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Empowering Passive Learners: Enhancing the Teaching and Learning Process with Scenario-Based Learning

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ABSTRACT

Imagine a cup that's empty - that's how passive learners are. They simply gather information without thinking about using it. An empty cup describes them well because passive learners are not actively engaged in the learning process. When online classes happened due to the pandemic, passive learners hesitated even more to participate. This passivity can be detrimental in today's fast-paced world. To address this concern, Scenario-Based Learning (SBL) is a promising instructional approach. SBL can make learning more engaging. Teachers like it because it helps them reach their goals better. Moreover, it is an up-to-date inventive teaching method that provides a vast number of benefits and can dig active mood in passive learning. This tertiary-level study aimed to explore tertiary level students' achievement and feedback about Scenario-based Learning (SBL) in the Communication course at Raffles University. A hundred and twenty undergraduate students participated in SBL for three months during a semester of study. Questionnaires and classroom observations served as the main data sources for this research. The findings of the study revealed that the majority of the passive students responded favorably, and the observation demonstrated that most of the students were willing to make effort to speak in English. The findings reflected the benefits of SBL as a language teaching strategy and a vital strategy to improve communication skills in the classroom. In the endeavor to produce graduates who are well-prepared and versatile for the challenges that lie ahead, Scenario-Based tasks have proven to be a promising and impactful method.

KEYWORDS: Passive, learner, Scenario-Based Learning (SBL), Communication Skills

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Introduction

As the Covid-19 pandemic hit nationwide, online learning has been more immune to all students, especially passive learners. At least, during the face-to-face teaching and learning process, the educators managed to identify students' weaknesses and work towards them, but during the pandemic, most of the educators faced major problems in handling teaching and learning, especially for passive learners who are reluctant in engaging themselves in any ongoing activities in the class. If this situation persists, the students might lose interest in studying, which will affect the quality of education shortly (Wang, 2004). Passive learners' "Disease" could spread all over the class. This is because when a group activity needed every member of the group to be involved in the discussion and presentation, it creates low self-esteem for other group members due to the reluctance of passive learners to participate in the activity (Michaelsen, Fink, & Knight, 1997). Passive learners spoil any group activity though other group members are capable enough.

Moreover, passive learners sometimes let the teachers down (Cheng, 2000). In other words, it can be said that the reluctance of the passive learners made the teachers or lecturers feel demotivated to continue working on the particular teaching task. As said (Dyche & Epstein, 2011), passive learners tend to divert the current teaching strategies due to a lack of motivation and low self-esteem in teachers regarding their teaching skills. Consequently, teachers should take into account the following crucial elements for the students while designing a lesson: The students' preference towards the lesson, the benefits of the lesson to the students, students' requirements, and competency level. This can be said that a thoroughly considered plan will have a positive impact and allow the teacher to think clearly as said by Breen and Littlejohn (2002), devising student-centered teaching plans is essential for keeping students active in the English classroom. In addition, Vicky (2000) claims that passive learning happens when students absorb knowledge through a lecture, reading assignment, or video using their senses. It is described as the learning style when the teachers load the students' minds with information to improve their exam scores, with the assumption that the students will join the course they want to study with open minds that are similar to empty vessels. It is undeniable that effective strategies should be used to promote student excitement, especially to inspire them to use their creativity to the fullest. The teaching and learning process will only be successful if the learners are fully involved in the process and not passive learners. Thus, a good teaching strategy is needed to keep passive learners on track thus, Scenario-Based Learning could play its role in moulding the students well according to the expected learning outcomes of any subject matter.

It can be said that when engaging and lively classroom activities are implemented, passive learners' terms can be nullified. Good classroom activities are crucial for keeping students engaged in their English studies. Teachers should plan these activities skillfully to pique students' interest in participating and to provide them with enough opportunity to connect with the teacher and other students. This is also supported by Xia (2003), where passive learners are learners who need engaging activities to boost their level and to make them concentrate in class.

