IMPROVING ACHIEVEMENT AND ATTITUDE THROUGH COOPERATIVE LEARNING IN PUBLIC SPEAKING TRAINING

ROJANARDWARAMONTRI

Airline Business, SuanSunandhaRajbhat University, International College, Bangkok 10300Thailand
E-mail: rojanard.wa@ssru.ac.th, rojanardw@gmail.com

Abstract— This research presents the importance of Personality Improvement and Grooming in the areas of Presentation skills towards the student representatives titled SSRUIC Youth Idol at Suan Sunandha Rajabhat University, International College (SSRUIC). The researcher investigated whether the use of Cooperative Learning Groups in Public Speaking Training changed students' individual achievement and students' attitudes towards Public Speaking. Fourteen students were chosen as samplings to conduct the research based on Public Speaking Training in order to evaluate the learner's attitudes towards the Public Speaking and to evaluate the effectiveness of the Public Speaking Training by having Pre-test and Post-test of Public Speaking Evaluation in the same learning group. As a result of this research, the researcher plans to continue to find ways to incorporate cooperative group activities.

Keywords— Attitude, Achievement, Cooperative learning, Public Speaking.

I. INTRODUCTION

Fear or anxious about presentation skills is expressed in a variety and different ways among the students. At SSRUIC, in every subjects of each semester, students are required todo the group projects or term papers along with the group presentation. During the group presentation, the researcher found that students are most likely to use reading out loud technique rather than storytelling technique as a tool for presenting the paper. Throughout the years of teaching, the researcher as a lecturer noticed this fear of public speaking or classroom presentation are the draw backs of the students' capabilities and the individual's achievements. These attitudes about the fear of public speaking have been a major concern that lecturer as a researcher would like to address and discuss about the solutions.

Lecturers have the sometimes-difficult task of trying to identify which strategy or practice works best for each individual student to overcome this fear of public speaking. The researcher believed that in many instance, students can learn from group training. Working cooperatively is an important life skill that students can use outside the classroom to help work effectively with others to solve any problem or task.

There are varieties in training to improve the individual personality. The researcher would love to explore an ideal classroom where all of the students feel comfortable sharing their ideas in front of the classroom naturally. Training with the interaction within cooperative groups help students feel confident in their own abilities. It is very beneficial for students to realize that the same fear can be solved by different strategies and still arrive at the same conclusion. The cooperative communication between students also can be very beneficial in other curriculum areas.

Nowadays, the recruitment process especially in the airline industry scored on first impression which based on grooming and self-presentation. Thus, Public Speaking is the tool as a fundamental support for students to improve their presentation skills in order to meet the criteria in the selection process for the upcoming internships and other future careers. Public speaking is commonly understood as the formal, face-to-face talking of a single person to a group of listeners. It is closely allied to "presenting". Most of the time, public speaking is to persuade the audience. The purpose of public speaking can range from simply transmitting information, to motivating people to act, to simply telling a story. As a result, the researcher would like to try these tools to implement the public speaking techniques into practice. So, the Public Speaking Training was conducted .

The main purpose of this research was to study the design of Public Speaking Training to improve the personality in the areas of presentation skills as the positive attitudes towards public speaking. The qualitative data was collected through Public Speaking Training Evaluation form pre test and post test together with TeacherJournal Interview. A content analysis was used to analyze the qualitative data. The two findings of the study were as follows:

1. To design the Public Speaking Training towards SSRUIC students.
2. To examine the effectiveness of cooperative learning group towards Public Speaking Training.

Literature Review

Attitude is defined as a way of thinking or feeling about something. When working with students, their attitudes can play an important role in the learning process. If a student feels that he or she can do well and be successful, then he or she usually is successful. However, if a student feels that he or she

cannot do the required work then he or she may not be willing to put forth the effort to be successful. Cooperative learning can be a useful tool to help develop a positive attitude toward learning.

