

EXTENT OF STUDENTS' ENGAGEMENT AND PERFORMANCE TO ACTIVE LEARNING APPROACH IN SENIOR HIGH SCHOOL ENGLISH SUBJECTS

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Abstract

This study investigated the impact of active learning approaches on the engagement and performance of Senior High School students in English subjects at PHINMA Araullo University. The research focused on various active learning techniques such as group collaboration, cooperative learning, gamification, peer learning, and project-based learning, hypothesizing that these methods foster deeper understanding, improved knowledge retention, and the development of 21st-century skills. Employing a descriptive-correlational design, the study utilized a survey questionnaire to collect data on student engagement and perceived performance in English subjects under these instructional methods. The questionnaire's reliability was confirmed through a Cronbach's Alpha test, indicating "Good" to "Excellent" internal consistency. Data analysis involved descriptive statistics (mean and standard deviation) and inferential statistics (Pearson product-moment correlation coefficient) to determine the relationship between engagement and performance. Preliminary findings suggest a high level of student engagement in active learning approaches within English subjects. The study anticipates revealing a significant positive correlation between student engagement in active learning and academic performance in English, highlighting the effectiveness of these methodologies in improving learning outcomes. The research aims to provide evidence-based recommendations for integrating and enhancing active learning strategies in the Senior High School curriculum at PHINMA Araullo University and contribute to the literature on active learning within the Philippine educational context.

Keywords: Active Learning; Student Engagement; Academic Performance; English Subjects; Senior High School; PHINMA Araullo University; Instructional Approaches; Student-Centered Learning; Descriptive-Correlational Research; Educational Outcomes.

1. Introduction

Active learning is an educational approach that actively involves students in their learning process through interactive methods, rather than passive listening. It emphasizes student engagement with the material, their peers, and instructors, promoting deeper understanding, improved retention, and the development of higher-order thinking skills such as analysis and evaluation.

Widely recognized in recent decades, active learning includes strategies such as collaborative work, educational games, peer teaching, and project-based learning. Rooted in the constructivist theory, it encourages students to connect new information with prior knowledge, fostering creativity and real-world problem-solving skills.

Despite its proven benefits, traditional lecture-based teaching remains dominant in many classrooms. Implementing active learning can be challenging but is essential for fostering student-centered learning, boosting motivation, and improving academic performance.

In English language instruction, especially at the senior high school level, active learning strategies like role-playing and peer discussions have been effective in enhancing fluency, confidence, and critical thinking. The researcher, with expertise in English education and innovative pedagogy, aims to explore how these strategies can meet the evolving needs of 21st-century learners and improve student outcomes.

2. Review of Related Literature

Effective active learning relies heavily on the active facilitation and guidance of teachers, who play a vital role in structuring classroom activities, monitoring student progress, answering questions, and providing personalized support. In active learning environments—where there is often no single focal point like a traditional whiteboard—teachers must be intentional in moving students through interactive tasks such as group discussions, problem-solving, and collaborative projects. Research by Freeman et al. (2014) shows that active learning significantly improves exam performance and reduces failure rates when instructors are actively involved in guiding the learning process. Similarly, institutions like Cornell University emphasize the need for teachers to design activities that target challenging concepts and connect clearly to learning objectives, reducing lecture time and increasing interactive engagement. Recent studies, such as those by

Alharbi and Alshammari (2025), further support the importance of teacher guidance in creating emotionally supportive classrooms that enhance motivation and participation. Teacher preparation programs also stress that students benefit most from active learning when instructors provide clear instructions, scaffolding, and feedback.

One-on-one or small group discussions are another powerful form of teacher support in active learning. These personalized interactions offer students individualized feedback, clarify misunderstandings, and deepen engagement. The Think-Pair-Share method, which often incorporates such one-on-one interactions, helps students reflect, discuss, and refine their understanding. While direct studies on one-on-one discussions are limited, broader research consistently highlights their positive impact on motivation, critical thinking, and student learning. Personalized dialogues also play a crucial role in fostering a sense of connection between the teacher and student, encouraging more meaningful participation.

