# STUDENTS' ATTITUDE TOWARDS COOPERATIVE LEARNING AT PULO ELEMENTARY SCHOOL, SAN RAFAEL, BULACAN

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**Abstract**

This study was conducted to determine the attitude of students towards cooperative learning at Pulo Elementary School, San Rafael, Bulacan. Specifically, it aimed to understand if cooperative learning facilitates greater learner participation in class activities. Likewise, it sought to describe the cooperative learning strategies practiced by the lecturers using quantitative and qualitative methods in order to gather data. Based on the findings of the study, students favor the utilization of the cooperative learning for it enhances the level of class participation and students are more comfortable with teacher-centered learning strategies. Therefore, the researchers recommend that lecturers could formulate ways to evaluate students individually even they are in groups, more emphasis should be placed by the school in promoting cooperative learning; and stakeholders can conduct seminars for the betterment of the lecturers about the strategies.

*Keywords:* Cooperative Learning, Students' Attitudes

## Introduction

There are changes in the present curriculum- including the change of teaching-learning process in the classrooms. The Enhanced Basic Education Act of 2013 also known as K to 12 Program is the reason of changes in the Philippine Educational System. Implementation of K to 12 Program requires the open mindedness of the teacher and the full belief that the curriculum will enhance learning (Bilbao, Corpuz & Dayagbil, 2015).

In the past educational system, formal classroom setting lectures cannot move away from the traditional method of teaching in which one effectively delivers a speech and learners just passively listen and take notes. Before, teachers were used to direct teaching method where they spoon-feed their learners.

Didactic method is a form of instruction which is a teacher-centered approach that occurs when an educator mainly lectures instead of facilitating learning. McLeish (2009) observes that didactic appears to be not the most effective learning tool. Teachers using the didactic method provide quizzes after lecture. As a result, learners do well in the lower levels of Bloom's Taxonomy i.e. simple recall questions, but whenever there is need for application, analysis, synthesis and evaluation learners perform poorly. As such, it can be said that the learners reasoning abilities are not being fully realized.

Section 5 of the Enhanced Basic Education Act of 2013 states that the curriculum shall use pedagogical approaches that are constructivist, inquiry-based, reflective, collaborative and integrative. Cooperative approach is included in the teaching-learning process. The teacher must use this method of teaching to lessen the teacher's role of being repository of knowledge that



just freely gives learners information. Teachers must motivate learners to become active rather than passive participants in their learning.

Salandanan & Corpuz (2013) assert that there is no such thing as best method in teaching. In choosing a method or strategy in implementing a lesson, the teacher must be aware of the learners' diversity and individuals' different learning styles. Teachers must not focus in using one method alone but must apply other methods too. Direct teaching method is not literally discarded; however, teaching styles must be varied to cover the range of learning abilities including the cooperative method.

Learning can be more enjoyable if learners work together as a team to achieve a specific target or objective (McLeish, 2009). There have been many studies conducted regarding on the value of cooperative learning. The reason for choosing Felder & Brent's (1994) study as the basis of this study is because he found that learners became so accustomed to work in groups that this work translated into other courses. Therefore he concluded that the cooperative learning technique had the desired effect of changing learners' work ethics.

The purpose of the researchers' study is to know the students' attitude towards cooperative learning method. With the changes that are happening in the present curriculum, implementation of the lesson shall also adapt to them.

In cooperative learning, learners can share and open with their classmates. They can learn based on their own experiences. It is further believed that once persons actively participate in their own learning experience they will see an improvement in their academic performance.

**Review of Related Literature**

Marzano (2003) posits that group work like cooperative learning has a positive impact on learners' achievement, interpersonal relationships and attitudes about learning. It shows that through the use of group activities during implementing a lesson affect the learners' achievement.

According to Slavin (2011), cooperative learning is an instructional method in which teachers organize learners into small groups, which then work together to help one another learn academic content. When learners work together, they achieve more than when they work alone.

Meng (2005) examines the application of cooperative learning in the Chinese classroom. He focused that the nature of the Chinese culture which is marked by collectivism enabled their learning style to be more successful collectivism places emphasis on a more extended self which is understood in a wider context that is in relation to a physical and social environment which one seeks to harmonize. Learners who work together achieve more than when they work alone. It shows that when the teacher applied the use of cooperative learning, learners tend to work together in a pleasing way. Learners can achieve their socialization skills which is better than to study independently.

