



MODERN PROBLEMS IN EDUCATION AND THEIR SCIENTIFIC  
SOLUTIONS

THE ART OF ENGAGEMENT: CULTIVATING ACTIVE  
PARTICIPATION IN EFL EDUCATION

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**Abstract:** *The article investigates the potential of activities such as games, role-plays, and debates in EFL classrooms to speaking, listening, and critical thinking abilities among language learners. It suggests traditional methods may not be effective due to insufficient practice and feedback. Therefore, practicing actively in the classroom can be an excellent solution.*

**Keywords:** *EFL classroom, engagement, communicative approach, active learning, student motivation, language leaning.*

**Introduction.**

In English as a Foreign Language (EFL) education, student engagement is a critical factor in achieving successful language acquisition. Traditional teaching methods often focus on passive learning, where students listen to lectures and memorize information without actively participating in the learning process. However, there is research in education and psychology that suggests active participation enhances comprehension, retention, and overall language proficiency. The concept of engagement in EFL education is closely related to interactive learning, fun games, role play activities, student motivation, and learner autonomy.

**Games in ESL students classrooms.**

The aim of games is not to waste time or break the ice between students. Byrne (1995) described games as a structured form of play that follows specific rules. They should be engaging and entertaining, serving not only as a pause from regular tasks but also as a means for learners to actively use the language while participating. Furthermore, Richard-Amato (1996) emphasizes that while games are typically linked to enjoyment, their educational benefits, especially in second language learning, should not be overlooked. They are valuable as they enhance motivation, reduce the anxiety of learners, and create opportunities for authentic communication. Games make learning more enjoyable and engaging compared to regular lessons. They help students learn the language while having fun in class. Even shy or hesitant students respond well to them (Mei & Yu-Jing 2000). Since games offer a different approach to learning, they keep students interested and motivated. This also helps lower the stress of learning a new language.

**The impact of Role-plays in learning.**





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Role-play activities in EFL classrooms are a powerful way to enhance language learning. They create a dynamic and interactive environment where students can practice real-life conversations in a safe and engaging setting. By taking on different roles, learners build confidence, improve their speaking skills, and develop better pronunciation and fluency. Additionally, role-plays encourage creativity, boost confidence to speak in public, and make learning more enjoyable. These activities also help students to overcome their fear of making mistakes, making them more comfortable using English in everyday situations. Role-play is a widely used activity in various language teaching methods. As Tateyama (1998) highlights, it is an effective tool because it challenges learners cognitively, requiring them to process and produce language in real time. It also helps assess their ability for both sociopragmatic and pragmalinguistic knowledge during interactions. According to Chen-jun (2006), role-play is one of the most effective ways to give students the chance to practice and develop real-life communication skills within the classroom.

### **Benefits of Debate/Discussion with students.**

Debate and discussion can help students to enhance their speaking and listening in an interactive setting. Most of the students who learn English as a second language are passive. They are afraid of making mistakes and being laughed at by their peers, so they cannot use the English language in everyday life (Marcelino, 2005). In a debate, students present and defend their positions on a given topic. Since it's an argument, students can form opinions, make assertions and evidence to back them up, respond, and ultimately take part in discussions (Werdingasih, 2018). The researcher also thought that regular debate participation would help students improve their English speaking skills, increase their vocabulary, and build their confidence. Additionally, all educational activities were carried out online during the pandemic. According to a study by Putri (2022) looking into the usage of debate in online classrooms, students' speaking abilities, critical thinking, and spontaneous responses could all be enhanced by using online debate. The researcher discovered that the WhatsApp app, which served as the medium for online instruction, was not very user-friendly. Moreover, debate is one of the most crucial things that can help improve critical thinking. According to Halvorsen (2005), debate motivates students to think from different points of view about an issue. Students have a chance to utter their ideas not only about the given topic but also with one another.

### **Conclusion.**

Students learn English better when lessons are engaging. In the classroom, with the help of the games, different types of role-plays, and debate/discussions, students can enhance their skills, particularly speaking, listening, and critical thinking, which is important for writing.







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