Cooperative learning has been linked to other positive social or affective outcomes. One benefit is the increase in social skills of students who participate in group work (Whicker et al.,1997). These skills can help students perform in situations outside of the school setting. Being able to work with others can be very useful attribute to have when seeking employment in many companies.

Cooperative learning is an educational approach which aims to organize classroom activities into academic and social learning experiences. It has been described as "structuring positive interdependence"

Cooperative learning is a method of teaching and learning in which students team together to explore a significant question or create a meaningful project. A group of students discussing a lecture or students from different school working together over the internet on a shared assignment are both examples of collaborative learning. They develop their interpersonal skills. They learn to deal with conflict. Students engage in numerous activities that improve their understandings of subjects explored. Students learn skills for resolving conflicts when they arise. Diversity is celebrated and all contributions are valued. Learners actively participated.

During the past several years, many studies have been done focusing on topics of teaching and using cooperative learning. This research provides reader with the following themes related to cooperative learning: students' individual achievement and students' attitudes.

Bernero (2000) studied 25 second grade Black and Hispanic students working in cooperative groups. Bernero used surveys of teachers and students and found that students felt more comfortable working in a cooperative group.

Anderson (2005) studied 420 junior and senior college students in a comparison of cooperative learning and traditional lecture based biochemistry curriculum. Anderson found that students in the cooperative learning environment scored higher than their peers in standardized testing of the curriculum and were more positive about their learning experience.

Yamarik (2007) studied a total of 116 students enrolled in intermediate macroeconomics classes in spring of 2002 and the fall of 2004. Using multivariate regression analysis, he found that students taught by cooperative learning achieved greater academic performance in the form of higher exam scores.

Each of the research projects previously mentioned found that there was an increase in student achievement when using cooperative learning.

The use of public speaking in the form of oral presentations is common in higher education and is increasingly recognized as a means of assessment. Continued stress is being placed on both public and private educational institutions to incorporate more public speaking courses into their curriculum. This emphasizes the importance of making a sound argument at young age. Studies have been conducted that suggest that high-school students may not be receiving effective instruction in public speaking, which would benefit them academically, personally, and professionally. A report from the National Association of Colleges and Employers shows that employers want job candidates with strong communication skills. Similarly, educational success also requires the ability to articulate your thoughts clearly.

Public speaking differs from written communication in that the audience is present, gathered for some occasion. That occasion has norms and expectations that a speaker must recognize. Finally, a public speaker has some purpose, something they are trying to accomplish or set in motion. Good public speaking always accounts for these three components.

Given the setting and the benefits of cooperative learning found by research, the researcher created a study which aimed to use cooperative learning as an activity approach which might help students with social interactions and personality improvement focusing on presentation skills improvement in group activities. The purpose of this research is to use group learning to help improve students' presentation skills by developing a positive attitude towards Public Speaking. The researcher will be examining the research theme of student achievement and student attitude in seeking to answer the research questions:

- How will students' attitudes toward public speaking changed after cooperative learning ?
- What happens to students'individual achievement after working in cooperative learning groups?
- What happens to the teaching and classroom when the lecturers implement cooperative learning in Public Speaking Training?

Through this investigation, the researcher hopes to better understand if using Cooperative Learning approach helps students understand and enjoy Public Speaking Training more. The students will be given the opportunity to use each other as a resource to solve problems. The success of the group depends on the cooperation among the group members.

II. DETAILS EXPERIMENTAL

2.1. Materials and Procedures

The purpose of this research is to use group learning to help improve students' presentation skills by developing a positive attitude towards Public Speaking.The Pre-test Public Speaking Training Evaluation formwas conducted and usedon to

evaluate whether the attitude towards public speaking has improved. Data was collected intermittently throughout the eight week study. As more cooperative learning activities were introduced, the students had the opportunities to participate speaking in public training which engage in the problem solving practice, courage and self expression practice, team building behaviours. The results of this study are also beneficial for teachers in their classroom. It provides information on how to adapt presentations skills to better meet the requirements of the selected curriculum.