While McDowell (2001) concludes that learners believe that they learned more from the course exercise that is the teach yourself document, than if the material had been lectured in the traditional manner. The conclusion made showed the usefulness of having student centered learning wherein learners tend to learn more as they practice themselves to study independently and interdependently. Learners can learn better also if they will



participate in group activities because as they work cooperatively they can learn some information on learnings that are based on experiences.

Student-centered strategy group obtained higher scores than the traditional strategy group. It shows that learners who work together achieve more than when they work independently. In the traditional strategy, learners tend to learn by themselves through memorizing their notes from what their teacher taught them. But in the new implemented curriculum in the Philippines, they changed passive to active learners (Chanchalor & Chomputong, 2004).

Johnson, Johnson & Smith (1998) discuss that Socrates taught in small groups and engaged learners in his famous art of discourse, meaning to learn from others through dialogue and discussion rather than simply receive input. It shows that learners tend to learn more from others than simply reading notes. Thompson & Taymans (1996) elaborates that in order for cooperative learning to be successful, teachers need to be sure they have a clear system for managing student behavior, teach learners specific interpersonal skills and teach learners how to perform the specifics rules and procedures expected within different cooperative structures. Teachers must familiarize themselves with the cooperative learning techniques. Teachers must be knowledgeable enough to use cooperative learning method and must consider the differences among learners.

Cooperative learning activities encourage learners to read and understand the meaning of a text together in small groups, such as activities should also arouse learners' interest and intrinsic motivation. Learners can improve their attitude towards

work. Learners will have self-confidence and reduce anxiety. Researchers knew that one of the reasons why learners don't participate in class is because they have fear to commit mistakes in front of their classmates but as learners participate in group, their confidence will increase and also they will become motivated to perform and talk in front of class without any anxiety (Law, 2011).

Barraket (2005) is an advocate of a marriage of both teacher-centered and student-centered approach with an aim to enhance student-centered teaching method in a master's level social research methods course. This was done through the introduction of various techniques namely: problem-based learning, group work, role play and simulation. From this study, it was concluded that the move towards student centeredness had a positive influence on student performance, learning experience and subject evaluation. It showed how cooperative learning increases learners performance when they work in groups.

With the framework of cooperative learning groups, learners learn how to interact with their peers and increase involvement with the school community. Positive interactions do not always occur naturally and social skills instruction must precede and concur with the cooperative learning strategies. Social skills encompass communicating, building and maintaining trust, providing leadership and managing conflicts. Cooperative learning enhances class participation and make learning experience easier. They will not just only learn on academic means but also they will teach leadership that will boost their confidence in public speaking. Learners will also improve attitude towards work as they manage different problems and conflicts (Goodwin, 1999).



Preszler (2005) adds in his study that learners performed better on examination when there was the mixture of both student and teacher centered techniques. In implementing a lesson, it is better if a teacher uses not just only one method of teaching. Teacher can use both teacher and student approaches to make the discussion more enjoyable. This will increase students' potentials to participate in class and make the learning experience easier. Learners tend to reduce their fear whenever they want to ask questions to their teachers.

Jollifee (2007) indicates that cooperative learning requires learners to work together in small groups to support each other to improve their own learning and that of others. There are five basic elements of cooperative learning according to Johnson, Johnson & Holubec (1991). It is only under certain conditions that cooperative efforts may be expected to be more productive than competitive and individualistic efforts. Those conditions are clearly perceived positive interdependence where according to Jolliffee (2007) pupils are required to work in a way so that each member needs others to complete the task. It's a feeling of one for all, all for one.

Considerable primitive (face-to-face) interaction is another condition where learners promote each other's learning by helping, sharing and encouraging efforts to learn. Clearly perceived individual accountability and performed responsibility to achieve the group's goals is a condition that requires each learner in the group to develop a sense of personal responsibility to learn and help the rest of the group to learn as well.

