

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

3.0 Introduction

This chapter presents the description of the research methodology used in the study. It will describe the location of study, sample, research method and instruments used to analyse data.

3.1 Location Of Study

The study was carried out in Rima Secretarial Finishing College Kuala Lumpur. The Institution is located in the Golden Triangle area in the state of Wilayah Persekutuan. It is registered under the Jabatan Pendidikan Swasta, Kuala Lumpur. The Institution has an enrolment of 831 students. The students are streamed into two fields of study – Secretarial and Management Courses.

The Secretarial studies programme consists of Certificate and Diploma Courses. The Certificate Course is for a duration of nine months and the Diploma course is for a duration of eighteen months.

The study will focus on the Diploma course. There are four semesters and during each semester, students do five subjects. The subjects are Procedures of Meeting, Introduction to Management, Information Technology, Language II and

Interviewing Skills. The study will focus on one subject in the Fourth Semester.

The subject is Interviewing Skills.

The classes are held in the classroom on the Third Floor of the College Building. The classroom chairs and tables will be arranged in groups around the room as shown in Figure 3.1.

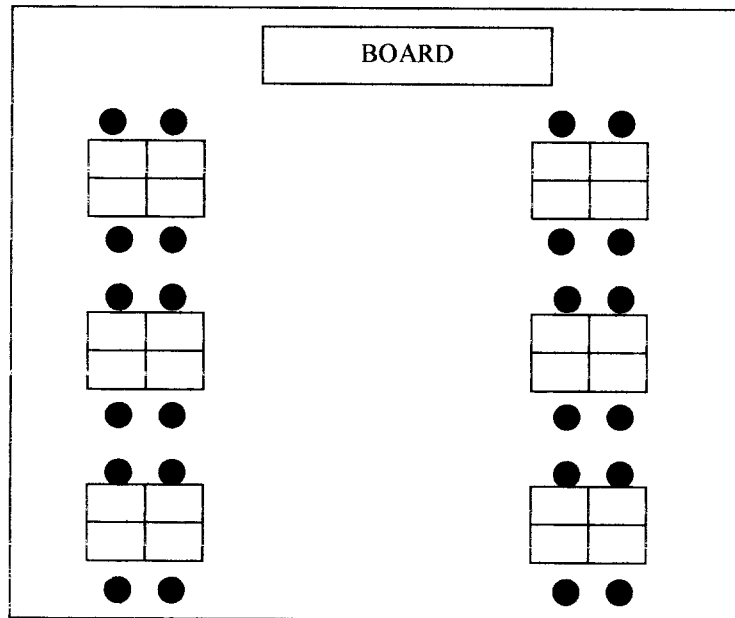


Figure 3.1 : Cosy learning environment

This will facilitate a cosy environment and encourage better interaction and discussion in comparison to the normal classroom environment which is a one way process of interaction as shown in Figure 3.2.

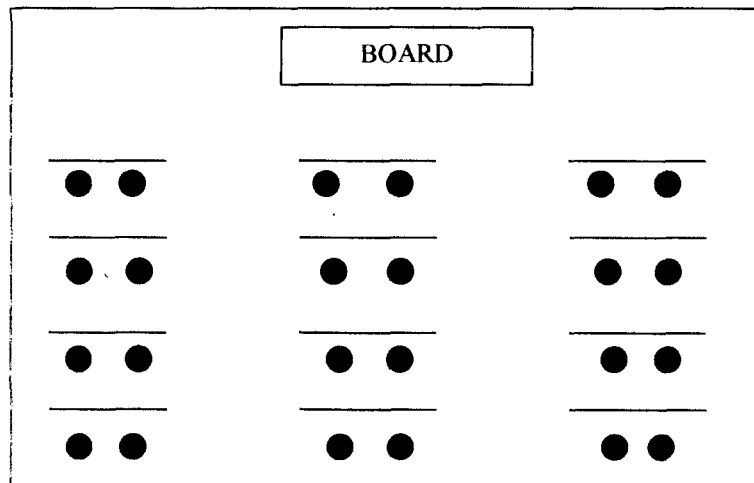


Figure 3.2: Traditional classroom setting

3.2 The Sample

The sample consists of female students due to the nature of the course. Twenty four students were selected for the study, ranging from 19 years to 28 years of age, comprising Malaysian and International students.

The ratio of Malaysian students to International students is 2 : 1. There are fifteen Malaysian students and nine International students. The Malaysian students comprise five Chinese, five Indians and five Malays. The International students include four from China, one from Indonesia, one from the Philippines, one from Korea, one from Brunei and one from Thailand.

