

The Power of Ice Breaker Activity: Examining the Impact of Icebreakers on Student Participation and Engagement in the Classroom

School Teacher Department of
Education Philippines
0009-0002-0219-8471
richie.mepieza@deped.gov.ph

Received: Okt 06, 2023; Accepted: Des 24, 2023; Published: Jan 24, 2024;

Abstract: This study explores the importance of creating a comfortable and respectful classroom environment through the use of icebreaker activities. The study analyzes the opinions of six students on ways to improve or modify icebreaker activities to promote engagement and participation in the classroom. The results of the study reveal that icebreaker activities are essential in building a positive and productive learning environment. The students believe that icebreakers help to improve their speaking and listening skills, as well as their mood and brain activation. They also feel that icebreakers create a safe learning space and promote flexibility and willingness to learn. Furthermore, the students stress the importance of wise selection and modification of icebreaker activities to ensure that they have a positive impact on students and promote engagement in the classroom. The students suggest that icebreakers should be used at the beginning of each class to help energize and motivate students. Additionally, the students believe that clear expectations for student behavior are critical in creating a safe and respectful classroom environment. They stress the need to minimize threats or distractions that could interrupt the flow of learning. This study highlights the importance of creating a comfortable and respectful classroom environment through the use of icebreaker activities. The findings suggest that icebreakers can be modified to better promote engagement and participation in the classroom, ultimately leading to a positive and productive learning environment for students.

Keywords: Classroom environment, Icebreaker activities, Student engagement, Learning outcomes

Introduction

In recent times, the significance of learners engagement and participation in the classroom has come increasingly honored as a critical element of effective teaching (Steen- Utheim & Foldnes, 2018). One way to foster learner engagement and participation is through the use of icebreakers, which are conditioning designed to grease social interaction, produce a positive classroom atmosphere, and make a sense of community among learners (Fiock, 2020). The use of icebreakers has come more current in classrooms at all situations, from elementary grade to higher education, as they've been set up to be effective in enhancing learners participation and engagement (Cong, 2020). Despite the implicit benefits of icebreakers, some preceptors are reluctant to use them due to concern that they may take up precious educational time and may not be applicable for all learners (Tewell, 2020). Also, the effectiveness of icebreakers may vary depending on the environment in which they're used (Arfiandhani, 2020). As similar, it's important to understand how icebreakers can be effectively used in different culture to enhance learners' participation and engagement.

In the Philippines, learners' engagement and participation in the classroom is a crucial concern for teachers. Despite sweats to increase learners' engagement through aesthetic teaching strategies,

similar as active teaching and group work, numerous scholars still struggle to laboriously share in classroom conversations and conditioning(Venton & Pompano, 2021). This highlights the need for effective strategies that can promote learners' engagement and participation in the classroom.

The use of icebreakers in the classroom may be particularly applicable in the Philippine environment, where social connections and interactions are largely valued(Eiluned et al., 2015). Icebreakers can help to establish a positive classroom atmosphere and produce a sense of community among learners, which may encourage learners to share more laboriously in classroom conversations and conditioning.

Also, the Philippine educational system is presently transitioning to a K- 12 model, which includes another 2 years in senior high school (SHS)(Tajolosa, et al., 2022). This transition has redounded in changes to the class and teaching strategies, with an increased focus on learner- centered and active teaching approaches(Baticulon, et al., 2021). The use of icebreakers may align well with this shift in teaching strategies, as they encourage learners interaction and collaboration.

Despite the implicit benefits of icebreakers in the Philippine environment, there's a lack of exploration on their effectiveness in promoting learners' participation and engagement. Therefore, the present study aims to fill this gap by examining the impact of icebreakers on learners' participation and engagement in the classroom in the Philippines.

Research Questions:

1. What are the perceptions of students towards icebreakers as a tool to enhance their participation and engagement in the classroom?
2. How do different types of icebreakers affect students' motivation and interest in the subject matter
3. What are the factors that contribute to the success or failure of icebreakers in promoting student engagement and participation in the classroom?

Research Objectives:

1. To explore students' experiences and perceptions of icebreakers as a tool for enhancing their participation and engagement in the classroom.
2. To investigate the effectiveness of various types of icebreakers in increasing students' motivation and interest in the subject matter.
3. To identify the key factors that contribute to the success or failure of icebreakers in promoting student engagement and participation in the classroom, and to provide recommendations for their implementation in future classroom settings.

Literature Review

Icebreakers are activities designed to facilitate social interaction and create a positive classroom atmosphere among students (Dressel, 2020). The use of icebreakers in the classroom has become increasingly popular in recent years, as they have been found to be effective in enhancing student participation and engagement (Cong, 2020). The present review of related literature will examine the research on the impact of icebreakers on student participation and engagement in the classroom, with a focus on studies conducted in the Philippines.

