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Innovative Solutions to New Challenges
in English Language Education:
Aligning National Outcomes to
Global Standards

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Introducing Innovative Solutions to New Challenges in English Language Education: Aligning National Outcomes to Global Standards

The 24th MELTA International Conference discusses and deliberates on innovative solutions to meet new challenges in English language education, with the view of aligning national outcomes to global standards. The conference encourages ELT professionals to share innovations in policies, pedagogies and learning systems. MELTA believes that any attempt to innovate solutions to meet new challenges in English language education has to take into cognizance the evolution of the English language, both regionally and globally, its transforming purpose, its use in changing contexts and its role in reframing communication.

The 24th MELTA International Conference proceedings is our effort to gather the opinions, thoughts and concerns of the many national and international education policy makers, scholars and practitioners, who have painstakingly advocated the advancement of innovative solutions to the challenges within the context of English Language Education, and provide a pathway for their voices to be heard in aligning national English Language Education outcomes to global standards. Their professional views, research, best practices, theoretical perspectives and understanding of issues and research in English language education will hopefully inspire more English Language educators to be involved in advancing methodologies, policies, curriculum, materials and resources, programme design, ICT, differentiated instructions, linguistic and language awareness, professional development and teacher education, within their practice.

It must be noted that the 34 papers are not peer-reviewed but just copy edited for language suitability and appropriateness, typos, formatting and reference checking so as to ensure compliance with the formatting required for the proceedings. The papers are organized thematically into 6 main categories:

i.   Speaking, Listening & Communication
ii.   Reading & Writing
iii. Technology & ICT
iv.   Creativity & Cognition
v.   Grammar
vi.   Others

It is our hope that these 34 papers will ignite rigourous academic discussions and encourage further scholarly initiatives, leading to effective and innovative solutions to new challenges. Eventually, it is hoped that the existing standards in nations will rise in par with the accepted global standards in the area of English language education.

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Innovation in Group Work Presentation:
A Challenge Responded

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Introduction

Featuring active learning to promote student engagement, group work is prevalently utilized as its merits have undeniably indicated the way much of the real world works today. To assess the result of group work, teachers often employ group work presentation. Group presentation has been conventionally carried out by each group member preparing his/her own share known before the group presentation. This brings about the diminution of the two most important elements of group work namely positive interdependence and individual accountability. The positive interdependence is less strengthened and the individual accountability is ruined as it is not what its nature means.

How can actually the two elements of positive interdependence and individual accountability be both strengthened? An innovation has been implemented by utilizing the idea of representative and role assigning which are determined on the group presentation day. Every group member should be ready for the whole section of the group task as a lottery will be done and role interdependence is determined on the day right before the presentation section.

This paper reports a small-scale research I conducted in my classroom at Widya Mandala Graduate School. It reveals how the cooperative-learning oriented class is assessed and how the perceived challenge is responded by the *Master of Arts in TEFL* students who are often assigned to read independently and then perform group presentation. Prior to the main issues, related literature will be presented.

Related Literature
Cooperative Learning

The education philosophy that maintains that education should be learner-centered brings about Cooperative Learning (Coelho, 1992). Termed correspondingly as 'peer involvement', 'peer-led activity' or 'peer-mediated activities' (Gaies, 1985 in Tamah, 2011) and in Indonesian as '*pembelajaran gotong royong*' (Lie, 2002:12), Cooperative Learning, as its name suggests, leads to more learning-oriented approaches, particularly in content courses (Cottell, 2010; Millis, 2010). Cooperative Learning, which is sometimes termed interchangeably with 'collaborative learning' (Barkley, Cross & Major, 2005; Richards & Rodgers, 2001) basically refers to the use of small groups where students work together to maximize their own as well as peer's learning which is often problem-based (O'Brien, Milles, & Cohen, 2008). Similarly pointed out, students working together in a Cooperative Learning class are obliged to learn and to be responsible for their fellow students' and their own learning (Slavin, 1990 as cited in Jacobs, Lee & Ball, 1996).

