



## THE APPLICATION OF ACTIVE LEARNING STRATEGIES IN A MULTICULTURAL CLASS

**Cavide Demirci<sup>1i</sup>,**

**Nesrin Gümüŝ<sup>2</sup>**

<sup>1</sup>Faculty of Education,  
Eskisehir Osmangazi University,  
Eskisehir, Turkey

<sup>2</sup>Institute of Educational Sciences,  
Eskisehir Osmangazi University,  
Eskiŝehir, Turkey

### **Abstract:**

The purpose of this study which is of qualitative research and case study type is to observe outcomes of utilizing from active learning strategies in Advanced English courses with 6 university students coming from different countries. After completing the course which is presented in detail in the methodology section, students were asked to compare the course and the process with previous ordinary courses and evaluate it. It was observed at the end of the study that in general, active learning strategies improved the interest in the lesson, encouraged every student to express their opinions, and as it was also stated by the students, was more effective in learning.

**Keywords:** active learning strategies, multicultural class

### **1. Introduction**

The aim of the study is to try active learning strategies in class in order to bring some energy and observe the effects of this approach on students with different cultural backgrounds. This study is important for it is applied in a multicultural class and proves the effectiveness of active learning strategies with all kinds of students. The sub problems of this study are, stirring up a class of adult English learners, and bringing the students from different backgrounds to work together.

---

<sup>i</sup> Correspondence: email [demircicav@gmail.com](mailto:demircicav@gmail.com)

The active learning approach is an approach that uses the most appropriate learning environment and techniques for the student, fed from constructivist theory, cooperative learning and probing-based learning roots (Michael & Modell 2003). The active learning approach is based on the idea of transforming learning from a general standard process to a far more personal process by giving the responsibility of the learning activity to the learners. (Açıkgöz, 2009) Students who learn by living and controlling rather than a task are more interested and motivated. It is of great importance for students to check and evaluate their own learning process (Bonwell & Eison 1991), the student can draw his or her own route according to what he wonders or needs to learn, which enhances the effectiveness of this learning. Learning seems to be in control of the student however, it is shaped by the teacher's instructions. The teacher, who is in the role of a moderator in the process of implementing this approach, prepares the infrastructure. To be able to apply active learning techniques, the physical conditions of the class need to be sufficient for learning, the level of readiness of the students to the topic needs to be high, sufficient training should be given for the application and the teacher needs to have the necessary knowledge about the techniques (Açıkgöz, 2009). There is no common definition of active learning that is accepted by everybody. Active learning is a student's active impact on learning and a student's involvement in the learning process which allows students to focus on creating knowledge with an emphasis on skills such as analytical thinking, problem-solving and meta-cognitive activities that develop students' thinking (Niemi 2002; Rotgans and Schmidt, 2011; Niemi and Nevgi, 2014). Bates and Townsend (2007) noted that the transformation of schools depends on the transformation of teachers. All learning activities are active in some sense, but active learning refers to the level of engagement of the student in the instructional process. Surprisingly teachers' use of the term "active learning" is based on intuitive agreement rather than common definition (Bellanca, 2008). As a result, many teachers suggest that all learning is naturally active, so that students are actively involved in listening to formal presentations in the classroom. The analysis of learning-teaching research, however, suggests that they need to do more than just listening. In other words, students should be busy reading, writing, debating or solving problems. More importantly, students must be involved in high-level cognitive activities such as analysis, synthesis, and evaluation for their active participation.

Effective learning approach has many strategies that are used to start lessons, to process lessons and to finish lessons (Demirci, 2006). These are; the desired/known strategy, inviting to share a new event, bearing, writing the ending, pre-test, and emotional connection, questioning for motivation, doing homework, liking and future planning, thoughts and feelings cards, moving fast, step by step and layered learning,

everybody write questions, writing the ending, chorus study, voting, think-pair-share, say or pass, writing the answer of the question, write-share-learn, and ask a friend (Demirci, 2003). Teachers should use strategies that are appropriate for their students, their subjects, achievements and class level. When they see that the strategy they are applying is not effective, they need to immediately change the strategy (Demirci, 2006).