Effectiveness of Icebreakers

Studies have constantly set up that the use of icebreakers in the classroom can enhance learners' participation and engagement (Abou- Khalil, et al., 2021). For instance, a study by Erdoğan and Çakiroğlu (2021) set up that the use of icebreakers in a university classroom redounded in increased learners' participation and bettered stations towards the course. Also, a study by Abbas et al. (2022) set up that the use of icebreakers in an online course redounded in increased learners' engagement and reduced learners' attrition rates. Furthermore, several studies have to claim that icebreakers can help to establish a positive classroom atmosphere and produce a sense of community among scholars (Westwick & Chromey, 2015; Higbee, et al., 2021). This can be particularly important in educational environment where social connections and interactions are largely valued, similar as in the Philippines (Abou- Khalil, et al., 2021). By establishing a positive classroom atmosphere and promoting social connections among scholars, icebreakers can help to reduce passions of insulation and promote learners' engagement. In addition, studies have also shown that icebreakers can be effective in breaking down walls among scholars from different backgrounds (Vickers, et al., 2015; Roy, et al., 2020). This is particularly applicable in the Philippines, which is known for its different population and culture (Vickers, et al., 2015). By creating a safe and welcoming atmosphere for all learners, icebreakers can help to bridge gaps between scholars from different backgrounds and encourage collective respect and understanding. Icebreakers can also be an effective way to introduce and support course content (Vickers, et al. 2015). For instance, an icebreaker that requires learners to partake their opinions on a particular content can serve as a means of introducing the content and creating interest and engagement among learners. Also, an icebreaker that requires scholars to work collaboratively on a task related to course content can help to support crucial generalities and encourage active learning. Despite the implicit benefits of icebreakers, some studies have also raised concerns about their effectiveness in certain environment. For example, a study by O'Neill and McMahon (2005) found that the use of icebreakers in a large lecture hall setting didn't affect increased learners' engagement. Also, a study by Leslie (2021) found that icebreakers were less effective in promoting learners' engagement in courses that were perceived to be less applicable or intriguing to learners. Overall, the literature suggests that the effectiveness of icebreakers in promoting learners' engagement and participation may depend on a number of factors, including the environment of the classroom, the design of the icebreaker exertion, and the applicability of the course content to learners' interests. Icebreakers in the Philippines The use of icebreakers in the Philippines has been documented in several studies, which have highlighted their potential to promote student engagement and create a positive classroom atmosphere. For example, a study by Roy, et al., (2020) found that icebreakers were effective in enhancing student participation and engagement in a college-level course on social work. The study also found that icebreakers were particularly useful in promoting interaction among students from diverse backgrounds. Similarly, a study by Vickers, et al (2015) found that the use of icebreakers in a college-level course on communication arts resulted in increased student participation and improved attitudes towards the course. The study also found that icebreakers were effective in promoting a sense of community among students and creating a safe and welcoming environment for all students.

Another study by Higbee, et al. (2021) found that icebreakers were effective in promoting student engagement and reducing anxiety among first-year college students in the Philippines. The study also found that icebreakers were effective in promoting social connections among students and creating a positive classroom atmosphere. Despite the positive findings on the use of icebreakers in the Philippines, some studies have also highlighted the need for careful consideration of the design and implementation of icebreaker activities. For example, a study by Westwick, et al. (2015) found that poorly designed icebreaker activities can have a negative impact on student engagement and participation. The study emphasized the need for icebreakers that are relevant and meaningful to students, and that are carefully aligned with course goals and objectives.

Effectiveness of Icebreakers in the Philippine Context

In the Philippine context, there is a growing interest in the use of icebreakers in the classroom to enhance student engagement and participation. One study conducted by Insorio and Macandog (2022) examined the use of icebreakers in a university classroom in the Philippines. The study found that the use of icebreakers resulted in increased student participation and engagement, and that students perceived icebreakers to be an effective teaching strategy. Furthermore, the Philippine Department of Education has emphasized the importance of student-centered and active learning approaches in the new K-12 curriculum (Adarlo & Jackson 2017). The use of icebreakers may align well with this shift in teaching strategies, as they encourage student interaction and collaboration. However, there is a lack of research on the effectiveness of icebreakers in promoting student participation and engagement in the Philippine context. A study conducted by Boonsuk, et al. (2023) explored the perceptions of Filipino students towards icebreakers. The study found that students perceived icebreakers to be effective in promoting social connections and enhancing their learning experience. In addition, students reported feeling more comfortable and confident in expressing their opinions and ideas in class after participating in icebreaker activities. This suggests that the use of icebreakers in the Philippine context may be an effective strategy to promote student engagement and participation. Another study by Lin, et al., (2021) investigated the impact of icebreakers on student engagement in a high school classroom in the Philippines. The study found that the use of icebreakers led to increased student engagement, with students reporting higher levels of interest and motivation in the class. In addition, the study found that icebreakers helped to establish a positive classroom environment, leading to improved teacher-student relationships. Furthermore, a study by Wu and Velasco (2022) examined the effectiveness of icebreakers in promoting intercultural communication in a university classroom in the Philippines. The study found that the use of icebreakers helped to break down cultural barriers and promote understanding among students from different cultural backgrounds. This suggests that icebreakers can be an effective tool for promoting inclusivity and diversity in the classroom. Research conducted in the Philippine context suggests that icebreakers can be an effective strategy to enhance student engagement, participation, and learning. The use of icebreakers aligns with the student-centered and active learning approaches promoted in the new K-12 curriculum, and can help to establish a positive classroom environment and promote social connections among students. However, more research is needed to explore the specific impact of icebreakers on student participation and engagement in the Philippines, as well as the potential benefits for students from different cultural backgrounds.

Potential Differences in the Impact of Icebreakers

While icebreakers have been found to be effective in enhancing student participation and engagement, the effectiveness of icebreakers may vary depending on student characteristics such as age, gender, and ethnicity. For example, a study by Anyichie, et al. (2023) found that the effectiveness of icebreakers in enhancing student engagement varied based on student ethnicity. In the Philippine context, it is important to examine potential differences in the impact of icebreakers based on student demographics. The use of icebreakers in the classroom has been found to be effective in enhancing student participation and engagement, and can help to establish a positive classroom atmosphere and create a sense of community among students. While there is limited research on the effectiveness of icebreakers in the Philippine context, studies have shown that icebreakers can be effective in enhancing student engagement in this context. Further research is needed to explore potential differences in the impact of icebreakers based on student demographics in the Philippines. Ultimately, the findings of this research study can inform best practices for the use of icebreakers in the classroom and enhance the quality of education for students in the Philippines.

Methodology

Research Design

This study utilized a qualitative research design to examine the impact of icebreakers on student participation and engagement in the classroom. Qualitative research was an appropriate approach for this study because it allowed for an in-depth exploration of the experiences and perspectives of the participants (Birt et al., 2016). In particular, this study utilized a case study design, which allowed for the examination of a specific phenomenon within a particular context (Roberts, et al., 2019). The case study approach was appropriate for this study as it allowed for an in-depth examination of the impact of icebreakers on student participation and engagement in the specific context of PAU Excellencia Global Academy Foundation, Inc.

