

# INTERACTIVE ACTIVITIES AS AN ALTERNATIVE TO ENCOURAGE STUDENTS INVOLVEMENT IN ENGLISH READING CLASS

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**ABSTRACT:** *The common problem found in reading was the students could not comprehend the text easily, because the students were passive. They never worked together in discussion or presentation. When the teacher asked them to read some texts and to find out the main ideas from the texts, most of the student could not or it easily. An interactive activity as a technique that is possible for them to improve their involvement in learning English, especially in reading class. This technique can help the students to comprehend the content of reading text in group; beside that, they can share, cooperate, and support each other, achive learning objective, and make the learning enjoyable. Interactive activities will help the teacher to engage the students. Teacher can use interactive activities in classrooms from high school to university. The choice of strategies is affected by a number of considerations: the level of the objectives, the abilities of the students, teacher teaching skills and preferences, the size of the class, and many other factors. However, since school is supposed to help students sharpen their higher-order thinking skills, strategies that promote active involvement in learning should be the goal of every teacher. Interactive lecturing and structured discussions are methods that promote a degree of student involvement.*

**KEY WORDS:** *Interactive activities, teaching-learning process, involvement the student, and reading comprehension in English.*

## INTRODUCTION

There are four skills of English that should be mastered by students. One of the English skills that is crucial to be mastered by students is reading. By reading, students can improve their knowledge, get more information of around the world, and improve their critical thinking as well. Beside that, the students increase their language, get new vocabulary, and learn grammatical rules.

Although there are many advantages of reading as mentioned above, most of students still have problem in following reading class. The common problem faced by students are they can't comprehend the text easily and they tend to be passive in following the lesson. They never worked together in work discussion or presentation and they have low enthusiasm in doing assignment. They got difficulties in answering question.

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There are many factors that can influence the students' problem above. Some of them are low involvement in reading class and uninteresting technique of the teaching-learning process. The common problem found in reading was the students could not comprehend the text easily, because the students were passive, not involve in learning process. Students have low involvement and motivation in learning English in reading class. When the teacher asked them to read some texts and to find out the main ideas from the texts, most of the student could not find it. They also could not answer the questions after reading text.

By considering some problems happened in the teaching and learning process, the writer would like to apply an interactive activity as a technique that is possible for them to improve their involvement in learning English, especially in reading class. This technique can help the students to comprehend the content of reading text in group. Beside that, they can share, cooperate, and support each other, increase learner participation, achive learning objective, and make the learning as enjoyable as well. What we are going to discuss in this papare is "how interactive activities are able to encourage the student's involvement in reading class?"

### **THE IMPORTANT OF TEACHING READING AND THE PURPOSE OF READING**

Reading is a dynamic case, most particularly with the readers' knowledge of the experiential content of the text (Nunan, 1991:70). From this explanation, reading is a process of mind to get information and knowledge with comprehend all of the reading text. According to Donald Leu (1987), reading is a developmental, interactive, and global process involving learned skills. The process, specifically incorporates an individual's linguistic knowledge, can be both positively and negatively influenced by non linguistic internal and external variables of factors. It means that reading is regarded as complex activity that involves various activities, such as knowing each symbol and analyzing the words into a meaning. Reading comprehension needs an active thinking process in mind to comprehend and understand what has been read (Falasifah, 2008:9).

Reading is a very important in a study and society, because there are many books, references, and instructions etc. which are written in English. The students who have lack of reading skill will have difficulty in comprehending all those references. The student who only confines from his or her teacher at class without having an effort to read many references will not pass in time and succed. According to Ramelan *et al.*, reading:

[...] is good activities for the learners; reading is also something crucial and indespensable since the success of his study depends for the greater part on his ability to read. If his reading skill is poor, he is very likely to fail in his study or at least he will have difficulty in making progress. On the other hand, if he has good reading ability, he will have a better chance to succeed in his study at school (Ramelan *et al.*, 1990:i).

Ramelan *et al.* (1990: ii) also said even after leaving school, reading will be of much use for students by reading a lot of literary works on various kinds of subject their mind will be more developed in maturity. Moreover, they will have to remember that there is no journey's end for education oneself.

