

Full Length Research

Exploring the Practices and Strategies of Active Learning in Higher Education

¹Bahaa Subhi Razia and ²Bahaa Subhi Awwad

¹Palestine Technical University – Kadoorie, Department of Industrial and Logistics Management, Palestine.

E-mail: bahaa.razia@ptuk.edu.ps

²Palestine Technical University – Kadoorie, Faculty of Business and Economics, Department of Computerized Banking and Financial Sciences, Ramallah, Palestine.

Corresponding author's Email: dr.awwadb@hotmail.com and b.aboawwad@ptuk.edu.ps

Orcid: <https://orcid.org/0000-0001-6356-9956>

Accepted 25 April 2024

Active learning has gained increasing educational, and research interest. Active learning has a broad definition. This paper provides a comprehensive guide for instructors who aim to engage their students in the learning process. It examines the transition from passive to engaging approaches in higher education by examining active learning practices. It uses a mixed-methods approach in universities in the Arab area to collect data through surveys and interviews. The growth of communication skills, planning obstacles, and student engagement are highlighted in the qualitative findings. Active learning's effectiveness is dependent on increasing engagement, as demonstrated by a positive correlation between critical thinking and quantitative analysis conducted with SPSS. Time management and skill regulation are two difficulties. Successful implementation requires careful planning, alternative assessment, and continuous skill development. The study focuses on the significance of institutional support to assist teachers in reaping the benefits of active learning.

Keywords: active learning, Higher Education, Strategies.

Cite This Article As: Bahaa, S. R., Bahaa, S.A. (2024). Exploring the Practices and Strategies of Active Learning in Higher Education. *Inter. J. Acad. Res. Educ. Rev.* 12(2): 27-29

INTRODUCTION

The concepts of teaching and learning have been highlighted in several new studies. According to Harland (2012), a systematic examination of the ideas and pedagogical conditions for their implementations is necessary to achieve the purposes of teaching and achieve what can be done in academic work. In this sense, curriculum refers to the tasks, activities, interactions, and dialogue that take place in the classroom (Sasikumar,2014). Active learning is considered an educational strategy that assists students in applying academic skills, increasing student engagement and improving student critical thinking for students. This research will present and employ numerous active learning strategies in higher education

(Vera, 2022). Active learning strategies encourage students to gain and retain knowledge through participation and engagement in the learning process. On the other hand, Traditional or Passive learning focuses on providing students with knowledge through lectures that adversely affect understanding and problem-solving skills (Vera, 2022). Active learning in the classroom has become widely accepted and required to increase the effectiveness of student engagement and sharing of ideas. This can range from small or large groups working together involving discussion, writing, reflection or problem-solving. Vera (2022) indicated that besides the importance of face-to-face interactions between students, recent technology has delivered new opportunities for communication and cooperation outside the physical classroom.

Active Learning Strategies and Implementation

Hartikainen et al. (2019) stated that the processes of active learning are greatly associated with an approach to learning rather than an approach to instruction. Therefore, several strategies of problem-solving, reflective decisions or group discussion can be considered effective strategies for achieving active learning (Vera, 2022). This is crucial as there is a need to consider a shift in the traditional approach when adopting an active learning approach (Arcos-Alonso et al., 2022). Active learning practices can be effectively implemented by adopting different theories including Social learning and Constructivism (Kudryashova et al., 2016). Social learning theory encourages students to work together by providing opportunities for individuals to interact, observe, collaborate and share knowledge. However, constructivism theory allows individuals to construct their understanding by participating, communicating, and engaging in discussions and problem-solving activities. Applying these two theories in higher education is crucial to achieving social and cognitive observation and interaction.

This results in a more successful implementation of active learning processes and enhanced student engagement. The most common strategies to achieve active learning in higher education are: the use of technology, project-based learning, flipped classroom, inquiry-based learning, and collaborative learning (Vera, 2023). To achieve effectiveness in active learning, especially in higher education, academics and practitioners need professional and constant training and development. This can be achieved by organising seminars and training programmes that are vital for improving communication and engaging skills. It is also important for administrators to provide essential resources and tools to academics to assist them in improving their teaching skills and creating a dynamic environment. The students stand to gain the most from this investment in the long run since they get better educational experiences, better academic results, and vital skills that will help them succeed.

