



RESEARCH PAPER

Active Learning Strategies and their Effects on Learning: A Review

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ABSTRACT

This review article presents a comprehensive detail on different kinds of Active learning strategies used in ESL classrooms to teach students and focuses on their outcomes and possible benefits and demerits of those strategies. The Active learning construct is based on the theory of constructivism which says that learning occurs when the learners are engaged in a productive and interactive environment where the exchange of information takes place through collaboration and cooperative learning. Active learning includes several activities where the learners are engaged in different types of content creation and skill expression. Those activities differ from context to context and field to field and have unexpected outcomes on the learners throughout the session. Some of the activities have a positive effect and some have a negative one merely because of the different backgrounds and approaches of the learners. This research provides some detailed information on how the construct of Active learning is expressed and how it can be implemented and what are the outcomes of such strategies when applied to the ESL classroom.

KEYWORDS Active Learning Strategies, Constructivism, Activities, Outcomes

Introduction

The education system is now taking in many changes and the purpose of improvisation on the teaching methodologies is indeed a necessity and a crucial requirement to meet in this century and to ensure better learning for the new generation of students who do not want to engage in old traditional approaches of teaching and learning. There are several new approaches introduced and implemented in ESL classes and few of them get good feedback and appreciation from the students and learners, while few do not get along with the approaches of the learners and the instructors among those all the methods and techniques the term Active learning dominates and is highlighted in the approaches, it the umbrella term which can include all these activities and the strategies used to teach different level of students (Kamarulzaman et al.,2018). Active learning is a new and ongoing trend that has gained a lot of popularity in Pakistani Universities and some of the strategies that are used in ESL classrooms are discussed here, along with that what are the outcomes that have resulted when those strategies are applied. Active learning can be defined as a term that has several definitions and wider explanations, it can be defined as a self-directed approach toward

learning (Li et al.,2021), that requires learners' active engagement (kamarulzaman et al.,2018).

While traditional approaches see students as passive listeners or learners solely depending on the teacher for everything where teachers are given the authority and role to supervise and teach the students to do whatever they want them to, on the other hand, the active learning approach holds students to remain active and take part in the class and not become passive learners (Jamila & Maslawati,2017). Active learning techniques can activate learners to have continuous ongoing participation in the classroom by making their role dominant (Al-Ghamdi and Al-Oweidi,2021). The concept of active learning strategies is not confined to a single statement but is a broader concept that was developed by its pioneer authors Bonwell and Eison in 1991. The concept provided by them was that students engage in a meaningful environment where their learning takes place and they increase their knowledge (Nguyen et al., 2021).

Material and Methods

The procedure used for the data collection started with the selection of relevant articles from the search engines and those articles were selected based on their title and their specific closeness to the main review paper topic. Apart from this, the articles were filtered out by reading their abstracts and then the specific ones were again filtered for reading and usage. The articles selected were then given a full reading by the researcher where the specific and useful findings were included in the study according to the need of the study.

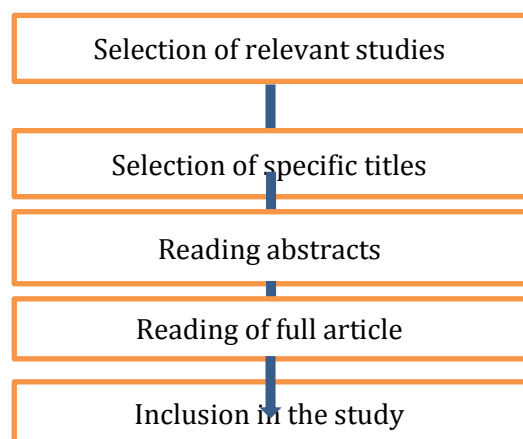


Figure 1 Flow Diagram Of Review Process.

For this research, 32 relevant studies were selected and the researcher selected these from the following main sources: (i) Research Gate (ii) springer Journals, and (iv) Google Scholar (v) Sciencedirect.com (vi) Green.edu.bd.