In this context, it is possible to say that active learning has a meaning beyond "*active participation of learners in learning*" (Akşit, 2007, 19). Sivan and friends (2000) claimed in their study on the effects of active learning on the students' learning quality, that the active learning approach not only increases success, but also creates sense of curiosity, improves the handling and developing of the data, and improves independent learning skills and ability of future planning. Likewise, Fleming (2000), in a physics lesson for future teachers, prepared in accordance with active learning methods, it was concluded that students showed more interest in the topics to understand the subject of the lesson. The precondition for active learning to happen is to put Student-centered education that envisions student participation at all levels instead of the traditional teacher centered teaching. (Vural, 2004, 48; Ünver, 2002, 2856). Many studies have shown that active learning methods provide a multi-faceted development for students. In a study conducted by Park and Choi in 2014, the contribution of traditional methods and active learning methods to student success has been researched. It has been found that students who are studying in the classroom where active learning methods are used have higher academic achievement than those who are learning by traditional methods. At the same time, it was observed that these students were more inclined to share the knowledge they gained, to produce new ideas, and to assume greater responsibility for learning activities.

A similar study by Miller and Metz (2014) was conducted in order to examine the contribution of active learning activities to English teaching. Two student groups of 22 students on the same level took English lessons through traditional methods and active learning techniques during one semester. It was observed that the students who took the courses with active learning techniques had higher success in the course than the other group and the participation to the class was significantly higher than the other group. Amran, Yokoyama and Nishino (2016) conducted another study that investigated the effect of the students' learning achievement on the lessons learned from the student activities on the basis of the discussion technique among active learning methods in English classes. The results of the study show that these techniques contribute significantly to the students' skills in creativity, problem solving skills, and the ability to produce and share information.

The reason for this study is; firstly, the lack of student motivation observed in the class by the English teacher. The fact that the students are less enthusiastic and less

interested in the English lesson, and that this negatively affects the atmosphere within the classroom, requires the teacher to look for mobility in this area. The lesson teacher, thinking that the course materials are limited in terms of attracting attention to the lesson, is needs to draw attention from the students and wants to use the activities that will attract the students from different cultures and strengthen their communication with each other and make them active.

The study group is formed by 10 university students from different countries (Two Gambia, two Somalis, one Bangladesh, one Albanian, three Kazakhstan, one Turkish citizen), and the lesson is Advanced level English lesson.

The other reason for the study is the comparison of the traditional English lesson with the lesson in which active learning strategies are used by this study group coming from different cultures and educational infrastructures, and to assess how their past education influenced their view of classical education and active learning strategies.

Since the subject of the course book is related to sleeping diseases, the teacher begins with the strategy of determining *the desired / known strategy* at the beginning of the lesson. The class conveys their own experience on the subject, and notes the questions they want to learn about sleeping. When talking about their own experiences, the class is asked to *use the questioning strategy* at points they are interested. This also helped the class to develop an *emotional connection* with the topic; in turn this emotional connection enhances the satisfaction of the learning activity. Finally, the teacher asks the class to write the ending of the story (Sleep, Haruki Murakami) about a woman who cannot sleep, and the strategy, *writing the ending* from active learning strategies is used. In the beginning of this start-up, the *bearing strategy* is used to increase the imagination about the subject. Two circles are formed- one inside the other and the students move to the next seat after sharing one sentence about the topic with the student in the inner circle. At the end of this interaction, the study group has the possibility to choose from many different ideas for the end of the story. The achievements in this context are to make sure that all participants in the study group are able to build up topic related sentences, to learn English words about "sleep", and finally to improve their writing skills. Active learning aims at educating individuals who think, research, produce, problem solving and critical thinking by preventing memorization (Fleming, 2000; Bonwell and Eison, 1991). In this context, strategies that are just right for acquisitions are provided by active learning strategies for this course. However, prior to the implementation of the strategies, a pretest is applied to the study group and thus a pre-activity is started at the beginning of the course by writing "*Write five sentences about sleep*" on the board, this both serves as a pretest and as a warm-up activity. After the course is done, the question "*What do we know about sleep?*" is asked and answers are collected, So that it can be understood whether the targets have been achieved. After

this oral evaluation it is determined that the study group learned more on the lesson topic.

