

# An Exploration of Active Learning Strategies in Teaching English at a Junior High School with Merdeka Curriculum

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## Abstract

*Purpose:* This qualitative study aims to obtain information on the learning model used by teachers in one of the junior high schools in Surakarta and to find out the strategies used by teachers to increase student motivation in the learning process.

*Methodology:* This study involved 3 English teachers in one of the junior high schools in Surakarta (7th, 8th, and 9th grade English teachers) who were positioned as research subjects. All data were collected by using observation and interview methods. The collected data were analyzed descriptively in the form of continuous interaction until the data were complete.

*Results:* The results of this study inform that the learning models that teachers use in the learning process include project-based learning models, flipped learning, and mind mapping, which are able to help teachers facilitate the learning process. The influence in the strategies that teachers do to increase student motivation to actively participate in the learning process includes conditioning the learning atmosphere, making study group discussions, holding competitive competitions, creating interesting learning variations, giving praise, and giving punishment.

*Applications/Originality/Value:* Following up on the findings of this study, active learning strategies in the Merdeka curriculum at junior high schools in Surakarta must be further optimized through the design of lesson plans, learning resources, and learning assessments in each learning model used.

## Introduction

The learning model is one aspect of learning that serves as a guideline for carry-ing out activity steps. In applying the steps of the learning model, there are ap-proaches, strategies, methods, techniques, and tactics that teachers use to support learning. Meanwhile, the learning model is a place to conduct all forms of learning activities to achieve effective learning goals. (Rosmala, 2021). To increase students' learning activities, one of them is by using an effective learning model. Therefore, in order to improve student learning outcomes, learning methods are needed that can motivate students to be more creative, active and enthusiastic. So that the learning outcomes to be achieved can increase. (Trianto, 2010: 1).

The problem in the world of education that we are currently facing is about the low quality of education at every level of education. Various kinds of efforts have been carried out by conducting training to improve the quality of educators, provid-ing and improving facilities and infrastructure, as well as improving or innovating a curriculum as an effort to improve the quality of education and education manage-ment in each school. The implementation of the independent curriculum (IKM) be-gan to be implemented simultaneously throughout Indonesia in the 2022-2023 aca-demic year (Iskandar, Rosmana, Nabilah, Pebriyanti, Prayoga, & Faqih, 2023). By applying many varied learning models, it is hoped that the quality of learning will improve. One of the learning models that can be applied in implementing the inde-pendent curriculum is the active learning model (Purhanudin, Hasperi, Putri, Rama-dhani, & Viktoria, 2023).

Active learning dates back to the time of Socrates who was one of the main origi-nators among progressive educators such as John Dewey who thought that learning is naturally an active process (N.J, 2019). Active learning can be defined as learning that leads to optimization that involves the intellectual and emotional aspects of students in the learning process that leads to knowledge, skills, attitudes and values (Santoso & Izdaharo, 2022).

Based on some of the explanations above, it can be concluded that active learning strategies are the best way to encourage student activity and participation in every learning activity, creating an atmosphere that develops student learning initiatives and responsibilities in the form of student-to-student, or student-to-teacher interac-tions during the learning process (Santoso & Izdaharo, 2022). Student learning activ-ities at school are quite complex and varied. If these various activities can be created at school, then the school will truly become the center of maximum learning activi-ties so that it can improve student learning outcomes (Sadirman, 2003). Based on the description of the background above, the problem formulation that will be studied in this study is to see the learning model used in active learning strategies and the strategies employed by teachers to increase student motivation to be active in the learning process.

## Methods

The method used in this research is a qualitative method. A qualitative approach is a research method that produces descriptive information in the form of words written or spoken by individuals, as well as observable behavior. In research, qualitative methods can be used to gain a more thorough understanding of a phenomenon. Therefore, according to Basri (2014), qualitative research emphasizes the process and its interpretation. Attention in qualitative research focuses on human elements, objects, and institutions, along with the relationships between them, with the aim of understanding events, behaviors, or phenomena (Mohamed, Abdul Majid & Ahmad, 2010).

