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## **1. TITLE OF INNOVATION**

**BUDDY SYSTEM** (English Language)  
(*Penyertaan Kategori Pelajar Guru*)

## **2. OBJECTIVES**

- a. To create a system where teaching and learning process can be more effective for both teacher and pupils.
- b. To develop leadership skills among the students in a classroom.
- c. To improve classroom management.

## **3. BEFORE THE IMPLEMENTATION**

In order to create a 21<sup>st</sup> century learning in a classroom, it is undoubtedly that the use of teaching aids in the classroom has been highlighted and teachers are encouraged to use different interesting teaching aids to gain the students' interest and to improve the teaching and learning session better.

I am of the opinion that teaching aids are not the only method or technique to motivate the students to learn and I am more inclined to introduce a systematic system in my English lesson. Speaking of the 21<sup>st</sup> century learning again, the focus is also stressed on cooperative learning. Cooperative learning is the instructional use of small groups so that students work together to maximize their own and each others learning (Johnson and Johnson, 1989). Cooperative learning may work well when the members in a group are willing to participate and give their full cooperation. In many situations, it does not work well and it will always end up with only one or two persons who complete the task, especially if it is a group that consists of mixed ability students.

One of the ways to solve this problem is perhaps to assign one role for one member so that no one is left behind. But, in reality it becomes a burden to the teacher to give instructions and to monitor either all of the members give their full commitment or not. Apart from that, it is also impossible to assign different roles for each group task done in the classroom.

#### **4. ISSUES CONCERNED**

Based on my teaching experiences in the schools that I went for my teaching practices, it is difficult to create a systematic independent learning which inclines towards student-centered learning. There are always a few problems that may arise from the groups in a classroom, especially in a classroom of mixed-ability students.

As an example, if the group consists of all good learners, they may argue to get the role of a leader and be in charge of giving the answers. An argument will occur when they have different opinions.

Apart from that, another problem can also occur if the group consists of all weak students. Based on my observation, when none of them knows the answer, they will end up of writing down any answers. This will indirectly affect the learning outcomes and the effectiveness of a group system created by the teacher. At the same time, this group of weak students may need more guidance. What would happen if the class has few groups of weak students? Undoubtedly, teacher will run here and there to guide them during the activity.

As I have explained above, sometimes, if one group consists of good and weak students, the one who completes the task will always be the good students. In this matter, the weak students gain nothing and do not practice anything that has been learnt in the lesson.

#### **5. IMPLEMENTATION OF INNOVATION**

##### **5.1 Relationship with teaching and learning**

Considering all the factors above, I tried to find an effective method on how to create a more independent learning and tried to maximize the student-centered learning where teacher acts as the facilitator; to monitor the group progress and provide little guidance. As students work together in pairs or groups, they share information and come to each others aid (Brown, 2007). Therefore, I believe that 'Buddy system' can help to create a more effective learning.

This system is still not widely known and used in the classroom and there are not many researches have been done about this system compared to cooperative learning.

## 5.2 Description of innovation

In this innovation, there are few steps that teachers should take into account before implementing it in the classroom. Teachers should bear in mind that this system requires the teacher to pick few students to become the 'Young Teachers' in the classroom.

1. It is essential to ensure that the classroom is already divided into groups.
2. Depending on the number of groups in the classroom, teacher pick few pupils to become the representatives. I name them as the 'Young teachers.' For example, if the class has six groups, teacher should pick six students to become 'Young teachers.'
3. Make sure to pick only the good students and students who are always active in the classroom participation.
4. If the teacher is to conduct a lesson where it involves group work, call the 'Young Teachers' beforehand and tell them what they should do.
5. It is also important to give them a pre-lesson so that they get the gist of the lesson and know what to expect from the activity conducted.
6. During the group work, one group will have one 'Young Teacher.'

I have conducted few lessons where this 'Buddy System' is implemented in my English lessons. The description of one of the lessons conducted using this system is as follows:

Date	25 <sup>th</sup> February 2016
Class	Year 5
Num. of pupils	30 students
Level of proficiency	Mixed-ability
Language focus	Reflexive pronoun
Main skill	Grammar
Integrated skill	Speaking skill
Topic	Unit3 : Superheroes
Content standard	5.1 By the end of the 6-year primary schooling, pupils will be able to use different word classes

	correctly and appropriately.
Learning standard	5.1.2 Able to use pronouns correctly and appropriately a) reflexive
Lesson objectives	By the end of the lesson, pupils will be able to : a) Fill in the blanks with correct reflexive pronouns. (average learners) b) Fill in the blanks with correct reflexive pronouns with guidance. (weak learners)
Activities	1. Jazz chant 2. Board game