## 2. Methodology

This study is a qualitative research design; case study. Qualitative research employs different philosophical assumptions; strategies of inquiry; and methods of data collection, analysis and interpretation (Creswell 2009, 173). A qualitative approach emphasizes the qualities of entities, processes and meanings that are not experimentally examined or measured in terms of quantity, amount, intensity or frequency (Denzin and Lincoln 2000, 8). Put another way, quality refers to a thing's essence and ambience - the what, how, when and where of it. Qualitative research thus refers to the meanings, concepts, definitions, characteristics, metaphors, symbols and description of things (Berg 2007). Thus applying the active study strategies could best be studied with this research type. Qualitative researchers are interested in understanding the meaning people have constructed, that is, how people make sense of their world and the experiences they have in the world (Merriam, 2009, p. 13). Therefore, in this case, this class set a perfect example for the experiences from different worlds.

Various research methods and techniques are available for interpretive studies; they draw from phenomenology, hermeneutics, feminism, deconstructivism and may take the form of ethnographies, interviews, psychoanalysis, cultural studies, participant observation, grounded theory, just to name a few. The researcher will select the best method(s) based on his/her research question: will the researcher study individuals (narrative, phenomenology); explore processes, activities and events (case study, grounded theory); or learn about the broad cultural-sharing behavior of individuals or groups (ethnography) (Creswell 2009, 177)

This study is an example of a case study. A qualitative case study examines a phenomenon within its real-life context. Data are collected on or about a single individual, group, or event. In some cases, several cases or events may be studied. The primary purpose of a case study is to understand something that is unique to the case(s). Knowledge from the study is then used to apply to other cases and contexts. Qualitative case study methods often involve several in-depth interviews over a period of time with each case. Interviews explore the unique aspects of the case in great detail, more so than would be typical for a phenomenological interview. In this case, the active learners have become an example for adult classes that come from different cultures.

The Class: Ten university students from different countries (Bangladesh, Somalia, Kazakhstan, Turkey, The Gambia, Albania)

The Lesson: Advanced Level English (Topic: Sleep)

After a brief introduction to the topic, the lesson followed as shown in the table:

Time	Active learning strategy used for the task	The teacher's input	The class' observed reaction
10 minutes	the desired / known strategy	The class was asked what they expected to learn, what they felt curious about and what they were interested in.	Students were more focused
20 minutes	the questioning strategy emotional connection strategy	The class was directed to share their experiences related to the topic and ask questions to other students about the experiences they shared.	Students were interested to see their friends had similar experiences, they listened carefully, and they connected emotionally.
10 minutes		Teacher read the short story until the climax of the story	
25 minutes	bearing strategy	The class was designed so that there were two circles- one in the other, and students were told to think of alternative endings to the short story covered in the lesson, then to say one sentence to the student sitting in front of him and then moving to the next chair to face another student.	Even though an adult class, it was observed that motion prevents boredom, and the students enjoyed the idea of hearing alternative endings. This helped the creativity.
5 minutes	writing the ending	At the end of the lesson, the teacher wanted the class to write the ending of the story as homework.	

*“How much do you know about each other’s sleep?”* was my question as I entered the classroom. For, since the beginning of the term I had noticed that my students had difficulty in socializing in class. It is a special group, ten students from different parts of the world.

### 3. My Colorful Class

I have one Turkish student; Onur, he is the youngest in the class, he likes music and has his earphones on most of the time except class times, this way he avoids having conversations with his classmates.

Ali is of Somali origin but he was born and grown up in the Netherlands. He went to school there. Now he is in Turkey for his University education. He is more

talkative compared to the rest, yet still whenever he has free time he prefers watching sports news and he also has little contact with his friends.

Ahmed was born in Somali, and he and his family moved to Canada when he was a baby, he is the oldest in the class, and his only hobby, basketball, is usually filling his free time. He has very little in common with the others. He usually has a serious looking facial expression. He volunteers to answer the questions asked about the lesson, but when it comes to speak about a topic, he keeps silent.