This research was conducted at junior high school in Surakarta. The researcher chose the location at the junior high school in Surakarta, because based on observations outside the field, this school looks like a school that has good quality and quantity even though the location of this school is near residential areas which may rarely be known by people that there is a school in the area. So that the researcher has the aim of wanting to know how the school is, students in carrying out learning activities, especially learning in English subjects, as well as teachers in the application of active learning strategies in the classroom.

The object of this research is to see how the situation and conditions of learning in the classroom, especially in English subjects and how the teacher applies classroom learning in implementing the independent curriculum so that it can produce the value or target achieved. While the subjects in this study consisted of three junior high school English teachers in Surakarta, namely from grade 7, 8 and 9 teachers. Teachers as research subjects taken are parties involved in English learning with the aim that research subjects can provide accurate data on the application of active learning strategies in the classroom.

The technique used in this analysis is descriptive data analysis. In this case, factual data has been collected and described. The data comes from all information obtained from interviews through several steps. After collecting and recording the data, the researcher conducted an interaction analysis that included narrowing down the data, presenting the data, and confirming the results. The analysis of this study was conducted along with data collection or after all data were collected.

## Findings and Discussion

### Result

This section explains the research results from observations and interviews. The arrangement of the research results refers to the problem formulation.

### Learning Models Used by Teachers in Teaching English

Before learning activities in the classroom, teachers must have prepared what learning model will be used when class learning has started. This is to avoid teacher confusion during class and how to handle the confusion. Therefore, teachers are required to prepare materials and learning models that will be used during learning. The results of interviews conducted by researchers to informants that some teachers use a variety of learning models. These learning models are Project-Based Learning (PJBL), Flipped Learning, and Mind Mapping. As K argues

“Banyak sih mbak metode yang dipakai nya, kadang PJBL (Project Based Learning), bisa juga Mind Mapping. Gimana situasi dan kondisinya aja sih mbak.”

*“There are many methods used, sometimes PJBL (Project Based Learning), or Mind Mapping. It just depends on the situation and conditions.”*

#### a. Project-Based Learning

This project-based learning model is used by teachers to involve students to be active in solving problems in learning. The way teachers apply this learning model is used in class by involving project work or used with technology such as presentations. And as for the syntax that teachers must use when applying this project-based learning model, including:

##### 1. Determine the fundamental question

When learning begins, the teacher asks students about the material that has been presented to see if students have understood the material presented. H said

“Misal nih dari materi procedure text, saya bertanya ke anak ‘apa yang kalian ketahui tentang procedure text? Procedure text itu mempelajari tentang apa sih?’ ya kayak gitu sih mbak pertanyaan-

pertanyaan mendasarnya. Toh ini juga siswa masih kelas 7 jadi saya ga bertanya pake pertanyaan-pertanyaan yang sulit.”

*“For example, from the procedure text material, I ask the children ‘what do you know about procedure text? What does procedure text learn about?’ That’s the basic questions. After all, these students are still in grade 7 so I don’t ask difficult questions.”*

The fact that all teachers carry out warm-up activities such as asking questions about what material has been learned at the last meeting with the aim of knowing whether or not the student understands the material that the teacher has presented. This also encourages students to be active with communication between teachers and students by asking basic questions.

## **2. Develop a Project Plan**

As E says,

“Project-based learning ini bagus mbak, si anak jadi aktif dikelas. Sama juga jadi percaya diri dan berani buat ngomong di depan kelas. Karena kan pjbl ini biasanya presentasi tugasnya. Kalo penyusunan rencana proyek nya ya itu buat kelompok. Tapi kalo cara milih kelompoknya itu biasanya saya serahin ke siswa enak nya gimana. Minimal anggotanya itu 3 orang dan maksimal 5 orang. Kaya misalnya pada materi descriptive text, yaudah cara mengerjakan tugasnya anak disuruh mendeskripsikan teks nya dengan menyebutkan unsur yang ada dalam teks itu. Terus kalo udah selesai baru bisa di presentasikan di depan kelas.”

