HOW TO MAKE LESSONS MORE INTERACTIVE AND FUN FOR STUDENTS

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Abstract. The present study explores ways to make lessons more interactive in the classroom. The main aim of the study is to understand how interactive activities influence students' participation, motivation, and learning outcomes. The participants were 17 beginner level students. Different interactive techniques such as group discussions, pair work, games and question-answer activities were used during lessons for a month twice a week. Students' participaton and engagement were observed and recorded throughout the lessons. The results showed that interactive activities increased students' motivation and helped them understand the material more effectively. Moreover, students felt more confident expressing their ideas and communicating with their classmates. The findings suggest that using interactive teaching methods can create a more engaging and effective learning environment for both students and teachers.

Key words: Interactive lessons, student participation, classroom interaction, active learning, teaching, teaching methods

Introduction.

In today's fast paced world, lessons still follow the traditional way. Just a teacher speaks and students only sit, take notes and listen to the teacher. In order to make lessons more interactive, the teacher should shift the classroom atmosphere from teacher-centered to student-centered. By both interactive and fun lessons, the lessons alter from passive lectures to active, student-centered learning. For example, making a great use of S group collaborations, hands-on tasks and digital tools would create really learning atmosphere. As Ignacio Estrada said that if students could not learn the way we teach, maybe we should teach them the way they learn. Some need visuals, some need practice, some need movement and more support. Accordingly, there were many scholars who did research on this concept.

Direct instruction teaches challenging academic content to a range of diverse learners. (Cristen R.Rolf, Timothy A Slocum 2021). In order to do so, it includes a complex system for organizing and directing teacher-student interactions to maximize learning. This system includes: instructional formats that specify the interactions between teacher and student, flexible skill-based groupings, active student responding, and responsive interactions between students and teachers.

Several studies also emphasize the experiential learning , developed by David Kolb (1984–present), in this learning process, students learn most effectively through a continuous cycle of experience. According to this theory, learning begins with a concrete experience, followed by reflective observation, where learners think about what happened. They then move to abstract conceptualization, forming ideas or concepts based on their reflections, and finally

engage in active experimentation, applying what they have learned to new situations. This cycle shows that learning is an active, dynamic process.

More research has focused on constructivism, developed primarily through the work of Jean Piaget and Jerome Bruner (1960s–present), is based on the idea that learners actively construct knowledge through exploration, questioning, and problem-solving. Rather than receiving information passively, students build understanding by connecting new ideas to their existing knowledge structures, a process known as schema building. A teacher wants to teach the concept of photosynthesis. Instead of explaining everything directly, the teacher gives students different plants, light sources, and simple observation sheets. Students work in small groups to place one plant in sunlight and another in a shaded area. Over several days, they observe the differences, record changes, and discuss possible reasons. As they explore, they begin forming their own ideas—schemas—about how plants use light to grow.After observation, the teacher facilitates a discussion, asking guiding questions such as:"Why do you think the plant in sunlight grew more?", "What might plants need to make their own food?" Students use their findings to build their own explanation of photosynthesis, and only after that does the teacher provide the formal scientific explanation.

Overall, Interactive learning is strongly supported by several major educational theories that explain why students learn more effectively when they participate actively. However, the practical application of these theories requires careful planning, appropriate materials, and teacher readiness, as interactive methods demand more preparation and classroom management skills.

Research Questions

1.How does shifting from a teacher-centered to a student-centered classroom influence learners' engagement and active participation during lessons?

2. To what extent do interactive strategies—such as group collaboration, hands-on activities, and digital tools—enhance students' learning outcomes in comparison with traditional direct instruction?

3. How do experiential and constructivist learning approaches (e.g., Kolb's learning cycle and schema-building activities) affect students' ability to understand and apply new concepts in real classroom settings?

Literature Review

Interactive teaching has become a key focus in modern pedagogy, as traditional teacher-centered instruction often limits students' engagement and active participation. According to Richards and Rodgers (2014), interactive learning shifts classroom dynamics toward student-centered environments where learners are encouraged to collaborate, ask questions, and construct knowledge through meaningful communication. This approach significantly enhances both motivation and learning outcomes.

Research on classroom interaction shows that interactivity improves learners' cognitive involvement. Walsh (2011) argues that when teachers create opportunities for negotiation of meaning—through questioning, feedback, and discussion—students become more active contributors to the learning process. However, despite its benefits, many classrooms still rely heavily on lecture-based instruction, which leads to passive learning (Littlewood, 2018).

