

INTERESTING ICE BREAKING ACTIVITIES TO REDUCE STUDENTS' BOREDOM IN CLASS

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ABSTRAK

Penelitian ini mengkaji kebosanan siswa di kelas dan bagaimana guru mengatasi hal tersebut. Kebosanan siswa digambarkan sebagai perasaan emosional ketika seseorang tidak tahu apa yang harus dilakukan dan tidak tertarik pada sekelilingnya. Icebreaker dapat digunakan dalam situasi ini. Hal ini dapat membantu siswa lebih merasa nyaman dan dapat menarik siswa untuk berkomunikasi. Penelitian ini termasuk penelitian deskriptif kualitatif yang menjelaskan mengenai icebreakers yang dapat digunakan di kelas, cara untuk memilih icebreakers, dan tujuan dari icebreakers tersebut. Langkah-langkah penelitian adalah menginvestigasi permasalahan siswa, mengumpulkan, memilih, mengaplikasikan icebreakers, dan membuat kesimpulan. Temuan penelitian ini adalah 5 icebreakers yang dapat digunakan di kelas, seperti the door game, do you like your neighbours?, two truths and a lie, interview, and fantasy island. Tujuannya adalah untuk menghilangkan kebosanan siswa di dalam kelas, untuk mengajarkan kosa kata atau jenis kata, untuk mengajarkan topik sapaan dan pengenalan, untuk membuat siswa percaya diri, dan untuk meningkatkan kreativitas siswa.

Kata kunci: *icebreakers, students' boredom in class*

A. Introduction

There are some reasons students feel bored in their class. Lack of challenge, monotonous vigilance tasks, class atmosphere are main reasons of students' boredom (Perry, 2010: 34). Contributing to boredom is the perception by many students that school learning is meaningless, or not connected with their goals and interests and not valuable in their lives. Meaningless learning is initiated by others, requires little personal involvement by learners, affects (at best) a small part of learners' lives, and is viewed by learners as not relevant to their goals. Unfortunately much classroom teaching reinforces this perception, especially when teachers lecture and students passively listen.

Learning cannot be made meaningful to students by simply telling them why the learning is important. Rather, meaningful learning requires a reorganization of the teaching-learning process. Teachers become learning facilitators who provide resources for students to attain their goals or solve problems that are important to them (Barret, 2008: 123). All students do the same thing at the same time, there will be much differentiation with some working in groups and others individually, some inside and others outside of the classroom, and so forth. Although such latitude may not be possible across an entire school day, allowing students some choices is

predicted to increase their perception of learning as meaningful to them and thereby help to reduce boredom.

An icebreaker is a facilitation exercise intended to help the members of group to begin the process of forming themselves into a team. Icebreakers are commonly presented as a game to "warm up" the group by helping the members to get to know each other. They often focus on sharing personal information such as names, hobbies, etc (Becky, 2015: 23).

Teachers can use icebreakers within their classrooms to create a connected and comfortable learning environment for their students. Icebreakers are necessary for a successful classroom. Icebreakers allow for a student to become emotionally connected with school and increase motivation (Kelly, 2015: 45). There are many important items to consider when working with icebreakers: 1) Teachers need to learn what icebreakers work out best according to the age group ; 2) Teachers need to have step-by-step instructions, and then 3) Teachers need to give modeling.

Icebreaker is the most effective when it is thought out, practiced, and has clear instructions. There are two types of Icebreakers: 1) Facilitating Introductions are used to help participants ease into training and helping the participants to learn each other's names and information (Dover, 2015); and 2) Topic Lead-ins are used to identify needs and goals, share information and resources, and/or surface resistance (Arthur, 2004: 54).

Students' boredom in English classroom happens when students do not understand and focus on class. Therefore, an icebreaker is needed. It can help a teacher to reduce students' boredom in class.

B. Literature Review

1. Interesting Ice Breakers

An icebreaker is defined as a tool that enables the group leader to foster interaction, stimulate creative thinking, challenge basic assumption, illustrate new concepts, and introduce specific materials (Amos, 2006: 37). Therefore, an icebreaker is a structured activity that is designed to relax learners, introduce them a new thing and energize them. There are some icebreakers such as follows (Becky, 2013: 3).

a. Getting-to-Know-You Icebreakers

Icebreaker is frequently presented in the form of a game to "warm up" a group by helping the members to get to know each other. It often focuses on sharing information such as names, personal facts, hobbies. *Getting to know you* helps people who already know each other become more acquainted. The outcomes are often humorous and always interesting.

b. Team Building Icebreakers

It is intended to help a group to begin the process of forming themselves into a team or teams, such as building activities, aid group dynamics by building trust, communication, and the ability to work together.

c. Party (Fun) Icebreakers

No one likes walking into a party where few people are familiar. For a party to be exciting, guests need to be put at ease. Party icebreakers serve this purpose, introducing guests to one another. Use icebreakers that are simple and entertaining to coax people to converse and laugh. This sets the right mood for the rest of the party.

d. Icebreaker Questions

As the name implies, icebreaker questions simply elicit information from people in an effort to get them comfortable and relaxed. Icebreaker questions can be serious or funny. The best icebreaker questions are designed specifically for an identified age and people for activities or experiences.

