

HOW TO ENGAGE NON-ENGLISH MAJOR STUDENTS' ENGAGEMENT IN ENGLISH-SPEAKING CLASS: A CASE STUDY IN DONG NAI UNIVERSITY

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Abstract

This action research was conducted to evaluate (1) the extent to which non-English major students' interest in learning English rises; and (2) the mechanism by which engagement enhances learning accomplishment. Over 30 students participated in the study, which lasted two weeks. The data was gathered via a questionnaire, a pre-test, a while-test, a post-test, and an interview. The results of the oral tests and questionnaire indicated that the students' oral performance in the post-test was better than in the pre-test (as measured by the speaking criteria). The students also stated in the interview that they were greatly motivated to study English because of three things: (1) a lot of hands-on, interactive learning during class; (2) a lot of logical, practical lesson activities; and (3) their increasing proficiency in speaking. The technique has been found to have positive benefits on boosting learning accomplishment among English-speaking non-English major students, according to the findings.

Keywords: Anticipatory set, pedagogical approach, engagement, learning interest, learning achievement

1. Introduction

Over the course of several decades, an increasing number of educators have stressed the need of fully including students in training and educational settings. According to earlier research, children obtain greater learning outcomes when they participate more in the classroom. In fact, engagement is essential to the learning process because it helps students pay attention and concentrate better, exercise critical thinking, and participate in engaging activities. Angela Provitera McGlynn. (2001). Thus, action research technique was used in this study to identify the strategy for raising adult participation in speaking activities in the classroom. The study was carried out in a non-English major class at Dong Nai University (DNU) in Vietnam. It involved teaching communicative spoken English for ten weeks, during which time instruments for tests, interviews, and questionnaires were used to collect both quantitative and qualitative data. This study aims to highlight the unique approach that promotes learning achievement among adult English-speaking learners by actively involving non-English major students in non-English major classes. The following inquiries are used by the researcher to carry out this case study in the paper:

1. Does the "Anticipatory Set" method raise students' enthusiasm in studying English to what extent?
2. How can participation in the classroom support students' learning outcomes?

2. Literature Review

It is evident that students may obtain higher levels of learning accomplishment the more actively they participate

in the classroom. Specifically, Pascarella and Terenzini's (1991) alternative method was designed to address the effect of college on students: "Maybe the most compelling conclusion is the least unexpected one." In other words, a student's degree of information acquisition and overall cognitive growth increases with increased involvement in academic work and college experiences. Moreover, Shulman (2002) put engagement at the core of his learning taxonomy, saying that "learning begins with student engagement," expanding on the work of Pascarella and Terenzini.

Aside from that, because of their unique qualities, adult educators have struggled to capture the whole focus of non-English major students in the classroom. Malcolm Knowles (1980), an educator, postulated in the early 1970s that adults and children learn in distinct ways, saying that "babies are born as brilliantly intelligent learners." When they are extremely young, it is amazing how much they pick up so fast and readily (Hargreaves, 2004). As a result, it is said that the field of adult education is now confronted with a greater difficulty in examining preventative and intervention measures that effectively increase the engagement of adult education practitioners (Lawler, 1991). To be more precise, I. A. Kolesnikova (p. 50) listed a few challenges and obstacles that may arise when addressing them: *"For an adult person, potential barriers to self-education include multiplicity, variability and discreteness of information received from the surrounding world and the impossibility of covering an entire body of knowledge."*

According to MacKeracher (1996), facilitated learning involves the teacher acting as a co-inquirer with the students, acting as a catalyst, providing material and process resources, acting as a non-English majorective mirror or alter ego, and providing support, direction, and encouragement. The supervision of a supervisor during a research project by a graduate student would be a prime example of assisted learning. The purpose of education becomes more about the process of (1) developing critical thinking abilities; and (2) maturing as a person and citizen rather than the subject-based knowledge/skills, especially in self-directed learning or guided learning. Building a positive self-concept, appreciating human existence, and encouraging individuals to delve into their emotions were the main goals of Barer-Stein and Draper (1988). The tutor's reflections, as reported by Goldgrab (Draper & Taylor, 1992), encapsulate the spirit of humanism: "We see learners for what they have to give, their ideas as individuals, as well as for their life experience and common sense."