Data Collection

In this study, the articles were searched using keywords such as active learning, types of active learning strategies in ESL classrooms, and outcome of active learning strategies. These keywords were sometimes combined to find suitable articles and papers on the topic. The search period was customized and the range was set between the years 2013 to 2023. This period of ten years was chosen to dig out the recent works on active learning and the developments that took place during these ten years.

Active Learning

The concept of active learning focuses less on just providing passive knowledge to students rather it takes on the challenge to involve students and let them develop some of the skills that need to be there with them (Yusuk,2020). Active learning term broadly has its roots in the concepts of involving the learners to physically or mentally perform the tasks themselves and letting them ponder over the way they do these tasks this strategies based classroom will include all the teaching methods and strategies that involve students actively (Hung,2015). Active learning can engage learners in several activities and the main purpose is to make them do things and learn by themselves and not help them so that they become self-sufficient (Hodgson et al., 2013). Over time the term has evolved from a term that represents the teaching method to a term that involves students doing things and is more than a teaching method now Active learning provides opportunities for students to reflect and develop skills of their own (Freeman et al., 2014). Now the term has given the concept of learning which are evidence-based and includes several different strategies that are beyond just involving students in activities (Stains & Vickery, 2017). The terms denoted to be very significant in helping students not only do their tasks but also have an impact on their retention of all the content that they study through active learning strategies (Stains et al., 2018). In an activity-based class additional action and work are needed on the part of learners and the learners find it very hard to do but this is the real essence of active learning strategies that have evolved itself during the times (Deslauriers et al., 2019). The concept has evolved from passively involving students to making students work their way out through group and peer collaboration and with the help of their instructors to successfully integrate Active learning strategies in their classroom learning (Nguyen et al., 2021). These were some of the exhaustive definitions of active learning strategies that came across in the literature review. The implementation of this method is subject to different queries and doubts and is even appreciated by ELT practitioners around the world but the practice of traditional lecture approach still entails a dominant position in the classrooms (Stains et al., 2018). The development of a constructivist approach to teaching gave rise to teaching practices which include Active learning strategies used in the classroom (Munna and Kalam , 2021).

Active Learning Strategies and their Outcomes

These are some of the active learning strategies that are used in ESL classrooms and this research is based on these strategies and its usage in ESL classroom along with the outcomes that they can bring.

Poster Presentations

Zerin and Khan (2013) describes posters as a useful, new and unique way of presenting the information which is brief and clearly identifies the idea and helpful in presenting those ideas in front of the classroom in the form of posters which are again prepared and maintained by the learner and presented in the classroom. This is a new technique but not now a days where the technology has taken the world on its fingers, but poster presentations still entail a very important part in the development of language presentation and creativity along with cognitive skills and skill building. They provide a chance of learning to students by involving them actively in the activity by visually representing the content through posters which helps not only in understanding the content but also makes them skilled in representing the data which is in a written or other form in a poster visualized form. (Kondal and Prasad, 2019). The posters are visual representation of the content which is related to the language or any other fields, the visualization of material on a poster demands high quality of specification towards the material to decide which things and which content can be applied and inserted on a poster so that it represents the topic at relevant notes. Creating visual posters help

understand the audience what is the research record of a student. (Howard,2015) and this representation also has its effects on the teaching, learning and feedback which is to be provided by the audience, teachers and the learners in the classroom or the environment where these posters are to be taken or (Ross, 2019).

