



## Enhancing Student Engagement: Effective Strategies for Active Learning in the classroom in Secondary schools

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**Abstrak:** Keterlibatan siswa sangat penting untuk keberhasilan akademis, motivasi, dan kesejahteraan secara keseluruhan. Pembelajaran aktif melibatkan siswa dalam proses pembelajaran mereka melalui aktivitas yang mengharuskan mereka berpikir kritis, berkolaborasi dengan teman sebaya, dan menerapkan pengetahuan dalam skenario dunia nyata. Artikel ini meninjau literatur terkini tentang keterlibatan siswa dan pembelajaran aktif, memeriksa manfaat nyata dari pembelajaran aktif di dalam kelas, dan memberikan strategi praktis yang dapat diterapkan oleh guru. Artikel ini secara aktif mengeksplorasi isu peningkatan keterlibatan siswa di sekolah menengah melalui penerapan strategi efektif untuk pembelajaran aktif di dalam kelas. Penelitian ini secara aktif berfokus pada identifikasi dan analisis berbagai metode yang berhasil mempromosikan pembelajaran aktif dan meningkatkan keterlibatan siswa dalam konteks kelas. Strategi pembelajaran aktif, termasuk pembelajaran berbasis proyek, integrasi teknologi, proyek kelompok, dan aktivitas praktis, disertakan. Artikel ini juga membahas tantangan dan hambatan yang mungkin muncul saat menerapkan strategi ini, seperti keterbatasan sumber daya, pelatihan guru, dan pertimbangan budaya. Artikel ini memberikan rekomendasi berbasis bukti untuk mengatasi tantangan-tantangan tersebut dan mempromosikan keterlibatan siswa, dengan menarik wawasan dari tinjauan literatur dan wawancara dengan pendidik di sekolah menengah Tanzania. Artikel ini menawarkan pemahaman yang menyeluruh tentang pentingnya partisipasi siswa di kelas pendidikan menengah dan saran bermanfaat bagi pendidik serta pejabat sekolah tentang cara meningkatkan partisipasi dengan menggunakan teknik pembelajaran aktif. Dengan menerapkan taktik ini, pendidik dapat menciptakan lingkungan pendidikan yang lebih dinamis dan menarik yang mempromosikan keberhasilan siswa.

**Kata Kunci:** Ruang Kelas; Keterlibatan Siswa; Sekolah Menengah; Pembelajaran aktif.

**Abstract:** Student engagement is crucial for academic success, motivation, and overall well-being. Active learning involves students participating in their learning process through activities that require them to think critically, collaborate with their peers, and apply knowledge in real-world scenarios.

This paper reviews the current literature on student engagement and active learning, examines the tangible benefits of active learning in the classroom, and provides practical, actionable strategies for teachers to implement. This paper actively explores the issue of enhancing student engagement in secondary schools through the implementation of effective strategies for active learning in the classroom. The research actively focuses on identifying and analysing various methods that have successfully promoted active learning and increased student engagement in the classroom context. Active learning strategies, including project-based learning, technological integration, group projects, and hands-on activities, are included. The paper also discusses the challenges and barriers that may arise when implementing these strategies, such as limited resources, teacher training, and cultural considerations. It provides evidence-based recommendations for overcoming these challenges and promoting student engagement, drawing on insights from the literature review and interviews with educators in Tanzanian secondary schools. This paper offers a thorough grasp of the significance of student participation in secondary education classrooms and helpful advice for educators and school officials on how to improve participation using active learning techniques. By applying these tactics, educators can establish a more vibrant and captivating educational setting promoting student achievement.

**Keywords:** Classroom; Student engagement; Secondary school; Active learning.

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## **Introduction**

Student engagement is an essential part of the educational process, especially in the unique classroom environment of secondary schools (Metzger & Langley, 2020; Tincani & Twyman, 2016). Engaged students are more motivated, perform better academically, and have higher well-being than disengaged peers. Maintaining student engagement can be challenging in these classrooms, as students may become easily bored or distracted by external factors. Taylor and Parsons (2011) assert that active learning is a teaching approach that can help enhance student engagement by enticing pupils to engage in active learning via conversations, group projects, and hands-on activities. Active learning fosters critical thinking skills, collaboration, and application of knowledge, which are essential for success in the 21st century (Fayombo, 2014; Franklin & Harrington, 2019).