A rigorous perspective used to argue for Cooperative Learning is the fact that "What is transmitted to students through lecturing is simply not retained for any significant length of time" (Finkel, 2000 as cited in Millis, 2010:1). Having examined researches on some instructional strategies – more favorably termed 'learning strategies' – having a strong effect on student achievement in all subject areas at all grade levels, Marzano, Pickering and Pollock (2001) reported that the strategy of Cooperative Learning had an effect size of .73 and the percentile gain of 27 – a finding which indicates that the experimental group actually performed better than the control group (because of the positive effect size of .73) and that the teaching intervention employing Cooperative Learning strategy could change the students' mean score from percentile 50 to 77.

Another study revealing the merit of Cooperative Learning is that of Tamah (2011). She found that in cooperative interaction a group of students with different ability levels could assist one another by showing the need of assistance as well as providing assistance. The students made use of scaffolding categories – not only simple referential questions but also clarification requests and confirmation checks to get assisted. The students also made use of both simple assertions and further clarifications, feedback assertions and extended explanation to provide assistance to group members. The data in her study indicated that the students were involved in genuine interaction suggesting that the students learnt cooperative skills – the ones

that will serve them well in their future academic careers and in other life aspects.

The implementation of Cooperative Learning is responded positively by high school students as well as teachers (Tamah & Prijambodo, 2014). Their study revealed there was a high level of preference to Cooperative Learning. Slightly below 93% student and teacher respondents (n=56) claimed that they liked this particular learning strategy. The respondents (about 89%) also admitted the high frequency of Cooperative Learning implementation in classes. Their finding is consistent with the simple survey done by the writer who distributed a set of questionnaire at the beginning of a lecture to the freshmen of 2014-2015 academic year at two faculties of Widya Mandala Catholic University (n=168). The survey reveals that 89.3% respondents liked learning in groups, and 90.5% respondents admitted that they frequently got the implementation of Cooperative Learning in high school. This implies that the teaching paradigm has been shifted from instructor-centered teaching to student-centered teaching and it is very much favored.

Essential Components

Cooperative learning literature repetitively points out two of five essential components to be maintained in classroom instruction, which has the label of cooperative learning (e.g. Felder & Brent, 2007; Johnson & Johnson, 1994; Kagan & Kagan, 1994; Millis, 2010; O'Brien, Milles, & Cohen, 2008). The two critical aspects are Individual Accountability, and Positive Interdependence. Individual accountability is making each other accountable for his or her own learning. Although it is group work, "easy riders" should be discouraged (Barkley, Cross & Major, 2005:83). Positive Interdependence is "the most basic principle in cooperative learning" (Kagan & Kagan, 1994). Achievement as well as failure is equal when it concerns with positive interdependence. An achievement of one group member equals an achievement of another; the failure of one group member equals another's. The students are made to realize that they are positively interdependent one another in the group – that everyone in the group sinks or swims together (Kagan & Kagan, 1994), and that no group member can be successful unless every member is (Male, 1994).

Positive interdependence includes task interdependence, resource interdependence, reward interdependence and role interdependence (Male, 1994). Task interdependence is performed when the teacher, for instance, divides a text into its paragraphs and each

member in the group reads a different paragraph then each shares what they have read. Resource interdependence occurs when only one sheet is provided for the group rather than one sheet for each member so that the idea of working together is enforced. When students are encouraged by a reward like "You will get a 5-point bonus if every group member scores at least 75", reward interdependence is ensured.

Role interdependence is confirmed by assigning roles to the group members to encourage interaction and discussion and to help the group accomplish the task more efficiently (Cohen et al., 1994). Barkley, Cross and Major (2005) point out that role assigning aims at enhancing greater participation within group, ensuring various aspects of a learning task and encouraging interdependence among group members. Citing Millis and Cottell (1998), they further assert six common group roles: facilitator, recorder, reporter, time keeper, folder monitor, and a wild card. A facilitator moderates the group discussion by summarizing, and making sure all members participate. A recorder records any group activities by completing students' worksheet for submission to the teacher. A reporter serves as the spokesperson. A time keeper keeps track of time limitation. A folder monitor takes care of the group materials prepared in a folder by the teacher. A wild card fills in the role of any missing member.