Demonstrating concepts is another key strategy in active learning, particularly effective in STEM subjects. Teacher-led demonstrations help students visualize and apply abstract ideas through concrete examples, such as experiments, simulations, or guided practice. Studies show that demonstrations increase

both verbal and non-verbal participation, serving as anchors for discussion and collaborative learning. The integration of technology—such as multimedia, simulations, and AI tools—has further enhanced the impact of demonstrations by making them more interactive and accessible. Combining demonstrations with strategies like Think-Pair-Share, jigsaw activities, and real-time feedback mechanisms strengthens understanding and engagement.

In summary, research consistently supports the central role of teachers in facilitating active learning. Through guided activities, personalized discussions, and well-executed demonstrations—often enhanced by technology—teachers create dynamic learning environments that promote deeper understanding, motivation, and academic success.

3. Methodology

This study employed a descriptive-correlational research design to examine the relationship between student engagement and academic performance among Senior High School (SHS) students, particularly within the context of an Active Learning Approach. The descriptive aspect aimed to provide a detailed picture of the students' engagement and performance levels, while the correlational component investigated whether a statistical association existed between these variables, without implying causation. No experimental manipulation occurred; instead, data were collected and analyzed to explore natural relationships. Existing literature supported this design, highlighting the significant role of student engagement in enhancing academic achievement through active learning strategies that foster critical thinking and deeper understanding.

The respondents included 263 Grade 11 and Grade 12 students enrolled in English subjects at PHINMA Araullo University. Stratified random sampling was used to ensure each academic strand was proportionally represented, improving the objectivity and representativeness of the sample. Previous studies validated this approach, confirming that randomly selected and adequately sized samples provide reliable and generalizable findings in educational research.

For data collection, the study utilized a researcher-made survey questionnaire as the main instrument. It comprised four sections: demographic information, student engagement (based on both student and teacher actions), academic performance (measured through student grades), and a section on proposed action plans to enhance active learning strategies. Likert-scale items were used to gather quantifiable data suitable for statistical analysis, and participants rated their experiences on a scale from 1 to 4. The instrument aimed to comprehensively assess the relationship between active learning strategies, student engagement, and academic performance.

To ensure the instrument's validity and reliability, it underwent expert review for content validity by English teachers and Active Learning Coaches and was pilot tested with 30 students to confirm face validity. Feedback from both processes was used to refine the questionnaire. Reliability was measured using Cronbach's alpha, which resulted in a high value of 0.97, indicating excellent internal consistency.

Data collection took place during the second semester of the academic year 2024–2025. The validated questionnaire was distributed via Google Forms through Facebook Messenger group chats. Prior to distribution, approval to conduct the study was obtained from the school's administration, and participants were assured of the confidentiality of their responses. The researchers stratified the student population of 672 by academic strand to ensure fair representation.

The data analysis involved several steps. Descriptive statistics (frequencies, percentages, mean, and median) were used to summarize demographic profiles and levels of engagement. Engagement was analyzed across student and teacher action indicators using Likert-scale data. Spearman's rank correlation coefficient was applied to determine the relationship between demographic factors, engagement levels, and academic performance, especially since the data were ordinal and not normally distributed. Grades were assessed using the DepEd grading scale. Finally, based on the findings, a proposed action plan was developed to sustain and improve the active learning approach, with the goal of enhancing both student engagement and academic achievement in SHS English subjects.

4. Result and Discussion

This portion of the study gives the summary, conclusions, and the researcher's recommendations based on the results of the study.

Summary of Findings

The study involving 263 Senior High School students at PHINMA Araullo University revealed key insights into their demographic profile, engagement levels, academic performance, and the relationship between these variables. Most students (61.22%) were aged 17–18, and a majority were female (65.02%). The Humanities and Social Sciences (HUMSS) strand had the highest representation (38.02%), while GASEDUC had the least (0.76%). Additionally, 74.52% were enrolled in the core English subject, COR 002.