The "Anticipatory Set" pedagogical approach (ASPA) is defined as a brief exercise that occurs at the beginning of a class to direct students' attention and prepare them for the content that will be covered by the instructor. Deutsch, Anne C. and Brandon K. West (2017). The anticipatory set is based on this concept, according to Barer-Stein, T. & Kompf, M. (2001). Madeline Hunter (1982) said that she called the opening several minutes of class "prime time." Watching a video of a lightning storm, though, would be far more thrilling.

3. Research Methodology

Research context

Dong Nai University (DNU), regarded as the top English academic institution, is the site of the current study. This one also gains recognition for having helped almost 5,000 English language learners enhance their Communication English proficiency annually.

For the purpose of this study, the researcher is in charge of several roles including professor, head, and teaching assistant in order to support most of the English tours that are provided for students who do not major in English throughout several DNU faculties. She is keen to develop innovative, efficient teaching strategies to support students in achieving higher academic achievement since she has a thorough understanding of the traits and challenges faced by non-majoring in English students when studying the language.

Participants

30 non-English major students, ages 18 to 19, who were divided into two English 1 classrooms at Dong Nai University were chosen to take part in the two-month course with the common learning goal of enhancing English

communication abilities. Particularly on the first day of the course, a different pre-test administered by the researcher/teacher identified 3 exceptional, 7 good, 17 fair, and 3 bad English learners. However, a very unique pedagogical strategy known as the "Anticipatory Set" is intended to be applied to the teaching and learning process with a number of specific duties so that the study can assess and determine whether it is successful in encouraging learners' engagement and resulting in a better improvement in learning.

Research instruments

The three research instruments—the pre-test, while-test, and post-test—as well as the questionnaire and the expert, student, supervisor, and visiting teacher interviews provided the two types of data used in the study. First off, the questionnaire, the while-test, the post-test, and the pre-test all did a good job of presenting the numeric data.

4. Results and Discussion

Results

Two types of data were used in the study: (1) quantitative and (2) qualitative data collected using three different research instruments (pre-, while-, and post-tests); (2) questionnaires; and (3) interviews with five students, one expert, the supervisor at the DNU Center, and one visiting instructor. Following collection and analysis, the data from these study instruments distinctly revealed the following three conclusions.

Research Question No. 1: Does the "Anticipatory Set" method raise students' enthusiasm in studying English to what extent?

One of the most encouraging signs that first showed the qualitative information addressing this study topic was the expert's input from the interview instrument. Based on the expert's response, it appears that she assumed the "Anticipatory set" technique may have several benefits for the class. Similarly, based on observation and academic evaluation, the supervisor—an academic manager at the DNU Center—shares with the expert the following similar assumptions: (1) From his office, he frequently hears the lively and dynamic sounds of students and teachers conversing or encouraging one another during games or other events; and (2) The average attendance of students in this class is consistent.