Sadi is from Bangladesh, he likes reading and sometimes has difficulty understanding his friends' accents, and therefore he hides behind a book when there is time to chat with his friends.

My two students from the Gambia, Dan and Haim usually sit next to each other and don't prefer speaking with the others. If they ever happen to speak with the others, their topics are about sports and the homework.

Three of my students, Kuna, Omar and Diyar come from Kazakhstan, and they are more sociable than the others. They are willing to take part in dialogues, and enjoy making jokes in class. Especially Kuna tries to be friends with everyone in class. However, my Kazakh students tend to speak Russian most of the time. Dale is from Albania; he can speak Italian and is interested in acting. He likes to be in the center and he is very skilled in relating events, he expresses himself confidently and rarely feels shy.

I am teaching Advanced English to this class, my students had taken an English test to be accepted to this university, so they already know English. In my class, we use an advanced level course book, we generally stick with the syllabus and have a traditional lesson, where the teacher is in the center and the students complete the tasks. This was how we had been studying since the beginning of the term. By the tenth week, the students had taken their midterm exams and all of them passed with a good score. However I was not satisfied with the atmosphere in class. My class was hardworking and successful, but they had not become a real group.

When the lesson topic was "sleep", I decided to apply some active learning strategies. Active Learning is an approach that makes use of the constructivist theory, collaborative Learning and Problem-based Learning theories; and uses the best learning techniques and environment for the students (Michael and Modell 2003). The learner takes on the responsibility of learning and changes the learning process into an individual process rather than a general standard procedure (Açıköz, 2009). The motivation is high when students are in charge, and learn by experiencing and being involved in the process. It is highly important that the students control their own learning process and evaluate themselves (Bonwell and Eison, 1991), whatever they are curious about, whatever they need to learn, it is the student's responsibility to acquire

these and thus learning becomes more efficient. The teacher acts like a moderator and prepares the basis of the lesson, makes sure the active learning strategies have the appropriate setting to be applied, makes sure the students' preparedness is high and there is sufficient time for the activities and has efficient knowledge about the strategies that will be applied in the lesson (Açıkgöz, 2009).

#### 4. Results and Discussion

The purpose of this study was firstly the low motivation level in class. The students, believing they already knew the language, showed minimum effort in class; therefore, it was necessary to attract their attention by bringing in something new. Secondly, the purpose was to bring the students together in a study and helping this multicultural class to overcome their shyness.

##### 4.1 Stirring up the Class with Active Learning Strategies

My students have their computers and internet access in class. Before starting the lesson, I told them I wanted them to sit somewhere else rather than their usual seats. They sat in a circle facing each other. Before opening their books, I asked them what facts they knew about sleep. Ali said *"we should sleep around 7 to 8 hours for our health"*, Sadi answered *"during sleep our organs can get a proper rest"*. Thus I elicited what knowledge they had about sleep, the answers were similar, nobody in class mentioned insomnia or other problems related with sleep. Every student raised hands to give information on how necessary sleep was. Then I asked them the question *"What is it called if we cannot sleep?"* The correct answer came from Onur, he gave the answer *"insomnia"*. I used the active learning strategy *"what do you know and what do you want to learn?"* so I asked the class what else they knew about insomnia. The answers were too general and it was obvious that they had no specific information. Dale said it was lack of sleep, Haim said it was an important sleep problem. I said, *"What would you like to learn about insomnia?"* Ahmed and Sadi were curious whether it was psychological or physiological; Onur said he wanted to learn if there was a cure or medicine.

Then I asked the class to search for the word insomnia and gave them time. Walking outside the circle they had formed, I saw what the results of their research were. After a ten minute research, the class found the answers for their questions and even more. I said, I wanted them to turn to their friend sitting next to them, and try to find out what the other had learned through his research. I asked if anyone in class had ever experienced insomnia. Kuna said he had difficulty falling asleep during exam weeks, and thus a dialogue began. Everyone shared their own experiences, both about exam weeks and their sleep problems. I didn't interrupt them, instead I observed them



and saw that sleep was a good topic for university students and everyone had something to say about that.