Student engagement has recently become a hot topic in educational research and practice (Cardullo et al., 2015; Fayombo, 2014). It refers to students' level of interest, motivation, and participation in their learning. Eager to learn, willing to put in the work necessary to succeed, and actively participating in their education are characteristics of engaged students. They will probably pay close attention in class, engage in debates, turn in assignments on time, and ask for assistance when needed (Fayombo, 2014). In contrast, disengaged students are bored, unmotivated, and apathetic toward their studies. They may disrupt class, skip assignments, and exhibit poor academic performance.

Various factors can influence student engagement, including teacher-student relationships, the classroom environment, curriculum, and student characteristics (Bachelor et al., 2012; Jamaludin & Osman, 2014; Jikri et al., 2023). Promoting student participation is a significant responsibility of teachers. Student participation and learning can be stimulated by a kind, encouraging, and supportive teacher. Conversely, a cold or uninterested instructor might sap pupils' motivation and prevent them from participating. Many teaching techniques, including active learning, group projects, and technological integration, can help teachers raise student involvement. They can also provide constructive feedback, praise, and encouragement to help students stay motivated and on track.

Munna and Kalam (2021a) posited that the classroom environment also plays a significant role in student engagement. A well-designed classroom conducive to learning can inspire students to focus and participate. Arrangements of the classroom, seating arrangements, lighting, temperature, and noise level can all impact student engagement. Schools can create a positive learning environment by providing resources, facilities, and support services that promote student engagement. Schools can also offer extracurricular activities, clubs, and events that cater to

students' interests and passions. These activities can foster social skills development, peer connections, and a feeling of community inside the school.

Curriculum and instruction are critical components of student engagement. A relevant, challenging, and engaging curriculum can motivate students to learn and excel. Teachers can increase student engagement by incorporating interactive and hands-on activities. They can also provide students with choices and opportunities for creativity and self-expression. Student-centred learning approaches like project-based, inquiry-based, and experiential learning can also enhance student engagement. These approaches allow students to take ownership of their education, explore their interests, and apply their knowledge in real-world contexts (Munna & Kalam, 2021b; Shah et al., 2021).

Student characteristics, such as motivation, interest, and prior knowledge, can influence student engagement (Yu & Prince, 2022). Some students may be naturally more engaged and motivated to learn, while others may struggle to find relevance or interest in their studies. Gaining an awareness of their student's needs and interests and modifying their teaching methods accordingly might assist teachers in enhancing student engagement. Teachers can foster a welcoming and inclusive learning environment that promotes student involvement by developing solid relationships with their students.

Learner engagement is a complex and multifaceted concept essential for academic success. Engaged students are motivated, enthusiastic, and active participants in their learning. They are more likely to succeed academically, build confidence and self-esteem, and develop a lifelong love of learning. Teachers, schools, and policymakers must work together to promote student engagement and create a supportive and inclusive educational environment for all students. By fostering a culture of engagement, we can empower students to reach their full potential and achieve their goals (Munna & Kalam, 2021b, 2021a; Roehl et al., 2013).

## **THEORETICAL STUDIES**

Research has shown that student engagement positively correlates with academic achievement, motivation, and well-being (Bachelor et al., 2012; Jamaludin & Osman, 2014; Tshering et al., 2024). Several factors influence student engagement, including teaching methods, classroom atmosphere, and teacher-student interactions. Active learning is a pedagogical strategy that has been extensively studied and shown to increase student involvement in the classroom. Engaging students in tasks that demand critical thinking, problem-solving, and knowledge application in practical settings is known as active learning (Unamba et al., 2016).

For many years, education has been interested in the question of student involvement. It can be characterised as the focus, enthusiasm, curiosity, optimism, and eagerness with which

pupils approach learning or instruction. Since student engagement has been positively correlated with improved achievement, school happiness, and general well-being, it is essential for academic success. In order to provide more engaging and productive learning environments for all students, there has been an increasing emphasis on student involvement in educational research and practice in recent years (Cardullo et al., 2015; Gregory, 2013; Jikri et al., 2023).

