



THE EFFICACY OF ICE-BREAKING ACTIVITIES IN ENHANCING STUDENTS' MOTIVATION FOR ENGLISH LANGUAGE ACQUISITION

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Article History

Submitted 20 July 2024
Revised 6 August 2024
Published 30 August 2024

Abstract

Ice breaking is believed to cultivate a pleasant learning environment and promote active student participation. It's essential to note that the effectiveness of the ice-breaking strategy hinges on the teacher's ability to craft and execute the activity. Teachers must demonstrate creativity and innovation when selecting ice-breaking activities that align with student characteristics and lesson material. This research aims to explore the application of ice-breaking activities in the learning process to enhance students' motivation at Buah State Elementary School. The study adopts a descriptive qualitative approach focusing on an English teacher as the key informant. Data collection methods include interviews and documentation, while data analysis incorporates data reduction, presentation, and conclusion techniques. The findings suggest that incorporating ice-breaking activities into learning sessions has transformed the previously dull and uninspiring atmosphere into a vibrant and enjoyable one, increasing student motivation. As a result, ice-breaking activities are deemed highly effective in boosting student engagement and motivation.

Keywords: *English Learning Process, Ice Breaking, Students' Motivation*

INTRODUCTION

Education has a vital role in building quality human resources. One aspect that must be considered in the learning process is student learning motivation. Without strong motivation, student learning effectiveness can decrease, resulting in less-than-optimal learning outcomes. Especially in English subjects, students' motivation to learn is often a challenge because this language is not always used in everyday life, especially in non-English countries. Therefore, it is important to look for various strategies that can increase students' learning motivation, one of which is using the ice-breaking strategy.

Ice breaking is a technique used to create a warm classroom atmosphere, break the ice, and involve students in learning. This strategy is believed to create a pleasant learning environment and encourage active student participation. Various studies show that a conducive classroom atmosphere can increase student motivation and learning success. Ideally, the learning environment should be interactive, dynamic, and conducive to students. Students are expected to actively participate in every learning activity and show high interest

in the subjects taught, including English. However, in reality, not all students are highly motivated to learn English. Some students find it difficult and boring, so they lack enthusiasm for participating in learning. This showed that many students have difficulty being motivated to learn English. According to Sibuea (2017), one of the factors that influences student learning motivation is the method used by the teacher. Monotonous and less varied teaching methods can cause low student learning motivation.

To increase students' learning motivation, using the ice-breaking strategy can be a practical approach. This strategy involves various activities to create better interactions between students and teachers and between students themselves. According to Arintistia (2022), the ice-breaking technique can create a comfortable and enjoyable learning atmosphere so that students are more motivated to learn. Ice-breaking can be done by presenting games in the form of jokes, variations of clapping, singing, playing, and so on. The ice breaker model is a method used to dilute an atmosphere that is not conducive. In this way, students' concentration and attention become focused again (Alawiyah, 2019; Pratama et al., 2021). Kurniawati (2016) and Nuryana & Purwanto (2010) agree that learning concentration means focusing your mind on a subject by putting aside all other things unrelated to the lesson. Concentration in learning can be shown by several things, including focus of view, attention, ability to answer, ask questions, and good psychomotor response. Still, many students lose concentration on learning during the learning process. Therefore, teachers should be able to attract students' attention so they can concentrate on learning before finally conveying the knowledge that will be taught.

However, it is essential to remember that the effectiveness of the ice-breaking strategy depends on the teacher's ability to design and implement the activity. Teachers must be creative and innovative in choosing ice-breaking activities that suit student characteristics and lesson material. According to [author's name], teachers who are creative in applying teaching methods can increase students' learning motivation. Apart from that, regular evaluation of the implementation of the ice-breaking strategy is essential to see to what extent the plan has succeeded in increasing student learning motivation. Thus, the ice-breaking strategy can be an effective tool in learning English, helping students to be more motivated and achieve better learning outcomes.

In conclusion, student learning motivation is an essential factor in the educational process. With the importance of English in the global world, a creative and practical approach to learning is needed. The ice-breaking strategy has great potential to increase student learning motivation. With proper implementation, this strategy can bring positive changes to the teaching and learning process in the classroom.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Ice-breaking is an integral part of the English learning process. Ice breaking can also relieve students' boredom during learning exercises. Ice cracking is an activity that can be used to increase student participation and provide a sense of humor in the classroom (Collins et al., 2007). Ice breaking can be used at an English learning session's start, middle, and conclusion (Jannah, 2021). As a result, the use of icebreakers in learning activities is critical in order to eliminate lethargy and boredom and allow students to concentrate well while learning English. According to Yeganehour (2016), there are three categories of icebreakers.

First, there is the opening activity. This practice is carried out at the start of the learning process to motivate and increase student interest. The second method is to utilize an energizer when students appear unfocused and unenthusiastic about the learning process.