Student engagement is also influenced by affective factors. Dörnyei (2001) highlights that motivation, self-confidence, and reduced anxiety are essential for active participation. In

interactive lessons, learners feel safer to express their ideas because the focus shifts from teacher evaluation to collaborative exploration. Nevertheless, according to Hattie (2012), some students remain silent even in interactive settings due to fear of making mistakes or low self-esteem, suggesting that the teacher's facilitation techniques are crucial.

A number of interactive strategies have been proposed to increase student involvement. Bonwell and Eison (1991) introduced the concept of active learning, emphasizing methods such as pair-work, debates, problem-solving tasks, and student-led discussions. More recent research by Brown (2019) shows that integrating digital tools—such as collaborative platforms, polling apps, and multimedia resources—significantly enhances participation by offering students varied ways to interact with content.

Structured collaborative techniques also play a major role. Slavin (2015) found that cooperative learning fosters positive interdependence and encourages every student to contribute. Similarly, Chen (2020) demonstrated that task-based activities promote higher engagement as students work toward meaningful outcomes rather than simply completing mechanical exercises.

Method and Materials

This study used a classroom-based action research method. It was carried out with fifth-grade students at 27th school in Uychi district. The research lasted for two weeks and focused on examining how interactive activities could increase student engagement during English lessons. At the beginning of the study, I conducted a pre-observation to identify the level of student participation. During this stage, I took notes on how often students answered questions, interacted with peers, and took part in class tasks. The results showed that many students were passive, rarely volunteering to speak or participate in activities.

After identifying the problem, I introduced a set of interactive techniques as the intervention. The main activities included Think-Pair-Share and Group Puzzle activities.

Think-Pair-Share was a student-centered strategy in which learners were given a question or problem. First, they thought silently for a short time. Then, they discussed their ideas with a partner, and finally shared their answers with the whole class. This activity encouraged all students to think actively, talk in pairs, and build confidence before speaking in front of the class.

Group Puzzle Activity was a collaborative task designed to promote teamwork and active problem-solving. Students were divided into small groups, and each group received different pieces of information. To complete the task, they had to communicate and fulfill the crosswords. For instance, they are given the names of fruits in disorder like ppale, eapr, ifg and like these. They have to debate and come to compromise with their peers. In this process even the shiest students tend to speak. The reason why is that, they already know the answer and as they young, they will be eager to convey their own opinion. Moreover, this task suits their level and does not create ang challenges.

The materials used in the research were simple and easily accessible. They included question cards for Think-Pair-Share, paper based materials for group Puzzle Activity and observation checklists for recording student engagement. Overall, these activities and materials were suitable for creating a more interactive classroom environment and encouraging active involvement from all students.

Result

At the beginning of the research, the classroom observations showed that many students were passive during lessons. Only a few students regularly answered questions or took part in discussions, while the majority remained silent and hesitated to participate. The pre-observation results indicated low engagement, limited peer interaction, and minimal voluntary responses.

During the action stage, the introduction of interactive activities noticeably changed the classroom atmosphere. Students became more active, curious, and willing to communicate. Each activity contributed to student participation in different ways. Think-Pair-Share helped shy students speak more confidently because they first shared ideas in pairs before speaking in front of the class. The Group Puzzle activity encouraged teamwork and required every student to contribute, which reduced passiveness. Students communicated more, asked questions, and worked together toward completing the task.

By the end of the two-week intervention, student engagement increased significantly. Students interacted more freely, participated actively in group tasks, and showed higher motivation during lessons. The post-observation results revealed that the number of passive students decreased, and more learners took part in discussions and classroom activities. Overall, the interactive techniques successfully created a more active learning environment and helped students become more involved, confident, and motivated in English lessons.

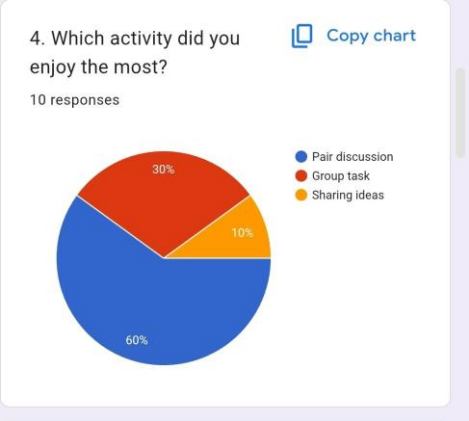

Figure 1

The pie chart indicates that 60% of students chose pair discussion as the most enjoyable activity. 30% of them preferred group task. Moreover, 10% of them chose sharing ideas as enjoyable one.