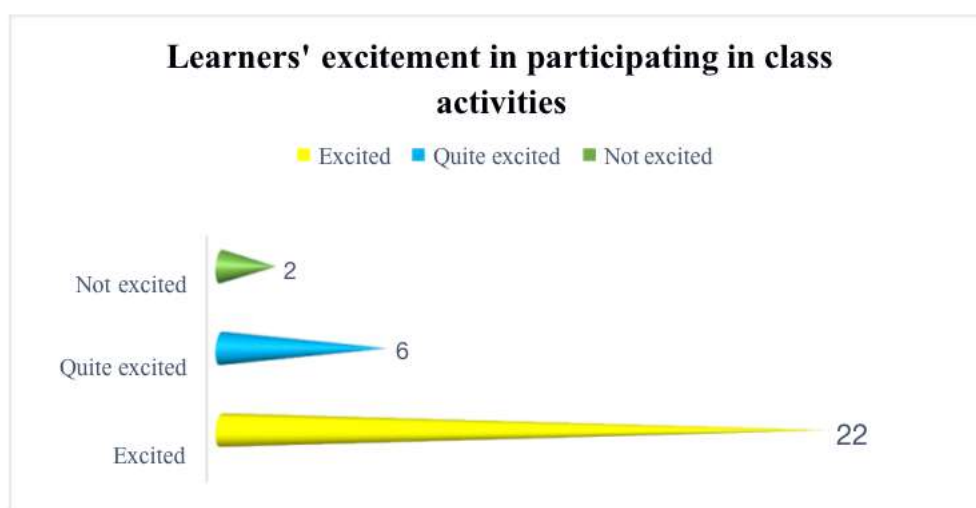


Figure 4.1. *Learners' excitement in participating in class's activities*

Moreover, the quantitative information gathered from the questionnaire is provided in an organized manner. Figure 4.1 shows that 73 students were enthusiastic about taking part in class activities, and 20% of participants were engaged in the activities as well.

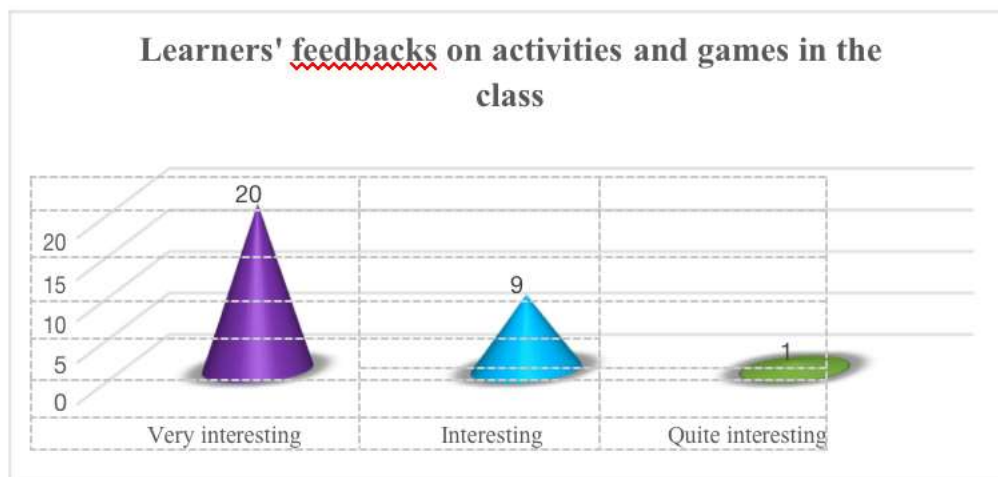


Figure 4.2. *Learners' feedbacks on activities and games in the class*

Furthermore, Figure 4.2 also shows how much students find in-class activities and games engaging. More specifically, 20 out of 30 participants said that the games and activities in the class are extremely fascinating, and 9 out of 30 said the same. After a demanding day at work or college, many find that engaging in a lot of movement in class is an excellent way to let off steam.