Setting and Participants

The study was conducted at PAU Excellencia Global Academy Foundation, Inc. in the Philippines. The participants in this study included 1 teacher, the teacher in-charge, and 7 students who were currently enrolled in grade 11 senior high school at PEGAFI. The participants were purposively selected for this study because they had experience with icebreakers in the classroom. The teacher, Mira, was selected because she was currently teaching the reading and writing subject to the grade 11 senior high school students at PEGAFI and consistently using icebreakers in her classroom. The students were purposively selected to ensure that a range of perspectives were represented in the study. The criteria for student selection included: (a) being currently enrolled in grade 11 senior high school at PEGAFI, (b) having experienced icebreakers in the classroom, and (c) being willing to participate in the study. The sample of students included both male and female students from different academic backgrounds.

Data Collection

The data for this study was collected through semi-structured interviews. Semi-structured interviews were used because they allowed for flexibility and the ability to explore in-depth the experiences and perspectives of the participants (McIntosh & Morse, 2015). The interviews were conducted in English and were audio-recorded with the consent of the participants. The interviews were conducted separately with the teacher, the teacher in-charge, and the students. The interviews were conducted by the researcher in a private location at PEGAFI. The interviews were approximately 30 minutes to 1 hour in length and were conducted using an interview guide. The interview guide included open-ended questions that were designed to elicit the participants' experiences and perspectives on the use of icebreakers in the classroom.

Data Analysis

The data collected from the interviews was analyzed using a thematic analysis approach (Crowe, et al., 2015). Thematic analysis was an appropriate approach for this study as it allowed for the identification of patterns and themes within the data (Crowe, et al., 2015). The data analysis process involved several steps:

1. Familiarization with the data: The audio-recordings of the interviews were transcribed verbatim. The researcher read and re-read the transcripts to become familiar with the data.
2. Generation of initial codes: The researcher identified and coded the data using open coding, which involved identifying and labeling concepts and themes in the data.
3. Identification of themes: The researcher reviewed the codes and grouped them into themes based on similarities and differences in the data.
4. Refinement and definition of themes: The researcher refined and defined the themes by reviewing the data and ensuring that they accurately captured the participants' experiences and perspectives.
5. Interpretation of themes: The researcher interpreted the themes by analyzing the data and drawing conclusions based

Findings

This study explores students' views on icebreaker activities and their effectiveness in promoting engagement and participation. Four themes emerged from the responses: (1) The Benefits of Icebreaker Activities in Promoting Engagement and Participation, (2) Theme: The influence of the type of icebreaker activity on engagement and participation, (3) the role of teachers in designing effective icebreaker activities, and (4) the importance of creating a comfortable and respectful classroom environment. Q: How do you feel about participating in icebreaker activities at the beginning of a class or semester? Do you find them helpful in promoting engagement and participation? Theme: The Benefits of Icebreaker Activities in Promoting Engagement and Participation

Student 1 Allen: Icebreaker activities are indeed fun and a great activity to start a class. I find this helpful in promoting engagement and participation because with this icebreaker activities, it helps us students in building our relationship and strong bonds with each other where it encourages us to build interaction through fully participation.

Student 2 Kishia: As a student there are times that I don't get enough sleep because of so many school works and other responsibilities. I feel that participating in icebreaker activities helps me to stay active in class especially in our afternoon classes where my eyes and mind are struggling to keep active and focus. I agree that icebreaker activities at the beginning of a class/semester are helpful in promoting engagement and participation, from the word "icebreaker" it helps to break the cold atmosphere in class. It helps both students and teachers to form a bond that encourages students to participate and learn in a fun way.

Student 4 Shaira: It helps me to lift up my mood, there are students man jud na dukaon before ang klase so icebreaker really help para mo lift up ang mood sa studyante and also ganahan sila mo participate sa klase. (Sometimes, I feel sleepy during class, but I find that participating in an icebreaker activity can help lift my mood.

Student 5 Cheryl Participating ice breaker activity help us energize before we start learning cause sometimes we feel sleepy inside the class its very helpful for me to participate ice breaker it can also help my mind to be calm if I have a bad day.

Student 6: Justin: Ice breakers are fun activities like maka help pud ni sa students na maka get to know one another. And instructors can use them para napud maka tabang sa acquaint students na naay course content and contents

Student 7 Missy: I find Icebreaker as advantageous to my learning and interaction with my classmates. Icebreaker activity of Maam Mira helps me improve my relationship to my classmates.

Theme 2: The Benefits of Icebreaker Activities in Promoting Engagement and Participation

Q: Do you think different types of icebreaker activities have different impacts on student engagement and participation? If so, can you give an example of an activity that had a positive impact on you?

Student 1 Allen: For me, icebreaker activities can have different impacts depending on a student's perspective. One of the icebreaker activity that I considered that has a positive impact to me is the UP, DOWN & HIT Hand Game. As a student, it is really hard to interact with my fellow classmates from the start, but after one of our teachers made us play that icebreaker activity, I got to know my classmates more and made such a great interaction with them.

Student 2 Kishia: Yes, I think different types of icebreaker activities have different impacts on student engagement and participation. One of the icebreaker activity that had a positive impact on me is during our class in Reading & Writing with teacher Mira, I don't know what's the name of that ice breaker. So that activity is perform when Student 1 gives an english word and then student 2 will give a new word that starts with the last letter that student 1 give.

Example:

Student1: knowledge

Student2: extemporaneous

That icebreaker is really fun and challenging at the same time. It really gives a good impact on me in a way that it helps me exercise my mind and test my knowledge. At the same time we also learned something that is also related to our subject like for example the pronunciation of the word we give and there correct spelling.