When they had shared their opinions, I wanted them to give suggestions for their friends' problems. They came out with perfect examples for the modals, they made meaningful and useful sentences to solve their sleep problems using "should" and "ought to". The class was having a good time and learning at the same time, and this also brought them closer.

My next step was doing some listening exercises and supporting this with the use of the active learning strategy; "writing the ending". For this, I decided to choose a short story; Haruki Murakami's "Sleep".

The story is about a woman who describes her recent days. She begins her story with this sentence "*This is my seventeenth straight day without sleep*". This is a very catching story, the main character describes her routine, and explains that she has no problems, yet one day she stops sleeping.

The class listened to the story very carefully. I read until the climax of the story where the main character was in her car surrounded by some men, and then I stopped. I directed them to form small groups of three or four, and wanted them to discuss the ending. They came up with different ideas. Ali was not very eager to find an interesting ending; he jumped to the end by saying the men kill the woman. The usually silent Onur objected and said the story shouldn't end in such a simple way. Omar, the third student in that group wanted to have mystic ending, he said maybe the woman turned into stardust.

The second group formed by, Ahmed, Haim and Kuna agreed that some crime happened there but for them it was the woman who committed crime. They developed their ideas together and had a good time while creating the end. They made jokes and laughed together. Haim would usually prefer studying with Dan, but now because they were in separate groups, I observed that he enjoyed the company of Ahmed and Kuna. They had very creative sentences about the ending of the story.

The last group, Sadi, Dan, Diyar and Dale, could not decide on a common ending, but I saw that they listened to each other's endings with respect. For Sadi the ending would show the reader that the whole story was actually the dream of the woman, and even though she said she hadn't been sleeping for days, she was actually in hospital, and asleep during all the time. Dan wanted to add some mystery and proposed that she had turned into a witch. Diyar enjoyed his friends' ideas and listened to them with great interest, he even added some details to their endings. Diyar also liked to have a fantastic ending, he concluded that the woman was changing into a vampire and that was the reason she wouldn't sleep at nights. Dale joined him and added that the woman bit the men, and they started a new colony of vampires.

## 4.2 Active Learning Went Over Big

No matter what their endings were about, the aim of the active learning strategies had been accomplished. My purpose was including the class in the learning process, and having a more socialized group in class.

I started the lesson by finding out what the class knew about the topic, this was meant to be a pre-test. The level of the class and the age group made it possible to simply ask what they already knew. The answers showed that my class had general knowledge such as the importance of having a good sleep and alike.

The first strategy was *“What do you know and what do you want to learn?”* The students were asked what they wanted to learn about sleep in this lesson; this way they made it clear what they were curious about and what they expected to learn. When the word *“insomnia”* came up, we continued eliciting words related to insomnia, and some students talked about their own sleep habits.

The next strategy was giving the students the opportunity of independent reading. Independent reading is an important way for students to broaden the scope of their background knowledge. They searched for the words insomnia, sleep diseases, healthy sleep on their computers. This helped them to find the answers of the questions they were curious about at the beginning of the lesson.

The way the students were seated before the lesson started was also a part of an active learning strategy. The circle they formed enabled them to interact with all the other students. When they completed their research, I gave them time to share the things they found interesting with their friends sitting nearby. The long-awaited friendship started to form in class.

Following some grammatical expressions used for giving advice about sleep, we moved on with a short story *“Sleep”* by Haruki Murakami. I read the story aloud until the climax. Then I asked the students to think about what might have happened next. Here, the strategy used was *“writing an ending”*. In groups, ideas were developed, jokes were made, and in total the students enjoyed being free to make up an end.

Before ending the lesson, I wanted them to write the end as homework and asked them some questions for evaluating the lesson.

My first question was what they liked most about the lesson.