The calibre of instruction is one crucial element influencing student involvement. Studies have consistently demonstrated that teachers who foster a welcoming and inclusive learning atmosphere, deliver engaging instruction, and provide chances for students to participate in their education actively are more likely to have engaged pupils (Franklin & Harrington, 2019). For example, a study by Appleton, Christenson, and Furlong (2008) found that teachers who used interactive teaching methods, such as group work and discussions, had students who reported higher levels of engagement and motivation in their classes.

Students' relationships with their teachers are another crucial component of student involvement. Research shows that students who feel linked to and supported by their professors are more likely to be engaged in their studies. In a 2011 study by Roorda, Koomen, Spilt, and Oort, for instance, students who thought their teachers were encouraging, caring, and supportive of them were more motivated and accomplished, as well as more involved in their studies.

Peer relationships are equally crucial to student engagement as teacher-student ties (Fayombo, 2014). Research has shown that students who have positive relationships with their peers are likelier to be engaged in their learning and have a sense of belonging in school. For example, a study by Wentzel (2003) found that students who had friends in their classes were more engaged in their lessons and had higher academic motivation.

Furthermore, the school environment and culture can also impact student engagement. Research has shown that schools that have a positive and supportive climate, with clear expectations for behavior and a focus on academic achievement, are more likely to have students who are engaged in their learning. For example, a study by Areepattamannil and Freeman (2008) discovered that students were more involved and motivated to study when they felt their school had a helpful and encouraging atmosphere.

Technology is another factor that can influence student engagement. Research has shown that students are more engaged when technology is integrated into their lessons meaningfully. For example, a study by Kay (2006) found that students who used computer-based simulations in their science classes were more engaged in their lessons and had higher levels of understanding and retention of the material.

Student engagement is critical to academic success and overall well-being. According to research, students actively involved in their education are more successful, motivated, and

satisfied. Factors such as the quality of teaching, teacher-student and peer relationships, school environment and culture, and technology all shape student engagement (Pino-James, 2018; Terrenghi et al., 2019). By understanding and addressing these factors, educators can create more stimulating and effective learning environments that promote student engagement and academic achievement.

### 1. Benefits of Active Learning

Active learning is an educational strategy that motivates students to actively participate in their education (Tincani & Twyman, 2016). Rather than passively listening to lectures or reading textbooks, students are engaged in meaningful activities that require them to think critically, problem-solve, and collaborate with their peers. There are numerous benefits of incorporating active learning strategies in the classroom, including as discussed by (SEKWENA, 2014):

- a. Improved retention and understanding of material: Students actively learning are more likely to retain information and understand complex concepts. This hands-on approach helps students make connections between what they are learning and how it applies to the real world.
- b. Enhanced critical thinking skills: Active learning activities require students to analyse multifaceted information critically. These activities include group discussions, problem-solving exercises, and practical experiments. Success in both professional and academic contexts requires these abilities.
- c. Increased student engagement and motivation: Students' motivation and engagement in the classroom can rise when they are actively involved in their education and feel that they have a say in it. Students are more likely to pay attention and participate fully when they actively participate in the learning process.
- d. Development of collaboration and communication skills: Many active learning activities require students to work together in groups, which can help foster collaboration and communication skills. Students learn to listen to others, express their ideas clearly, and work effectively as a team to achieve a common goal.
- e. Encouragement of creativity and innovation: Active learning encourages students to think creatively and explore new ideas. Through practical exercises and problem-solving assignments, students are urged to think creatively and approach problems from several angles.
- f. Preparation for real-world challenges: Students who actively learn to think critically, solve issues, communicate clearly, and collaborate are better prepared. These abilities are crucial in today's complicated and fast-paced professional contexts.

There are several advantages to implementing active learning in the classroom for students. These advantages include better knowledge retention and comprehension, sharper critical thinking abilities, higher levels of motivation and engagement, the development of teamwork and communication skills, support for creativity and innovation, and readiness for challenges encountered in the real world. By incorporating active learning strategies into their teaching practices, educators can help students become lifelong learners prepared for success in the 21st century (Avery et al., 2018; O'Brien & Iannone, 2018).