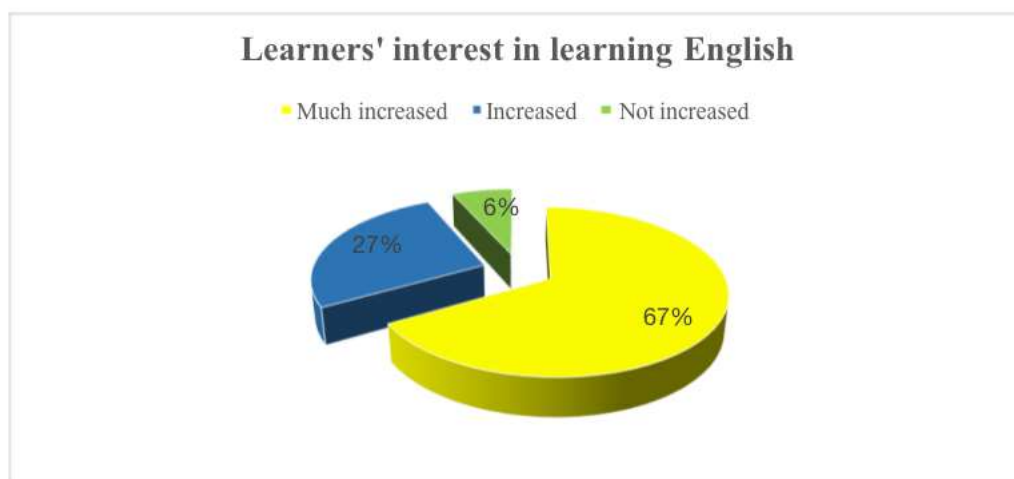


Figure 4.3. *Learners' interest in learning English*

As a consequence, the findings demonstrated that most students' enthusiasm for taking part in the classes helped to cultivate their interest in studying English. Figure 4.3 illustrates that 67% of students believed that a class using the "Anticipatory set" approach increased their interest in learning English significantly. This is because the new pedagogical approach made the activities applicable and relevant, and students found it simple and easy to participate in order to improve their English learning achievement. Furthermore, 27% of students concurred that the things they learned in class had a moderately positive impact on their enthusiasm in learning. Six percent of the participants, however, believed that they had not increased. During the initial days of the research, I saw that two students, or 6% of the participants, expressed reluctance to participate in the activities offered in class. Similar to kids, some adults lack the self-assurance necessary to perform in front of an audience. In an effort to support these two participants, I give them a lot more attention and frequently ask them to respond to questions. As a result, their confidence has increased in each and every class.

Research Question No. 2: How can participation in the classroom support students' learning outcomes?

The quantitative data from the test instrument undoubtedly contributes significantly to the evidence that students may attain higher levels of learning success in the classroom the more actively they participate in it.

The table illustrates that many of the study's participants made progress in improving their English language acquisition when they used the "Anticipatory set" strategy. Pre-, during-, and post-tests all used the oral test, which consists of two speaking and pronunciation components. The results are assessed using the speaking test table criteria. Finally, as shown in Figure 4.4, the learning levels of the students were clearly divided into 4 separate categories, ranging from Poor to Excellent, based on the score categorization.