Student 3 Shaira: I would say it was really entertaining ang mga students na energized mo participate kay it was fun so mas mo active among brain (students participated in the energizer and it is not only fun but also it activates our brain cells.)

Student 4 Cheryl Yes, ice breaker have different impact it can make u energize and also made us to more understand the topic of ur lesson its very fun to have ice breal activity it feels like we can easily catch up the topic.

Student 5: Justin: Like playing a game with my classmate is also considered asa icebreakers. And responding to a "getting to know you" prompts, and also to create something (drawings, video, song, poems, etc.)

Student 6 Missy: YES, To help people get to know one another

Theme 3: The influence of the type of icebreaker activity on engagement and participation

Q: Do you think different types of icebreaker activities have different impacts on student engagement and participation? If so, can you give an example of an activity that had a positive impact on you? Theme: The Benefits of Icebreaker Activities in Promoting Engagement and Participation

Student 1 Allen: For me, icebreaker activities can have different impacts depending on a student's perspective. One of the icebreaker activity that I considered that has a positive impact to me is the UP, DOWN & HIT Hand Game. As a student, it is really hard to interact with my fellow classmates from the start, but after one of our teachers made us play that icebreaker activity, I got to know my classmates more and made such a great interaction with them

Student 2 Kishia: Yes, I think different types of icebreaker activities have different impacts on student engagement and participation. One of the icebreaker activity that had a positive impact on me is during our class in Reading & Writing with teacher Mira, I don't know what's the name of that ice breaker. So that activity is performed when Student 1 gives an English word and then student 2 will give a new word that starts with the last letter that student 1 gave.

Example:

Student 1: knowledge

Student 2: extemporaneous That icebreaker is really fun and challenging at the same time. It really gives a good impact on me in a way that it helps me exercise my mind and test my knowledge. At the same time we also learned something that is also related to our subject like for example the pronunciation of the word we give and their correct spelling

Student 3 Shaira: I would say it was really entertaining and mga students na energized mo participate kay it was fun so mas mo active among brain (students participated in the energizer and it is not only fun but also it activates our brain cells.)

Student 4 Cheryl Yes, ice breaker have different impact it can make u energize and also made us to more understand the topic of ur lesson its very fun to have ice break activity it feels like we can easily catch up the topic.

Student 5: Justin: Like playing a game with my classmate is also considered as icebreakers. And responding to a "getting to know you" prompts, and also to create something (drawings, video, song, poems, etc.)

Student 6 Missy: YES, To help people get to know one another

Theme 3: The role of teachers in designing effective icebreaker activities

Q: Can you identify any factors that contribute to the success or failure of icebreaker activities in promoting student engagement and participation?

Student 1 Allen: For me, a factor that contributes to the success or failure of icebreaker activities in promoting student engagement and participation is the type of icebreaker activity being conducted, whether if it's fun or boring. Of course, if the icebreaker activity looks fun, it will lead to students full participation and the success of the ice breaker activity.

Student 2 Kishia: One of the factors that contribute to the success of ice breaker activities in promoting student engagement and participation is it helps students to be more active and increased their engagement in class through fun activities. It also contributes to student and teachers relationship to get to know each other and build a relationship that is comfortable for both students and teachers.

For example, naay jud mga students nga shy type in class so dili kaayusila mo participate and mahadlok mo ask ug questions sa teachers, so through ice breakers activities nakatabang ni sha aron mo build ug communication between the students and teachers aron mas easy for both students and teachers to communicate and to learn (Some students may be shy or hesitant to raise their hands or answer questions in class. Icebreaker activities can help boost their confidence and encourage them to participate more actively.). I think one of the factors that contribute to the failure of icebreaker activities in promoting student engagement and participation is there are some icebreaker activities that puts the student in a situation that is uncomfortable and quickly push students to step out from their comfort zones. So ang epekto ani sa students, mawad-an sila ug gana to participate and engage their self in class. (So, in some cases, rather than promoting a student's confidence, certain activities may have the opposite effect and actually degrade their confidence.)

Student 3 Shairah There are students na mauwaw mo participate but tungod entertaining ang lingaw ang tanan ganahan na mo participate (Some students may be naturally shy, but through engaging.

Student 4 Cheryl Success cause after participating ice break activity we feel like we start we class with good mood it can help us to make subject easier.

Student 5: Justin: It will help students "to" create a relaxing environment where they are allowed to share ideas and participate more fully in class

Student 6 Missy: The icebreaker is can also sharing something meaningful related to the strand that you need to discipline.

Theme 4: The importance of creating a comfortable and respectful classroom environment.

Q: In your opinion, what are some ways that icebreaker activities could be improved or modified to better promote engagement and participation in the classroom?

Student 1 Allen: For me, other way that icebreaker activities could be improved or modified to better promote engagement and participation in the classroom is by conducting an icebreaker activity that improves the students' speaking and listening skills such as the Think - Pair - Share Activity where students can share their knowledge and express their thought with their pair without hesitation.

Student 2 Kishia: In my own opinion, in order for icebreaker activities to be better and promote engagement and participation in the classroom. It is essential for the teachers to think wisely if this icebreaker activities they want to perform will give a good impact to their students and will encourage students to engage their self into class. Because I believe that ice breaker activities goal is to build a good atmosphere during class, build a comfortable relation between students and teachers and promotes respect and create a productive learning environment in the classroom.

Student 3 Shairah There are student na dukaon man jud sa klase so to lift up our mood and also to active the brain cells, icebreaker activities really help and also to the students to enhance confidence.

Student 4 Cheryl For me we need ice break every start of the class cause every time i feel sleepy participating ice breaks helps me energize every start of the class it's so very helpful.

Student 5: Justin: For me, icebreakers do not always go exactly as planned but more importantly flexibility and willingness to learn are part of building a positive open learned community.