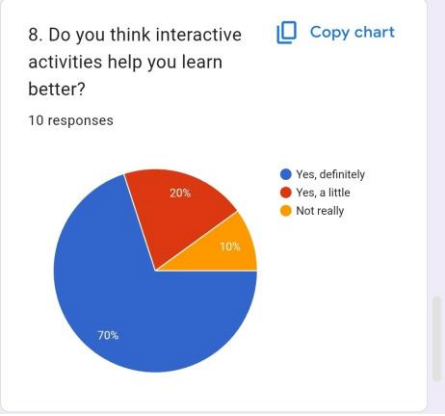

Figure 2

The results show that totally 70% of students preferred interactive activities to learn better. It means that interactive activities are the best way to teach and understand for both students and teachers.

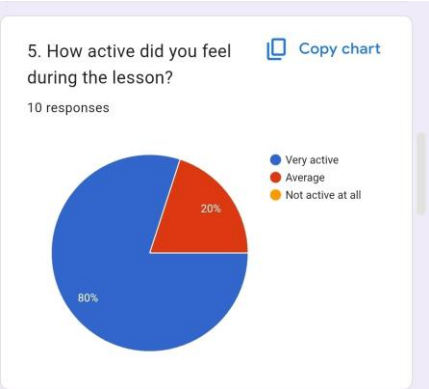

Figure 3

The pie chart says that after interactive lesson even 80% of students felt very active and eager to learn. From charts it can be concluded both teachers and students enjoyed from the interactive lesson which was full of many games and materials.

Discussion

The findings of this study indicate that shifting from a teacher-centered classroom to a student-centered learning environment had a strong positive impact on students' engagement and active participation. At the beginning of the research, most students were passive listeners who rarely volunteered to answer questions or participate in discussions. However, after introducing interactive, student-centered tasks such as Think-Pair-Share and Group Puzzle Activity, students became more active, communicative, and confident. They participated more frequently in classroom discussions and demonstrated a greater willingness to share ideas, which directly answers the first research question.

The results further show that interactive strategies were significantly more effective than traditional direct instruction. Think-Pair-Share gave students time to think individually, discuss their ideas with a partner, and then present their thoughts to the class. This process reduced anxiety and helped even shy students become more comfortable expressing their ideas. Group Puzzle Activity required each student to contribute an essential piece of information, which ensured equal participation and minimized the problem of passive learners. Compared to teacher-centered explanations, these interactive strategies led to deeper understanding, increased collaboration, and more meaningful engagement. This supports the second research question about the effectiveness of interactive techniques in improving learning outcomes. Experiential and constructivist learning approaches also played a key role in students' improved performance. Kolb's experiential learning cycle was clearly reflected when students actively engaged in tasks, reflected on their discussions, and applied new knowledge through peer collaboration. Schema-building activities within the Group Puzzle task helped students activate prior knowledge and connect it to new concepts, making learning more meaningful and long-lasting. These findings confirm the third research question by showing that experiential and constructivist approaches enhance students' ability to understand and apply new concepts in real classroom contexts.

The overall results of this study align with previous research. Lev Vygotsky (1987) argued that learning happens more effectively through social interaction, which was evident in both

interactive activities. Bonwell and Eison (1991) emphasized that active learning increases motivation and engagement, which matches the increased enthusiasm observed in the students. Kolb (1984) stated that experiential learning leads to deeper conceptual understanding, which supports the improvements seen after the intervention. A comparison of pre- and post-observation results confirms that students became more active, confident, and involved during lessons. Before the intervention, they showed low participation and limited communication. After implementing Think-Pair-Share and Group Puzzle activities, students demonstrated higher engagement, more collaborative behavior, and greater willingness to participate.

Overall, the findings clearly show that interactive teaching strategies, especially Think-Pair-Share and Group Puzzle Activity, can successfully transform traditional lessons into dynamic, student-centered learning environments and significantly enhance student engagement and learning outcomes.

Conclusion

This study explored how interactive teaching strategies can transform traditional, teacher-centered lessons into active, student-centered learning experiences. The findings clearly demonstrate that implementing activities such as Think-Pair-Share and Group Puzzle Activity significantly improved students' engagement, participation, and understanding of lesson content. At the beginning of the research, students were mostly passive, hesitant to share their ideas, and dependent on teacher explanations. After the intervention, however, they became more confident, collaborative, and actively involved in the learning process. The shift from teacher-centered instruction to student-centered learning played a vital role in these improvements. When students were given opportunities to think independently, discuss with peers, and apply their knowledge through collaborative tasks, their motivation and willingness to participate increased noticeably. The interactive activities used in this study encouraged equal participation, reduced anxiety, and created a supportive learning environment where every student felt valued.

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