TEACHING YOUNG LEARNERS WITH THE HELP OF ACTIVITY- BASED LEARNING

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Abstract: *this article deals with teaching English language to young learners through activity-based learning with the intention to provide communicative language teaching environment to young learners. It helps to improve language learning skills of young learners highlighting motivation to learn foreign languages through communication oriented various skill-based activities from early ages.*

Key words: *young learners, learning environment , second language learning, role plays, attention span, energetic, kinaethetic, hands-on activities, problem-solving initiatives, group discussions, role-playing, projects.*

As it's known, English as a global language, spoken extensively throughout the world. In a modernized century the necessity for non-native speakers to learn English from early ages is undeniable. For ESL (English as a Second Language) learners, early and active engagement with the language, guided by a teacher, is crucial for acquiring a second or foreign language. English young learner teaching programs assist these non-native speakers in becoming comfortable with learning targeted language. This purposeful guidance can be highlighted in their reading, listening comprehension, speaking fluency, pronunciation as well as in writing skills. ESL educators should prioritize effective teaching methods and strategies that foster successful English language learning environment during early stage of education. Implementing activity based real-life modeled communication tasks in primary context makes the language learning relevant and enjoyable for young learners.

Understanding activity-based learning is significant for creating the appropriate social environment; however, in connection with this knowledge, the physical environment must be well-thought-out to support the transactions that are intended to take place. Building on Lave and Wenger's Situated Learning: Legitimate peripheral participation (1991), situated learning theory provides insight to how the physical environment may be created to afford optimal learning experiences.

The activity-based learning approach aims to provide engaging and challenging learning materials and flexible space for learning through activity. The main feature of this approach is that learning is self-initiated, independent and at an individual pace.

Activity-based Learning (ABL) is, most simply, creating tasks, situations, activities, and other instructional ways to guide children to acquire, understand, and apply new information and skills that will help them in their studies and their lives. ABL expects learners not just to think but to do, feel,and have emotions. It involves them practically, personally, and socially. The research is clear that children learn better when they learn with *all five senses*, they can *handle and apply* their lessons, and they are motivated with a clear *sense of purpose*.

Activity-based learning occurs when:

- knowledge is mutually constructed with others;
- learning is collaborative and co-constructed between the learner and his or her social environment;
- motivation results from negotiations with others and from the socio-historical resources available in the physical environment that supports both the collective & individual development;
- activities are authentic and are planned to engage learners so that they will work with a variety of materials and share with others as they develop meaningful ideas and identities of themselves;
- peers (the other learners who are part of the social environment) contribute to knowledge construction by sharing definitions as well as identifying the affordances within the tasks-at- hand;
- the teacher is viewed as a mediator, facilitator, coach, mentor, and actuator who participates with the less experienced learners co-constructing knowledge.

The responsibility of the *classroom instructor* within ABL is to: create meaningful, interesting, active learning tasks, situations, and other opportunities for learners; provide clear, precise instructions and goals for a learning task; make sure there are suitable, safe conditions and enough of the necessary materials to perform the task; monitor and provide useful feedback to students as they progress in their work; guide students to collaborate effectively; support learners in assessing their work—both the process and the final results, or product; and more.

Engaging young learners through role-plays, songs, chants, tongue twisters gamification and worksheets encourages implicit learning. Incorporating photos,

illustrations, and real-life contexts enhances language acquisition, allowing young learners to learn language input more effectively.

According to scientists, such as, John Dewey emphasized the importance of learning through experience and the active participation of students in their learning processes.

Piaget's work on cognitive development supports the idea that children learn best through hands-on activities as they build knowledge through interaction with their environment.

Lew Vygotsky highlighted the social aspects of learning, emphasizing the role of interaction in the construction of knowledge.

David Kolb developed the Experiential Learning Theory, presenting a cyclical model of learning that involves concrete experience, reflective observation, abstract conceptualization, and active experimentation.

Robert Gagne's work on instructional design includes the idea of learning through active engagement and promoting different types of learning activities to enhance understanding.

Barbara Rogoff's research focuses on guided participation and the social context of learning, aligning with the principles of Activity Based Learning.

Marilyn Fleer has contributed to early childhood education research, exploring how play-based and activity-based approaches can enhance learning outcomes.

Richard Millwood's research emphasizes technology's role in supporting Activity Based Learning, blending traditional approaches with modern tools for better engagement.

Anne McKeough has studied the impact of ABL in literacy education, examining how interactive and participatory approaches can improve reading and writing skills.