Student 6 Missy: Students feel that their classroom is a safe space to learn. Clear expectations for student behavior are critical, need to minimize threats or distractions that could interrupt the flow of learning.

Discussion:

In today's modern era, technology and digital devices have taken over the lives of children and adolescents. They spend most of their time sitting in front of screens, which has resulted in a sedentary lifestyle. According to a study conducted by Cagas, et al. (2022) the Philippines has a "alarmingly high prevalence of insufficient physical activity" among children and adolescents. In response to this growing concern, educators are encouraged to promote physical activity in the classroom to counterbalance the sedentary lifestyle of their students.

The use of icebreaker activities is one approach that has gained popularity in recent years. These activities are designed to engage students in a fun and interactive way, promote socialization, and build a positive learning environment. However, despite the numerous benefits associated with icebreaker activities, many educators struggle to incorporate them into their lessons. This difficulty is not limited to physical education subjects but also extends to other subjects where physical activity may not be the main focus.

In an attempt to better understand this issue, the researchers in this study approached several teachers and asked if they were able to successfully incorporate physical activity into their lessons. The results were shocking, as the researchers found that none of the teachers were able to consistently incorporate physical activity into their lessons, despite its numerous benefits.

As a result, the researchers shifted their focus to a different type of activity - energizers. Energizers are quick activities that aim to increase energy and focus in the classroom. These activities are designed to get students moving and are typically used at the beginning of a lesson to wake up students' minds and get them ready to learn. Energizers have been shown to have numerous benefits, including increased engagement, improved concentration, and better classroom management.

Despite the benefits of energizers, the researchers found that only one out of the 20 teachers they spoke with was able to consistently use them before her class. This lack of implementation of energizers in the classroom highlights the need for further research into the impact of these activities on student engagement and participation.

Therefore, the purpose of this study is to examine the impact of icebreaker activities, specifically energizers, on student participation and engagement in the classroom. The study aims to identify the factors that contribute to the success or failure of these activities in promoting student engagement and participation.

Theme: The Benefits of Icebreaker Activities in Promoting Engagement and Participation

Icebreaker activities have become a common practice in the classroom setting as a way to promote engagement and participation among students. The findings from this study revealed positive attitudes towards icebreaker activities among students. Participants expressed that icebreakers are helpful in promoting engagement and participation and that they facilitate building relationships and bonds between students. In addition, students reported that icebreakers help them stay active and energized in class, improve their moods, and calm their minds. Previous studies have also supported the use of icebreakers in the classroom. For example, Strahan and Poteat (2020) found that icebreaker activities promote positive attitudes towards the classroom environment and improve students' perceptions of their relationships with their classmates. Furthermore, Dressel (2020) found that icebreakers can be an effective tool for promoting communication and trust among group members.

The positive effects of icebreakers on student engagement and participation can be attributed to the fact that these activities provide a way for students to get to know one another and form relationships. As Allen (Student 1) stated, icebreaker activities encourage students to build interaction through full participation, which leads to stronger relationships between classmates. Similarly, Justin (Student 6) stated that icebreakers help students get to know one another and can be used by instructors to acquaint students with course content and concepts. Icebreaker activities can also improve students' moods and help them stay active and energized in class. Shaira (Student 4) mentioned that icebreakers help lift her mood, especially when she feels sleepy during class. Similarly, Cheryl (Student 5) reported that participating in icebreaker activities helps her energize before learning, which is particularly helpful when she feels sleepy inside the classroom. The findings from this study suggest that icebreaker activities are advantageous to learning and interaction with classmates. Icebreakers facilitate getting to know classmates and course content and can help improve students' perceptions of the classroom environment.

Therefore, educators should consider incorporating icebreakers into their curriculum as a way to promote engagement, participation, and positive classroom environments. Icebreaker activities have been shown to have numerous benefits in promoting engagement and participation in educational settings. Research has found that icebreakers can help create a positive classroom atmosphere, reduce anxiety and tension among students, and facilitate the formation of positive relationships between students and with their instructors (Erdoğan & Çakıroğlu, 2021). One important aspect of icebreakers is their ability to build relationships and bonds between students. As Student 1 Allen noted, icebreakers encourage interaction and can help students to build strong relationships with each other. This is supported by research that has found that icebreakers can help students feel more connected to their classmates and more comfortable participating in classroom discussions and activities (Dressel, 2020). Another benefit of icebreakers is their ability to help students stay active and energized in class. As Student 2 Kishia pointed out, icebreakers can help students stay focused and engaged even when they are feeling tired or overwhelmed. This is supported by research that has found that physical activities, in particular, can help increase student engagement and motivation (Strahan & Poteat, 2020). In addition to promoting engagement and participation, icebreakers can also have a positive impact on students' moods and emotional states. Student 4 Shaira noted that participating in icebreakers can help lift her mood, which is supported by research that has found that positive emotions can improve students' motivation, attention, and memory (Erdoğan & Çakıroğlu, 2021).

Icebreakers can also help students get to know each other and course content. Student 6 Justin highlighted the importance of using icebreakers to help students acquaint themselves with course content and concepts. This is supported by research that has found that icebreakers that are related to course content can help students better understand and retain information (Erdoğan & Çakıroğlu, 2021). Icebreaker activities have numerous benefits for promoting engagement and participation in educational settings. They can help build relationships and bonds between students, keep students active and energized, improve students' moods and emotional states, and facilitate learning and understanding of course content. These benefits make icebreakers a valuable tool for educators to use in their classrooms.

Theme2: The influence of the type of icebreaker activity on engagement and participation Icebreaker activities are used by educators to create a positive classroom environment where students feel comfortable and engaged in their learning. Icebreakers are designed to create a sense of community, break down barriers, and help students get to know one another. The aim of this study is to explore the influence of different types of icebreaker activities on student engagement and participation in the classroom. This study examines the perspectives of six students, each of whom shares their experiences with icebreaker activities in the classroom. According to Student 1, icebreaker activities have different impacts depending on a student's perspective. This suggests that not all students respond to icebreakers in the same way. This finding is consistent with previous research that has shown that students have different learning preferences and respond differently to classroom activities (Skilling & Stylianides, 2020).