From the statement above, we can conclude that reading is very important for students either at school or after they graduated from their study. As the students who get English lesson, reading is very important to English as a target language to build vocabulary. It is realized that reading skill or reading activity will open knowledge widely give more vocabularies and more information. Further, the purpose of reading is looking for and getting information from books or texts. In reading, the students have to understand the idea the context and meaning of the texts on the passages.

According to Anderson, there are some purposes of reading, those are: (1) *Reading for details or facts*: the students read the text to get or know the inversion that have been done by the writer or solve the problems of the writer; (2) *Reading for the main idea*: the students read the text book to know “ why is the topic is good or intersting, then the problems on the passage, and make summaries of the passage”; (3) *Reading for the squence or organization*: the students read the text to know “what is happening in each part of the passage in every episode and solving the problems of the text”; (4) *Reading to classify*: the students read the text to classify some information or action of the writer in the text or paragraph; (5) *Reading for inference*: the students read the text in order to find out the conclusion from the actions or idea in the text; and (6) *Reading to compare or contrast*: whether having similarity with the readers or even contrast (cited by Nurgiyantoro, 2001).

The one important thing that needs to be considered is the component of reading, we know the component will support the success in comprehending reading material and contributing in important way to read. According to Donald Leu (1987:30-38), there are six components of reading: (1) *Decoding knowledge*: refer to the knowledge readers' use the determining the oral equivalent of the written word; (2) *Vocabulary knowledge*: the knowledge about word meaning used to determine the appropriate meaning for a word in a particular context; (3) *Discourse knowledge*: it means knowledge of language organization at units beyond the single sentence level, includes the knowledge of structural organization of different types of writing; (4) *Readiness aspect*: it is traditionally refers to the student's ability to read and understand a particular selection; (5) *Effectiveness aspect*: in reading, the effectiveness aspect includes both interest and attitude, this is will increase motivation and facilitate reading; and (6) *Syntactic knowledge*: it means knowledge of word order rules that determine grammatical function, and sometimes the meaning and pronunciation of word.

## DEFINITION OF STUDENTS' INVOLVEMENT AND INTERACTIVE ACTIVITIES IN TEACHING READING

"Involvement" is the act teacher of sharing in the activities of a group; the teacher tried to increase his students' engagement in class activities (<http://www.the.free.dictionary.com/involvement>, 10/11/2011). "Involvement" is also state of being involved, take part in an activity or a situation (Hornby, 1994:663). Students' involvement refers to the students who are actively involved in every activity which is conducted in class. This means that the focus is on the students or learner centeredness.

Since learning English as a second language is an interactive process between teacher and learner, teachers need to acknowledge the complexity and variety of social and cultural needs of their students. Learner centeredness will be seen as a broadly based endeavor designed to gear language teaching in terms of both the content and the form of instruction, around the needs and characteristics of learners.

To make students more understand about the lesson, they need to be actively involved in the activities. It is because the students' involvement has a big contribution to the effectiveness of teaching and learning process. The students are more likely to learn if they take an active part in practice geared to reach an instructional objective.

Teacher tasks is to select activities through which students can master course objective: lessons, discussions, written exercises, reading assignments, test, group work, individualized instruction, field trips, observations, experiments, and other kinds of experiences maybe necessary for students to learn the things the teacher wants them to learn. The choice of strategies is affected by a number of considerations: the level of the objectives, the abilities of the students, teacher teaching skills and preferences, the size of the class, and many other factors.

However, since school is supposed to help students sharpen their higher-order thinking skills, strategies that promote active involvement in learning should be the goal of every teacher. Interactive lecturing and structured discussions are methods that promote a degree of student involvement. Students' involvement refers to the students who are actively involved in every activity which is conducted in class. This means that the focus is on the students or learner-centered.