Scenario-Based Learning (SBL)

Scenario-Based Learning (SBL) is one of the best approaches to engaging core topics and skills in teaching Communication Skills as it helps learners to improve their communication skills by relating to their real-life experiences (Yarnall, Toyama, Gong, Ayers & Ostrander, 2007; Sorin, 2013). Moreover, SBL could help learners to eliminate negative intuition as well as their negative perception of dull teaching strategies too. As you are aware, teaching strategies could boost one's confidence when involved in any classroom activities (Brookfield, 2015). It can be said that classroom activities play a major role and eliminate low self-esteem in passive learners (Lawrence, 2006).

Teachers should be responsible for choosing the correct teaching strategies that can be used for all types of learners neither active nor passive. This is because lively teaching strategies could help the students to better understand the environment that can eliminate passiveness from the students. SBL could give a hand on this matter whereby it could provide a better teaching and learning environment. SBL could also enhance one's motivation and self-esteem towards the learning process (Hursen & Fasli,2017). By having a high self-esteem level, one student could nullify their passive attitudes towards the learning process.

Moreover, SBL could also enhance their confidence level. This is because the reason students are passive is due to their low confidence level. Thus, SBL would help in eliminating the feeling and make them enjoy the lesson as others do. In addition to that, SBL could also improve communication skills of the students. As for SBL, teachers will give certain scenarios based on the subject matter. When the students are divided into groups, they are given scenarios and are asked to develop their own scripts based on the scenarios given. With the first draft of the scripts, the students will move forward to perform the scenarios. The correction of sentences and grammar usage will be corrected by the lecturers after the performance of the scenarios. By doing so, the students will be able to correct their mistakes and use proper sentence structure and grammar accordingly in the future. Moreover, Scenario-Based Learning enables learners' engagement. In any task, it is believed that the engagement of participants is very much important, thus, SBL could somehow be part of students' engagement booster. In this era of teaching and learning mode, learner engagement is needed by each and every student (Bastian & Fuller, 2023). Basically, learner engagement will be helpful for the teachers to conduct their teaching, especially for passive learners. It can be said that passive learners have more chances of eliminating their passive and reluctant attitude towards learning via learner engagement boosting activity.

Learners at the same time could gain real-world skills and experience via SBL. This is because, during SBL activities, the scenarios given are basically related to real-life scenarios, which could help the learners be engaged in real-life situations and prepare them for betterment (Sorin, 2013). Moreover, those scenarios could help the learners to get fully involved and put in their own effort to sustain and maintain everyone's role. When they eliminate the passive listening attitude, they will automatically eliminate the passive learning style in them. As said by (Chi, 2009), passive learning is somehow interrelated to passive listening. It is possible to say that passive learners are those who could hinder other pupils from achieving better in class. This is because students who have poor character traits easily influence those who are active in class (Noguera, 2003). This will

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also prevent students from turning to other activities that do not have any immediate benefits for them. Additionally, it is feasible to assert that students who are passive in their learning may cause teachers to become upset or lose attention during instruction, which would prevent them from being even more focused on their pupils. Additionally, it will restrict teachers from working longer hours and raise the chance that they would not be able to talk (Perry, 1981).

In conclusion, there is strong evidence that the SBL approach can encourage learners who are currently passive to become more engaged in the teaching and learning process. The motivation behind this study stems from the observation that many students, particularly those who are not English majors, exhibit a passive behaviour in the classroom and are hesitant to participate in discussions initiated by the teacher. This reluctance to engage themselves creates a significant divide between educators and students. The absence of active involvement leads to reduced concentration among students, fostering feelings of isolation, ultimately hampering their academic performance. To counteract this issue and encourage student engagement, Scenario-Based Learning methodology was adopted. The study assumed that incorporating Scenario-Based Learning into the classroom environment would lead to improved student progress and performance. Therefore, the primary aim of this study was to investigate the impact of Scenario-Based Learning on student engagement, ultimately bridging the gap between teachers and students and enhancing overall academic outcomes.

By addressing the following research questions, this study aimed to increase passive students' interaction with and participation in classroom activities and lessons:

a. How do students perceive their level of engagement in the classroom before and after the implementation of Scenario-Based Learning?
b. What are the students' responses toward the use of Scenario-Based learning in English Communication class?