2. Students' Boredom in Class

Boredom is induced in several ways such as lack of challenge, monotonous vigilance tasks, and a bad class atmosphere (Perry, 2010:65). The nature of boredom can be seen such as silent emotion manifest to affective states like anger and anxiety, from teacher perspective, there is no disruptiveness anger to the situation, from clinical perspective practice, boredom lacks of psychological relevance. Then, it impacts to students' attention, effort, and performance.

C. Research Method

This research is a descriptive qualitative case study (Creswell, 2012: 34). This method examines the status of a group of people associated with an object, a condition, a thought or an event that occurs at the present time. The goal is to get an idea on how to find solutions to reduce students' boredom in classroom. There are several steps in this research such as:

1. investigating students' problems
2. collecting icebreakers
3. selecting an suitable icebreaker
4. applying icebreakers in classroom
5. making conclusion.

D. Discussion

Investigate students problems

There are some problems manifested to students' boredom based on interview to students and lecturers in English Education Department, University of Muhammadiyah Purwoketo such as the lecturers could not accommodate high students' competence. It is assumed from the lack of challenge in the tasks. The lecturers focus on low students competence.

Collect, Select and Apply Icebreakers in Classroom

There are several kinds of icebreakers such as:

1. The Door Game

It is adapted from Becky's dragon game. A teacher can use it for teaching grammar. For instance, when a teacher wants to teach parts of speech, this icebreaker can be used. A teacher can use a balloon for making it more interesting. Here are some steps for teaching adjective (parts of speech): a) A teacher asks students to stand up; b) a teacher decides to choose the multiple of 3 in starting the game, and points out a student who starts to count; c) a student begins to count it; d) a student has to mention an adjective, when it comes to multiple of 3.



Figure 1. Door Game

2. Do You Like Your Neighbors?

It can be used for introduction in the first meeting or when the topic is greeting. Here are steps: a) students stand in a large circle; b) a student begins the game standing in the middle of the circle; c) the student asks a question "do you like your neighbors?"; d) another student answers by mentioning name, class, and address.



Figure 2. Do you like your neighbors?

3. Two Truths and a Lie

It is an icebreaker for engaging students' confidence to speak. A teacher can apply it in speaking class. The steps are: a) participants introduce themselves and make three statements about themselves — two true and one untrue; b) the rest of the group votes to try to identify the falsehood.



Figure 3. Two Truths and a Lie

4. Interview

It is another way to engage students by having an icebreaker named interview. Students try to ask their friends about some cases. It leads to students' critical thinking asking questions and responding the questions.



Figure 4. Interview

5. Fantasy Island

The icebreaker aims at provoking students' creativity. A teacher can use pictures in colored papers. After that, a teacher distributes the papers to groups of students. Then, a teacher can ask students to make opinions about the pictures.



Figure 5. Fantasy Island

Based on the activities, a teacher can select an icebreaker for his/her teaching in 3 criteria. The criteria are: 1) an icebreaker which fits the teacher's topic and objective; 2) an icebreaker which fits teacher's setting; 3) an icebreaker which fits the teacher's own skill level. Besides that, a teacher can apply an icebreaker as opener to lead students to get focus and get motivation towards the lesson. When a teacher applies it in the middle of the lesson, it aims at refreshing the situation and getting concentration back. An icebreaker can be applied at the end of the lesson as a confirmation or review to the material.

E. Conclusions and Recommendations

There are a number of positive behaviors, which actually help the students learn and perform better in class. Teachers can use icebreakers within their classrooms not only to create a connected and comfortable learning environment for their students but also to reduce students' boredom in class. Icebreakers are necessary for a successful classroom.

It has been suggested that boredom has an evolutionary basis that encourages humans to seek out challenges. It may influence human learning and ingenuity.

From those causes, making some icebreakers to reduce students' boredom in class is a must, but since students may suffer from different level and forms of another ability in English the icebreakers must be adapted by students' level and ability in English. There are 5 kinds of icebreaker in the research such as *the door game, do you like your neighbors?, two truths and a lie, interview and fantasy island*. The objectives of those icebreakers are reducing students' boredom, teaching parts of speech or vocabulary, teaching greeting and introduction, engaging students' confidence to speak, and provoking students' creativity.

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