***On the Encourage Students to Involve in the Class.*** How to encourage students' involvement in the class, here they are: (1) Ask friendly questions, "who can help me out on this?", listen carefully, and find something good to say about even "incorrect" or off – base replies; (2) One instructor suggests having students "take a minute" to list ideas, steps, nothing that one student have something written down, and it seems easier to engage students; (3) Have an open question or polls section at some point during each class; (4) Building expectation into the syllabus will help let the students know how important involvement is; (5) Give extra credit in a variety of ways, so that all personality types are accommodated; (6) At a recent discussion, teachers agreed that the key to promoting interaction is patience; and (7) Several teachers suggest paying particular attention to your verbal and nonverbal feedback.

***On the Causal Factor of Students' Involvement Low.*** According to Sudikin, at least there are three factors that cause students' involvement low in teaching and learning process, they are: (1) Students haven't been able to formulate his/her ideas independently; (2) Students haven't dared to express an opinion or idea for other; and (3) Students are not accustomed to compete in expressing their opinion or idea with their friends (cited in [http://www.dit.ie/DIT/lifelong/adult/adlearn\\_chars.pdf](http://www.dit.ie/DIT/lifelong/adult/adlearn_chars.pdf), 10/11/2011).

The mistakes above are not burdened for the students, but the teacher responsible that problem above. Sometime, teacher aware or unaware had implemented and authoritative and avoids questions from students as a recorder, an accept on, and a memorizing.

Based on the explanation above, the teacher need positive respond concretely and objectively to improve students' involvement in teaching-learning process through interactive activities. Strategies for increasing and maintaining active learners' involvement are important to establishing and effective classroom. Students who are actively involved in learning activities benefit more from learning time. Learner involvement includes time spent listening to the teacher, time spent attending to activities, and most importantly time actively participating in learning by asking and answering questions.

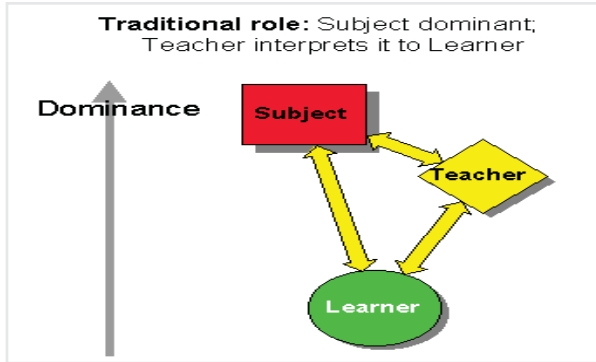
Active learning through paired and group activities during a class session can promote involvement in learning. Asking students to reflect on their learning experiences through students' feedback or learning journals also promotes greater involvement. Students who are learning English maybe reluctant to participate in classroom discussions and activities. A positive, supportive environment has tremendous impact on student comfortable, motivation, and success. These strategies can make classroom a more involved in class instead of just receiving the material passively, the students will be more interesting in following the lesson.

Meanwhile, interactive activities are an important aspect of distributed learning situation. Interactive activities for the classroom help to engage the students. Teacher use interactive activities in classrooms from preschool to university. Successful interactive should challenge the ways students think and encourage them to do a more in-depth study of the topic. Some interactive activities, such as simulation work best at a group level. Others can be done on a computer and allow students to work at their own level. Interactive activities for individual students are a great tool for students who are either ahead or behind the class (cited in "How to Create Interactive Activities for the Classroom?" at <http://www.ehow.com/how6678977create-interactive-activities.classroom.html>, 10/11/2011).

Furthermore, Michael Moore and Greg Kearsley (1996) suggest that there are three basic types of learner interaction. Each of these three types in an integral part of a comprehensive online course. In different situations, the balance between the three main components may be represented as an organism as a whole, especially with regard to its vital processes or functions through three points of a triangle of varying configuration.

