The Decline of Passive Learning into the Teaching Techniques through Active Learning

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Abstract

I attended the course of "Active Learning" in Montana State University, United States of America many years ago. I wondered why American lecturers taught the learners with happiness and many teaching materials in their classrooms, it was full of a cozy atmosphere. In the same way, the learners talked, ran, laughed without complaining, I felt in love with the American teaching then I have studied how did they do? What was the key of their teaching success? And why many Thai university lecturers do not enjoy to create the activities through technique as active learning. In this academic article, it was concerned about passive and active learning, time and classroom managements, effective teaching through the teaching technique of active learning.

Keywords: Active learning, Passive learning, Teaching techniques

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Introduction

About 10 years ago, I was sitting in the tuition room with few lecturers in the university classroom, and an American teacher was teaching us about "Active Learning." I gave copied handouts about "English", explained about the teaching methods and theories, and moved to talk about the grammatical rules or grammarians. Meanwhile, everybody was talking, and laughing at each other, I was thinking "Don't they understand English? Why they didn't focus on the lecturer?" Immediately, I asked my friend who sat beside on me "Why don't you focus on the teacher while he is teaching?" she said, "Boring." Actually, my point of view was the same as her, I understood my students who sat, and listened to me, how bored they were? In this case, in that class I did exercises as the teacher wanted us to do, no one talked, no one laughed at, I was curious "Why we cannot talk or consult each other?" and "Is it a passive learning? Because of my curious at that day, I have learned about how to teach with joyful, and happiness. After that not so long, I got a scholarship from Nakhon Sawan Rajabhat University to attending "Active Learning" course for 15 days in Montana State University, United States of America, I was an observer in American classes e.g., Science, English, History etc., it was fantastic, I had never taught through many techniques as American lecturers, it was attractive, and motivated me. After I had been back from America, I would like to change my classrooms' atmosphere to fulfill the students' happiness by smiling, they should remember of the difficult contents through activities and they can apply their knowledge on their jobs after graduated. By the way, I have read many books and searched for the websites are related with active learning, I would like to develop the university students' language skills i.e., listening, speaking, reading, writing, critical thinking, and pursue the university instructors how to change the way of teachings to be happy, and effective learning.

Learning by doing nothing

According to the definition of "Learning" is conceived as passive and active, it depends on the lesson plans, and the academic benchmarks, the teachers always worry about time management and the students' assessment. In fact, learning should be composed of active, purposive behaviors involving motivation, practice, and achievement (Herbert & Eugene, 1970, pp.184-190). Even though Thai university students' classes, there are 3 hours for the lecturers manage the lecturing only talking, writing without collaborating the contents with any other activities, it's the remarkable, the students are diet and lack of the inspiration, participating, and they receive the monotonous stimulation, thus both the lecturers and students are bored to create new innovations or knowledge together, they avoid responsibilities for learning, they are as zombies to accept information without considering as following the contents given. In this case, it was happened to me when the students compared the teaching methods of a teacher with the others, they didn't accept the way of active teachers, they were lazy to attend the activities, they didn't be patient to focus on the rules, and still denied new intellectual learning through the activities. The lecturers, however who are passive unprepared teaching on their behave like usual, it closes - minded to drive up the students' learning. The college classroom is rife with silent subversion (Christou & Bulthoff, 1997, p. 109). To my way of thinking, the students have learned by themselves about the advent of personal technology and free Wi-Fi has given students access very simple, they do not need to study in the classroom, go in through many applications such as computer games, online shopping, football matches, they are boring to attend listening about the knowledge they had been known already. In this case, doodling and note – passing are all but extinct, yet distraction is on the rise, with students checking their smartphones an average of 11.43 times in every class, technology might just kill the classroom lecture, but it might also save learning itself. (Bligh, 1971), and Bligh suggested that no lecture should not more than 20 minutes, according to his point of view, it appears that in Thai university class period is for 3 hours, the lecturers lecture for 10-12 minutes, then the students should not be passive, but activate should

get rid of their stressful, and moveable around the classrooms. Moreover, while passive learning may lead to a weak connection between neurons, active multisensory learning leads to deeply embedded neural connections (Michel, Cater & Varela, 2009; Wingfield & Black, 2005) the humans' brains work well and effective when the physically is moveable as well as passive learning equates limited learning.