Group Presentation
The fundamental six words to encourage group presentation is **Your work will be made public!** as work which is prepared for public enhances accountability (Doyle, 2008:115). The process of presentation improves, Doyle continues, important skills, which serve students for their lifelong learning. He further argues it is important to assist students understand that working collectively and supporting one another is advantageous for the sake of presentation skill improvement and also their future career.

The comment "When we want to give presentation in group we have already divide the material, so we cannot know all the material of the presentation." (a student's reflective journal in one of my undergraduate classes) indicates that the conventional technique of group presentation is very lenient. The students are prevalently left to decide what the presentation will contain and how it will be carried out. The roles the students take in the presentation are left to them to decide - they may appoint a

leader who controls and facilitates the presentation or they may all take an equal role. This is confirmed by another similar comment from a high school teacher "*Iya, mereka sudah tahu apa yang akan dipresentasikan. Mereka punya bagiannya sendiri. Jadi mereka harus presentasi semua.*" [translation: Yes, each group member knows in advance what to present. Each of the group members has his/her own part or section to present] (Tamah & Luluk, 2014;43). Group work has been implemented but the group work presentation has been destroyed as the two essential components (individual accountability and positive interdependence) are partly reassured implying the diminution of the essence of group work.

The Implemented Presentation Technique
The class of Language Testing was a 3-credit course, which met once a week. It was attended by the third semester students in the academic year of 2013-2014 at a graduate school for *Master of Arts in TEFL* in Indonesia. They had similar background in terms of teaching profession indicating they were in-service teachers. However, three of them were not involved in teaching anymore since they started their further study in the first semester. The whole semester program was held from 14 April till 16 August 2014. This particular study took the first half of the semester (14 April - 21 June 2014; the last week 16-21 June 2014 was allocated for the mid-term test).

The 19-student class was grouped into 2-3 member groups. Five groups had three members in each group. One group was a pair. Two students were single fighters who worked together on a similar topic, i.e. Test construction, but they did the presentation individually – one took Listening test construction, the other Speaking test construction. Among the seven class meetings, two meetings (meetings 3, and 4) were used for the group work assessment. On each meeting three groups were scheduled for presentation. One meeting (meeting 6) was used for single fighters' presentation.
Each group presentation was to be prepared for three stages. Stage 1 was allocated for about 15 minutes, and Stage 2 was too. Stage 3 was intended for Q & A and also allotted for about 15 minutes.

Not all members did the presentation. A lottery method (role drawing method) on the D-day was employed. The roles created covered those of a spokesperson, a prompter, and a technician. The teacher held a lucky draw from the role cards that were

symbolized with numbers. Written on each card was ❶, ❷, or ❸ representing the three roles: (1) spokesperson (the one chosen to present the result of the group work), (2) prompter (the one helping the spokesperson to remember what to say or what is missed), and (3) technician who also takes the role of a facilitator (as the one who operates the presentation media and the group moderator).

After half of the presentation (after the completion of Stage 1), another similar lottery method was carried out to determine the second spokesperson. The other roles were then determined based on the role table that had been prepared, so there were no overlapping roles. Briefly, group presentation was done in two stages to find the two spokespersons randomly.

Here is a typical procedure: When a group of three members named Agung, Billy, and Cepi is scheduled to do their presentation, all members are asked to 'step onto the classroom stage' and be ready with their presentation media. When they are really ready for the presentation, the lottery method is executed. Initially, the three of them are engaged in the first lottery method (for Stage 1). If Agung gets ❶, he becomes the spokesperson. If Billy gets ❷, he becomes the prompter. This entails that Cepi gets ❸ and hence the role of a technician who also becomes the group facilitator. In the second lottery method, only Billy and Cepi are engaged. If Billy gets ❶, he is the second spokesperson. Cepi then automatically gets ❷ identifying in due course he becomes the prompter. Meanwhile, Agung is directly determined to be the technician who is also the facilitator. The group formation in Stage 2 then goes like this: Billy is the spokesperson who is prompted, when needed, by Cepi. Meanwhile Agung who is the spokesperson in Stage 1 now becomes the technician and also facilitator.