Method

Action research is a special kind of study designed for teachers to use in their own classrooms to improve professional practices and try to address problems. It involves systematic observation and data collection that the researcher-practitioner may use for reflection (De et al., 2022). This study was derived from the reflection of the classroom lecturer that students tended to be reluctant to participate in the teaching and learning process. According to the teacher's reading, the learning process - which was essentially dull and ineffective - resulted in a lack of interest and participation from the students. As a result, the action study sought to enhance both the practice of teaching and the practice environment (Carr, 1986).

Participants

This study was conducted in a classroom at a university faculty. Students participating in the Communication Skills for Foundation Program course were among the study's participants. This program had a total of hundred and twenty students. The sampling used for this study would be convenient sampling. This sampling was used because it was convenient to use the samples for this study. All the students of the program were used for this study purpose.

Data Collection

Classroom observation was done since one of the goals of the study was to look at how an English lecturer used SBL to make passive learners active. According to popular belief, when compared to other teaching and learning approaches, observation provides an accurate assessment of student progress. In each of the four classrooms, a video camera was utilized to document the teaching and learning activities. Data triangulation was established by generating three different forms of data in order to increase the validity and dependability of the conclusions. In addition to the video recording, a survey was given to the students at the conclusion of the course. The purpose of this methodology was to profile the students from this specific field of study and investigate their opinions of the SBL approach. Additionally, questionnaires are a very helpful survey instrument that makes it relatively simple to evaluate big groups (Jones, T. L., Baxter, M. A., & Khanduja, V., 2013). A fixed response survey is a quick and effective approach to gather and analyse data (Fraenkel,2009) The teacher's critical self-reflection, which was recorded in the teacher's teaching journal, was another source of data (Brookfield, 1995). This specific source of data was supplemented with information from a questionnaire and video capture.

The duration of the study was approximately twelve weeks (3 months). The student meetings took place once a week, with each class having close to 12 meetings. The observation was conducted at the beginning and middle of the semester, and the questionnaire response was completed toward the end of the semester. The researcher created a 10-item, 5-likert scale questionnaire. The researcher had only a few negative questions in order to assess the questionnaire's positive, neutral, and negative elements (Oppenheim, 1992). Since questions 1, 2, and 3 concerned the pupils' performance, they are often regarded as positive. Since question 4's goal was to illustrate the advantages of SBL, it was deemed neutral, and the researcher created questions 7 and 8 as objections. As for the SBL method, the lecturer employed a number of themes that covered a variety of ways to enhance communication abilities, particularly in a professional context. In general, completing a literature review, incorporating SBL into the teaching and learning process, distributing questionnaires, analysing data, and eventually creating a report on the study are all steps in this research-conducting process.

Findings

As for the observation, a set of themes was utilized to record the frequency of student interactions, and the video recording and teaching plan were both subjected to thematic analysis. Basically, a scenario centered on a particular theme is presented to the students. These settings included workplace, classroom, grocery store, school, public, and at home. The lecturer requested the students to create their own dialogues based on the provided scenarios because he or she was aware of the students' low vocabulary and unwillingness to participate in an active teaching and learning environment. The pupils were given 20 minutes for each scenario, which mostly pertained to the context that was listed. When that time period elapsed, the pupils were asked to prepare appropriate dialogue and practice the dialogue with appropriate intonation and gestures. The groups were then instructed by the lecturer to do their assignment in front of the class. This method was created to

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give the students the opportunity to prepare in a way that combines group participation and interaction. The lecturer would provide some feedback following each session. The excerpts from the scenarios are mentioned in Table 1 below:

Table 1. Excerpts from the Scenarios

Themes	Scenario	Extract
Workplace	**Direction to the pantry**	***Group A*** *Student 1: Good morning! Welcome to HR Department.* *Student 2: Oh ok. Thank You… Ahhh I want to ask where pantry.* *Student 1: Oh…you wanna eat?* *Come I show you* *Student 2: Thank you* *Student 1: This place to eat. You use the fridge to putfood inside.* *Student 2: Ok. Thank you* *Student 1: Welcome* ***Group B*** *Student 1: Hi* *Student 2: Hi* *Student 1: I want to ask help to you* *Student 2: What* *Student 1: I want to ask where pantry* *Student 2: Come follow me I show you* *Student 1: Ok can* *Student 2: This is pantry* *Student 1: Ok*
Classroom	**Help with the homework**	***Group C*** *Student 1: Hi Nina.* *Student 2: Hi Melvin* *Student 1: I want to ask a favour can ah?* *Student 2: Ahh…What you want?* *Student 1: Can you help me with this homework?* *Student 2: Yah sure can* *Student 1: Thank You* *Student 2: Welcome*

		Group D *Student 1: Excuse me* *Student 2: Yes what you want* *Student 1: I want your help with this assignment* *Student 2: ok can* *Student 1: I don't understand this question.* *Student 2: Ok, let me help you* *Student 1: Thank You*
Grocery Store	**Buying product**	**Group E** *Student 1: Hi, may I know where is the dish wash* *Student 2: ahh…. wait ah let me check……hmmm its there in the second row.* *Student 1: Oh then thank you* *Student 2: Ok* **Group F** *Student 1: Hi* *Student 2: Hi. How can I help you?* *Student 1: May I know where is the laundry soap? Icannot find it here.* *Student 2: Its in the last row of the shelves.* *Student 1: OK. Thank You*
School	**Directionfor new student**	**Group G** *Student 1: Hi, Can I ask you something?* *Student 2: Yes. What is that?* *Student 1: May I know where is the principal room?* *Student 2: You go straight then at the corner there, you turn right, then you can see the room.* *Student 1: Ok, thank you* *Student 2: Welcome* **Group H** *Student 1: Hi, may I know where is the canteen?*

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		Student 2: Hi, yes sure. You can go straight then once you see the bookshop, you turn left. You can see the canteen on your right. *Student 1: Oh, thank you so much.* *Student 2: Welcome. Hmmm...are you a new studenthere?* *Student 1: Yes, today is my first day here.* *Student 2: Really? Good to hear that. Welcome to ourschool. Nice to meet you* *Student 1: Nice to meet you too*
Public place	**Asking for a help**	***Group I*** *Student 1: Hi, Can you help me to take care of myBag?* *Student 2: Hmm… yah sure. Since I will be sitting Here waiting for the bus* *Student 1: Appreciate your help* *Student 2: No problem* ***Group J*** *Student 1: Excuse me.* *Student 2: Yes. What is that?* *Student 1: Ahh….Can you help me to book a grab forme? My handphone no battery.* *Student 2: What grab ah?* *Student 1: I don't know you lah….* *Student 2: No don't worry, I can show your my Identity card and the address for the grabIs the same* *Student 1: Ok can. I book now* *Student 2: Thank You* *Student 1: Welcome*
Home	**Asking for a permission**	***Group K*** *Student 1: Mom, I want to ask whether I can go forMy friend's birthday party.* *Student 2: When and where?* *Student 1: its tomorrow night at KFC*

		Student 2: Ok. Can *Student 1: Thank You mom* ***Group L*** *Student 1: Hi dad. What are you doing?* *Student 2: Oh….I ah. I'm watching news.* * Why Anything?* *Student 1: Wah dad… I cannot ask meh.* *Student 2: No lah…because you wont simply ask me* *Student 1: Oh…actually I want to ask your Permission.* *Student 2: What* *Student 1: I want to go for a vacation next* * week with My friends.* *Student 2: How long?* *Student 1: 1 week* *Student 2: You want money meh.* *Student 1: Yah lah. That's why I need your* * permission hahahaha* *Student 2: Nah RM500.* *Student 1: Thank you dad* *Student 2: Ok. You careful*

Based on the observation, it can be concluded that each student has a unique communication style. The pupils had also done their best to prepare dialogues based on the subjects given to them. The pupils also succeeded in getting rid of their passive attitude toward the teaching and learning process. A change in teaching methodology could significantly help pupils, particularly passive learners, to overcome their passivity and resistance to learning. The ability to distinguish oneself from being a passive person may further encourage passive learners to commit themselves to the world of education with greater fervour. So, by being active learners in educational and learning processes may only result in growth and not a threat to themselves and the community.