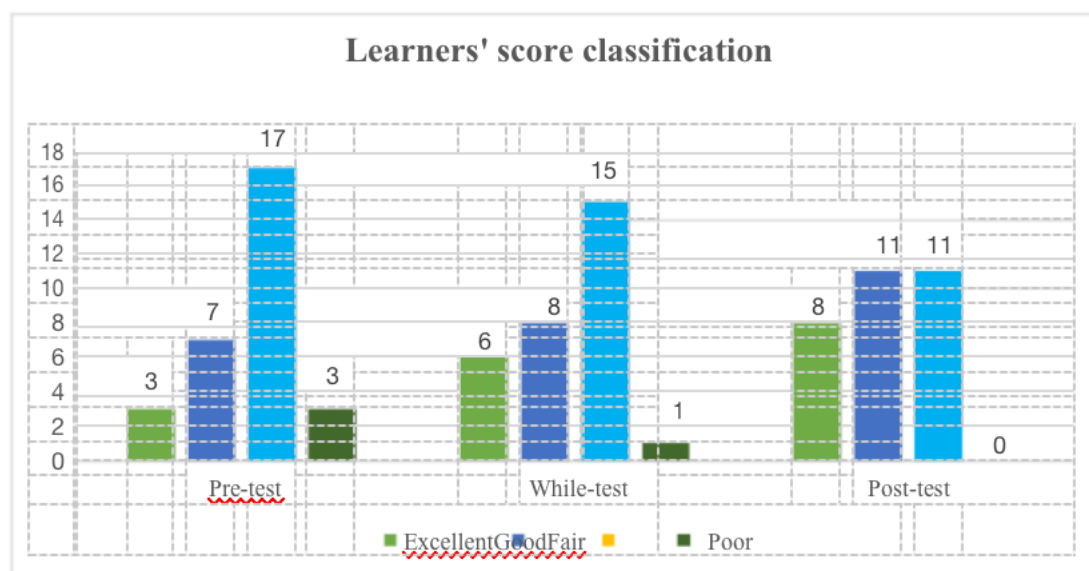


Figure 4.4. Learners' score classification in oral test

Classification	Score	pre-test	post-test	Percentage change
Excellent	8.5 - 10	3	8	+167%
Good	7.0 - 8.0	7	11	+57%
Fair	5 - 6.5	17	11	-35%
Poor	0 - 4	3	0	-100%

Table 4.1. Learners' test results before and after 2-month course

A test is an official academic assessment used to determine how well students have learned oral communication abilities. The learners were given access to the pre-test, while-test, and post-test only on the second day of the first study week, the first day of the fifth week, and the first day of the tenth week, in that order. I was able to determine how much my students improved their English communication abilities by using the "Anticipatory set" strategy based on the findings.

The number of exceptional learners increased to 6 from 3 at the start of the research, as shown in Figure 4.4. This

indicates a 166.7% shift in percentage. In addition, the proportion of proficient students rose from 7 to 11, signifying a 57.1% shift. Conversely, the outcome demonstrated that the fair pupils had a significant decline, falling from 17 to 11, or a shift of 35.3%. Additionally, as we could see, there were three bad learners as opposed to none. The percentage of underprivileged students in this category decreased to 100%.

As a consequence, test results taken by students both before and after a two-month course demonstrate that "Anticipatory set" has a favorable impact on participants' performance in learning improvement.

Discussion

The aim of this thesis was to examine two things: (1) how much the "Anticipatory set" strategy boosts interest in English learning among students who are not majoring in English; and (2) how procedural involvement promotes learning accomplishment. The outcomes were shown as follows:

The study question that followed focused on how ASPA affected non-majoring students' desire to learn English using interviews and questionnaires. Quantitative data analysis revealed that 20 out of 30 participants who considered the class's activities and games fascinating had significantly higher levels of interest in learning—67%—than the other students. In particular, it demonstrates very literally that students' enthusiasm in learning will rise in direct proportion to their level of participation in ASPA-related class activities. Regarding the post-test results, we discovered that the post-test performance was superior than the pre-test performance. For example, the proportion of low-income pupils fell from 3 to 0, while the proportion of high-achieving kids increased from 3 to 8.

Teachers instructing English-speaking students at other schools and institutions, as well as those at DNU, found the findings to be beneficial. The current study identified shortcomings even though it demonstrated the effects of the ASPA on students' oral performance: (1) the study was conducted on a limited sample size of 30 participants. The investigation was conducted during a brief two-month period. (3) Beginner-level English was used in the examples.

Conclusion

The results of the analysis produced by the three research instruments (test, questionnaire, and interview) showed that the number of students whose level of participation in class was much higher at the pre- and posttest. This implies that ASPA promotes learning achievement among learners who speak English well. In particular, the study's findings showed that:

1. Students' interest in learning English was greatly piqued by the extensive participation they engaged in, which was motivated by ASPA.
2. Students' enthusiasm in studying was increased the more involved time they spent, and this directly translated into better learning outcomes.

In addition to being interesting for students, ASAP are also a great tool for giving instructors an opportunity to be creative, which may help to bring fresh energy into your lessons. They might offer countless opportunities for starting a class period and using exercise as a teaching tactic. It's interesting to note that, depending on the needs of the classroom, the teacher can really create a lesson plan quickly using either high tech or low tech. If the teacher wants to experiment using anticipatory sets during education, they should think about beginning with a basic set that is comprehensive for the students. Gradually proceed to an intermediate or advanced set after the teacher is at ease. The instructor choose when to begin, but this is an opportunity to have fun and experiment with different approaches to guarantee that the lessons are compelling, rational, and successful from the first.

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