

ABSTRACT

Dini Nurizzati (2025). Revealing Pre-Service Teachers' Icebreaker Activity in EFL Classroom to Foster Students' Emotional and Behavioural Engagement: A Narrative Inquiry

This study reveals icebreaker activities in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) classrooms, focusing on pre-service teachers' knowledge, perceptions and challenges in implementing these strategies during their teaching practicum. Icebreakers are already recognized as an effective strategy and tool for reducing anxiety, capturing students' attention, and fostering a supportive learning environment. This research is primarily for pre-service teachers who are still developing their classroom management skills, icebreakers can serve as a strategy to foster behavioural and emotional engagement.

The primary aim of this research is to explore how pre-service teachers understand and implement icebreakers as an engagement strategy and to identify the difficulties they encounter in the process. By examining their perspectives, the study aims to provide insights into the perspectives of PPL pre-service teachers, particularly in preparing future educators to manage classrooms effectively and encourage student engagement.

Adopting a qualitative design with a narrative inquiry approach, the data were collected through semi-structured interviews and supported by classroom video documentation of teaching practicum sessions at two junior high schools in Bandung. Analyzing the data involves first examining the raw data, then identifying elements within participants' stories, sequencing these elements, and finally presenting a retold story that conveys participants' experiences. This methodology allowed for an in-depth exploration of the implicit grammar teaching processes and their effectiveness.

Findings reveal that pre-service teachers initially understood icebreakers through prior experiences as students and later deepened their understanding of these activities in their university coursework. They perceived icebreakers as valuable strategies to energize students, reduce tension, and create a lively classroom atmosphere that promotes participation. The study also found that icebreakers enhanced both behavioral engagement through active participation and attention, as well as emotional engagement through enthusiasm and enjoyment. However, participants reported challenges, including limited time, student resistance, and difficulties aligning activities with lesson objectives.

Keywords: Icebreaker, Pre-service Teachers, Student Engagement, EFL Classroom