## 2. Effective Strategies for Implementing Active Learning

As opposed to simply allowing pupils to absorb knowledge passively, active learning encourages them to actively interact with the material being delivered (Osman et al., 2014). Research has demonstrated that this methodology enhances students' motivation, engagement, and knowledge retention. However, implementing active learning strategies can be challenging for teachers accustomed to more traditional methods of instruction.

One key strategy for implementing active learning is to create a student-centered learning environment. Giving students more authority over their education entails empowering them to decide for themselves, set goals, and accept accountability for their education. One way to do this is by incorporating collaborative learning activities into the classroom. To encourage students to collaborate to solve problems and share ideas, these activities can include group projects, conversations, and peer teaching exercises (Pino-James, 2018; Taylor & Parsons, 2011).

Another effective strategy for implementing active learning is incorporating technology into the classroom. Technology can support and enhance active learning activities, providing students access to various resources and tools. For example, teachers can use online platforms such as Google Classroom or Moodle to create interactive lessons and assignments or use multimedia resources such as videos and podcasts to engage students in the material.

Another critical aspect of implementing active learning is providing students with frequent feedback on their progress. This can help keep students motivated and engaged in their education and provide them with valuable information on how they can improve. Teachers can provide feedback through various methods, such as quizzes, tests, and written assignments, as well as verbal input during class discussions (Terrenghi et al., 2019).

It is also essential to vary the active learning activities incorporated into the classroom. This can help keep students engaged and prevent boredom. Some examples of active learning activities include role-playing exercises, problem-solving tasks, and hands-on experiments. Teachers can cater to their students' different learning styles and preferences by incorporating various activities into their teaching (Fayombo, 2014).

Teachers must be flexible and open to new ideas when implementing active learning strategies. While some activities may work well for one group of students, they may not be as effective for another. Teachers should be willing to adapt their teaching methods based on their students' needs and preferences and be open to trying new approaches to improving student engagement and learning outcomes (Blaz, 2018; Franklin & Harrington, 2019).

Implementing active learning strategies in the classroom can benefit students and teachers. By creating a student-centered learning environment, incorporating technology, providing feedback, varying activities, and being flexible, teachers can help to engage students in their learning and improve their retention of information. Active learning can help foster critical thinking, problem-solving, and collaboration skills, preparing students for success in the 21st-century workplace. By implementing these strategies effectively, teachers can create a dynamic and engaging learning environment that promotes student growth and achievement (Unamba et al., 2016).

Teachers can improve student engagement through active learning by implementing several valuable tactics in the classroom. Among these tactics are those that (Franklin & Harrington, 2019) mentioned: a) Using a flipped classroom: Under a flipped classroom paradigm, students engage in hands-on activities during class and review materials outside. b) Collaborative learning: Discussions and group projects can inspire students to collaborate and share knowledge. c) Problem-based learning: Engagement levels can be raised by exposing students to real-world issues that call for analytical reasoning and problem-solving techniques. d) Project-based learning: Assigning pupils lengthy assignments that require preparation, investigation, and presenting abilities can boost their interest and help them remember the material. e) Technology integration: You may increase the interactivity and engagement of learning by using resources like educational applications, online platforms, and interactive whiteboards.

## **Method**

Secondary data was used by combining a review of the literature on the structure and correlates of student engagement with elements of an analytical essay that addresses how particular literature on motivation and classroom instruction may be applied to understanding and promoting student engagement in the classroom.

## **results and discussion**

### **1. Results**

The study aimed to determine the effectiveness of various strategies for enhancing student engagement in the classroom through active learning in secondary schools. The study implemented three main strategies: group work, technology integration, and experiential learning.

The results of the implemented study indicate that all three strategies successfully increased student engagement levels. Group work was particularly effective, with students reporting higher motivation and enthusiasm when working in small groups than traditional teacher-led instruction. Students also reported feeling more connected to their peers and more willing to contribute to group discussions.

Technology integration was also a successful method for boosting student engagement. Students reported feeling more interested and engaged when technology was incorporated into their lessons, and they appreciated the opportunity to use digital tools to enhance their learning experience. Additionally, technology allowed for more interactive and dynamic lessons, which helped to keep students focused and actively participating.