Howard Gardner known for his Multiple Intelligences theory, Gardner's work encourages educational practices that recognize different ways of learning, supporting activity-based approaches in the classroom.

These scientists have significantly contributed to the theoretical foundations and practical implementations of activity-based learning across various educational contexts.

As it’s notable that activity-based teaching and learning is an educational strategy that focuses on engaging learners through their active involvement in various learning tasks. This approach encourages learners to take an active role rather than

merely absorbing information passively. The main concept is to transition from traditional teacher-led instruction to experiences that center around the learners.

Activity-based learning adds a kinaethetic element to the learning process also called tactile learning which is an active learning style in which learners carry out physical activities to learn language concepts rather than just listening to a lecture listening or watching demonstrations.

Vernon (2009) suggested that games are a powerful method for teaching vocabulary to young learners. Children engage more actively and focus better when they enjoy themselves in the classroom setting, leading to improved feelings and performance both during and after the game. In this teaching method, learners participate in hands-on activities, problem-solving initiatives, group discussions, role-playing, projects, experiments, and other interactive tasks. These activities aim to enhance critical thinking, creativity, and problem-solving abilities, leading to a more profound understanding of the material.

While teachers acting as facilitators, help and support learners as they delve into concepts and use their knowledge in real-world contexts. This method creates a positive learning atmosphere where learners engage, collaborate, and gain insights from one another's experiences. The advantages of activity-based teaching and learning encompass heightened learner engagement, better information retention, improved communication and interpersonal skills, and the cultivation of a lasting enthusiasm for learning. By encouraging active learning opportunities, this approach empowers learners to become independent and self-motivated learners, better prepared to face real-life challenges.

The importance of teachers in effectively implementing activity-based teaching and learning is highlighted by various research studies and educational experts. Hmelo-Silver (2004) notes that teachers are key facilitators in activity-based learning settings, guiding students through different tasks and fostering a deeper understanding. Kirschner et al. (2006) point out that effective teachers customize activities to meet the individual needs of learners, promoting inclusivity and improving learning results. Harlen (2006) underscores the role of teachers in establishing a safe and supportive learning environment, encouraging learner involvement, and offering constructive feedback. McDevitt and Ormrod (2013) further assert that ongoing professional development for teachers is crucial for the successful implementation of activity-based learning, as it demands specialized skills

and knowledge. Ultimately, by acting as role models and motivating learners to embrace active learning, teachers significantly influence the transformative power of activity-based teaching and learning in the global education landscape.

Innovative teaching methods like activity-based learning, project-based learning, flipped classrooms, and experiential learning have become effective strategies to develop essential skills and competencies (Hmelo-Silver, 2004; UNESCO, 2017).

Activity-based learning promotes active learner engagement through hands-on activities and practical experiences, which lead to deeper understanding and improved retention of knowledge (Kirschner et al., 2006). Utmost Activity-based learning methods associated with Common Learner-Centered Instruction include:

Audio-visual aids, demonstration, group discussion & presentation, mastery learning, role-playing, thinking maps, drama, case study / research, think-pair-share, ICT-assisted learning.

The primary characteristics associated with Common Learner-Centered methods include:

- non-text-based ways to engage with the content and techniques from the official curriculum;
- the availability and use of materials brought into class from the local setting;
- learners' applying lessons in ways that relate practically to their lives and local context;
- learners' bringing new information, insights, and perspectives, to their formal lessons; and
- learners' representing what they have learned in creative ways.

Some basic Activity-based l methods associated with *Learning* include:

Game-based learning	Nature-based learning	Community-based learning
Music-based learning	Family-based learning	Banking and shopping
Project-based learning	Expert visits	Technology-based learning
Excursion/Field		

Project-based learning allows learners to tackle real-world projects, fostering collaboration with peers to devise creative solutions to complex issues.

Flipped classrooms utilize technology to present instructional content outside the classroom, freeing up in-class time for discussions, activities, and tailored support.

Experiential learning provides learners with immersive experiences in real-life situations, enabling the application of theoretical knowledge to practical contexts.

In conclusion, activity-based teaching and learning offer enhanced opportunities and increased motivation that foster young learners' engagement and deepen their understanding of the subject matter. By actively involving learners in hands-on experiences, encouraging critical thinking, and providing personalized learning opportunities, this approach cultivates a dynamic and enriching educational environment. This prepares promising learners to become lifelong learners and adept problem solvers from early ages in an ever-changing world.

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