Dan said *“I loved the class because we were able to discuss a great topic with our friends. And besides English, we also learned about a scientific stuff: sleep.”*

Ali said *“I enjoyed listening to the story and searching for information on the internet”*

Kuna said *“I enjoyed it a lot, both thinking freely with friends and knowing their interesting thoughts.”*

Omar said *“I have learned some new interesting things. We used the internet to find information. It was interactive, we worked together with our classmates and this was unusual.”*

Onur said *"Maybe we must do more active learning and listen stories, history and talk about them."*

Ahmed said *"I enjoyed it, kept me on my toes constantly thinking of different ways this story could have ended, at the same time gathering my peers' opinions on what they think. It was interesting to see what they thought happened and being able to brainstorm different outcomes."*

Dale said *"The point that we needed to complete the story, which made me feel like detective somehow."*

Diyar said *"I find a lot of conversations we have at the lesson helpful."*

Sadi said *"I like the variation of the class, like browsing and taking notes, listening an interesting story and discussing with others."*

Haim said *"I love the class because it was very interactive as a) exchange ideas with my friends b) also we use the computer to make some research."*

So, considering these answers we can conclude that everyone enjoyed discussing their opinions and being free to make research.

For my next question, asking what they didn't like about the question the whole class answered with one word: "homework".

The third question was *"Do you use the strategies of active learning and the information you learn in the lessons in your daily life?"*

Dan: *"The strategies increased our ability to think out of the box and helped us we researched things we've never heard of. We can use the method of researching in our daily lives which will help us both in English and our major lessons. I already know much about sleeping so that won't help."*

Ali: *"Yes, by searching I find it easier to learn new methods."*

Kuna: *"Yes it helped a lot, I learned new things in the process that could possibly help me or those close to me in the future."*

Omar: *"Firstly, topic of the lesson was interesting to me, so I worked willingly and learning new things is always interesting. The methods we used in the lesson could be useful in daily life, and the information we learned is useful for me because sometimes I have difficulty falling asleep."*

Onur: *"I will use these strategies in my daily life and also the information about sleep."*

Ahmed: *"It was an interesting method, first writing off the top of our head what we thought about sleep or insomnia, then researching to see how accurate we were and also learning new things in the process. And of course, this information helped. I've been through the same thing so I'm learning more about it. Also this method is nice because I get to hear others' opinions."*

Dale: *"By searching the information and talking about it later made it more easy to learn. So, yes, it is a good method. In any situation I may find it important."*

Diyar: *"This method improves not only speaking, but thinking in English skills and makes us more competitive in discussions."*

Sadi: *"I think the browsing and discussing parts really helped a lot. But it will take a lot of time and I don't want to take others' opinion in my every move."*

Haim: *"The class was interesting it made us inquisitive through research and discussion."*

Considering the answers the students gave to my second question, it can be said that they all found the methods useful and most of them are willing to use these strategies and the information they gathered in class in their daily life.

My third question was to compare the traditional classes with the active-learning based class. The responses were:

Dan: *"To compare this with a conventional lesson, it is less boring and more interactive than the traditional lessons."*

Ali: *"We use our own ideas and search on the net, we also get to discuss in groups, which we usually wouldn't do in a traditional lesson."*

Kuna: *"Normal (he means traditional) classes are better because I am used to them and I know the process."*

Omar: *"In my opinion this type of lesson is a way more interesting than a usual lesson because at the normal lessons we just listen and take some notes, but on this lesson we had a lot of fun while we were learning things."*

Onur: *"Traditional lesson is so boring and it can't help all students learn English."*

Ahmed: *"I believe traditional lessons are limited because of not really mind engaging where you have to actually think of what is to come, very monotone in a sense. Whereas this type of class is more hands and learning on our feet."*

Dale: *"A traditional lesson is boring all the time and the fact that only the teacher speaks makes me fall asleep but this method wakes me up! and makes my brain work in a different and cool way."*

Diyar: *"The active learning lesson has more performance and productivity."*

Sadi: *"I think this method might be helpful for some particular subjects and topics but a traditional lesson is a standard one for me, because it is helpful for everyone and every topic."*

Haim: *"Traditional lessons are more boring than our lessons because this method of learning was interactive as it was a give and take between a teacher and students while traditional is all about book and board."*

Eight out of ten students preferred active learning over traditional learning. In general, they expressed that being involved actively made them more interested, and thus they enjoyed the lesson more.

The fourth and the last question were about the cultural background of my students. I wanted to learn how they would compare their secondary education which they had received in their homelands, with the active learning lesson.