The academic background of the respondents and their understanding of the language varies. The Malaysian students have completed Sijil Pelajaran

Malaysia. Ten students have Credit in English Language and five students have a Pass in English Language. The International students have completed an equivalent of High School education in their own respective countries. Three students have Credit in English and six students have a Pass in English. The International students embarked on a six - month English Language Course at the Language Centre prior to joining the Secretarial Diploma Course. There is currently no international benchmark of a TOEFL or IELTS requirement set by the College for admission of international students into the Course.

These students have varying competencies in English Language and have to pursue and complete the Diploma Course within the stipulated time. This affects their academic performance.

3.3 Procedure

The purpose of the study is to evaluate how co-operative learning can improve academic performance in the subject of Interviewing Skills.

Two topics from the Interviewing Skills syllabus were chosen for this study. The topics were taught using Student Teams-Achievement Divisions (STAD) method. This method consist of five components. They are class presentations, teams, quizzes, individual improvement score and team recognition. The study period is for a duration of three weeks. Each week there are four one

hour slots. In total four hours of class time per week is scheduled. For details on the schedule of activities during the study period (refer to Appendix 1).

The following steps will be followed for the STAD method. Class Material will be presented by the lecturer. The lesson materials were prepared adapted from textbooks and delivered by lecture mode of instruction with audio visual presentations.

Students will be assigned to teams. All students will be ranked from highest to lowest. This will be done based on the past performance (third semester scores) of the students. The students will be categorized into high performing students, average performing students and low achievers (see Appendix 2).

Having categorized, there are five high performers, twelve average performers and six low achievers. From this category the students were ranked by numbers 1 to 24 (see Appendix 3).

The class will then be divided into teams. Since there are twenty four students, six teams will be formed. Each team will have four members. The team will consist of a high achiever, two average performers and a low achiever for five teams and one team will consist of three average performers and a low achiever.

Care was taken to ensure that there was a balance between performance level, different ethnic groups and at least one foreign student in each team (see Appendices 4, 5 and 6). The teams will be mixed for each lesson. Names of the students on each team will be filled up on the team summary sheet (Appendix 7) after each quiz.

The base scores of each student will be determined. Base scores represent students' average scores on past quizzes or test. For this study, the base score was calculated by taking the students previous semester marks in five subjects.

Students will be given individual quizzes after each period of team practice. Team Rules will be distributed to all students at the beginning of the study (see Appendix 8).

After each quiz, individual improvement scores are calculated. Students earn points for their teams based on the degree to which their quiz scores exceed their base scores. Improvement points guide is shown in Table 3.1.

Table 3.1 : Improvement Points

Quiz Score	Improve Points
10 Points and more below base score	5
10 Points and less below base score	10
10 Points above base score	20
10 Points and more above base score	30
Perfect Paper	30

Team scores are calculated by each member's improvement points being recorded on the team summary sheet. The average is calculated. Therefore the team score depends on the improvement scores rather than on the raw quiz scores. Quiz scores will be recorded on a Quiz Score Sheet (see Appendix 9).

Team accomplishment is recognized by the average team score. Two levels of award is proposed for this study. They are Super Team and Great Team Award. The criterion set for the awards is shown in Table 3.2.

Table 3.2 : Award Criterion

Team Average	Award
30	SUPER TEAM
20	GREAT TEAM

Certificates will be presented to team members who achieve Super Team and Great Team Status. Sample of certificates appear in Appendices 10 and 11.

The co-operative group students will also attend four other subjects during this semester. The subjects are Procedures of Meeting, Introduction to Management, Information Technology and Language II. The class lessons for these four subjects will be taught using the traditional method and students will work individually.

At the end of the study period, the students will sit for an examination in all five subjects. The scores from this examination will be analysed.

3.4 Instruments

For this study, one set of questionnaire will be used. The questionnaire is used to measure attitude towards the effectiveness of instruction and working as a team (refer to Appendix 12). The questionnaire was pilot tested to a small sample of the targeted population. Based on the feedback received, some of the questions were amended.

A face to face interview will be conducted to further ascertain the respondent's feelings and views (refer to Appendix 13 for the list of questions to be asked).

There will be a Pretest and Post Test. For the Pretest, the last semester's academic performance of the respondent will be counted. After the course of study, a Post Test will be conducted in all five subjects. The results from these five subjects will be analysed using descriptive statistics to determine the academic performance of the respondent.

3.5 Data Analysis

Based on the interview, questionnaire and test, data were analysed and test scores presented in percentages.