Frequent use of the relevant interpersonal and small

group skills will not function effectively if learners do not have and use the needed social skills such as leadership. Frequent and regular group processing of current functioning to improve the group's future effectiveness is very important for the teachers to also monitor the groups and give feedback on how well the groups are working together. Putnam (1998) clearly states that cooperative learning can serve as one powerful tool in creating effective inclusive classrooms of diverse learners. It means that cooperative learning can be used especially in diverse learners. Through cooperative learning, it enhances good working relationships among learners.

According to Horne & Pine (1990), learning is a cooperative and collaborative process. People enjoy functioning independently but they also enjoy functioning interdependently. Many times learners are reminded of something because of what they heard from the group. Learners begin to realize that they count and have something to give and to learn. It supports that cooperative learning facilitate greater learners participation in class activities. As the learners tend to cooperate with their classmates there are knowledge left in their mind. Learners can really learn through active and enjoyable class rather than listening to their teacher and just taking notes.

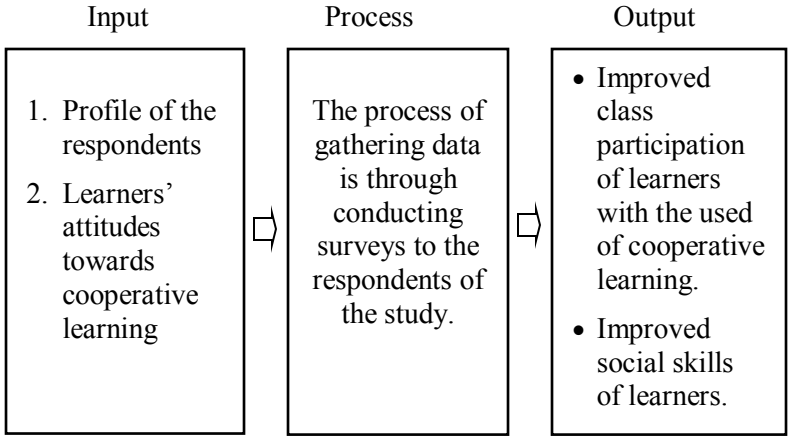
**Theoretical Framework**

Constructivism refers to the idea that learners construct knowledge for themselves. Each learner individually and socially constructs meaning as he or she learns. This constructivism theory allows learners to construct ideas based on their prior knowledge. Learners in group, can share their ideas to enable them to achieve their goals. It supports the study to have learners



view about the relatedness of collaborative learning on constructivism theory. This type of instruction will enable more long term retention of knowledge.

**Conceptual Framework**




The study aimed to determine the learners' attitude towards the utilization cooperative learning in class. In order to seek answers to the problems, the researchers gathered data by conducting surveys and interviews.

**Statement of the Problem**

This study aimed to determine the learners' attitude towards cooperative learning strategy.

Specifically, it sought answers to the following questions:

1. What are the student profiles in terms of:
   1.1 grade level and section;

1.2 age;

1.3 gender?

2. What are the learners' attitudes towards cooperative learning as perceived by the teachers?

3. Is there a significant relationship between the profile and the learners' attitudes towards cooperative learning?

4. How do teachers practice cooperative learning inside the classroom as perceived by the learners?

## Method

This study was conducted at Pulo Elementary School located at Barangay Pulo, San Rafael, Bulacan. Researchers chose the said school to save time in gathering answers to the questions.

Descriptive study was used to determine the views of learners toward cooperative learning strategies at Pulo Elementary School. This study used two methods. The questionnaire survey technique was used in quantitative technique since it enables large scale numerical data to be obtained over a short period of time. In this study, the researchers wanted to gather numerical data to indicate learners' view on cooperative learning. According to Minchiello (1990) quantitative research gathers data in numerical form which can be put into categories or in rank order, or measured in units of measurement. This type of data can be used to construct graphs and tables of raw data.

The chosen respondents were grades five and six learners and twelve teachers from Pulo Elementary School for School Year 2016-2017. The researcher interviewed three teachers while



nine teachers to answered the questionnaire as the part of the study.

In this study, the researchers used questionnaires and conducted interviews to gather information which is necessary for the descriptive method of study. The researchers adopted and modified the questionnaires of Keritha McLeish (2009) which was used in her study that comprised 23 questions for the learners and 19 questions wherein 9 of it are for the interview for teachers.