The Study was conducted in a pull-out public speaking training at SSRUIC in Bangkok. The university involved in this study has a total population of 14 students in Airline Business Program, International Business Program and Hospitality and Tourism Management Program. The participants in the study consisted of 1st and2nd year student. They were chosen for this study because they subscribed for the SSRUIC Youth Idol Public speaking Contest which the university's project was aimed to search for student representatives of the university identity. The participants are participated in the Public speaking Contest and attended Public Speaking Training fully. The duration of the study was for eight weeks during the month of April and May 2015.

During the study, the students worked in small groups or teams to help each other learn social skills and academic content. A lesson plan was created and continued the following elements; content area, academic objectives, language objectives, cooperative structures, time required, roles, material needed, and a descriptive of the teaching process. The cooperative group work activities each started with a trust building exercise before going to group activities such as problem-solving, cooperative games and discussion groups. A variety of cooperative learning structures were included in each activity.

2.2. Public Speaking Evaluation

This Public Speaking Training in this study was part of the activity of SSRUIC Public Speaking Contest. The academic and social goals of the cooperative learning structures gave students the opportunity to engage in the self expression behaviors being observed. The session usually ended when the groups reported back to the training group. Along with an oral, written, or whole group debriefing activity, in which the teacher and students could discuss the successes as well as the challenge an individual experienced. The debriefing activities were regarded as an important element in the whole process of cooperative group work as they gave students opportunity to reflect on their cooperative experiences.

A Personal Teacher Journal was used as another form of data collection . At the end of the study, the researcher would journal about specific group related activities. During the 8 week project period, the researcher noticed from the comments in the journal about the students' attitudes related to public speaking.

III. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The research for this paper took place in an International College of approximately400 total students located in the community near central Bangkok. The Public Speaking Training during this research project began by addressing and going through any students questions that arose from the previous days problems. Then, short introduction was given to the students about the theory. The majority of the training time was practice as used for cooperative learning. Students worked together on a specific task from the manual. In some circumstances, the students were given general instructions about a topic and allowed to discuss and formulate their own conclusions. These conclusions then were shared with the rest of the class until everyone agreed upon a final accepted conclusion. Generally, this type of activity worked well when all students experienced some type of success at the beginning of the activity.

During the research project, the researcher was trying to answer the research questions:

- How will students' attitudes toward public speaking changed after cooperative learning ?
- What happens to students 'individual achievement after working in cooperative learning groups?
- What happens to the teaching and classroom when cooperative learning was implemented in the Public Speaking Training?

How will students' attitudes toward public speaking changed after cooperative learning ?

Attitude can play a very important for the success of many students. If a student believes that he or she can be successful then, any times he or she will be successful. At the conclusion of this project, there was an increase in attitude toward public speaking after the group work training.

The students enjoyed working with one another on solving problems. The Public Speaking Evaluation formpre test and Public Speaking Evaluation form post test showed a slight increase in results as to changes in attitudes. When asked to rate the question number 5: "Working as a team would give you more understanding and a clearer impression" the responses were8.30% on totally agreed for the pre test and the responses were 75% on totally agreed for the post test. When asked to rate the question number1: "Having knowledge and understanding about Public Speaking from group research" the responses were 83.30% on disagree for the pre test

and the responses were 66.70% on totally agreed for the post test.

During the interviews, ten of the fourteen students interviewed said that they noticed changes in other students during public speaking group practice. The students all agreed that they understood the knowledge and technique better and do not get as nervous as before about presenting their ideas in front of the class. Twelve out of the fourteen students interviewed said that they felt that working in team has helped them to understand each person's responsibility. Results from the students' Public Speaking Evaluation form asking about working as a team would gave students more understanding and a clearer impression, The pre test showed that only 33 % of the students agreed compared to the post test of 75% of the student totally agreed. The students felt that working in group helps them to understand the theory and context better. The attitudes of the students has increased during the activity because every student was able to achieve some success at the beginning of the activity.