Outcomes

Students reported improvement in their learning vocabulary, these presentations help them decrease anxiety level, development of presentations skills along with this they reported that it provided them with ease to present the data because of visual aids. Teachers also reported a positive attitude towards posters because it actively engaged students and made them comfortable during their presentations (Zerin and Khan, 2013). Creating visual posters help understand the audience what is the research record of a student. The poster presentation involved all students and demanded higher level of learning and understanding due to the selection of selective language content and its presentation methods and sound practices of showcasing the important aspects of the material to be presented on a poster which helped assess different competencies of the students (Howard,2015) and this not only helped teachers in teaching and students in presentation of the content but also helped them in feedback through constant contact with the audience and the instructors (Ross, 2019). The results from all of these article when compared it can be seen that the poster activity increased engagement and comfort among students for learning in the study of Zerin and Khan (2013) while, Howard (2015) observed the activity as helpful to asses different competencies of a learner and how they are capable of doing research on different topics. Whereas, Ross (2019) in her study gives a view that the activity of poster increased the feedback coming from students to the teachers which is not possible the other way round.

Debates

Debate is an activity where the presentation of the content is arranged in logical and rhetorical manner such that it has quality of persuasion, mostly it is presented in the form of an argument where the presenter tries to dominate by the help of logic and lets the audience to accept their views on the basis of rationality and logic (Alasmari and Ahmed, 2013). According to Najafi et al (2016) are a kind of dialogue between two or more people and the aim of which is to find the answers or solutions to a problem or a question. The main aim of a debate is that people exchange ideas and whatever opinion they have with one another and find out the best suitable arguments which can logically defend or deny the statements or opinions provided by the opponent team. The debates include the exchange of information through communicating verbally and non-verbally expressing the opinion that one has. Debate is a logical argument between two people on a controversial issue to reach a conclusion, backed up by logical discussions in front of the audience and the judges to influence their thoughts and opinions(Cinganotto,2019).

Outcomes

The outcomes and advantages mainly found by the implementation of debates are that debates involve students in learning all four kinds of language skills (Reading, Writing, Speaking and listening) along with that they are able to learn the skills required to present successfully in the class but also help them learn language and practice it properly (Alasmari and Ahmed, 2013). debates encouraged the students to work as a team and cooperation was seem to have doubled in them while debating, the other factor and advantage of debate was that debates encouraged a kind of critical higher level of thinking among the learners which was not possible through passive listening in the

class (Najafi et al.,2016). Debates help in developing cognitive skills, speaking skills, language competencies, without demanding a high level of language proficiency, collaboration, team work and cooperation and increase flexibility towards the team member in a way that they respect each other. It helps in better knowledge retention and understanding of the concepts for a longer term (Cinganotto,2019). The activity has different outcomes in all the above researches in the field, where Alamas and Ahmed (2013) reported that debates enhances the practical skills of the learners and makes them learn all four language skills, whereas the study by Najafi et al. (2016) presents the view that it promotes team work and cooperation among the students and also stimulated higher order cognitive thinking skills and if we compare the result of the study by Cinganotto (2019) who claims that debates help in better knowledge retention and understanding of the language content.

Role Play

The activity of role play integrates the task of acting with language learning, where the learners act according to the situations given to them and present the language content accordingly where they practice different situation based on the language and act on it (Maarof, 2018). Another study conducted by Krebt (2017) illustrates that role play has a context dependent property where students are given real life situations which actually demonstrate and help them learn different communication strategies. Role play is a kind of activity in which students interact with one another to convey their points and the language material and this happens when they are assigned different roles to play and portray different characters depending on the situations of the environment. Along with such roles participants are given special instructions on how to perform and play a certain role and how to deliver the specific content. This method is quiet flexible as it doesn't require any special tools or places availability. It can be performed at the minimalist way at any place (Glover,2021). Students are given roles according to the scenarios in which they act and they behave accordingly and the main purpose of this is learning and understanding of the complex ideas and concepts which are not easy to understand otherwise. Mostly the script or guide of the role play is based on reality based scenarios because it is to be acted upon by the other people (Westrup & Planander,2013).