The learners and teachers were asked to rate some questions using the five-point Likert scale according to their attitudes or views on cooperative learning strategy.

The researchers personally administered the questionnaires to ensure a high retrieval rate from the respondents. The researchers asked permission to administer the questionnaires from the respective school principal. After the approval of the written request, the researchers distributed the questionnaires to grades five and six learners and to the teachers of Pulo Elementary School in San Rafael, Bulacan The researchers informed the respondents about the purpose of conducting a survey and they were guided accordingly. They also assured of the confidentiality of their responses.

## Results and Discussion

Table 1

*Frequency and Percentage Distribution of Learner-Respondents by Grade Level and Section*

| Grade Level | Section | *f* | % |
|---|---|---|---|
| 5 | A | 27 | 27 |
| 5 | B | 23 | 23 |
| 6 | A | 25 | 25 |
| 6 | B | 25 | 25 |
| Total | | 100 | 100 |

Table 1 shows that out of 100 learner-respondents, most (27%) were from grade 5-A; 23 followed by student-respondents from grades 6-A & 6-B with 25% each.

Table 2

*Frequency and Percentage Distribution of the Learner-Respondents by Age*

| Age | *f* | % |
|---|---|---|
| 11-below | 73 | 73 |
| 12-13 | 26 | 26 |
| 14-up | 1 | 1 |
| Total | 100 | 100 |

Table 2 shows that almost three-fourths (73%) of the learner -respondents were aged between 10-11 years old; 26 or 26% were 12-13 years old and 1 or 1% was 14 years old. Therefore,



most of the learner- respondents are in the adolescent stage.

Table 3

*Frequency and Percentage Distribution of the Learner-Respondents by Gender*

| Gender | Grade V | Grade VI | Total no. of respondents | % |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Male | 28 | 20 | 48 | 48 |
| Female | 22 | 30 | 52 | 52 |
| Total | | | 100 | 100 |

Table 3 showed the number of male-respondents and female-respondents from the two sections of Grades 5 and 6. It shows that female students outnumbered the male students.

The table further showed that there were more male students in Grade 5 than in Grade 6 while more females are in grade 6.

Table 4

*Mean Scores Distribution of Attitudes of Learner-Respondents Towards Cooperative Learning*

| Statement | Grade V | | Grade VI | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | WM | VI | WM | VI |
| When I work with others, I achieve more than when I work alone. | 4.48 | SA | 3.94 | A |
| I willingly participate in cooperative learning activities | 4.15 | A | 4.00 | A |

Table 4 Continuation

| Statement | Grade V | | Grade VI | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | WM | VI | WM | VI |
| Cooperative learning can improve my attitudes towards work. | 4.15 | A | 4.18 | A |
| Cooperative learning helps me to socialize more. | 4.08 | A | 3.90 | A |
| Cooperative learning enhances good working relationships among learners. | 4.01 | A | 3.90 | A |
| Cooperative learning enhances participation. | 4.01 | A | 3.42 | A |
| Creativity is facilitated in the group setting. | 4.37 | SA | 4.08 | A |
| Group activities make the learning experience easier. | 3.90 | A | 3.78 | A |
| Total | 4.14 | A | 3.90 | A |

The Grade 5 learner-respondents strongly agreed that they achieve more when they work with others, as indicated by 4.48 weighted mean. Grade 5 learner- respondents also agreed that they willingly to participate in cooperative learning activities, with 4.15 weighted mean. Learner- respondents from Grade 5 agreed that cooperative learning can improve my attitudes towards work with 4.15 weighted mean. While 4.08 weighted mean for cooperative learning helps them more to socialize more where interpreted as agree. They agreed also that cooperative learning enhances good working relationship among Grade 5 learners which got 4.01 weighted mean. Learners also agreed that cooperative learning enhances their class participation which got 4.01 weighted mean, and creativity is facilitated in the group setting got 4.37 weighted mean which is interpreted as strongly agree. Lastly, for them group activities



make the learning experience easier which got 3.9 weighted mean and is interpreted as agree.

