



## Full Length Research Article

### IMPLEMENTING COOPERATIVE LEARNING AMONG POST GRADUATE STUDENTS: LECTURERS' REFLECTION

**\*Lee Jun Choi, Abdul Halim Bin Mohamed and Mohammad Syawal Bin Narawi**

School of Education and Modern Languages (SEML), UUM College of Arts and Sciences,  
06010 UUM Sintok, Kedah Darul Aman, Malaysia

#### ARTICLE INFO

##### Article History:

Received 07<sup>th</sup> December, 2016  
Received in revised form  
15<sup>th</sup> January, 2017  
Accepted 28<sup>th</sup> February, 2017  
Published online 31<sup>st</sup> March, 2017

##### Key Words:

Cooperative Learning,  
Post-graduate Students,  
Reflection.

#### ABSTRACT

Over the last three decades, one of the pedagogical practices that has attracted much attention to the world of education is cooperative learning approach. While large lecture halls and bell curves generally characterized higher education, we have to accept the fact that there has been an increased in active learning and cooperative learning-based pedagogies in universities across the country. The role of university lecturers is changing. As the Constructivist educational paradigm continues to take hold, it is likely that the higher education will continue to make progress in alignment with this movement. However, under the false notions that cooperative learning is an alternative to, rather than an enhancement of professional lectures, some lecturers might struggle with implementing it or avoid integrating it into their classes. This study reports on the reflection of 12 university lecturers who have implemented cooperative learning in their classes while teaching masters' students for a duration of 14 weeks. Data from the interviews reveal that while the lecturers have positive experience with cooperative learning, a number of them encountered difficulties with implementation of it in their classrooms. As educators often operate under the false assumption that putting adults in groups automatically assumes that they are being cooperative and that they are learning, there were some 'interpersonal' issues identified. Some lecturers commented that it really required a very high commitment on the part of the lecturers if it was to be implemented effectively.

Copyright©2017, Lee Jun Choi et al. This is an open access article distributed under the Creative Commons Attribution License, which permits unrestricted use, distribution, and reproduction in any medium, provided the original work is properly cited.

#### INTRODUCTION

In every institution, academicians are trying to increase the effectiveness of learning through a variety of teaching approaches. Over the last three decades, one of the pedagogical practices that has attracted much attention to the world of education is cooperative learning approach. Cooperative learning has become quite an internationally known area among social researchers (Slavin, 2011). It is considered to be far more effective compared to lecture-based teaching (Tran & Lewis, 2012a; Tran & Lewis, 2012b; Slavin, 2011, Johnson & Johnson, 2009). There are many varieties of cooperative learning such as Teams-Games-Tournaments (TGT), Jigsaw Grouping, Group Investigation (GI), Student Teams Achievement Division (STAD), Learning Together (LT) and Team Accelerated Instruction (TAI). Even though Paulsen and Faust (2008) note that there is still a resistance and hesitation in higher education to transform traditional university classes into cooperative learning environments,

**\*Corresponding author: Lee Jun Choi,**

School of Education and Modern Languages (SEML), UUM College of Arts and Sciences, 06010 UUM Sintok, Kedah Darul Aman, Malaysia

university lecturers or professors have to accept the fact that it is a must approach to be integrated into their classrooms whether they like it or not. This paper highlights some of university lecturers' reflections while implementing cooperative learning approach into their masters classes. There were twelve lecturers of masters' program involved in this study, teaching different programs and different courses at the masters level. In this study, using cooperative learning approach, most of the lecturers normally involved a few masters' students working together in a group small enough that everyone can participate on a collective task that has been clearly assigned to them. As adult learners, students are expected to carry out their tasks without direct and immediate supervision from their lecturers. As the term "cooperative learning" implies, masters' students are also expected to help each other learn, share ideas and resources, as well as plan cooperatively what and how to study. Using cooperative learning methods, some lecturers had to sit together with their students to discuss or help one another with classroom assignments. Lecturers in this study also used structural approach when they implemented cooperative learning in their classes. Actually, the structural approach to cooperative