



TEACHING PRACTICE EXPERIENCE AT INSAN KAMIL NATURAL MIDDLE SCHOOL: INCREASING STUDENT ENGAGEMENT THROUGH INTERACTIVE ENGLISH LEARNING

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Abstract

Teaching practice is an essential component of teacher education programs because it provides prospective teachers with opportunities to apply pedagogical theories and develop professional competencies in real classroom settings. This study aimed to describe teaching practice experiences and examine students' perceptions of interactive English learning activities in improving student engagement at SMP Alam Insan Kamil. The study employed a descriptive qualitative approach. Data were collected through classroom observations, reflective notes, teaching documentation, and a questionnaire distributed to three eighth-grade students. The teaching practice was conducted in three sessions focusing on self-introduction, daily activities, and classroom vocabulary. The findings revealed that students showed positive perceptions toward the interactive learning activities. Most students agreed that group work, visual media, and interactive classroom activities made English learning more enjoyable, understandable, and motivating. Furthermore, the students reported increased participation, interest, and confidence in learning English. The findings indicate that implementing interactive teaching strategies can positively influence student engagement and create meaningful learning experiences. Therefore, prospective teachers are encouraged to incorporate interactive activities and relevant learning materials to promote active participation in English classrooms.

Keywords: *Teaching practice, interactive learning, student engagement, English teaching, students' perceptions*

INTRODUCTION

English is one of the most important international languages and plays a significant role in communication, education, and professional development. Therefore, English is taught as a foreign language in Indonesian schools to equip students with the necessary language skills for global communication. However, many students still face difficulties in learning English due to low motivation, limited vocabulary, and a lack of interest in classroom activities.

Student engagement is considered an essential factor in successful language learning because engaged students tend to participate actively and achieve better learning outcomes. According to Dewaele and Li (2021), students' engagement in the classroom is closely related to enjoyable learning experiences and positive interactions with teachers. Similarly, Zhou et al. (2022) state that student engagement involves behavioral, emotional, and cognitive participation during the learning process.

One of the approaches that can increase students' engagement is interactive learning. Interactive learning encourages students to participate actively through discussions, group work, games, and other collaborative activities. Hiver, Mercer, and Al-Hoorie (2020) argue that interactive learning environments can improve students' motivation and create meaningful learning experiences. Furthermore, Xie and Derakhshan (2021) emphasize that positive teacher-student interactions and supportive classroom environments contribute significantly to students' participation and interest in learning.

Teaching practice is an important component of teacher education because it provides prospective teachers with opportunities to apply theoretical knowledge in real classroom situations and develop professional competencies. Through teaching practice, prospective teachers learn how to manage classrooms, implement appropriate teaching strategies, and respond to students' needs effectively. The experience also enables prospective teachers to reflect on the effectiveness of their teaching methods and identify factors that influence students' engagement.

During the teaching practice conducted at SMP Alam Insan Kamil, the researcher observed that some students initially showed limited interest in learning English. However, students became more enthusiastic when interactive activities, group work, and visual media were implemented during the lessons. To support these observations, a questionnaire was distributed to several students to identify their perceptions of the interactive learning activities.

Therefore, this study aims to describe the teaching practice experience at SMP Alam Insan Kamil and to examine students' perceptions of interactive English learning activities in improving their engagement in the classroom. The findings of this study are expected to provide insights for prospective teachers regarding the importance of implementing interactive teaching strategies to create a meaningful and engaging English learning environment.

METHOD

This study used a descriptive qualitative approach to describe students' teaching experiences and perceptions of interactive English learning activities. The study was conducted at SMP Alam Insan Kamil with eighth-grade students during three learning sessions held on May 22, June 5, and June 12, 2026. The study participants were three eighth-grade students selected to provide feedback on the learning activities. Data were collected through classroom observations, reflective notes, teaching documentation, and a questionnaire.

The questionnaire consisted of ten closed-ended statements using a four-point Likert scale ranging from Strongly Disagree (1) to Strongly Agree (4). The statements focused on students' enjoyment, motivation, participation, confidence, and perceptions of the interactive learning activities. The collected data were analyzed descriptively by identifying patterns in students' responses and interpreting their perceptions of the English learning activities.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The questionnaire results revealed that students had positive perceptions toward the interactive English learning activities implemented during the teaching practice. Most responses were categorized as "Strongly Agree" and "Agree," indicating that the learning activities successfully engaged students in the classroom.

All students strongly agreed that they enjoyed participating in the English lessons and expressed their willingness to experience similar learning activities in the future. Furthermore, the students agreed that group activities and the use of visual media, such as pictures and Smart TV, made the lessons more interesting and easier to understand.

The findings also showed that the interactive activities increased students' motivation and participation in learning English. Students reported that they became more interested in English and felt more confident in participating in classroom activities. Overall, the questionnaire results suggest that interactive teaching methods contributed positively to students' engagement and created a meaningful learning experience.

The findings indicate that interactive learning activities can positively influence students' engagement in English classrooms. Group work, speaking activities, and visual media encouraged students to participate actively and made the learning process more enjoyable.

These findings are consistent with the principles of Communicative Language Teaching, which emphasize meaningful interaction and active student participation in the learning process. Moreover, learning materials related to students' daily lives, such as self-introduction and daily activities, increased students' interest because the topics were familiar and relevant to them.

The use of Smart TV and pictures also supported students' understanding of new vocabulary and created a more engaging classroom atmosphere. Therefore, interactive teaching strategies and relevant learning materials can be considered effective approaches for improving students' motivation and participation in learning English.

