

ABSTRACT

INVESTIGATING ICE BREAKING TECHNIQUES IN EFL LESSONS TO PROMOTE DEEP LEARNING

The implementation of deep learning in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) classrooms emphasizes meaningful, mindful, and joyful learning experiences. One instructional strategy that has the potential to support these principles is the use of ice-breaking activities. However, previous studies have mostly discussed ice breaking and deep learning separately, and limited research has investigated how ice-breaking techniques reflect deep learning principles in EFL classrooms. Therefore, this study aimed to identify the ice-breaking techniques used by EFL teachers and to analyze how the principles of deep learning are reflected in those techniques.

This study employed a qualitative case study approach. The research was conducted at an integrated Islamic junior high school in Bandung, Indonesia. The participants were two English teachers who were selected through purposive sampling. Data were collected through four classroom observations, semi-structured interviews, and documentation. The data were analyzed using qualitative data analysis involving data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing.

The findings revealed that the teachers implemented four types of ice-breaking techniques, namely game-based activities, movement-based activities, question-based activities, and short communicative activities. These techniques were implemented at different stages of the lesson, including the pre-learning, whilst-learning, and post-learning stages, depending on the learning objectives and classroom conditions. Furthermore, the findings showed that the implementation of these techniques reflected the principles of deep learning. Meaningful learning was reflected through activities that connected students' prior knowledge with the lesson content. Mindful learning was demonstrated through students' active participation, collaboration, concentration, and engagement during classroom activities. Joyful learning was reflected in the enjoyable classroom atmosphere created through games, movement, rewards, and collaborative activities, which encouraged students to participate enthusiastically.

In conclusion, well-designed ice-breaking activities function not only as classroom energizers but also as instructional strategies that support the implementation of deep learning in EFL classrooms. When aligned with learning objectives, these activities promote meaningful understanding, active participation, and positive learning experiences.

Keywords: ice-breaking techniques, deep learning, EFL classroom, meaningful learning, mindful learning, joyful learning.