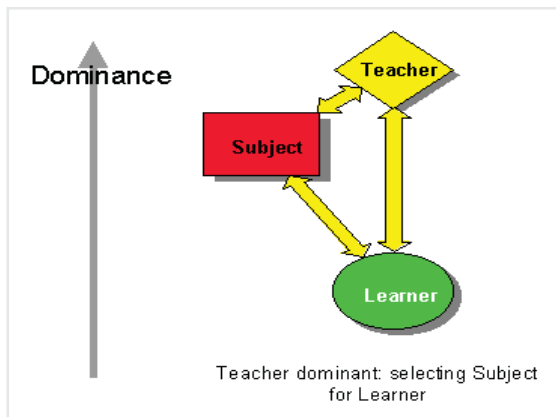
***First, Learner to Content.*** One basic model represents the common situation where the subject is at the top, indicating that it determines the structure of the

Teacher and Learner relationship, but the teacher comes next — the servant of the subject, but the master/mistress of the learner. Very broadly speaking, this may be consistent with cognitive approaches to learning. Let's see the diagram below:



Training is the planned process of engaging the learner with the content. Effective organization and presentation of the content will guide the learner as they process the information into their own schemas. Guidelines for supporting learner to content interaction include: (1) Provide an overview or visual map of the course content; (2) Organize materials to support the sequence of the course objectives; (3) Include the student guide that explains how to work through the content; (4) Link to additional or supplementary resources; and (5) Incorporate self-grading quizzes, thought provoking questions, or active practice exercise.

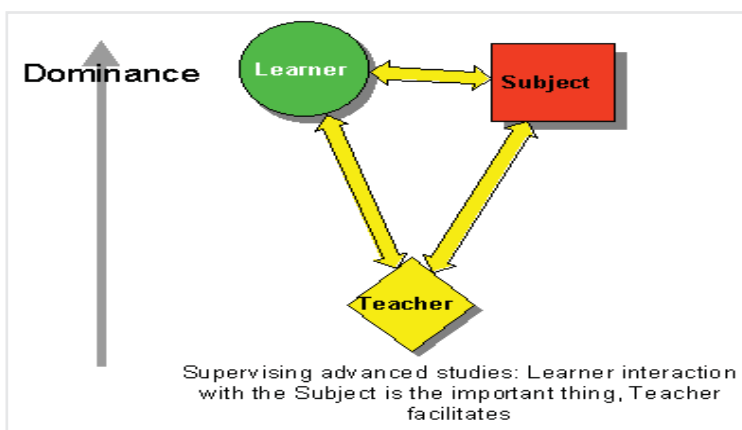
*Second, Learner to Instructor.* In another variant, on the other hand, the teacher is clearly in the dominant position, managing the relationship between the subject and the learner. Socially, either the interests of the learner or the demands of the subject or both may be subordinated to the requirements of the teacher. Let's see the diagram below:



The foundation for learner to instructor interactions is the inclusion of well-developed questions. These questions should guide learners from basic knowledge and recall of material to the application and synthesis of material. Thus, the questions should: (1) be planned and sequenced to support the learning objectives; (2) keep the learners alert and attentive stimulate thinking; (3) provide testing cues; (4) guide learner thoughts; and (5) help determine learners' levels of understanding.

*Third, Learner to Learner.* It can be contrasted with a further pattern, which is more analogous to supervision of a dissertation or thesis: the relationship between Learner and Subject is close, and the two are in a dominant position.

The role of the teacher is simply to provide a service to the learner's work with the subject. As you might expect, this is consistent with humanist approaches. Collaborative learning is powerful and enriching learning experience. Let's see the diagram below:



This type of interaction encourages the development of an online learning community that supports the sharing of goals, interest, and knowledge among learners. Web-based activities that support learner to learner interactions include: (1) Threaded discussions; (2) Group projects and presentations; (3) Serving as a discussion moderator; (4) Synchronous discussions or virtual chats; and (5) “Whiteboard” design project.

### TYPES AND STEPS OF INTERACTIVE ACTIVITIES

The chart below lists the activity types found in “Classic Classroom Activities Book: The Oxford Picture Dictionary Program” by: Renee Weiss, Jayme Adelson-Goldstein and Norma Shapiro (2006).