Methodology and Sampling

This study employed a mixed-methods approach to collect data including semi-structured interviews and questionnaires with predetermined answers (Lai and Waltman, 2008). This helps in enhancing the quality of the data gathered and ensuring that respondents provide comprehensive responses. The interview was conducted to provide in-depth insights, thoughts and patterns that can assist in establishing the questionnaire. The questionnaire was then designed using the existing literature and the collected data from the qualitative approach. The study selected the top 10 performing

universities in the Arab region according to the QS World University Rankings 2024. Qualitative data was collected from 20 academics and highly experienced participants who were then interviewed. The data collected was transcribed and then analysed and themed using content analysis. Finally, quantitative data was collected using a questionnaire distributed to 200 respondents. This data was then analysed using SPSS.

RESULTS

The findings from the interviews provided several patterns and thoughts. This includes student engagement, challenges affecting active learning, planning needed to achieve active learning, authentic assessment, and finally communication skills. The data from the questionnaire assist in providing more in-depth and specific findings. It can be observed that there is a positive relationship between student engagement and critical thinking. Creating more engaged learners are a key goal of active learning approaches.

This approach eliminates the need for students to learn passively through observation. Instead, they take an active approach to a topic that is relevant to their interests and engage in relevant, real-world conversations. This means that improving student engagement is important in achieving effectiveness in active learning. There are some barriers and difficulties that affect the implementation of active learning. These challenges include time management and insufficient regulation skills. Concerning planning, the results stated that there is a need for careful and effective planning when implementing an active learning approach. The results also suggested that moving from traditional assessment to different assessment methods is important to meet the active learning principles. Finally, the results show that there is a need for continuous development of communication skills in terms of written, visual, verbal and nonverbal skills. This leads to achieving effectiveness in an active learning approach and enhances student engagement. To summarize, teachers must possess effective communication skills to build a strong learning community. To create a positive learning environment, teachers can employ crucial communication skills such as active listening, effective questioning, clear and concise language, active engagement, and positive reinforcement. Teachers can foster a positive learning community and help students understand the subject matter better by incorporating communication skills into their teaching methods.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, active learning is widely regarded as a successful strategy for raising student engagement,

developing critical thinking and problem-solving skills, and fostering the development of general competencies. It is crucial to remember that putting active learning into practice might be difficult. Therefore, participants have to be aware of the challenges and potential obstacles involved in implementing active learning practices in the classroom. If educational institutions want to successfully integrate active learning, they should think about giving teachers assistance, tools, and training. Active learning strategies can be implemented more successfully by practitioners and improve students' educational experiences and outcomes by addressing the obstacles and offering the required assistance. It can be concluded that there is a positive impact of active learning due to its ability to improve a variety of educational facets. Although there are implementation problems, identifying and resolving these issues might help to successfully integrate active learning in the classroom and realise its potential benefits.

REFERENCES

- Arcos-Alonso, A., Garcia-Alvarez, M & Azpuru, A. G., (2022) Macroeconomics and active methodologies in higher education: A possible pairing and a possible binomial, *Cypriot Journal of Educational Science*, 17(1), pp 193-204. <https://doi.org/10.18844/cjes.v17i1.6695>
- Harland, T. (2012). *University teaching: An introductory guide*. USA: Routledge
- Hartikainen, S., HRintala, H., Pylväs, L. And Nokelainen, P. (2019) The Concept of Active Learning and the Measurement of Learning Outcomes: A Review of Research in Engineering Higher Education. *Educ. Sci.* 9(276); 1-19. <https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/EJ1238190.pdf>
- Kudryashova, A., Gorbatova, T., Rybushkina, S. And Ivanova, E. (2016). Teacher's Roles to Facilitate Active Learning. *Mediterranean Journal of Social Sciences*, 7(1), pp. 460-466. https://www.researchgate.net/publication/289365649_Teacher's_Roles_to_Facilitate_Active_Learning#fullTextFileContent
- Lai, E. R., and Waltman, K. (2008) Test preparation: Examining teacher perceptions and practices. *Educational Measurement: Issues and Practice*, 27(2), pp 28-45.
- Sasikumar, N. (2014). 'Impact of active learning strategies to enhance student performance', *Innov are Journal of Education*, 2(1), pp. 2-4.
- Vera, F. (2022). Implementación de metodologías activas en la educación superior mexicana: Análisis desde la perspectiva docente. *Revista Electrónica Transformar*, 3(3), pp 47-59. <https://revistatransformar.cl/index.php/transformar/articloe/view/66>
- Vera, F. (2023) Exploring the Synergy between Active Learning and Constructivism. *Allagi Observatory*. <https://allagi.cl/669-2/>