

UNIVERSITI TEKNOLOGI MARA

**COOPERATIVE GROUP LEARNING: THE USE OF
BRAINSTORMING TO PROMOTE SPEAKING SKILLS
AMONG FORM FOUR STUDENTS**

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DEDICATION

This thesis is exclusively dedicated to my loving parents, whose words of encouragement have greatly inspired me to further my studies to this level of education, who had taught me the best kind of advice that learning is a lifelong process!

ABSTRACT

The use of a variety of brainstorming activities has great potential to promote speaking skills in English as a Second Language (ESL) classroom. This exploratory research sets out to explore the types of brainstorming activities used to promote students' speaking skills and to find out how brainstorming activities in cooperative group learning can promote speaking skills. Students' and teachers' perspectives on the use of brainstorming in cooperative group learning are gathered to seek the opinions on how brainstorming helps to promote students' speaking skills. In this study, 321 Form Four students of an urban secondary school in Kuching were involved. The data were obtained through the analysis of students' questionnaire, interviews with three language teachers as well as the observations in classes during the cooperative group learning sessions. From the findings, it was found that the types of brainstorming activities most frequently used by English teachers to promote speaking skills are using word lists, word mapping and pictures. The study also indicated that both students and teachers have positive perceptions towards the use of brainstorming activities in cooperative group learning to promote speaking skills. The study concludes by providing some recommendations that this strategy has pedagogical implications that are relevant to students and teachers as it contributes to the increase in students' motivation, confidence and participation as shown from students' positive behaviour during classroom observations. Hence, findings from this study provide a new insight and knowledge in understanding how the use of brainstorming in cooperative group learning can promote speaking skills to reduce anxiety and reluctance of students speaking in the second language.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

CONTENT	PAGE
DEDICATION	i
ACKNOWLEDGEMENT	ii
ABSTRACT	iii
ABSTRAK	iv
TABLE OF CONTENTS	v-vii
LIST OF TABLES	viii
LIST OF FIGURES	ix
LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS	x
1. CHAPTER 1 INTRODUCTION	
1.1 Introduction	1
1.2 Background of the study	2
1.3 Problem Statement	6
1.4 Conceptual Framework	11
1.5 Research objectives	13
1.6 Research questions	13
1.7 Significance of the study	14
1.8 Limitations of the study	14
1.9 Operational Definitions	
1.9.1 Cooperative Group Learning (CGL)	15
1.9.2 Brainstorming	15
1.9.3 Speaking skills	16
2. CHAPTER 2 LITERATURE REVIEW	
2.1 Introduction	17
2.2 Overview of Cooperative Learning	17
2.2.1 Cooperative Learning Model	21
2.2.2 Advantages and Disadvantages of using CGL in teaching speaking skills	21
2.3 Cooperative Learning Method: Brainstorming	22
2.3.1 Using brainstorming in CGL to promote speaking skills	24

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction

Brainstorming is the random generation of ideas based around a topic and a technique of decision making that can be employed in any situation where participation is expected. This cooperative group learning strategy is a useful activity that can be easily introduced into language classes. Brainstorming in a large or small group encourages students to focus on the free flow of ideas. The teacher may begin by posing a question or a problem, or by introducing a topic. Students then express possible answers such as relevant words and ideas. Contributions are accepted without criticism or judgement. Initially, some students may be reluctant to speak out in a group situation but brainstorming is an open sharing activity which promotes all students to participate. By expressing ideas and listening to what others say, students fine-tune their previous knowledge or understanding, accommodate and increase their levels of awareness.

In addition, it is a fun activity which students enjoy and worth trying in speaking lessons. Blake & DeVries (2004) suggested that the key to encouraging speaking skills in the classroom is by creating the *proper environment, relaxed, and social interaction with peers*. Hence, the aim of this study is to explore the use of brainstorming in cooperative group learning to promote speaking skills among Form Four students in a secondary school in Kuching. In addition, this study aims to uncover both the teachers' and students' perceptions on the use of this teaching and learning method in the classroom. This chapter is an introduction to the research project. Through this study, it discusses the background of the study, the statement of the problem, the significance of the study, limitation of the study and definition of terms.