

# IMPLEMENTING COOPERATIVE GAME-BASED LEARNING TO ENHANCE STUDENTS' MOTIVATION IN ENGLISH LEARNING

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**Abstract:** This classroom action research explores the effectiveness of integrating *game-based cooperative learning* to enhance student motivation in English language learning at SMP Negeri 4 Surabaya, Class VII-F. Sparked by declining engagement due to monotonous teaching methods, the study adopts Kurt Lewin's action research model, implemented in one cycle. Thirty-three students participated, with data gathered through observation sheets and Likert-scale questionnaires, targeting six motivational indicators: interest, active participation, task consistency, self-confidence, questioning initiative, and teamwork. The findings reveal a significant improvement across all indicators following the implementation of educational games such as *Vocabulary Match!*, *Reading Race*, and *Descripto Dash!*. Students became more enthusiastic, cooperative, and confident—particularly when given positive reinforcement and grouped heterogeneously. Questionnaire results reinforced these observations, with students responding positively to the playful yet purposeful learning design. The study concludes that *game-based cooperative learning* offers a powerful, student-centered strategy to transform classroom dynamics and spark motivation in learning English, especially for descriptive text comprehension.

**Keyword:** Learning motivation; game-based learning; cooperative learning; English for Junior High School.

**Abstrak:** Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk meningkatkan motivasi belajar peserta didik melalui penerapan model *cooperative learning* berbasis *game-based learning* pada mata pelajaran Bahasa Inggris di kelas VII-F SMP Negeri 4 Surabaya. Latar belakang penelitian ini adalah rendahnya motivasi dan partisipasi peserta didik akibat metode pembelajaran yang monoton. Penelitian dilakukan dalam satu siklus dengan tahapan perencanaan, pelaksanaan, observasi, dan refleksi menggunakan model PTK Kurt Lewin. Subjek penelitian terdiri dari 33 peserta didik. Instrumen yang digunakan meliputi angket motivasi belajar dan lembar observasi terhadap enam aspek motivasi: ketertarikan, keterlibatan aktif, konsistensi tugas, kepercayaan diri, inisiatif bertanya, dan kerja sama. Hasil observasi menunjukkan adanya peningkatan signifikan dalam semua aspek motivasi belajar dari pertemuan pertama ke pertemuan kedua, terutama setelah penerapan permainan *Descripto Dash!*. Hasil angket juga menunjukkan bahwa mayoritas peserta didik memberikan respon positif terhadap metode pembelajaran yang digunakan. Dengan demikian, pendekatan *game-based cooperative learning* efektif dalam menciptakan pembelajaran yang menyenangkan, partisipatif, dan bermakna.

**Katakunci:** motivasi belajar; *game-based learning*; *cooperative learning*; Bahasa Inggris SMP

## INTRODUCTION

Education is a crucial key that drives the development of human civilization and culture. Education exists to help individuals develop their potential into morally upright, intelligent, creative, healthy, and communicative human beings who are able to collaborate with others. In addition, education fosters individuals' ability to appreciate and respect all forms of diversity, leading to more open-minded and democratic attitudes. Thus, the more people are well-educated, the more peace is ensured within society, and

the more a culture of tolerance is nurtured, ultimately forming the integration of National Culture (Widana et al., 2019).

In this modern era, education demands a learning approach that not only focuses on cognitive achievement but also builds students' motivation and active engagement. Many students experience a decline in learning motivation due to monotonous and unengaging teaching methods. This condition affects students' learning outcomes and participation in classroom activities.

This issue is also evident in Class VIIF of SMP Negeri 4 Surabaya, where students appear to lack enthusiasm and motivation in learning English. Their passive behavior during lessons, minimal participation in discussions, and low task completion rates indicate a need for a more engaging and student-centered learning approach. Based on these observations, the research problem can be formulated as follows: *"How can the implementation of a cooperative game-based learning model improve the motivation and learning outcomes of students in Class VIIF in learning English?"*

One solution to address this issue is by integrating a cooperative learning model based on games, or Game-Based Learning. This approach combines group collaboration with educational game elements to create a learning environment that is enjoyable, challenging, and interactive. Through learning-by-playing activities, students are not only required to complete academic tasks, but also trained to collaborate, think critically, and boost their learning enthusiasm. Game-based learning has been shown to enhance cognitive, emotional, and social engagement in meaningful learning contexts (Gee, 2003). When combined with cooperative learning, this approach also strengthens students' interpersonal skills and promotes mutual academic support, leading to improved learning outcomes and increased motivation (Slavin, 2010).