In the 2-student group presentation, the roles of prompter and technician are combined and taken by one student. The lottery method is also correspondingly employed. The only difference is that the lottery method is done once.

Method
A set of 7-item questionnaire was prepared to obtain the students' perspective on the implemented technique of group presentation. Two items were framed to perceive the novelty of the technique. They were formulated as follows: *When the group*

presentation technique was implemented, was it the first time for you to get this kind of group presentation? and *Have you got similar kind of group work presentation in other classes?* Two items were statements to be responded with numbers. A Likert scale ranging from 1 ('not at all') to 4 ('very much') was employed for both questions *How do you rate your preference to this kind of presentation?* and *How do you rate the usefulness of this kind of presentation?* The remaining three items were open-ended to elicit more elaborate perspective on the new technique of group presentation. The followings were formulated to elicit this particular purpose: *What do you like about it? What do you dislike about it?* and *What is your suggestion on how to improve it?*

The questionnaire was distributed to the students after Language Testing class was over in August 2014. The questionnaire collection (the data collection) was started on 20 October 2014 and was completed on 21 November 2014 (about a month period). It was carried out by email contacts. Of 19 students, only 14 (73.7%) students completed the questionnaire and returned it to the writer. Among the five students who did not return the questionnaire, two were, as previously indicated, the single fighters. They did not respond because they did the presentation individually, hence they might not think it was necessary for them to fill out the questionnaire, which was intended for the reflection of group presentation. Recalculating the percentage, the writer found that 14 (82.4%) out of 17 students returned the questionnaire. The high response rate (slightly above 82%) would yield more accurate measurements for the subsequent questionnaire analysis. This quite high response rate might be due to at least three factors: (1) the motivation of the students to respond to the very new challenge they experienced (as revealed in one of the analysed responses presented below), (2) the acceptable survey length of about 6 minutes to complete the questionnaire, and (3) this survey belongs to an internal survey type.

Findings

Novelty of the Group Presentation Technique

With regard to the novelty of the implemented technique of group presentation, 14 (100%) students admitted that it was the first time for them to get this kind of group presentation. It was in fact a challenge perceived by most of them. A student claimed straightforwardly: *As I remember, there is no other class, which implement this technique. Most lecture[rs] just divided the discussion material and asked us to present*

in groups, in which we can choose particular topic to be mastered without even paying attention to others' [other members in my group] part (trying to be honest).

Likewise, the students did not get similar kind of group work presentation in other classes even after the class was over. All 14 (100%) students opted NO as the answer to "The class was over now, and have you got similar kind of group work presentation in other classes?" The responses to these particular items, which strengthen each other, imply that the group presentation technique implemented is indeed an innovation experienced.

Table 1: Perceived Novelty of the Group Presentation Technique

	Yes		No	
	Count	%	Count	%
Having the first time experience in this kind of group presentation	14	100%	0	0%
Having similar kind of group work presentation in other classes	0	0%	14	100%

Preference and Usefulness Perceived

From Tables 2 and 3 presented below it can be seen that both the preference to and the usefulness of the group presentation technique are rated quite high. Trying to see if the difference (.22) between the two ranking means (3.21) and (3.43) is significant or not, the writer found – after employing Mann-Whitney U-test calculators available on line at http://www.socscistatistics.com/tests/ /Default3.aspx and also http://www.real-statistics.com/free-download/real-statistics-examples-workbook/ - that the U-value is 84.5 (The critical value of U at p≤ 0.05 is 55). Therefore, the result is *not* significant at p≤ 0.05, and it is similarly found that the obtained p-value of 0,535 is bigger than the pre-determined p-value of 0.05, which means that the difference is *not* significant. The preference and usefulness mean rates were not significantly different. Statistically measured, the subjects' preference was not significantly different from the usefulness perceived. Both the preference to and the usefulness of the group presentation technique are similarly rated high.