According to the information about learning by doing nothing, it's concerned with the lecturers' behavior such as "read a chapter, hear my lecture", it's the way of passive teaching. Moreover, a recent survey found that 65 percent of college students decided not to buy a required course textbook, their stated reason is the exorbitant cost of the tomes, but behind that reasoning lies: students clearly don't see the value of textbooks, because it's not how they learn. (Preville, 2019, p. 4.). In this case, the lecturers who will succeed on their teachings, they should learn how to adapt the teaching techniques, and the students can be a part of the lessons. Furthermore, passive learning cannot identify the persons' skillful, the sitting on the chair, and do not participate or collaborate with the others, the students are going to lose their inspiration to create new innovations, and creative thinking procedures are stopped.

Teaching Techniques through Active Learning

According to the cause and effect of passive learning that has been reflected to the students' loss of the inspiration, do not figure out with the textbooks, ignoring to the way of teaching etc. Nowadays, it's the 21st century, the lecturers should adapt their teaching methods, how to manage the classroom i.e., aims at establishing student's self-control through a process of promoting positive student achievement and behavior effectively through using materials to support the students who are full of the energy of creativity. (Chandra, 2015, p. 13).
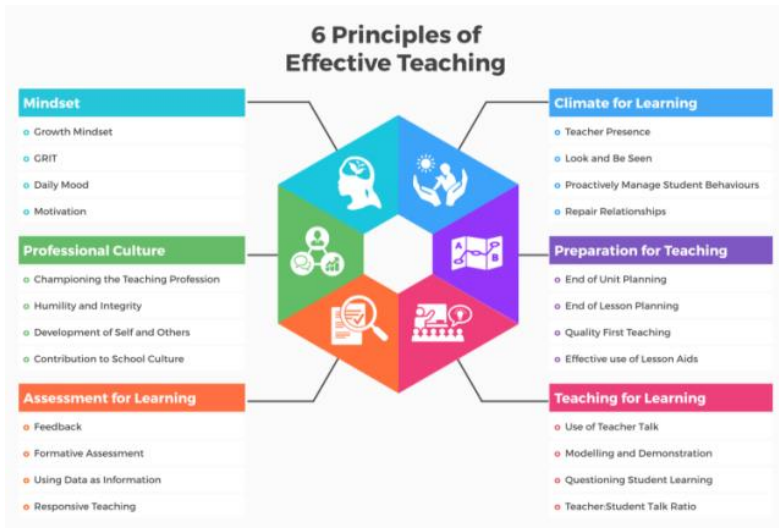
Figure 1. Infographic: 6 principles of effective teaching. (Best practices for effective learning, 2021)

In this case, the teaching techniques are part of the effective teaching e.g., teaching for learning, it's related with the techniques such as use of lecturers talk, modeling and demonstration, questioning student learning, lecturer and student talk to ratio. According to the Figure 1, the teaching techniques should be selected to match with the students' background knowledge, then the level up will be increased and more complicated as the contents planed. In this case, the effective teaching is composed of the mindset i.e., it's an attitude and belief in thinking which can be developed, and created by experiences of the thinkers. Professional culture is a part of the effective teaching, it's about the understanding the nature, culture of the students, including the developing the lectures and students' quality which there are concerned with the assessment for learning according to the curriculum benchmarks: feedback, formative assessment, using more data as information, responsive teaching, in fact in the classroom, the students and lecturers should spend time to share ideas or participate to design the activities together even the lecturers have been still mainly to do the lesson plans, and manage it through vary activities. Not only for those were

concerned about the effective learning in the classroom, but the climate for leaning is important, for instance lecturer presents, look and be seen by the students while doing activities, in this case, however both lecturers and students can adjust their attitude to improve the relationship. In the same way, preparation for teaching is one of important which the lecturers who teach through passive learning always do not prepare the activities to activate the learning process to the students, actually time management for attending each activity, it should be 15-20 minutes, and for the complicated contents, especially to be prepared the teaching materials such as chemical pens, plain papers, sticky tape etc. The last topic for the effective teaching is teaching for learning. Generally, human learn how to improve and drive up themselves through good examples and experiences, the teaching in the classroom however, if the students learn hard lesson through doing activities, they are happy with, and learn how to work as team workers, some teaching techniques, it's about lecturers' talking for sharing ideas between lecturers and students together, the modeling and demonstrate techniques support the students to identify and prove the truth that it can be trust in some subjects as Science and Mathematics, then the questioning is a way to activate the students' appearance, some secret of them, it can be reviewed because the students ask the questions, and they would like to know those answers to exchange their point of views with ratio.