The use of a cooperative game-based learning model is believed to encourage students to be more active and motivated. Therefore, this study was conducted to examine the extent to which the implementation of this learning model can improve students' motivation and learning outcomes, particularly in the context of teaching Class VIIF at SMP Negeri 4 Surabaya.

## **METHOD**

This study employed a Classroom Action Research (CAR) design using the Kurt Lewin model, which consists of four systematic stages: planning, acting (implementation), observing, and reflecting. The research was carried out in a single cycle.

The subjects of the study were 33 students of Class VII-F at SMP Negeri 4 Surabaya, during the even semester of the 2024/2025 academic year. The school is a public junior high school located in Surabaya, Indonesia, with students from diverse academic backgrounds. The preliminary observation showed that students had low motivation in learning English, particularly when learning descriptive texts, as indicated by their passive behavior and low task completion.

During the **planning stage**, the researcher identified student learning styles (dominantly visual and kinesthetic) and designed lesson plans incorporating cooperative and game-based learning strategies. The learning activities included vocabulary and reading comprehension games tailored to students' needs and the target topic: *Descriptive Text – My Study Habits*.

In the **implementation stage**, the researcher conducted two meetings using interactive games: *Vocabulary Match!*, *Reading Race*, and *Descripto Dash!*. In this stage, the researcher also facilitated group collaboration and used positive reinforcement strategies (e.g., appreciation words) to enhance motivation.

In the **observing stage**, the researcher used structured observation sheets to assess student behavior and motivation across six indicators: interest in the material, active participation, consistency in completing tasks, self-confidence, initiative in asking questions, and teamwork. Observations were conducted for each group during each session.

In the **reflecting stage**, the researcher analyzed the observation and questionnaire results to evaluate the effectiveness of the learning approach and identify areas for improvement. Reflection focused on whether the target motivation indicators showed improvement and whether the games supported students' engagement and understanding of the material.

The success criteria in this research were defined as follows:

1. At least 75% of students demonstrate improvement in motivation indicators (rated "Good" or "Very Good" on observation sheets).
2. Positive student response toward game-based learning as measured by the Likert-scale questionnaire.

Data collection techniques included direct observation and questionnaire surveys. The instruments used were:

- A motivation questionnaire with 15 items based on a 4-point Likert scale.
- Observation sheets for group behavior based on six predefined motivation indicators.

Data analysis was conducted using descriptive quantitative methods. Observation results were tabulated and averaged across groups and indicators. Questionnaire responses were analyzed using mean scores to interpret the overall student motivation level across each aspect.

## **RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

The learning process was designed by integrating interactive games tailored to students' dominant learning styles, which were predominantly visual and kinesthetic. Three types of games were used as formative assessment tools: *Vocabulary Match!* (matching vocabulary to definitions), *Reading Race* (identifying the structure and meaning of descriptive texts), and *Descripto Dash!* (reconstructing text structure using sentence fragments). Since the learning objective of identifying descriptive text structure was not fully achieved in the first meeting, the second meeting focused on reinforcement using the *Descripto Dash!* game.

### **First Meeting: Setting and Observations**

In the first meeting, cooperative learning was applied using the *game-based learning* model through *Vocabulary Match!* and *Reading Race*. The learning objective was for students to identify important information in descriptive texts and recognize their structure, using the theme "My Study Habits". Students were divided into eight groups (A to H), each consisting of 3–4 members. Group selection was self-determined.

Student engagement was observed using six indicators: interest, active participation, consistency in completing tasks, self-confidence, initiative in asking questions, and collaboration. A 4-point Likert scale (1 = Very Low, 2 = Low, 3 = Good, 4 = Very Good) was used.

### **Observation Results – First Meeting**

- **Interest:** Most groups showed strong enthusiasm. Groups A, B, and E scored 4 (Very Good), while Groups C, F, G, and H scored 3 (Good). Group D showed low interest (score 2).
- **Active Participation:** Six groups scored between 3–4. Two groups scored low due to lack of cooperation.
- **Consistency:** Seven groups consistently completed tasks (score 4); one group did not (score 2).
- **Self-Confidence:** Most students showed confidence; one group relied on others' answers.
- **Initiative in Asking Questions:** All groups showed high initiative (score 4).
- **Collaboration:** Most groups showed effective teamwork; one group lacked collective effort.