Outcomes

Maarof (2018) has reported that the role plays help them in oral communication and helped them in communication whereas the results from the findings of Suryani(2015) which shows the role play has its benefits because it lets the learner to apply the real world knowledge into practically applicable method of learning which is driven by the context in a real world. Students think beyond the classroom setting and apply their knowledge to a wider scope of things, they relate the content in the most specific and genuine way to solve the issues related to the content, helps receiving prompt feedback from the audience which are the learners and the teachers, help students to engage in a higher order thinking level and lets them understand the content in a deeper way, it helps them to take on the context in a real way and which helps them to understand the different roles and individuals in a society because they themselves portray such characters. Furthermore, the study by Westrup & Planander (2013) has different results which are that Role play seems to have very positive outcomes when it comes to language learning and teaching, because of the flexible nature of role plays they help learners in collaboration and understanding of the difficult concepts in a very flexible manner and help them practically demonstrating and learning cognitive, psychomotor and language skills in which verbal and non-verbal communication is also included.

Oral Presentations

Oral presentations are a tool to assess and use the language through presenting the content in front of the whole class and to actively participate through spoken communication (Brooks & Wilson, 2014). The oral presentations are the most commonly used technique of teaching and learning specially where English is taught as a second language or in the foundational courses and oral presentations are a form of communicating one's ideas and thoughts through interaction and presentation which is an active process, it happens when a teacher asks students to explain some topic through preparing a presentation for it and present it in front of the class (Salem, 2019), the oral presentation has three stages which are planning, preparation and practice and require students to use a target language effectively in the classroom. (Hammad, 2020).

Outcomes

According to Riadil (2020), the use of oral presentations improved students' language vocabulary, grammar, communication skills, the use of specific words and their appropriate usage according to the context whereas the findings from the study of Putri (2019) show that oral presentations can improve and increase students' confidence by making them face the whole audience and also help in motivating them to speak in the class. Moreover, the outcomes found in the study by Permis et al. (2020) show that oral presentations helped students generally in improving their speaking skills, making them participate more in the classroom by improving their language skills because when preparing and working as a presenter the learner develops several skills of a language related to reading, speaking and listening not only these language skills are polished but students also master critical language skills in which they learn how to present a content critically according to the contextual needs.

Jigsaw Reading, Biography Worksheets

Jigsaw reading is an activity where students are divided into groups and each group gets a different biography where they read that biography and then re-tell it to the other people and hear about their biographies and all of the learners who hear different biographies have to take notes and note down what was different about each separate biography. Then worksheets are made of those biographies where they answer the questions related to the biographies that they have read (Jones and Palmer, 2017). The jigsaw technique arranges and composes learners in a way that it makes them responsible to each other and for each other's growth in learning and achieving the group targets and goals. (Harun et al., 2016). The jigsaw reading strategy includes the reading and comprehension of the content and then the presentation and discussion of the material by the students in a group and it includes solving puzzles based on the reading and comprehension (Sabbah, 2016).

Outcomes

The study conducted by Sabbah (2016) gives us the findings about the outcomes of jigsaw reading in the ESL classroom that the strategy increased students' academic achievements along with their motivation and spirit to learn and read the language. On the other side a study by Jones and Palmer (2017) shows that these strategies provide the learners with some critical solving skills of language, like relating content with the similar context, completing content requires working on meaningful ways of developing the semantically and pragmatically correct language and presentations help involve the visual verbal and non-verbal help to present the content in an appropriate way, whereas

a study by Harun et al. (2016) shows the strategies inculcate a sense of togetherness and cooperation and problem solving skills among the learners.

Group Work

Group work can be defined as an activity in which students gather around to perform a specific task in which they cooperate with each other and help each other out for the purpose of completion of a task. The whole concept of group work refers to equality by giving chance to each and every member to perform in a group task and have equal say and represent that of democratic environment in a classroom (Al-Azzawi & Al-Khazali, 2019). Group work involves students to work cooperation and collaboration in the classroom and take accountability of each other's learning and learn with each other (Veramuthu and Shah, 2020). In the study conducted by Pateson et al. (2016) he states that group work is a strategy of learning which makes students to learn with each other not only for the sake of learning but also for helping each other out through building a team work environment.