Table 2.   Responses and Average Score toward the Use of Scenario-Based Learning in English Communication Class

No	Statement	SA	AS	A	AS	N	AS	D	AS	SD	AS	TS	A
1	I like Scenario Based Learning method	110	550	9	36	1	3	-	-	-	-	589	3.9

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No	Statement	SD		D		N		A		SA		TS	A
2	I can speak better without any hesitation	99	495	13	52	5	15	3	6	-	-	568	4.1
3	I don't feel shy to voice out	89	445	20	80	4	12	5	10	2	2	549	4.0
4	There are many benefits from this course using this SBL method	100	500	12	48	8	24	-	-	-	-	572	4.1
5	The SBL method is fun	112	560	6	24	1	3	1	2	-	-	589	4.1
6	The SBL method is boring	1	5	-	-	1	3	116	232	2	2	242	2.3
7	Usage of SBL method does not benefit me	1	5	1	4	1	3	86	172	31	31	215	2.2
8	SBL method makes me feel demotivated	1	5	-	-	3	9	100	200	16	16	230	2.0
9	SBL method is the best method for learning communication skills	98	490	12	48	3	9	5	10	2	2	559	4.0
10	SBL helps me to engage better in the classroom	111	555	4	16	5	20	-	-	-	-	591	4.1

*SD-Strongly Disagree, D-Disagree, N-Neutal, A-Agree, SA-Strongly Agree, AS-Average Score for each category, TS-total score and A-Total average

Table 2 makes it abundantly evident that over 75% of the students overwhelmingly concurred that they preferred scenario-based learning in the teaching and learning process. Based on their responses to the survey's positive items, it is undeniably demonstrated that the SBL approach has encouraged them to participate more actively in the classroom. Additionally, the numbers suggested that even though they often learn passively, this strategy can encourage students to get out and provide a presentation in front of the class based on the given scenario. The students believed that SBL could effectively dispel their unfavorable opinion that they could not talk and were shy to speak, based on answers to questions 2 and 3. Generally speaking, it can be said that most students rejected unfavourable queries.

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In terms of average score, Table 2 summarises the students' average reactions to the SBL method. As shown in Table 2, the favorable questions outperformed the unfavorable ones. Questions 2 and 4, which asked about their attitude and the benefits of the SBL method, received the highest scores, 4.1, as did Question 5, which asked about the method's positive outcomes. Furthermore, the unfavorable questions (7 and 8) had the lowest scores of 2.2 and 2.0, respectively.

Discussion and Conclusion

The results of the survey can prove that Scenario-Based Learning is indeed effective and can stimulate students to engage more in learning. Not only that, in fact, it can be said that SBL can also eliminate passiveness from a student and create confidence to speak in front of other students in the classroom. This can actually help to eliminate their fear of trying to speak to others as well outside of the classroom context. Furthermore, SBL technique can also make it easier for teachers to teach grammar. This is because, in this SBL method, students will sketch a dialogue that is relevant to the given scenario. With this, a student can actually use more grammar to sketch a dialogue. SBL technique also could aid in vocabulary development, allowing students to learn a language faster. As evidenced by their increased interaction in this English class, the students in this study responded positively to the SBL method of teaching English.

Scenario-based learning can make language learning more engaging and enjoyable for students. When they are presented with realistic scenarios that they can relate to, they are more likely to be motivated to participate and practice their speaking skills. In addition to that, it provides opportunities for students to develop their communication skills by engaging in conversation with others. They learn how to express their ideas, opinions, and emotions in a more natural and authentic way. Furthermore, Scenario-based learning requires students to think critically and creatively about how to respond to a given situation. They need to consider the context, the audience, and their own goals in order to make effective communication choices. By using scenarios that are culturally relevant, students can learn more about the culture and customs of the language they are learning. This can lead to a better understanding of the nuances of the language and can help students communicate more effectively.

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