Table 2: The Preference to the Group Presentation Technique

To what extent is the preference to the group presentation technique?	Count	%	Total	Count	%	Average rating (1-4 scale)
1 'Not at all'	0	0,0%	Dislike	3	21.4%	
2 'A little'	3	21,4%				
3 'Some'	5	35,7%	Like	11	78.6%	3.21
4 'A lot'	6	42,9%				
Total	14	100%	14	100%	100%	

Table 3: The Usefulness of the Group Presentation Technique

To what extent is the usefulness of the group presentation technique?	Count	%	Total	Count	%	Average rating (1-4 scale)
1 'Not at all'	0	0,0%	Useless	1	7.1%	
2 'A little'	1	7,1%				
3 'Some'	6	42,9%	Useful	13	92.9%	3.43
4 'A lot'	7	50,0%				
Total	14	100%	14	100%	100%	

Among the respondents, merely one respondent was confidently consistent in the zone of negative perception. This particular respondent was the only one who opted scale 2 ('a little') for both preference and usefulness issues. She disliked the technique and she did not think that the technique was useful. Here is what she pointed out:

(What I like): *It's gonna be fair for each member of group. So they have to be ready whatever task assigned on the D-day.*

(What I dislike): *I did understand how to implement and what the purpose of this presentation technique. However, others still kept questioning and this condition distracted the essence of the presentation itself. So, the focus was not on the material, but rather avoiding the mistake during the presentation session.*

(Suggestion): *I think no need to implement such complicated rule, although it aimed to be good and fair presentation. Because actually no matter how hard that the teacher arranged the rule to push us to really do the group work together. In fact, we still did individually based on the part we have divided and only sat in a group when it's time to perform or present. No one can be blamed due to this condition. It's only a matter of time and habit. And some of us who has been mature enough could feel humiliated since it showed teacher's disbelief of the group work by implementing this technique.*

Two respondents had the 'dislike' option (picking scale 2 'a little') for preference issue but they considered that the technique useful (picking scale 3 'some') for usefulness issue. The followings are the comments from one of them:

> (What I like): The presentation pushed me to prepare the material more more more seriously. I had to understand the whole material since I did not know whether I would be the spokesperson. This way, I got more understanding.
>
> (What I dislike): When I could not be the spokesperson and I had prepare my presentation.
>
> (Suggestion): I think all students should be given a chance to present the material, to sharp their understanding. Or, those who would not the spokesperson should be given opportunities to answer questions from the class.

As Tables 2 and 3 reveal, the majority of the respondents (amounting to slightly below 79% and 93%) were consistent in the zone of positive views for preference and usefulness issues. Four respondents had the opted scales of 3 and 3 (both 'some') respectively; one respondent had 3 and 4 ('some' and 'a lot'); six had 4 and 4 (both 'a lot). Some comments indicating the reasons why they liked the technique are presented below.

1) *Since I don't know what role I will get, I tend to prepare the material better. I read and try to comprehend the material thoroughly so I can do the presentation well in any roles I will get.*

2) *It makes all the group members to be ready to present all part of the presentation or material. The lottery gives fair opportunity for the members of the group in the presentation. No one has longer or easier part in the presentation. They have to read the material from the beginning to the end of it.*

3) *This presentation method forces students to read all the materials to be presented and thus avoid students to merely read the materials partially, as often occurs in each presentation turn.*

4) *Actually I like this group presentation technique, eventhough for the first time I was confused how to implemet it, since it is a new technique for me. But after joining the process of presentation I was familiar with this technique. It means that by using this technique all the students in each group were involved in it, and they were demanded to master the materials that they presented to the audience. The students also were expected to take part actively in their group presentation. So the students were not passive during the presentation*

5) *Every presenter should prepare well since they never know whether they will be the presenter or the prompter. Furthermore, we usually only prepare the part that we are going to present but this time we have to prepare and study all the materials.*

The positive responses above support the finding of Tamah and Prijambodo (2014): "It was definitely new for us and I think it is also a good way to have the students prepare the material they are going to present. Although it might not go as then plan [as planned], having a sense of surprise of being the spokesperson during the presentation day is quite interesting." and similarly "The rule of choosing the presenter, encourages us to read and learn more about the materials."