All things considered, an awesome teaching in the 21st Century, not to be focused on the lecturers' knowledge, but the teaching strategies or variety techniques are needed to be applied for the students. Undoubtedly, I do understand how hard to start and adjust the new teaching methods, especially, the own personality of each lecturer is different. In a way, the teaching technique is called "Active Learning" supports the classroom environment is better, cheer up the students' inspiration, and relax at the same time. In the same way, Active Learning can also help students focus in on what content the instructor wants them to know (Katelyn. M. Cooper & Sara E. Brownell, 2020, p.4). In the way of Active Learning is about the discussion in the classroom, and think about what will be happened after the lecturer explained full of the contents. In this case, from the Figure 2 is

identified the period of time to be set up the activities, the first procedure is asking and talking about the students' background knowledge and lecturing about the content lessons for 10-12 minutes, then the activity is ready to attend for 3-4 minutes and explain the content theory for 10-12 minutes, next is allow the students to participate activity again just for checking about their understanding to the lecturer's explanation, before the class will be finished, the summary should be done to clarify understanding of the students as well.
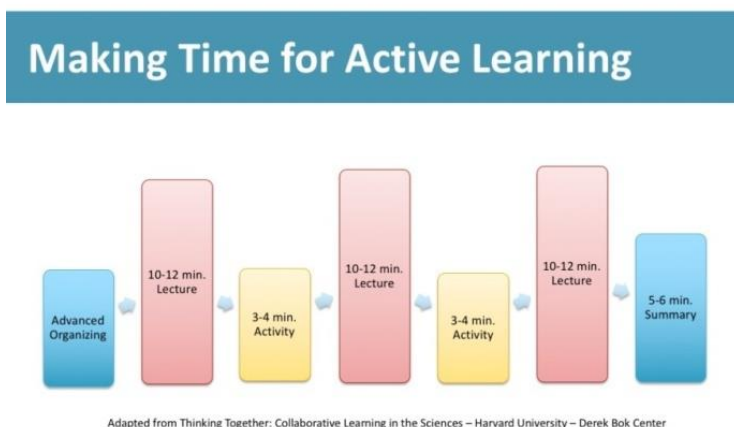

Figure 2. Infographic: Making time for active learning. (Center for Educational Innovation, 2021)

In this case, from the Figure 2, the during of time to set up the activities depend on how much time in a class, for the university class's period is 3 hours, that's mean the lecturers can divide more time and activities to appropriate with the contents and students.

While the lecturers allow their students to do activities through active learning is mentoring and coaching which they are aimed to develop some knowledge skills of the learners. Among all subject groups are based on active learning, which means that "learning by doing and thinking" should include the 21st century skills (Surakarn et al, 2020, p. 35). A good teaching is to be a mentor, the lecturers should walk around the class when the activities were assigned, the students are always curious and would like

good advises, for instance the technique of project-based learning which the students want to understand about the Cycle of Deming, it's PDCA (Plan, Do, Check, Act). Basically, the lecturers should learn how to empower to learn the PDCA, it is going to support the teaching techniques and time management in the classroom.

Teaching techniques or strategies in active learning activate the students' brains through the technique of "Brain - Based Learning", it's strategy to perform the students' learning challenges by thinking, collaboration etc. In fact, Brain – Based Learning pits a strong emphasis on physical exercise and movement in the classroom. (Singaravelu, 2018, p. 767). In this case, many teaching techniques through active learning are used in my classroom as following:

Figure 3. Photo: Active learning activity, 2312607 English for tourism and Hotel # 2, the 2nd year students, B.A. (Tourism and Service), Faculty of Management Science, Nakhon Sawan Rajabhat University, 2020.