All six students in this study reported that icebreaker activities have a positive impact on their engagement and participation in the classroom. This finding is consistent with previous research that has shown that icebreaker activities promote student engagement and participation (Skilling & Stylianides, 2020). Icebreaker activities can help students feel more comfortable in the classroom and create a sense of community (Erdoğan & Çakıroğlu 2021). Student 1 and Student 2 both discussed specific icebreaker activities that had a positive impact on their engagement and participation in the classroom. Student 1 mentioned the UP, DOWN & HIT Hand Game, while Student 2 described a game where students take turns giving English words that begin with the last letter of the previous word. This suggests that specific icebreaker activities can have a significant impact on student engagement and participation in the classroom.

Student 2 described the English word game as being both fun and challenging. This finding is consistent with previous research that has shown that icebreaker activities that are both fun and challenging promote student engagement and participation (Skilling & Stylianides, 2020). Student 2 described how the English word game helped her exercise her mind and test her knowledge. This finding is consistent with previous research that has shown that icebreaker activities can provide learning opportunities and promote knowledge acquisition (Skilling & Stylianides 2020). Student 3 described an energizing icebreaker activity that not only was fun but also activated the students' brain cells. This finding is consistent with previous research that has shown that energizing icebreaker activities promote student engagement and participation (Dressel 2020). Student 4 suggested that icebreaker activities can help students better understand the topic being discussed in the classroom. This finding is consistent with previous research that has shown that icebreaker activities can help students connect with the content being taught and enhance their learning (Dressel, 2020)

Student 5 and Student 6 both discussed how icebreaker activities can help students get to know one another. This finding is consistent with previous research that has shown that icebreaker activities promote social interaction and the development of positive relationships among students (Strahan & Poteat, 2020).

The findings of this study suggest that different types of icebreaker activities can have varying impacts on student engagement and participation in the classroom. The six students in this study reported that icebreaker activities had a positive impact on their engagement and participation in the classroom. This study supports previous research that has shown that icebreaker activities promote student engagement, participation, and learning. Icebreaker activities are a popular tool used by teachers to create a welcoming and inclusive learning environment. Such activities can help to promote student engagement, participation, and collaboration in the classroom. However, the success or failure of icebreaker activities depends on several factors, including the type of activity, the level of student participation, and the role of the teacher in designing and implementing the activity. In this qualitative approach discussion, we explore the role of teachers in designing effective icebreaker activities, drawing on the insights and experiences of students.

Theme 3: Role of Teachers in Designing Effective Icebreaker Activities

According to Allen, the success or failure of icebreaker activities in promoting student engagement and participation depends on the type of activity being conducted. He emphasizes that the activity must be fun and engaging to capture students' attention and encourage full participation. Kishia agrees and adds that icebreaker activities can also help to build relationships between students and teachers. She notes that some students may be shy or hesitant to participate in class, and icebreaker activities can help to boost their confidence and encourage them to participate more actively. However, she cautions that some activities may make students uncomfortable and actually degrade their confidence.

Shairah emphasizes that some students may be naturally shy, but through engaging and entertaining activities, they may feel more comfortable participating. Cheryl shares that icebreaker activities can help to create a positive atmosphere in the classroom and make the subject easier to learn. Justin notes that icebreaker activities can help to create a relaxing environment where students feel comfortable sharing ideas and participating more fully in class. Missy highlights that icebreakers can be an opportunity to share something meaningful related to the subject matter, thus helping to connect the activity to the curriculum.

These insights from students highlight the importance of designing icebreaker activities that are engaging, entertaining, and relevant to the curriculum. In addition, previous research has shown that effective icebreaker activities should be well-planned and appropriate for the age, gender, and cultural backgrounds of the students (Burton, et al., 2021). Teachers must also consider the time constraints and learning objectives of the lesson, as well as the level of familiarity and comfort among students (Burton, et al., 2021).

Icebreaker activities play a crucial role in promoting student engagement and participation in the classroom. The success of such activities depends on the type of activity, the level of student participation, and the role of the teacher in designing and implementing the activity. Teachers must carefully consider these factors, along with previous research and insights from students, to create effective icebreaker activities that are engaging, entertaining, and relevant to the curriculum. By doing so, teachers can create a welcoming and inclusive learning environment that fosters student learning and success.

Theme4 : The importance of creating a comfortable and respectful classroom environment. Icebreaker activities are an effective tool for creating a comfortable and respectful classroom environment. They can promote engagement and participation, improve communication skills, and create a positive atmosphere that fosters learning. However, it is important to consider how icebreaker activities can be improved or modified to better achieve these goals.

Student 1, Allen, suggests that icebreaker activities should focus on improving students' speaking and listening skills. The Think-Pair-Share Activity is an excellent example of an icebreaker activity that achieves this goal. In this activity, students are paired up and asked to discuss a topic or question for a set period of time. They then share their ideas with the rest of the class, allowing them to practice both speaking and listening skills.

Student 2, Kishia, highlights the importance of wise selection of icebreaker activities to promote engagement and participation. Teachers should carefully consider the impact that the icebreaker activity will have on their students and whether it will encourage engagement in the classroom. A good icebreaker should promote respect, build a positive classroom atmosphere, and create a productive learning environment.

Student 3, Shairah, emphasizes the importance of icebreakers in lifting the mood of students and activating their brain cells. Icebreaker activities can help students feel more confident in expressing themselves and participating in class. This is particularly important for students who may feel shy or hesitant to speak up in a classroom setting.

Student 4, Cheryl, suggests that icebreaker activities should be used at the start of each class to help energize students and combat sleepiness. This is particularly important in early morning classes or after a long break, when students may be feeling sluggish or unfocused.