| Activity             | Grouping     | Description   |
|----------------------|--------------|---|
| Round -Table Label   | Small Groups | Students work cooperatively to label picture vocabulary items and check their accuracy.   |
| Survey               | Small Group  | Students ask and answer questions about personal preferences and work individually to record the result on a graph.   |
| Mixer                | Whole Class  | Students get acquainted as they ask and answer yes/no questions with six classmates and write the responses on an activity sheet.                                   |
| Information Exchange | Pairs        | An information gap activity where students ask and answer questions to the answers on complementary activity sheets and then work together to check their accuracy. |
| Double Crossword     | Pairs        | Students ask for and give clues to solve a crossword puzzle and then work together to check their work.   |
| Picture Differences  | Pairs        | Students study two almost identical scenes and work together to identify and list the differences on a chart.   |
| Drawing Dictation    | Pairs        | Students take turns describing and drawing pictures according to their partners' directions.  |
| Role Play            | Small Groups | Students read and assign roles and topic-related conversations, create original dialog, and act out a situation.  |
| Take a Stand         | Pairs        | Students read and analyze topic statements, choose a "pro" or "con" position, create original statements and discuss their opinions.                                |
| Board Game           | Small Groups | Students play a game to review previously learned vocabulary taken from an entire unit.   |

(source: <http://www.the.free.dictionary.com/involvement>, 10/11/ 2011).

These activities are appropriate to all levels with the exception of Role Play and Take a Stand which work best in Beginning-High or Intermediate-Low classes. Each activity is self-contained, so we may randomly choose any activity in the unit in *Classis Classroom Activities Book*, or we can work sequentially within each unit. Within each unit, the activities ordered from easy to more challenging in terms of student task and participation.

The Advantages of Using Interactive Activities teaching learning process are: (1) can create a presentation that will excite and engage students; (2) can increase learner participation; (3) achieve learning objectives; (4) make the learning as enjoyable as possible; and (5) can introduce teamwork skill.

Furthermore, there are 9 steps to using interactive activities successfully by Christie Sterns in "Training Make Cents Inc.: 425 Seriously Fun Ways to Enhance Learning" (2008). Those are:

*First, Having a clear objective for using the activity.* Interactivity increases the time needed to teach something, so it's not about being interactive just because books tell to you. Interactivity should have a purpose, which is to teach or reinforce an important learning point. With the exception of energizers, you should tie all



interactivity to your content and place it strategically in your agenda to drive home a learning message.

*Second, Preparing for the activity.* Read through the activity to make sure you understand the flow and purpose, and plan how you will introduce it.

*Third, Setting the mood.* Obtain the materials you need and arrange furniture and equipment to achieve your best results.

*Fourth, Beginning with enthusiasm and warmth.* Let participants know that they are in for some great learning while having fun.

*Fifth, Explaining the purpose of the activity.* Let them know why you are doing it and what kind of participation you expect, such as working alone or in teams.

*Sixth, Giving clear direction.* Clearly explain the steps in the activity to avoid frustration. If many steps are involved, especially if participants will be moving around the room, explain one step at a time and have the participants complete that action. If you provide all the instructions up front, by the time you finish, participants won't remember the first step and you will waste time repeating yourself.

*Seventh, Running the activities.* As the activity progresses, encourage and support the participant and answer the questions. Also watch body language and facial expressions to see their reactions to the activity. Are they laughing and having fun, or confused and frustrated? Intervene when necessary.

*Eighth, Watching the clock.* If an activity is timed, warn the participants every so often: "you have two minutes left". Then be sure to give them the full two minutes. Don't cut them off at one minute or let them have another five minutes.

*Ninth, Debriefing the activity.* Guide the participants to link what they learned to their behavior on the job. Answer questions and lead a discussion when appropriate.

## CONCLUSION

Interactive activities are an important aspect of distributed learning situation. Interactive activities for the classroom help to engage the students. Teacher use interactive activities in classrooms from pre-school to university.

There are three basic types of learner interaction. Each of these three types is an integral part of a comprehensive online course: (1) Learner to Content; (2) Learner to Instructor; and (3) Learner to Learner.

Types of interactive activity such as Round-Table Label, Survey, Mixer, Information Exchange, Double Crossword, Role play, Take a Stand, and Board Game are appropriate to all levels with the exception of Role Play and Take a Stand which work best in Beginning-High or Intermediate-Low classes.

The Advantages of Using Interactive Activities, we can: (1) create a presentation that will excite and engage students; (2) increase learner participation; (3) achieve learning objectives; (4) make the learning as enjoyable as possible; and (5) can introduce teamwork skill.

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