Students reported a high level of engagement, with most strongly agreeing on their participation in both student and teacher actions. "Listening" and "Individual Thinking" were the highest-rated student actions, while "Moving/Guiding," "Demonstrate," and "Follow-Up Questions" ranked highest among teacher actions.

This suggests a strong and effective implementation of active learning strategies. Statistical analysis showed significant negative correlations between age and certain engagement actions. As students aged, their levels of "Listening," "Individual Thinking," and perception of teacher actions like "Answering Questions" and "Moving/Guiding" slightly declined. However, no significant relationship was found between engagement and variables such as sex, academic strand, or English subject.

In terms of academic performance, the results were outstanding. The average grade was 92, with 83% of students achieving "Outstanding" (90–100), and the remaining 17% achieving "Very Satisfactory" (85–89). Notably, no student scored below 85, reflecting consistently high academic achievement.

A statistically significant positive relationship was found between the extent of student engagement and academic performance. Active learning behaviors such as participating in discussions, completing worksheets, asking and predicting questions, and taking part in quizzes strongly correlated with higher academic outcomes. These results affirm the effectiveness of active learning and its impact on student success.

To sustain and enhance these outcomes, the study proposes the Active Learning Synergy Program (ALSP), which includes regular teacher training, coaching, and best practice sharing. The program aims to build a collaborative, engagement-focused environment that continuously supports student achievement through effective active learning strategies.

Conclusions

1. The typical respondent in this study is a 17-18 year old female Senior High School student enrolled in the HUMSS strand and taking the COR 002 English subject. This demographic composition indicates that the findings largely reflect the experiences and perceptions of a predominantly female, slightly older group of students within a specific academic track in their core English coursework.
2. Students consistently exhibit a high level of engagement in active learning approaches, both through their own actions and in response to teacher strategies. Students "Strongly Agree" that they actively participate in listening, individual thinking, and various in-class activities like discussions and worksheet use. Similarly, teachers are perceived as highly effective in employing active learning methods such as clear lectures, real-time writing, posing and answering questions, providing one-on-one discussions, and demonstrating concepts. This indicates a robust and mutually reinforcing environment of active learning within the Senior High School English subjects.
3. While sex, academic strand, and the specific English subject taken do not significantly influence students' engagement, age emerged as a factor. Specifically, older students demonstrated a slightly lower tendency to engage in active listening, individual thinking, answering questions posed by the teacher,

and perceiving the effectiveness of teachers' moving/guiding actions. This suggests that as students age, certain engagement behaviors in active learning environments may require more targeted strategies to maintain high levels of participation.

4. The Senior High School students in this study showcased impressive academic performance, with their average grade of 92 firmly positioning the group within the "Outstanding" category. This high average reflects a profound understanding and mastery of their subjects. A significant 83% of the students achieved grades between 90 and 100, further emphasizing their strong academic capabilities. The remaining students, while a smaller group, still demonstrated excellence by earning scores ranging from 85 to 89, placing them in the "Very Satisfactory" range. It is particularly noteworthy that not a single student received a grade below 85, meaning no one fell into the "Satisfactory," "Fairly Satisfactory," or "Did Not Meet Expectations" categories as per the DEPED grading system. This consistent pattern of high achievement across the entire student body indicates that they not only met but considerably exceeded the minimum academic standards, reflecting positively on their dedication and the quality of instruction they received.
5. This emphasizes that student academic performance is significantly enhanced by both active student engagement and effective teacher actions. Students who actively participate in learning through listening, thinking, questioning, discussions, presentations, and regular assessments consistently show improved outcomes. Simultaneously, strategic teaching methods—including dynamic lecturing, real-time writing, targeted questioning, personalized guidance, and clear demonstrations—also significantly contribute to student success. Ultimately, the findings highlight a powerful, significant relationship where engaged learners, supported by responsive and well-executed teaching practices, lead to optimal educational achievement.
6. Based on the observed high levels of engagement and performance, coupled with specific areas for nuanced improvement (e.g., age-related engagement), the Active Learning Synergy Program (ALSP) is a well-justified and comprehensive proposal. It aims to build upon existing strengths by promoting continuous professional development for teachers (training, best practice sharing) and addressing potential engagement gaps through a dedicated research and evaluation component. The ALSP is designed to ensure that active learning translates not just into perceived engagement but into consistently improved and sustained academic outcomes, while also fostering a deeper understanding of underlying factors influencing engagement.