Outcomes

The study by Pateson et al. (2016) founds that involving students in group work helps them to retain the information for a longer time, increases their accountability towards their group and learning, helps them develop critical thinking skills, boosts their confidence, lessens their anxiety levels and makes them feel more comfortable about their own learning by involving them in group activities, whereas the study by Al-Azzawi & Al-Khazali (2019) states the benefits of using group work may include increased students cooperation and motivation to work in pairs, this makes it easy for students to break complex problems into smaller manageable tasks that can be solved easily, time is managed very well because students otherwise cannot perform as an individual because of its time taking, helps in sharing of different ideas, thoughts and opinions which are otherwise not shared by all the students in a group, helps them in understanding complex concepts which are not possible otherwise when it comes to the grip of the concepts in a topic. Moreover Veramuthu and Shah (2020) found out that the collaborative and group work involves students which enable them to learn better the skills taught in the English classroom and according to them the writing skills are one of the skills that flourish and develop during the times of group work.

Think-Pair-Share

Think-pair-share is an activity which involves students to work in pairs and actively participate in the activity through critical thinking and speaking and sharing it with other students. This activity involves three stages, in the first stage students are given a topic on which they think and gather enough knowledge about its understanding then in the second stage they are advised to pair up with other students and work out both their ideas and opinions about that material or topic which is given to them and finally in the third stage they are required to speak about it and share the knowledge with others (Zaim & Radjab, 2015)

Outcomes

The study conducted by Kaddoura (2013) claims that think-pair share activity helped students improve their listening skills, by listening to others they had flexible acceptance of each other's opinions, they learnt more effectively, shared their views which helped them to gain more perspectives, they also promoted positive outcomes related to growing emotionally and critically with the language and its content. Whereas

the results from the study of Hamdan(2017) shows that think pair share activity encourages individual participation, motivation to participate, since there is near to no peer pressure and they feel at ease while performing different tasks like speaking, and because of less hesitation, they develop critical thinking skills in them which allow them to think and participate in the content through speaking and enhance their learning habits. Moreover, the study conducted by Manurung (2017) states that think-pair-share gives chance to students to speak about their opinions and most importantly it gives them chance to think before what they speak, along with it the activity increases the collaboration and cooperation among the learners.

Game-Based Learning

Game based learning style of learning and teaching in ESL classrooms is a result of technological advancements of 21st century which can be said to have improved and advanced the performance of students in 21st century by involving them in games and making interactions through those games by making learning easy and enjoyable (Hitosugi et al., 2014). Through these Game-based-learning activities students can be helped with the development of their cognitive and psychomotor skills and they learn how to critically analyse a situation and synthesize according to the needs of the learner (Chen & Law, 2016).

Outcomes

The study by Hitosugi et al. (2014) shows that the possible outcomes of game-based learning classrooms are that students get to involve in technology which increases their motivation and enthusiasm to learn because of the new interesting techniques that are used and the technologically advanced nature of the class, On the contrary the findings from the study of Bodnar and Clark (2017) show that the game-based approach increased the oral and written medium of communication among the students by involving them to participate in the activities. There might be some challenges in involving them in these activities but after all they gained some benefits from these. And one more study from Ahmed et al. (2022) has a different view from these two studies and state that game-based-learning can have many benefits; it can reduce the anxiety of the learner hence making them active participants in the classroom, it helps in development of cognitive skills to analyze, synthesize and evaluate the material.

SRS Tools

SRS are basically tools and devices which are used by the students in the classroom to answer the questions posed by the teacher and these tools are known as clickers. The clickers have a proper system of keypad and devices which can transmit the response from each student to the teacher so that the received responses get a check by the teacher. The use of such tools which can also be called as clickers involve students in active learning and engage them introducing the technology in the classrooms (Aljaloud et al., 2015).