The first technique, according to the Figure 3, it was an activity designed for knowing the students' English vocabulary background knowledge which normally this technique is used for the first time of the lecturer and learners never attend the class before, after that the lecturer can assess and plan how to manage the lesson plan. In case of teaching the course of 2312607 English for Tourism and Hotel # 2, the 2nd year students of B.A. (Tourism and Service), Faculty of Management Science. Nakhon Sawan Rajabhat

University in 2020, the learners' problem was the vocabulary which it must be used in the contents as the lesson plan, and expected outcome. Therefore, the technique is named the "Balloon Pop" was selected to develop 25 students in this class. The "Balloon Pop" gives each group an inflated balloon with the task / problem trapped inside a piece of paper. At the signal, all groups pop their balloons. Injects fun, noise, and energy to a group assignment. (Yee, 2020, p. 7). From my point of view, the technique of the "Balloon Pop" supports the students to collaborate in a group, they can learn how to work as a good team worker and recognize English vocabulary which they have known before. Generally, the nature of human beings love to compete, full of energize when they laugh at, and share their ideas together. The advantage of this technique was the students knew more vocabularies because each group exchanged to correct the words spelt on the balloon, then when the students wrote the words on a balloon by chemical-colored pens, it reflects to the brain. Simultaneous, from long ago, the various psychological influences of color on human beings have been a focus of attention. (Yoto et al, 2007). Finally, this group of the university students should be developed more higher difficulty contents, it may be related with English grammatical rules and written language through more teaching techniques of active learning.
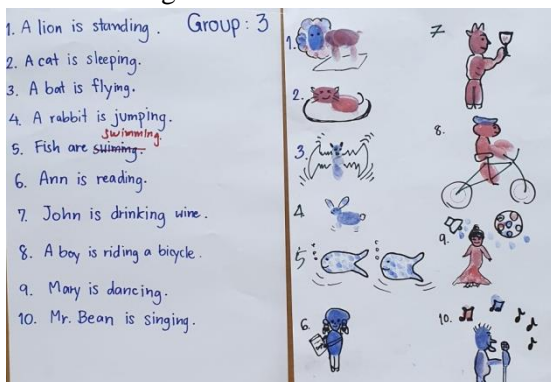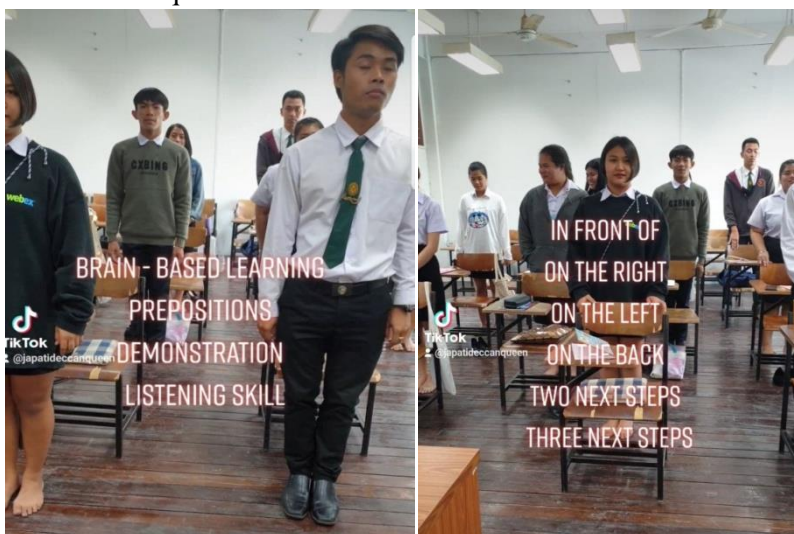

Figure 4. Photo: Active learning activity, "How to teach through the teaching technique of active learning" in Subhadrarama college, Gangodawila Nugegoda, Colombo, Sri Lanka, 2018.