Table 1. Average Score per Aspect of first meeting

Aspect	Average	Interpretation
Interest	3	Good
Active Participation	3.37	Very Good
Task Consistency	3.75	Very Good
Self-Confidence	3.25	Good
Questioning Initiative	3.75	Very Good
Collaboration	3.12	Good

#### **Interpretation Scale:**

3.26 – 4.00	= Very Good
2.51 – 3.25	= Good
1.76 – 2.50	= Low
1.00 – 1.75	= Very Low

Based on these findings, overall student engagement was high. Most students showed enthusiasm and discipline in task completion, with collaborative behavior evident in most groups. Only one group remained disengaged and non-collaborative.

### **Second Meeting: Setting and Observations**

The second meeting applied *game-based cooperative learning* through *Descripto Dash!*, focusing on identifying the structure of descriptive texts. Students were assigned to heterogeneous groups of 3–4 students to enable scaffolding for lower-performing learners. Students reconstructed sentence fragments into well-structured texts and completed five comprehension questions. Positive reinforcement was also given.

Table 2. Average Score per Aspect of Second meeting

Aspect	Average	Interpretation
Interest	4	Very Good
Active Participation	3.62	Very Good
Task Consistency	4	Very Good
Self-Confidence	4	Very Good
Questioning Initiative	4	Very Good
Collaboration	3.62	Very Good
<b>Interpretation Scale:</b>		
3.26 – 4.00	= Very Good	
2.51 – 3.25	= Good	
1.76 – 2.50	= Low	
1,00 – 1,75	= Very Low	

There was a significant increase in all motivation indicators. Students were more confident, consistent, and collaborative, especially in reconstructing texts and solving questions.

### **Likert-Scale Questionnaire Results**

The motivation questionnaire contained 16 items based on six indicators: interest (items 1–3), active participation (4–6), consistency (7–9), self-confidence (10–12), initiative (13–14), and collaboration (15), with item 16 measuring attitude toward game-based learning. The results from 33 students are summarized below:

Table 3. Average Score per Aspect of student Likert-scale Questionnaire

Aspect	Average	Interpretation
Interest	2.91	Good
Active Participation	2.88	Good
Task Consistency	3.15	Good
Self-Confidence	2.66	Good
Questioning Initiative	2.73	Good
Collaboration	3.48	Very Good
<b>Interpretation Scale:</b>		
3.26 – 4.00	= Very Good	
2.51 – 3.25	= Good	
1.76 – 2.50	= Low	
1,00 – 1,75	= Very Low	

The results indicate that students generally responded positively to *game-based cooperative learning*, especially in collaboration and consistency. However, self-confidence remained slightly lower, suggesting a need for further targeted strategies.

### **Discussion**

The findings show that *game-based cooperative learning* has a positive impact on student motivation in learning English descriptive texts. This is consistent with Slavin (2009), who argued that cooperative learning improves academic performance and engagement through peer collaboration.

In the first meeting, although one group remained unmotivated, most students actively participated and showed improved behavior. By the second meeting, all indicators improved, particularly through structured grouping and teacher reinforcement. These findings align with Gee (2003), who emphasized that educational games enhance cognitive and social engagement, and with Slavin (2010), who highlighted the effectiveness of structured collaboration.

Questionnaire data also supports observational findings, showing positive attitudes towards collaborative games. However, the relatively lower score in self-confidence indicates the need for continuous scaffolding, individualized support, and role rotation to empower quieter students.

Overall, the integration of *game-based cooperative learning* successfully enhanced cognitive, affective, and social dimensions of learning. These outcomes support the design of learner-centered classrooms and the application of meaningful, play-based instruction in secondary English education.

## CONCLUSION

The implementation of the cooperative learning model based on game-based learning in the English classroom of Grade VII-F at SMP Negeri 4 Surabaya has proven effective in enhancing students' learning motivation. Through games such as *Vocabulary Match!*, *Reading Race: Descriptive Text*, and *Descripto Dash!*, students demonstrated significant improvement in six aspects of learning motivation: interest in the material, active participation, consistency in completing tasks, self-confidence, initiative to ask questions, and collaboration.

Interactive and enjoyable learning activities fostered enthusiasm for learning, active engagement, and strengthened group collaboration. Observations and questionnaires indicated that most students were enthusiastic and consistent in completing tasks, actively engaged in discussions, confident in expressing their opinions, and showed a high level of initiative in asking questions. Although the aspect of self-confidence still needs to be improved for some students, this approach generally succeeded in creating a positive, participatory, and meaningful learning environment.

In light of these positive outcomes, it is recommended that English teachers and other educators consider the ongoing and contextual use of the game-based cooperative learning approach, adapted to students' characteristics and learning objectives. This approach not only enhances learning outcomes but also supports the social-emotional development of students through collaborative and enjoyable learning experiences.

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