When asked to comment on the negative thing or the problem faced, they pointed out some hurting experience showing not all students respond to the same things in the same way: (the first two comments are from the respondents opted 3 and 3; the third from the one opting 3 and 4; the last two from those opting 4 and 4 for preference and usefulness issues respectively)

1) *It so happens that when I had learned the materials and ready to present, unfortunately I did not get the turn. Somehow I felt disappointed.*

2) *Since we have to prepare and study all the materials, sometimes we can not optimilize it. For example, the group discussion will be in two parts, (There will be two session of presentations) I wished I could be the presenter of presentataion part 1 but after I took the lottery, I got the second session of the presentation part 2 so it seemed that I was not well prepared. However I have tried to study and prepare for presentation part 2.*

3) *This kind of arrangement in doing the presentation creates a kind of tension. I keep on guessing what roles I will get and how I will perform the presentation. I cannot focus and concentrate to prepare the presentation.*

4) *I dislike this technique very much because it was a new thing. But in time work with my classmates which are (perhaps) feeling tired after their working hours and then showing uniterested feeling to work on this technique, perhaps they thought the technique is too much or confusing (lottery technique, as it makes all students have to prepare for the material).*

5) *What I don't like from this method is that when there is a member who is not ready or well prepared. The presentation automatically turns to be not as good as when it is presented by the one who is well prepared, also when a member has to present a part that is difficult for him or her.*

When asked to provide suggestions, the majority of the respondents did not do so, instead they provided encouraging comments as seen below: (all comments are from the respondents opting both 4 for preference and usefulness issues)

1) *The presentation with this technique is good enough, especially to trigger the students like S2 [graduate] students to stay alert during the class. The feeling while waiting for the lottery (turn) was good enough for the students. By creating unusual presentation technique will makes the students to stay ready or stay alert with the class learning condition and material.*

2) *It was confusing at first, but as the time went by, we did it well by practicing. It was great!*

3) *In my opinion the grouping that you promoted is the best ever as it required us (all the member) to know our presentation material.*

The actual suggestions vary from a simple reminder like "This method is quite alright. It just requires the teacher or lecturer to remind the students of the consequences to master all part of the material well and to ask them to discuss or comprehend the material" to a more challenging one like "It would be better if the lottery were taken before the presentation and students could prepare themselves better. To make sure that everyone in the group prepares the presentation equally, perhaps it will be better if each of them has to answer some questions. The questions are prepared by the lecturer and different groups in the class and the presenting group gets the chance to choose the question."

One last suggestion worth quoting is "I just think that it will be more interesting if all the groups should prepare the materials that have been set in the syllabus. Then on the due date the lecturer bring lottery in which there is only one lottery consist of the topic that must be presented while the other lottery is empty. The group that takes lucky the lottery, they have to present it. It is expected that all groups will learn the materials before the class because usually only the group who will present the material who learned well about the topic. As the result, sometimes we get in blank when the group please us to ask some questions since we have just learned the material presented by the presenter." It indicates that the respondent was indeed triggered by the inventive technique and came to an even rigorous idea of how to make students not only read the assigned materials for the group but also the whole semester course materials.

A novelty has been admitted; it has been seen as a challenge. And the challenge has auspiciously been responded. The challenging presentation technique is here to establish further.

Conclusion

The model of group presentation technique has evidently been designed to approach more closely to learner-centered teaching to bring about thoroughgoing students' engagement. Further issue to consider is providing students some control over how they earn their grades. Will the group score be taken and combined with the individual score of the summative test to get the average? Or whether the group score is taken only one third and the individual score two thirds? Weiner (2002) in Blumberg (2009) argues that students are likely to learn more – to be motivated – when they perceive they have some control over their grades. Simply, further studies are needed to investigate how to ensure that both individual effort and group effort are measured to achieve individual accountability while still promoting group interdependence – another primary circumstance with regards to earning grades.

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