

Inductive Grammar, Student-Centered Reading, and Interactive Poetry: The Effects of Teaching English with Fun in Schools of Two Villages in Lebanon

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Abstract : Teaching English as a Second Language (ESL) is a common practice in many Lebanese schools. However, ESL teaching is done in traditional ways. Methods such as constructivism are seldom used, especially in villages. Here lies the significance of this research which joins constructivism and Piaget's theory of cognitive development in ESL classes in Lebanese villages. The purpose of the present study is to explore the effects of applying constructivist student-centered strategies in teaching grammar, reading comprehension, and poetry on students in elementary ESL classes in two villages in Lebanon, Zefta in South Lebanon and Boqaata in Mount Lebanon. 20 English teachers participated in a training titled "Teaching English with Fun", which focused on strategies that create a student-centered class where active learning takes place and there is increased learner engagement and autonomy. The training covered three main areas in teaching English: grammar, reading comprehension, and poetry. After participating in the training, the teachers applied the new strategies and methods in their ESL classes. The methodology comprised two phases: in phase one, practice-based research was conducted as the teachers attended the training and applied the constructivist strategies in their respective ESL classes. Phase two included the reflections of the teachers on the effects of the application of constructivist strategies. The results revealed the educational benefits of constructivist student-centered strategies; the students of teachers who applied these strategies showed improved engagement, positive attitudes towards poetry, increased motivation, and a better sense of autonomy. Future research is required in applying constructivist methods in the areas of writing, spelling, and vocabulary in ESL classrooms of Lebanese villages.

Keywords : active learning, constructivism, learner engagement, student-centered strategies

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