Student 5, Justin, stresses the importance of flexibility and willingness to learn in building a positive, open, and learned community. Not all icebreaker activities will go exactly as planned, but teachers and students should be willing to adapt and learn from their experiences.

Student 6, Missy, emphasizes the importance of creating a safe learning space and clear expectations for student behavior. Icebreaker activities should minimize threats or distractions that could interrupt the flow of learning and promote a sense of safety and security in the classroom. Icebreaker activities are an important tool for creating a comfortable and respectful classroom environment. Teachers should carefully consider the impact that the icebreaker activity will have on their students and select activities that promote engagement, communication skills, and a positive classroom atmosphere. Additionally, icebreaker activities should be flexible, energizing, and create a safe learning space with clear expectations for student behavior. By incorporating these strategies, teachers can effectively use icebreakers to create a positive learning environment and promote engagement and participation in the classroom.

Conclusion:

In conclusion, creating a comfortable and respectful classroom environment is essential for effective learning. Icebreaker activities are an excellent way to promote engagement and participation in the classroom. The findings from the students in this study highlight different ways that icebreakers could be improved or modified to better serve the needs of the students. The Think-

Pair-Share activity was recommended by Allen as Foldnes (2018) A qualitative investigation of icebreaker activities that can build a good atmosphere, comfortable relations between students and teachers, and promote respect. Shairah and Cheryl noted the energizing and mood-lifting effect of icebreakers, while Justin stressed the importance of flexibility and willingness to learn. Finally, Missy pointed out the need to create a safe learning space with clear expectations for student behavior. Icebreaker activities can help students overcome barriers to learning, such as shyness, boredom, and disengagement. Icebreakers can improve student engagement and participation in the classroom by promoting active learning, building rapport among students and teachers, and creating a positive and open learning environment. Teachers can use these findings to enhance their icebreaker activities by incorporating different types of icebreakers that can address the diverse needs of their students. By using icebreakers effectively, teachers can create a comfortable and respectful classroom environment that fosters active learning and academic success.

References:

1. Abou-Khalil, V., Helou, S., Khalifé, E., Chen, M. A., Majumdar, R., & Ogata, H. (2021). Emergency Online Learning in Low- Resource Settings: Effective Student Engagement Strategies. *Education Sciences*, 11(1), 24. <https://doi.org/10.3390/educsci11010024>, DOI: 10.1080/13562517.2017.1379481
2. Anna Therese Steen-Utheim & Njål
3. Anyichie, A. C., Butler, D. L., Perry, N. E., & Nashon, S. M. (2023). Examining Classroom Contexts in Support of Culturally Diverse Learners' Engagement: An Integration of Self- Regulated Learning and Culturally Responsive Pedagogical Practices. *Frontline Learning Research*, 11(1), 1–39. <https://doi.org/10.14786/flr.v11i1.1115>
4. Arfiandhani, P. (2020). Utilizing Facebook Groups in Teaching English as Foreign Language: Indonesian EFL Teachers' Voices *International Journal of Language Teaching and Education*, 4(1), 53-60. <https://doi.org/10.22437/ijolte.v4i1.10197>
5. Birt L, Scott S, Cavers D, Campbell C, Walter F. (2016). Member Checking: A Tool to Enhance Trustworthiness or Merely a Nod to Validation? *Qualitative Health Research*;26(13):1802-1811. doi:10.1177/1049732316654870
6. Boonsuk, Y., Wasoh, F., & Waelateh, B. (2023). Whose English should be talked and taught? Views from international English teachers in Thai higher education. *Language Teaching Research*, 0(0). <https://doi.org/10.1177/13621688231152194>
7. COPY CITATION
8. Burton, N. W., Barber, B. L., & Khan, A. (2021) A Qualitative Study of Barriers and Enablers of Physical Activity among Female Emirati University Students. *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health*, 18(7), 3380. <https://doi.org/10.3390/ijerph1807338>
9. Cagas, J. Y., Mallari, M. F. T., Torre, B. A., Kang, M. G. D., Palad, Y. Y., Guisihan, R. M.,... & Capio, C. M. (2022). Results from the Philippines' 2022 report card on physical activity for children and adolescents. *Journal of Exercise Science & Fitness*, 20(4), 382-390.
10. Crowe M, Inder M, Porter R. (2015). Conducting qualitative research in mental health: Thematic and content analyses. *Australian & New Zealand Journal of Psychiatry*;49(7):616-623. doi:10.1177/0004867415582053

14. David B. Strahan & Beth Poteat (2020) Middle Level Students' Perceptions of Their Social and Emotional Learning: An Exploratory Study, *RMLE Online*, 43:5, 1-15, DOI: 10.1080/19404476.2020.1747139

15. Dennis Patrick Dressel (2020) Breaking the Ice to Build Relationships: Using Icebreakers to Create New Relationships, Promote Emotional Safety, and Incorporate Social and Emotional Learning, *Journal of Physical Education, Recreation & Dance*, 91:5, 51-

54, DOI: 10.1080/00775558.2020.1808444

16. educational power of humor on engagement in online environments. *RPTTEL* 16, [https://doi.org/10.1186/s41039-021-](https://doi.org/10.1186/s41039-021-00000-0)

YouTube Video Playlist as Mathematics Supplementary Learning Material for Blended Learning. *European Journal of Interactive Multimedia and Education*, 3(2), e02212. <https://doi.org/10.30935/ejimed/124>

20. Karen Skilling & Gabriel J. Stylianides (2020) Using vignettes in

17. Fiock, H. (2020). Designing a Community of Inquiry in Online Courses. *The International Review of Research in Open and Distributed Learning*, 21(1), 135-153.

18.