Recommendations

1. Given that the majority of respondents are 17-18 year old females primarily from the HUMSS strand and enrolled in COR 002, it is recommended that active learning strategies be tailored to be gender-inclusive and age-appropriate, considering the cognitive development and learning preferences of this dominant age group. Furthermore, since COR 002 is the core English subject for a substantial majority of students, intervention and enhancement programs for active learning should prioritize this course to maximize reach and impact. While acknowledging the presence of students from diverse academic strands, particularly the prevalence of HUMSS, teaching materials and examples should be designed to resonate broadly while also considering the unique interests of students from other, less represented strands to ensure overall engagement and relevance.
2. Given the consistently high levels of student engagement across both student and teacher actions, particularly in "Listening," "Individual Thinking," "Moving/Guiding," "Demonstrate," and "Follow-Up Questions," it is recommended to further leverage these strengths by incorporating more opportunities for student-led activities that require deep listening and individual thought. Professional development for teachers should continue to emphasize and refine strategies related to dynamic classroom presence, effective demonstrations, and skillful follow-up questioning, as these are highly valued by students. Furthermore, explore how the perceived effectiveness of these teacher actions can be explicitly integrated into the design of new active learning initiatives to maintain and even enhance the already strong engagement observed.
3. Given the negative correlation between increased age and engagement in "Listening," "Individual Thinking," "Answering Questions," and "Moving/Guiding," it is crucial to develop targeted interventions specifically designed to maintain and boost active participation among older students in these areas. While sex, academic strand, and English subject do not significantly impact engagement, the age-related decline suggests a need for tailored active learning strategies that cater to the evolving learning styles and potential disengagement factors in older adolescents, ensuring that all age groups remain highly involved in the active learning process.
4. Given the exceptionally high academic performance of the Senior High School students, with an average final grade of 92 ("Outstanding") and no student scoring below 85, it is recommended to identify and document the instructional practices and active learning strategies that have contributed to this remarkable success. The institution should aim to maintain these high standards by continuing to foster an environment that supports deep learning and mastery, potentially through peer mentoring programs where high-achieving students can support others, and by exploring opportunities for advanced or

enriched content to challenge the consistently outstanding performers.

5. Given the consistent and statistically significant positive relationship between active student engagement (including listening, individual thinking, participation in various activities, and asking/predicting questions) and improved academic performance, it is highly recommended to continuously integrate and expand these active learning methodologies across all subjects. Educators should emphasize and provide ample opportunities for retrieval practice through regular tests and quizzes, as this has also shown a strong positive link to performance. The institution should further reinforce these findings by promoting teaching strategies that encourage deeper student involvement and metacognitive awareness, ensuring that the proven benefits of active engagement directly translate into sustained academic success.
6. Given the proposed Active Learning Synergy Program (ALSP), which includes "Regular Training and Coaching Sessions" and "Best Practice Sharing Sessions," immediate implementation is recommended. It's crucial to prioritize the research component to understand age-related declines in engagement. This research will allow for tailored training and coaching sessions that directly address these specific engagement issues. Additionally, fostering a strong culture of collaboration through best practice sharing sessions will ensure continuous improvement and adaptation of active learning strategies, ultimately strengthening the connection between increased student engagement and improved academic performance.

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