The second technique, as I concerned with the technique of the "Balloon Pop" supported the students to activate more learning as team workers, they need to be driven up from the teaching effective methods of the lecturers about vocabulary and grammatically. Undoubtedly, nonnative speakers worry about how to apply the grammatical rules to the other language skills, some countries have the higher benchmarks to using the foreign languages such as English, Chinese, Japanese etc., the lecturers always lecture through the passive learning because in their views, English structure is complicated, it's hard to understand and plan to teach through the activities. According to the Figure 4, it's named "Make it a Story" it's to encourage students to submit their group projects as a comic or story created online (bubblr, StripCreator, StoryJumper, Storify) (Yee, 2020, p. 7). Eventually, I have tried hard to create simple activity matched with the harder contents as "Tenses, Conditional Sentences, Parts of Speech" etc., when I was invited to be a speaker "How to teach through the teaching technique of Active Learning" in Subhadrarama College, Gangodawila Nugegoda, Colombo in Sri Lanka in 2018. Actually, in 2017 I had been to Subhadrarama College, Gangodawila Nugegoda, Colombo in Sri Lanka then at that time, I was an observer in English and Sinhalese classes i.e., the official and national languages of Sri Lanka. I observed that Sri Lankan college students' background knowledge of English grammatical was weak even they spoke English fluently. Hence, I had prepared to improve their grammar and written skills, and planned to see them again in 2018. By the way, Sri Lankans speak English as a Second Language, but many of the college students cannot use English as well as Thais. In 2018, on the other hand, I collected the technique "Make it a Story" was applied for the college students and created the teaching materials which they were used: Stamp Pad, Chemical pens, A4 papers etc. I planned the activities for them, the content was "Present Continuous Tense". In this case, they divided in 4-5 groups, they were 6 people in each group, then they had to recognize the "Action Verbs" and arrange new sentences as the structure of the "Present Continuous Tense", they stamped their thumbs on papers and decorated the drawings by chemical pens. As the result, after Sri Lankans collaborated "Make it a Story" used few materials to create their masterpieces, they

enjoyed to work as teams, and remembered the structure of the situation precisely. At that time, before our class was finished and they had gone, they had to answer my questions on the activities they had done, for instance "I have an action verb, it's "drink" how can I say as the Present Continuous Tense?" as the result for wrapped up activity, Sri Lankan college students could answer the questions are better and fluent.

Figure 5. Photo: Active Learning activity, 2313616 English for Tourism and Hotel 4, the 3rd year students, B.A. (Tourism and Service), Faculty of Management Science. Nakhon Sawan Rajabhat University, 2020.

The third technique, in classroom, many times that the students do not focus on the lecturer's explaining who are in front of the classroom, it has many factors to reflect the students' behaviors such as the lecturers' teaching technique, disturbing sounds, chatting or devices. At the beginning, I wrote about "Brain – Based Learning" can support the learners to relax and focus on the contents. In the middle way of the class, the technique of "Brain - Based Learning" should be used for 3-4 minutes, according to Figure 5, I had spent time to lecture about 15 minutes then I observed the learners' behaviors, they were sleepy, and did not focus on me anymore. Because of

that caused, the "Punctuated Lectures", one way to do this is through a technique described by Angelo entitled "Punctuated Lectures": Listen, Stop, Reflect, Write and Give feedback "This involves periodically stopping during a lecture and having students reflect on what they were doing by answering one or more. (Lansing Community College, 2020). As the Figure 5, the learners learnt about prepositions through their movements as the lecturer spoke out, Firstly, I tested them to write preposition of locations as they knew for 5 words then I randomized some of the students to read their answers aloud, I selected only six words, there were "in front of, on the right, on the left, on the back, two next steps, three next steps", the learners had to move around their chairs as the lecturer commands. In this case, many active learning techniques were used: Brain – Based Learning, Demonstration and beyond than these activities are a practicing the learners' listening skill too.

Conclusion

The learners' learning behavior can be changed because of the lecturers' teaching techniques. In this case, passive learning can be used to the students, but it makes the students lose a performance, and self-confidence. Furthermore, time management is an important for doing activities through active learning, in the university students has full 3 periods a subject then the lecturers can use both passive and active learning, the lecturer spends 10-12 minutes for passive learning after that moment just use the other techniques such as "Brain –Based Learning, Brain gyms etc. In the same way, passive learning should not be used in full period without doing activities, the learners are bored, and do not activate to learn new knowledge, lack of inspiration, finally they do not want to read or use the textbooks because it's not interesting, when the learners have to prepare themselves to take any test, they maybe enjoy over viewing the contents taught, but forget everything in a short time. In contrast, if the lecturers take more time to learn how to create both teaching materials and effective teaching through active learning, the students are going to apply their knowledge with their future professions and the result of the assessment belongs to the curricular benchmarks are valuable and available.

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