Dan: *"To compare this lesson to my junior high school lessons, the research method was not implemented and the classes were a bit intense."*

Ali: *"In this lesson we learn more and improve our listening skills whereas back home we read passages and answered questions."*

Kuna did not answer this question.

Omar: *"In my country we have a common type of lesson, we just listen and take information, but I think it is appropriate only for some types of subjects like physics or math. But for English lessons it has to be more interactive."*

Onur: *"My secondary education wasn't different from other schools. I think active learning is better than my secondary education."*

Ahmed: *"These classes in both Somalia and Canada are more hands on either way, where these monotone classes have really been excluded more or less. Here though doesn't really apply cause there is traditional class here."*

Dale: *"The fact that we were young and we had to learn everything the lessons were so strict and all the time we had to learn and do boring homework. This type of learning is more educative and easier to capture whatever you need."*

Diyar: *"Secondary education, I got it in my motherland, has no difference with traditional way. Especially English classes don't require speaking English from students, which is the main purpose at learning any language."*

Sadi: *"In secondary education we just used to copy and listen what our teachers said. But in a more active class all the students can give their own opinions."*

Haim: *"The difference between this lesson and my secondary school lessons varies; some teachers were traditional while others were practical more of exercises and home works."*

After eliciting the answers for the last question, we may say that in most countries, traditional education is more dominant, but from both the opinions, they shared with me, and their reactions I had observed in class, it is obvious that the students enjoyed the active learning strategies. The problem I had noticed before, that they have not become a friendly group, was solved by active learning strategies. Asking and answering questions, sharing their opinions and experiences, and working on the tasks together, the active learning strategies became a solution for my class.

When things are going wrong, sometimes it is a good idea to step back for a while. In my class, I could name the problem, but was not able to solve it. Without addressing anyone directly, and without pushing anyone to do something, I managed to bring my students together and created a nice group out of the independent individuals. The active learning strategies I used in this study have been highly

effective in accomplishing the goals; killing the routine, and creating a more socialized class. As I have mentioned before, my students preferred to keep in their own world and no matter the topic was, the lessons were mostly dull. However starting with the active learning strategy “*what do you know and what do you want to learn?*” the class started to show curiosity and everyone started to take part in discussions. The way they were seated at the first minutes of the lesson allowed them to interact with the others rather than their usual buddies. I observed that they encouraged each other and had real conversations. Then giving them time to make their own research enabled the students to learn what they really wanted to know, and doing the research first hand, it turned out to be more efficient than listening to what the teacher says. Forming groups and asking to the friend strategy also served very well for both of my purposes. Concluding the lesson with “writing the ending” strategy was very beneficial, because the class had time to discuss alternative endings and was totally free in choosing the end.

It was observed that in general, active learning strategies improved the interest in the lesson, encouraged every student to express their opinions, and as it was also stated by the students, was more effective in learning.

## References

1. Açıkgöz, K. Ü. (2009). *Aktif öğrenme*. İzmir: (11. Baskı) Biliş Yayınları
2. Akşit, F. (2007). *Coğrafya Öğretiminde Aktif Öğrenmenin Akademik Başarı ve Tutum Üzerine Etkisi*, Gazi Üniversitesi Eğitim Bilimleri Enstitüsü (Yayımlanmamış Doktora Tezi), Ankara.
3. Amran, R., Yokoyama, F., & Nishino, K. (2016). *Development of Active Learning Methods of English in Japanese High Schools to Support Student Activities in Group Discussions*. *Procedia Computer Science*, 96, 1471-1478.
4. Bates, R. & Townsend, T. (2007). The Future of teacher education: challenges and opportunities. Townsend, T. & Bates, R. (Eds.). *Handbook of teacher education: globalization, standards and professionalism in times of change*. P.O.Box 17, 3300 AADordrecht, the Netherlands. [www.springer.com](http://www.springer.com).
5. Bellanca, J. A. (2008). *200+ active learning strategies and projects for engaging students' multiple intelligences*. (Second edition). California: Corwin Press
6. Berg, Bruce L. *Qualitative Research Methods for the Social Sciences*. 6th Edition. San Francisco: Pearson Education, Inc., 2007.
7. Bonwell, C. C. & Eison, J. A. (1991). *Active learning: creating excitement in the classroom* (1st ed.) Washington: The George Washington University