The third option is feedback and disclosure. The teacher can use this activity at the end of a lesson to assess students' comprehension of the subject covered. The instructor may select one of the sorts of icebreakers listed above, but the teacher must adapt to the environment in the classroom. Games are one type of icebreaker that teachers might use. Game-based icebreakers increase student activity since they are related to the material, not just playing games. Games can be used to convey messages or materials, Putri & Loli (2023). Learning motivation is very important in supporting students' success in the learning process. Learning motivation is one-factor determining effectiveness in learning, Mutiara & Merry (2022). Conversely, the learning outcomes do not run optimally for students with low interest or learning motivation. Intrinsic motivation is the motivation that arises from aspects that are generated in one's instincts and affect one's character and behavior (Craig, 2008). Irwandi (2017) states that Intrinsic motivation is the internal motivation to do something following the desired goals. Meanwhile, Extrinsic motivation can be in the form of awards such as salary increases and promotions. Extrinsic motivation comes from external factors such as parents, teachers, and the learning environment by adding the components of external motivation in learning that are rewards, pride, and competition, Anggi and Absharini (2021).

Several research have looked into the role of icebreakers in English language learning. Farwati et al. (2018) describe how icebreaker exercises operate and whether they are compatible with English teaching philosophies. The study's findings proved the effectiveness of icebreaker activities in boosting students' interest in an English class, as reflected by their readiness to learn. Another study by Kadek Bagus Rusman (2022) found that icebreaker activities can assist in developing fun learning, create a suitable learning environment, and pique students' interest and motivation in their academic work. On the other side, icebreakers can impact students' scores in terms of achieving learning objectives.

METHODOLOGY

In this study, qualitative research was the chosen research methodology. Qualitative research uses research approaches to conduct a thorough and descriptive linguistic analysis of phenomena in study participants or students. This study aims to determine how icebreakers may be applied to increase students' enthusiasm to learn and make studying fun. The study's subjects were thirty-six fifth-grade students at Beulah public elementary school. Descriptive qualitative research is used as the methodology. Two techniques were used to collect the data: documentation and interviews. Documentation is kept of activities that show off the classroom setting or the application of icebreakers. The researcher ascertained whether there is a difference in improving students' English learning levels by conducting interviews following the use of icebreakers in the classroom.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

According to the author's interviews with the homeroom teacher and numerous grade 2 students at Beulah Public Elementary school, implementing icebreakers dramatically enhanced students' interest and excitement for learning. The group that participated in the ice-breaking session showed a greater rise in interest and excitement for learning than the class that did not participate. Following the icebreaker session, students reported feeling more at ease, motivated, and engaged in learning. Ice-breaking strategies make people feel more at ease while learning, boost their self-esteem, and provide an opportunity to express their opinions and experiences.

For instance, icebreakers teach students to behave appropriately when they are boisterous in class. The teacher invites less engaged students to take part in icebreaker activities to spark their attention again. Icebreaker activities can be a valuable method for creating a positive learning atmosphere and increasing student involvement in the curriculum. Teachers should often include icebreakers in their lesson plans to maximize their students' learning potential. This article shows how encouraging students to use the interview approach as an icebreaker might help them become more interested and passionate about their studies. Icebreaker interviews allow students to interact, discuss, and build relationships with their peers.

In addition, icebreakers help students broaden their viewpoints, learn new material related to the subject matter, and improve their understanding of the curriculum. The study results show that using icebreakers in the classroom positively affects the learning processes of primary school students. Students who participated in ice-breaking activities showed increased social contact, enhanced willingness to study, and more engagement with the material. Apart from that, after the icebreaker activity, students reported a more relaxed and exciting learning atmosphere in the classroom. Teachers can significantly benefit from ice-breaking during ongoing class procedures, especially when students are unruly or lack enthusiasm. There are advantages and disadvantages to breaking ice.



Picture 1 The implementation of ice-breaking



Picture 2 The lecture technique and scaffolding process

The results and discussion clarify that in Buah public elementary school teaching and learning activities, teachers continue to employ the lecture technique, which limits learning to one direction—learning from the teacher alone. This reduces learning effectiveness since students will get bored easily and become less engaged in the classroom, which lowers student learning concentration. Therefore, by using ice-breaking strategies, we attempt to assist students in increasing their focus during instruction so that they have a high motivation to learn. We ask students to play games for a bit if they aren't feeling enthused about learning till they are again.

CONCLUSION

Upon reviewing the research findings and discussions, it is evident that the implementation of the ice-breaking strategy by teachers is aimed at enhancing the concentration and learning motivation of elementary school students. This approach has successfully fostered an environment where students are more focused and actively engaged in comprehending the learning material. The process of improving children's concentration and learning motivation through the ice-breaking strategy aligns with the prepared action plan and assessment criteria, which evaluate the student's ability to concentrate during the learning process and the effectiveness of ice-breaking in motivating them in class activities. Consequently, it can be concluded that the use of Ice Breaking has the potential to increase student learning motivation in classes IV, V, and VI for the 2023/2024 academic year. This suggests that Ice Breaking can be an effective solution to address issues experienced by students before or during classroom activities, and can enhance motivation and aid in achieving learning objectives. As a result, we have observed an enhancement in elementary school students' learning motivation, leading to improved focus during lessons, reduced self-distraction, and a heightened sense of responsibility. Teachers can utilize Ice Breaking as an alternative learning model or instructional tool, and its use during teaching has a significant impact on student learning motivation. Future research recommendations include expanding the variety of measurement methods, considering the influence of a broader range of external factors, and engaging a more diverse sample.

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