Finally, this discussion emphasizes the importance of implementing interactive teaching strategies to enhance student engagement in English learning. Findings indicate that students respond more positively when learning activities involve group work, visual media, and topics related to their daily lives. Furthermore, supportive teacher-student interactions and meaningful classroom activities contribute to increased motivation, participation, and self-confidence. Therefore, English teachers should design engaging and student-centered learning experiences that accommodate learners' needs and encourage active participation in class. The following table and figure summarize key factors, teaching processes, and the relationship between interactive learning and student engagement observed during teaching practice.

Table 1. Factors Influencing Students' Engagement in Interactive English Learning

Factor	Description	Impact on Students' Engagement
 Interactive Teaching Methods	The use of interactive activities such as discussion, role play, games, and group work in the classroom.	Students are more active, enjoy learning, and become more involved in the lesson.
 Use of Visual Media	The use of pictures, Smart TV, and other visual aids to present and explain learning materials.	Helps students understand the materials more easily and makes learning more interesting.
 Group Activities	Students work together in groups to complete tasks, solve problems, and share ideas.	Improves cooperation, communication, and students' self-confidence.
 Relevant Materials	Materials are related to students' daily lives, such as self-introduction, daily activities, and classroom vocabulary.	Students find the materials easier to understand, more meaningful, and more motivating to learn.
 Positive Teacher Interaction	The teacher gives support, encouragement, and creates a friendly and comfortable classroom environment.	Students feel valued, more confident, and willing to participate actively in class.

Figure 1. The Process of Teaching Practice at SMP Alam Insan Kamil

**Explanation:**

Table 1 shows the factors that influence students' engagement in interactive English learning and their impacts. Table 2 explains the key concepts in the teaching practice at SMP Alam Insan Kamil and how they contribute to effective English learning. Figure 1 illustrates the teaching practice process from planning to outcome. Figure 2 demonstrates the relationship between interactive learning elements and the improvement of student engagement.

Table 2. Key Concepts in the Teaching Practice at SMP Alam Insan Kamil

No.	Concept	Explanation	Implication for Teaching
1.	 Teaching Practice	Pre-service teachers apply teaching theories in real classroom situations through three teaching sessions.	Provides real teaching experience, improves teaching skills, and allows evaluation of classroom practices.
2.	 Focus on Content	The lessons cover self-introduction, daily activities, and classroom vocabulary.	Relevant materials help students understand and use English in their daily contexts.
3.	 Student Engagement	Students actively participate in interactive activities such as discussion, group work, and games.	Increases students' motivation, interest, and participation in English learning.
4.	 Assessment & Reflection	Observation, reflective notes, and questionnaires are used to evaluate teaching and understand students' perceptions.	Helps pre-service teachers improve teaching strategies and meet students' needs.
5.	 Positive Outcomes	Students show positive perceptions toward interactive learning activities.	Interactive learning is effective in improving engagement, confidence, and interest in learning English.

Figure 2. The Relationship Between Interactive Learning and Student Engagement



Figure 1

Following the presentation of the results, this discussion interprets the findings and explains their implications for English language teaching during teaching practice. The findings indicate that implementing interactive teaching strategies positively influenced students' engagement throughout the three teaching sessions. Classroom activities such as group work, discussions, role play, and the use of visual media encouraged students to participate more actively and created a more enjoyable learning environment. The questionnaire results further supported these observations, showing that students had positive perceptions of the teaching activities and expressed greater motivation, confidence, and interest in learning English.

The findings are consistent with previous studies highlighting the importance of interactive learning in promoting student engagement. Dewaele and Li (2021) emphasize that students' enjoyment during classroom activities contributes significantly to their engagement and willingness to participate. Similarly, Zhou et al. (2022) explain that student engagement involves behavioral, emotional, and cognitive participation, all of which can be strengthened through meaningful classroom interaction. During the teaching practice, students demonstrated increased participation, particularly when the learning activities were collaborative and connected to their daily experiences.

The results also demonstrate the importance of integrating relevant learning materials and visual media into English instruction. Topics such as self-introduction, daily activities, and classroom vocabulary enabled students to relate the lessons to their own lives,

making learning more meaningful and easier to understand. Moreover, the use of pictures and Smart TV increased students' attention and facilitated vocabulary acquisition. These findings support the view of Hiver, Mercer, and Al-Hoorie (2020), who argue that interactive learning environments foster students' motivation and create more engaging language learning experiences.

Furthermore, positive teacher–student interaction played a crucial role in encouraging active participation. Providing clear explanations, constructive feedback, and continuous encouragement helped students feel more confident when expressing themselves in English. This finding aligns with Xie and Derakhshan (2021), who state that supportive teacher interpersonal communication positively influences students' classroom engagement and learning motivation.

Overall, the findings suggest that interactive teaching strategies, supported by collaborative activities, visual media, and relevant learning materials, can effectively enhance students' engagement in English learning. For prospective English teachers, teaching practice serves not only as an opportunity to develop professional competence but also as a valuable experience for identifying effective instructional strategies that respond to students' learning needs and create meaningful classroom experiences.

CONCLUSION

The teaching practice conducted at SMP Alam Insan Kamil provided valuable experience in developing pedagogical and classroom management skills. Through three teaching sessions focusing on self-introduction, daily activities, and classroom vocabulary, the researcher gained practical experience in delivering English lessons and creating an interactive learning environment.

The questionnaire results revealed that students had positive perceptions of the interactive learning activities. They enjoyed participating in the lessons, found the materials easy to understand, and expressed increased motivation and interest in learning English. Group activities and the use of visual media, such as pictures and Smart TV, also contributed to greater student engagement and participation.

Therefore, this study concludes that interactive teaching methods and relevant learning materials can effectively improve students' engagement and create meaningful English learning experiences. The findings also suggest that prospective teachers should incorporate interactive strategies and technology into their teaching practices to foster students' motivation and active participation in the classroom.

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