8. Creswell, John W. *Research Design: Qualitative, Quantitative, and Mixed Methods Approaches*. 3rd Edition. Los Angeles: Sage Publications, Inc., 2009.
9. Demirci, C. (2003). *Etkin öğrenme yaklaşımının erişiyeye etkisi*. Hacettepe Üniversitesi Eğitim Fakültesi Dergisi, 25(25).
10. Demirci, C. (2006). *Fen bilgisi öğretiminde etkin öğrenme yaklaşımının bilgi düzeyi erişiyeye etkisi*. Eğitim ve Bilim, 31(139), 10-18.
11. Denzin, Norman K., and Yvonna S. Lincoln. *Handbook of Qualitative Research*. Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications, Inc., 2000.
12. Fleming, D. S. (2000). *A Teacher's Guide to Project-Based Learning*, Scarecrow Education, Attn: Sales Department, 15200 NBN Way, P.O. Box 191, Blue Ridge Summit, PA 17214.
13. Merriam, S. (2009). *Qualitative research: A guide to design and implementation*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.
14. Michael, J. A. & Modell, H. I. (2003). *Active learning in secondary and college science classrooms: a working model for helping the learner to learn*. London: Lawrence Erlbaum associates press
15. Miller, C. J., & Metz, M. J. (2014). *A comparison of professional-level faculty and student perceptions of active learning: its current use, effectiveness, and barriers*. Advances in physiology education, 38(3): 246-252.
16. Niemi, H. (2002). Active learning—a cultural change needed in teacher education and schools. *Teaching and Teacher Education* 18:763-780. [http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/S0742-051X\(02\)00042-2](http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/S0742-051X(02)00042-2)
17. Niemi, H., & Nevgi, A. (2014). Research studies and active learning promoting professional competences in Finnish teacher education, *Teaching and Teacher Education*, 43: 131-142. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.tate.2014.07.006>
18. Park, E. L., & Choi, B. K. (2014). *Transformation of classroom spaces: traditional versus active learning classroom in colleges*. Higher Education, 68(5): 749-771.
19. Rotgans & Schmidt Henk G. (2011). The role of teachers in facilitating situational interest in an active-learning classroom. *Teaching and Teacher Education*, 27: 37-42. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.tate.2010.06.025>
20. Sivan, Atara, Leung, Roberta, Wong, Woon, Chi-ching, Kember, David (2000) "An implementation of active learning and its effect on quality of student learning", *Innovations in Education and Training International*, 37(4): 381-389
21. Ünver, Gülsen (2002). *Öğretmen Adaylarının Öğrenci-Merkezli Öğretimi Planlama, Uygulama ve Değerlendirme Becerilerini Geliştirme*. Yayınlanmamış Doktora Tezi, Hacettepe Üniversitesi Sosyal Bilimler Enstitüsü.
22. Vural, Birol (2004). *Öğrenci Merkezli Eğitim ve Çoklu Zeka*. Hayat Yayıncılık, İstanbul

Creative Commons licensing terms

Author(s) will retain the copyright of their published articles agreeing that a Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International License (CC BY 4.0) terms will be applied to their work. Under the terms of this license, no permission is required from the author(s) or publisher for members of the community to copy, distribute, transmit or adapt the article content, providing a proper, prominent and unambiguous attribution to the authors in a manner that makes clear that the materials are being reused under permission of a Creative Commons License. Views, opinions and conclusions expressed in this research article are views, opinions and conclusions of the author(s). Open Access Publishing Group and European Journal of Education Studies shall not be responsible or answerable for any loss, damage or liability caused in relation to/arising out of conflicts of interest, copyright violations and inappropriate or inaccurate use of any kind content related or integrated into the research work. All the published works are meeting the Open Access Publishing requirements and can be freely accessed, shared, modified, distributed and used in educational, commercial and non-commercial purposes under a [Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International License \(CC BY 4.0\)](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/).