For the Grade 6 learner- respondents, they also agreed to all statements where when they work together independently they achieve more which got 3.49 weighted mean; willingly participate in cooperative learning activities which got 4.00; cooperative learning can improve their attitudes towards work, which got 4.18 weighted mean ; both cooperative learning helps them to socialize more and it enhances good working relationship among their classmates got 3.9 weighted mean; cooperative learning enhances class participation got 3.42 weighted mean; creativity is facilitated in the group setting got 4.08 weighted mean; and group activities make the learning experience easier got 3.78 weighted mean.

Learners have favorable attitude towards the implementation of cooperative learning in their classrooms. Both Grade 5 and Grade 6 students agreed that cooperative learning affects them with good result. It is noticed that Grade 6 learner- respondents rated weighted average of 4.14 which can be interpreted as Agree and for Grade 6 learner-respondents rated 3.9 weighted average which is interpreted also as agree.

On the assessment of questionnaires, some of the learner-respondents said that they prefer to work on their own rather than in a group because they can understand lessons more easily, it helps them enhance their ability without the help of others, they can think deeply without being interrupted and they can learn on their own. On the other hand, there are students who do not prefer to work on their own because they are scared to work alone, they are slow in finishing the activities, they can’t do

things on their own, and they can come up with more ideas when they work with others.

Table 5

*Relationship Between Profile and Learner's Attitudes Towards Cooperative Learning*

| Profile | Learner's attitudes | Interpretation |
|---|---|---|
| Grade V | -0.11667 | Indifferent / negligible relationship |
| Grade VI | -0.10534 | Indifferent/ negligible relationship |
| Age | -0.17019 | Indifferent/ negligible relationship |
| Gender | -0.164862 | Indifferent/ negligible relationship |

Based on the figure, it shows that the profile of the learners does not have any significant relationship with learner's attitudes towards cooperative learning. The grade level of learners shows that there is a negligible relationship to their attitudes. It means that learners' view towards cooperative learning does not depend in their grade level. The age of each learner shows that there's negligible relationship to the attitudes. It means that the view of learners about the attitudes does not depend on their age.

The gender of learners also shows a negligible relationship to their attitudes. It means that the view of learners about cooperative learning doesn't depend on their gender.

Therefore, it was proven that the profile of learners does not have any significant relationship with learner's attitudes towards cooperative learning.



Table 6

*Frequency to Which Cooperative Learning Method is Used*

| Category | Grade V | | Grade VI | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | *f* | % | *f* | % |
| Always | 38 | 38 | 8 | 8 |
| Sometimes | 12 | 12 | 42 | 42 |
| Very Often | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Rarely | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Never | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Total | 50 | 50 | 50 | 50 |

Table 6 shows that teachers use cooperative learning sometimes in their classes. It was reported by 54% of the learners from the two sections of grades V and VI. On the other hand, 46 or 46% of learner-respondents answered that their teachers always utilized cooperative learning in their classes.

The study showed that the teachers in Pulo Elementary School sometimes utilized cooperative learning approach. This means that were not utilizing group activities every day in their classes.

Teachers agreed that they are familiar with the use of cooperative learning in class which is an organized and structured way to use small groups to enhance student learning and interdependence. Learners are given a task better known as an assignment and they work together to accomplish this task.

The three teachers stated that they prepared their learners by giving the directions or instructions before grouping them and

ensured that learners have materials to be used. They also said that learners are more comfortable with the use of teacher-centered method but through the new curriculum implemented in the Philippines, they were allowed to change their case in the classroom from teacher-centered to learner-centered. As they utilized cooperative learning in class, learners became more active and energetic in classroom.

**Conclusions**

Based on the summary and results of the findings, the following conclusions have been arrived at:

1. The learner- respondents of their study from grade 5 and 6 with majority age of 11 and below and some were 12-14 years old.
2. There were many positive feedbacks about utilizing the co-operative learning strategies, and learners preferred if their teachers give more group activities.
3. There is no significant relationship between the profile and learner's attitudes towards cooperative learning.
4. Teachers in Pulo Elementary School utilized cooperative learning and gave group activities in Grade V and VI classes.

**Recommendations**

Based on the findings of the study and conclusion, the following recommendations are proposed for the future researchers and stakeholders:

1. The principal of the school can promote other cooperative learning activities through conducting seminars and meetings.



2. Teachers are recommended to utilize more cooperative learning in their classroom discussion.
3. Future researchers can gather information on how teachers evaluate each member of a group.

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