What happens to students 'individual achievement after working in cooperative learning groups?

When looking at the fourteen different individual assessment scores from the Public speaking Contest activity, there were a change in the performance of the student as a group. The students themselves felt a little more confident through this investigation. At conclusion of this project, the result showed that students' individual achievement has higher scores in cooperative learning groups. For the score on a scale of 5 to 1 of Public Speaking Rubic, during the Public Speaking Contest pre screen (before the training), the mean baseline score for the 14 students was 45%. For the score on a scale of 5 to 1 of Public Speaking Rubic, during the Public Speaking Contest finals (after the training) , the mean score was at 72% .

What happens to the teaching and classroom when cooperative learning was implemented in Public speaking Training?

In this project progressed, The researcher noticed that cooperative learning allow the lecturer to see the development of the students and allow the students to work with their challenges. Before the training, the researcher always has been too quick to advise the solutions when a student is struggling rather than allow them to process and think for possible solutions. The researcher also noticed that Focus game and fun activities in the training keep the attention span and participation involvement longer. As time passed, the students began to realize that each member does have different skill which is special in an individual that could developed and help the group to perform better.

As documented in the Personal Teacher Journal, a specific example of the learning to speak in public was a group activity involving in self introduction. As the students participated and discussed about body language, this showed that the activity helped many of the students understand the concept much better than the teacher just telling them how it works.

Another example of letting the students discover their strengths or special skills as a group involved express ideas in front of the class practice activities. The individual groups began to work together to create lists of the different skills. The particular group noticed their strengths and were able to explain this to the rest of the class. This and other instances have helped the researcher as a teacher to learn the group work can be a beneficial way for students to learn from one another.

CONCLUSIONS

The findings of this research showing an improvement in students' attitudes toward public speaking is very useful not only in an academic achievements but it also benefits the personal achievements in many areas of life. The studies also found an increase in students' achievement scores after working in cooperative learning groups. The successful learning outcomes for students can encourage the development of positive attitudes toward learning in any subjects or any other trainings. The experience in the cooperative learning in the training convinced the researcher that cooperative learning can have a positive effect on students achievement and attitudes toward public speaking. The research findings on the increase on the group performance showed that cooperative learning can help students to encourage students to be more involved with one another. As the researcher experienced the higher scores of the group performance in the final public speaking contest, There are many ways that helping one another in cooperative learning groups have made the group become more productive. It is important that the participation of the group members participated.

After completion of this research, the researcher would like to continue to develop the idea of cooperative learning in the other subjects or other trainings. The study has convinced that there are many benefits that can be gained when students work together. The exchange of different ideas and strategies can be beneficial to all students. This exchange of different strategies allows the students to overcome the fear which in this study was the focus to overcome the fear of public speaking. With the experiences to overcome the fear can build courage, trust and strength in other areas of life. For the future study, this might be the useful tools to support the further studies about personality improvement or team building behavior.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Cooperative learning and Public Speaking Training were part of Knowledge Management 2014-2015. Acknowledgement to Knowledge Management or KM team called “Crystal light” which the ultimate goal was to accomplish SSRU Strategic planning no. 3 that is to enhance the standard of learning and teaching process. Therefore, Cooperative learning was the key success factors to enhance the standard of learning and teaching process.In addition,this research presents the outcome of the effective 7 procedures of Knowledge Management which the Crystal light team has won the “Good Practice Award 2015”. The activities of the SSRUIC Youth Idol Public Speaking Contest were the initiated project to improve the students’ presentation skills by conducting the Public Speaking Training. The students who won the Public Speaking Contest were titled “SSRUIC Youth Idol” which their roles and responsibilities were to help the society or do community service assigned by the university. “SSRUIC Youth Idol” are to enhance the standard of Youth behavior and to set a good example of Youth. The splendid outcome was that they were not only representing the university (SSRU) but they were also representing youth throughout the regions.

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