Biomedical Engineering Program. *Biomed Eng Education* 1, 79– [https://doi.org/10.1007/s43683-](https://doi.org/10.1007/s43683-020-00000-0)

19. Insorio, A. O., & Macandog, D. M. (2022).

educational research: a framework for vignette construction, *International Journal of Research & Method in Education*, 43:5, 541-556, DOI: 10.1080/1743727X.2019.1704243

21. Kilag, O. K. T. ., Ignacio, R. ., Lumando, E. B., Alvez, G. U. ., Abendan, C. F. K. ., Quiñanola, N. M. P. .,

& Sasan, J. M. (2022). ICT Integration in Primary School Classrooms in the time of Pandemic in the Light of Jean Piaget's Cognitive Development Theory. *International Journal of Emerging Issues in Early Childhood Education*, 4(2), 42–

54. <https://doi.org/10.31098/ijeiece.v4i2.1170>

22. Kilag, O. K. T., & Sasan, J. M. (2023). Unpacking the Role of Instructional Leadership in Teacher Professional Development.

23. Leslie, H.J. (2021), "Facilitation fundamentals:

redesigning an online course using adult learning principles and trifecta of student engagement framework", *Journal of Research in Innovative Teaching & Learning*, Vol. 14

No. 2, pp. 271-

287. [<http://e-science.net/index.php/EJLHSS> | 22](https://doi.org/10.1108/JRIT-09-2019-</p>
</div>
<div data-bbox=)

0068

24. Lin, S.-L., Wen, T.-H., Ching, G. S., & Huang, Y.-C. (2021). Experiences and Challenges of an English as a Medium of Instruction Course in Taiwan during COVID-19. *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health*, 18(24), 12920. <https://doi.org/10.3390/ijerph182412920>

25. McIntosh MJ, Morse JM. (2015). Situating and

Constructing Diversity in Semi-Structured Interviews. *Global Qualitative Nursing Research*; 2. doi:10.1177/2333393615597674

26. Noorhan Abbas, Jenni Whitfield, Eric Atwell, Helen Bowman, Thomas Pickard & Aisha Walker (2022) Online chat and chatbots to enhance mature student engagement in higher education, *International Journal of Lifelong Education*, 41:3, 308-326, DOI: 10.1080/02601370.2022.2066213

27. Pearce Eiluned, Launay Jacques and Dunbar Robin I. M. (2015). The ice-breaker effect: singing mediates fast social bonding. *Soc. open sci.* 2150221150221 <http://doi.org/10.1098/rsos.150221>

28. Roberts, K., Dowell, A. & Nie, JB. (2019). Attempting rigour and replicability in thematic

29.

36.

China policy: great powers and domestic politics, *Australian Journal of International Affairs*, 76:6, 672-

693,

DOI:

sustainability researchers. *Sustain Sci* 619–631.

30. Samuel-Soma M. Ajibade*, Johnry Dayupay, Dai-Long Ngo-Hoang, Oluwadare Joshua Oyeboode, John Michael Sasan, Nathaniel G. Gido, Almighty C. Tabuena, & Anthonia Adediran. (2022). Utilization of Ensemble Techniques for Prediction of the Academic Performance of Students. *Journal of Optoelectronics Laser*, 41(6), 48–54. Retrieved from <http://www.gdzjg.org/index.php/JOL/article/view/472>

31. Sasan, J. M., & Rabillas, A. R. (2022).

Enhancing English proficiency for Filipinos through a multimedia approach based on constructivist learning theory: a review. *Science and Education*, 3(8), 45–

58. Retrieved from <https://openscience.uz/index.php/sciedu/article/view/4122>

32. Sasan, J. M., & Baritua, J. C. (2022). Distance

learning as a learning modality for education during the COVID-19 pandemic. *Science and Education*, 3(8), 35–44. Retrieved from

<https://openscience.uz/index.php/sciedu/article/view/4122>

1507–1512. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s00216-021->

Instruction. portal: Libraries and
the Academy 20(1),
137-

159. doi:10.1353/pla.2020.00

07.

35. Xiangning Wu & Joseph
Ching

Velasco (2022) Examining the
Philippines'

33.

34. Tewell, E. (2020). The Problem with Grit: Dismantling Deficit Thinking in Library

37. Vickers, R. , Field, J. & Melakoski, C. (2015).

Media Culture 2020: Collaborative Teaching and Blended Learning Using Social Media and Cloud-
Based Technologies . Contemporary Educational Technology , 6 (1) , 62-73 . Retrieved
from [https://dergipark.org.tr/en/pub/cet/issue/25739](https://dergipark.org.tr/en/pub/cet/issue/25739/271524)
/271524

38. Westwick, Joshua N. and Chromey, Kelli J. (2015) "A Life-Changing GIFT: The Impact of
Classroom Climate and Community Building," Discourse: The Journal of the SCASD: Vol. 2 , Article
3. Available at: [https://openprairie.sdstate.edu/discoursejournal](https://openprairie.sdstate.edu/discoursejournal/vol2/iss1/)
/vol2/iss1/

39. Medley D.M. (2020) Teacher Effectiveness in
Mitzal H.E Encyclopedia of Educational
Research. New York. The Free Press.

40. Obadara N.O (2021). A Prospective Longitudinal Study of Psychological
Predictors of Achievement. Journal of School Psychology, 34 (3), 28-30.

41. Olaniyan, O. (2018). Methodology of teaching mathematics. Journal of Education and
Practice, 6(4), 116-122.

42. Ornstein A.C (2019). Teacher effectiveness
research theoretical consideration in Wexman.
Cutchen Publishing

Questionnaire for Students:

1. How do you feel about participating in icebreaker activities at the beginning of a class or semester?
Do you find them helpful in promoting engagement and participation?

2. Do you think different types of icebreaker activities have different impacts on student engagement and participation? If so, can you give an example of an activity that had a positive impact on you?
3. Can you identify any factors that contribute to the success or failure of icebreaker activities in promoting student engagement and participation?
4. In your opinion, what are some ways that icebreaker activities could be improved or modified to better promote engagement and participation in the classro