Outcomes

The findings from the study of Shaban (2017) state that the SRS tools contributed to how students focus in the classroom by improving their concentration and engaging them. Also it enhances their critical thinking skills helped promoting the group work and collaboration among students. Likewise, another study has different findings which is conducted by Stowell (2015) shows that clickers help students to indulge in more activities by keeping their identity unknown which has a great impact on their

performance in the class, also help in measuring their level of understanding of a topic or material, easily provide a prompt feedback to the students which is not possible otherwise.

Minute Paper

A one-minute paper activity comprises of a 60 second feedback kind of talk where students are encouraged to talk about all that happened during the session and speak about it in brief and comprehensive way. This happens at the end of the session or the lecture and basically its purpose is to have feedback from the students and to allow their opinion regarding the class content, along with it this activity ensures learning through having a check on every student by assessing their learning through that one minute talk (The One-Minute Paper, n.d.)

Outcomes

The research findings from the study of Vera (2022) show that the one minute paper can have many benefits, it can increase the strength and quality of the classroom content by elaborating and making the discussions better in the classroom, by helping students to voice their knowledge and opinions and share it with the class, by decreasing the fear of public speaking in students by giving them chance to speak, by increasing the participations and learning motivation in students, the activity also promotes creativity and critical learning skills among the students.

The review paper answers the first research questions by addressing the exploration and comprehension of the term "Active learning strategies" over the time period of ten years by encapsulating the view that first it was a traditionally and commonly adopted approach where students seems to be held responsible for their own learning with the involvement in the classroom activities and with the passing time the term acquired a more socially acceptable and inclusive approach where the scaffolding factors came in and the students had a support and collaboration from their peers and their social environment where they learn from each other holding accountability of each other. Along with that the second question which asked the outcome of these above active learning strategies as found from the related studies is mostly seen as positive and include improvement in learning through following factors: improvement in learning vocabulary, decrease in anxiety and fear of performance, communication and public speaking skill development (Zerin and Khan, 2013). They helped the students by improving the quality of material presented, making them aware of the practical issues in teaching and learning faced by the teachers and students in the classroom, building confidence in them (Remesh, 2013), self-reflection through productive feedback taught them how to correct their own mistakes through self-evaluation (Shaarudin and Muhammad, 2017). These strategies helped them in improving their learning skills and cognitive skills by teaching them how to work semantically and pragmatically with the content (Jones and Palmer, 2017), improved their focus towards class, motivated them to work as a group in collaborative setting (Shaban, 2017), helped them engage with content more interestingly (Yunus et al., 2019), helped in retention of knowledge and increased responsibility towards group learning (Pateson et al., 2016), made them flexible towards accepting the thoughts of other and helped them to learn other content through sharing of it (Kaddoura, 2013), improved their written and oral communication (Bodnar and Clark, 2017). The review provided the answers comprehensively and each strategy is justified with its outcomes that resulted from its application in ESL classroom.

Conclusion

The active learning is said to be a technique where learners and teachers learn and teach through collaboration and interaction between the learners and this technique has several strategies which exhaustively include posters, oral presentations, microteaching activities, peer reflection, self-reflection, jigsaw reading, biography worksheets, envelopes, SRS (student response system), Group work, think pair share, Game-based learning. All of these activities have positive impact on learning of students and improve their knowledge and confidence along with it gives them chance to improve their skills at different level and some of those skills contain communications and social interaction skills which are enhanced by working in flexible learning environments and collaboration and cooperation which are the main keys to the social learning concepts. There were different outcomes of the activities that involve students in the learning and those benefit reflect the areas of language learning, language skills development, competency development, cognitive skills development, competency development and it was also seen that most of the ESL activities were related to engaging students in puzzle solving or higher order thinking tasks which increased their attention and made them learn more content with the help of their peers.

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