The description of the stage where I implemented this system is explained in the table below:

Stage	Content	Teaching and learning activities	Rationale
Practice 1 (15 minutes)	-as a follow-up activity	<b>'Reflexive pronoun' board game</b> Each group receives one dice and one board game. On the board game, there are questions on reflexive pronouns. Each member prepares their own token to be moved on the board. After group members land their token on any squares, they have to pick the card and answer the question stated. The game ends until one person arrives at 'Finish.' <b>'Young teacher'</b> will become the one who checks their answer and to give instructions.	- To reinforce learning - To inculcate the element of fun in learning English - To stimulate thinking

### 5.5 After the implementation

Through the observations done in the classroom and the feedback received from the pupils, I found that pupils are motivated to participate in group activity. After using the 'Buddy System,' I asked their feedback on the system implemented. The purpose of this feedback is to gain the data needed regarding their experiences of using this system in teaching and learning session. From this table, it shows that pupils are interested

to participate in the group task as there are less anxiety due to little involvement of the teacher. Therefore, it shows that this system brings a positive result. The transcription of the interview is as follows:

Questions	Responses
Do you like to the group activity conducted in the classroom?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Yes.</li><li>- Yes.</li><li>- I like.</li><li>- <b>Good.</b></li><li>- <b>Yes. I like.</b></li><li>- <b>Yes.</b></li></ul>
Which one do you like? Do you want the teacher to check your answer or do you want your friend to check?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- My friend.</li><li>- <b>I want 'Danial' to check.</b></li><li>- <b>My friend.</b></li><li>- Not the teacher.</li><li>- My friend.</li><li>- My friend.</li></ul>
Is there any argument in the group during the activity?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- No.</li><li>- <b>No.</b></li><li>- No.</li><li>- No.</li><li>- No.</li><li>- No.</li></ul>

Apart from that, I did record the responses gained from the system used in my lesson reflection. From the reflection, it shows that pupils prefer the group activity using 'Buddy System' where one 'Young Teacher' is appointed in one group. The students feel less anxious when the one who is in charge of checking their answers is their classmate instead of the teacher.



Picture 1: 'Young Teacher' was explaining the correct answer to the question given.



Picture 2: Pupils played in groups.

### **5.3 Sharing of innovation**

After I received a good feedback regarding this system, I have already shared this innovation with my practicum partner as well as my mentor for the third practicum.

Besides that, I have created one Facebook page named 'Cool English Lessons' in which I always use to post anything related to teaching English. As the group already consists of more than 1000 members, I thought that would be a good platform for me to spread and share the 'Buddy System.' I also hope that this system can be used more widely and not only to teach English.

## **6. BENEFITS OF THE INNOVATION**

The benefits of 'Buddy System' are strongly supported for students who speak English as second language and students with disabilities (The Cochlear Implant School Toolkit, n.d). The benefits of 'Buddy System' will be based on the objectives that I have specifically set before I implemented this system.

This system has helped to create a more effective teaching and learning session for both the teacher and students. Learning can be more effective when the tension in the class atmosphere is reduced. As the students feel closer towards their friends, it makes them feel less anxious when the one who is in charge of the group is their own classmate instead of the teacher. According to Mitchell Montessori School (2015), the younger peer can connect with her older partner on a deeper level because there is an added level of relateability (with age range as well as overall life experience). On that note, it also works well in a classroom of mixed ability students as there are different range of understanding and level of proficiency. This system will also intrinsically motivate them to participate.

Furthermore, this system helps to develop leadership skills among students. It is no doubt that the pupils who are selected as 'Young Teacher' will become more confident in themselves. It is because they have gained the trust from the teacher to become the one who leads the group.

On that note, as the teacher has the 'little helpers' in the class, it is easier to control the classroom. According to Mitchell Montessori School (2015), the 'Buddy System' has helped tremendously with classroom management all over the years, especially during transitions between

activities. Hence, it improves classroom management and at the same time, the teacher does not have to walk from one group to another group to guide them from time to time.

## 7.0 SUGGESTION FOR IMPROVEMENT

In the world of teaching profession, there is no end for a room of improvement. On that note, I think if the teachers find that this system only helps the good students to develop their leadership skill, I would like to suggest that teachers can also do a rotation where different leaders will be assigned after a certain period of time. As an instance, teacher may pick the average pupils too to become 'Young Teachers' when the level of the activity conducted is not too difficult. Therefore, this system will also allow more pupils to become 'Young Teachers' who are able to help their peers in a lesson.

## References

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