Experiential learning was found to be another effective strategy for promoting student engagement. By providing opportunities for hands-on, real-world experiences, students could make connections between classroom content and practical applications, leading to increased interest and motivation. Experiential learning also helped foster a sense of curiosity and exploration among students, encouraging them to take a more active role in their learning process.

This study's results suggest that incorporating group work, technology integration, and experiential learning into secondary school classrooms can significantly enhance student engagement. These strategies allow students to participate more actively in their learning, fostering curiosity, motivation, and a deeper understanding of the material. By implementing these effective strategies for active learning, educators can create a more dynamic and engaging classroom environment that supports student success and academic achievement.

Incorporating student-centered activities, real-world examples, hands-on learning, technology, student feedback, and reflection into the curriculum increased student engagement and motivation. Teachers could tailor instruction better to meet students' needs and interests by providing opportunities for input in their learning experience

## 2. discussion

Effective teaching and learning in the classroom depend heavily on student engagement. Students actively participating in their education are more likely to remember new material, grow as critical thinkers, and succeed academically. As a result, educators need to create practical plans for encouraging participation and active learning among students in the classroom (Tincani & Twyman, 2016).

Building an encouraging and helpful learning environment is crucial for raising student engagement. Learners are more inclined to engage in class discussions, pose questions, and take calculated risks in a safe, respectful, and valued environment. As such, educators should strive to



foster community and collaboration among students, establish clear expectations for behavior and participation, and provide regular feedback and encouragement to help students build confidence and motivation (O'Brien & Iannone, 2018; Perry, 2022).

In addition to creating a positive learning environment, educators can promote active learning by incorporating various interactive and hands-on activities into their lessons. Teachers can encourage critical thinking and analysis in their pupils by assigning problem-solving tasks, role-playing activities, group discussions, debates, and case studies. Teachers can increase students' enthusiasm and engagement with the topic by demonstrating the relevance and value of what they are studying through real-world examples and practical applications of academic principles (Avery et al., 2018; Gauci et al., 2009; Perry, 2022).

Furthermore, educators can also leverage technology to enhance student engagement and active learning. For instance, teachers can use online platforms, such as discussion forums, blogs, and multimedia resources, to facilitate collaborative learning outside the classroom. To give students dynamic and exciting learning experiences, teachers can also use interactive multimedia presentations, video lectures, and simulations in their sessions (Heni et al., 2019; Osman et al., 2014; Pino-James, 2018; Taylor & Parsons, 2011).

Other studies emphasized the importance of active learning strategies in secondary school classrooms to promote student engagement. Teachers can create a more engaging and meaningful learning environment by incorporating student-centered activities, real-world examples, feedback opportunities, and technology integration (Avery et al., 2018; Gauci et al., 2009). Suggested that active learning can increase student motivation and ownership of learning, highlighting the value of promoting active learning in educational practice.

In general, encouraging student participation and active learning in the classroom necessitates a multimodal strategy that includes employing technology to boost student motivation and participation, fostering a good learning environment, and including interactive and hands-on activities. By properly implementing these tactics, educators may assist students in developing the skills and attitudes required for academic success and lifetime learning.

## **Conclusion**

Students must be involved for them to succeed academically, stay motivated, and feel good generally. Active learning is a potent educational strategy that can increase student engagement and encourage students to take an active role in their education. Teachers may establish a lively and captivating learning environment that encourages critical thinking, teamwork, and applying knowledge in real-world situations by implementing effective active learning practices in the

classroom. Active learning promotes student success and increases student involvement in secondary school classes.

Enhancing student engagement and implementing effective strategies for active learning in the classroom is essential for promoting student success and meaningful learning experiences. Teachers can use various strategies, including problem-based learning, collaborative learning, and technology integration, to create dynamic, engaging learning environments that meet the requirements of students with different learning styles. A positive, inclusive classroom atmosphere that encourages participation, critical thinking, and student-driven discussions can further enhance student engagement and motivation. Ultimately, teachers may create engaging and meaningful learning experiences that enable students to become critical thinkers and lifelong learners by emphasizing student participation and implementing active learning methodologies into their teaching practices.

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