*“Project-based learning is good, the children become active in class. They also become confident and brave enough to speak in front of the class. Because PJBL is usually a presentation of the task. If the preparation of the project plan is for the group. But when choosing the group, I usually leave it to the students. The minimum members are 3 people and a maximum of 5 people. For example, in the descriptive text material, the students are told to describe the text by mentioning the elements in the text. Then when it’s finished, they can present it in front of the class.”*

The preparation of this project plan needs to be done by every teacher when implementing this project-based learning model to arrange a systematic learning sequence. As in descriptive text material, where the teacher has compiled a learning plan which is then given to students. So that students can prepare themselves to collect the materials needed. This also makes it easier for students to work on assignments because the rules of work are easy to understand.

## **3. Create an activity schedule**

Not only making a schedule for completion or workmanship, but making all components of the schedule of activities in learning at that time, such as determining the deadline for the project, determining when presentations are made by students, and so on until the evaluation schedule and project assessment. As the results of the researcher’s interview with one of these English teachers, namely Mrs. H

“Biasanya saya menentukan dulu jadwal-jadwal kegiatannya. Tapi pasti aja ada request-an dari siswa supaya deadline pengerjaannya di perpanjangin. Jadi pasti ada kesepakatan dulu sih diawal”

*“I usually determine the activity schedules first. But there must be requests from students to extend the deadline. So there must be an agreement at the beginning”*

Creating and determining timelines and deadlines in learning, especially in working on assignments or projects, is a basic thing that must be made before learning begins. Where the teacher has determined that the task that is currently made must be collected when, either on that day or at the next meeting. So that learning is planned, organized, and in accordance with the target the teacher wants.

## **4. Monitor the implementation of project-based learning**

And E also said

“Cara saya mengontrol dan mengawasi siswa saat pengerjaan sebuah proyek atau tugas, saya selalu memuterin setiap kelompok, ngampirin satu-satu kelompok. Dan pastinya nanya juga ada kesulitan apa nggak. Kalo ada ya saya bantu jelaskan lagi. Tapi kalo gada kesulitan ya saya seneng dong berarti siswa udah paham semua. Jadi gausah dijelasin ulang. hehe”

*“The way I control and supervise students when working on a project or assignment, I always rotate through each group, stopping by one by one. And of course, I also ask if there are any difficulties. If there are, I help explain it again. But if there are no difficulties, I’m happy, it means that the students have learnt everything. So I don’t need to explain it again. Hehe”*

The purpose of monitoring or supervision itself is of course to ensure that the project runs well, the classroom conditions are conducive, and the project is completed on time. The teacher circulates around each group of students to supervise students in the process of making their projects. So monitoring is very important to ensure that students make progress on the project given.

## 5. Testing and grading the project

And also the results of an interview with Mrs. K

“Pengambilan nilai itu diakhir setelah siswa mempresentasikan hasil kerja kelompoknya.”

*“The assessment is taken at the end after the students present the results of their group work.”*

All teachers gave assessments to students after the students had finished presenting the results of their group work. The assessment is done by recording it on the assessment paper and then the teacher gives feedback on the students' work. This is so that the teacher can assess the level of achievement of students in completing the project they are assigned. So that this assessment is expected to provide feedback for student understanding.

## 6. Evaluation of project-based learning

H stated firmly

“Evaluasi pembelajaran ini penting banget loh!. Kita bisa tau nih respon siswa terhadap proyek yang baru saja digunakan dalam pembelajaran. Terus juga kita jadi bisa mengupgrade cara supaya penyampaian materi yang udah disampaikan mampu dipahami siswa dengan baik.”

*“Learning evaluation is really important. We can know the students' response to the project that has just been used in learning. Then we can also upgrade the way we deliver the material that has been delivered so that students can understand it well.”*

Evaluation in this project-based learning model is carried out by means of teachers providing feedback on student work, while students provide reviews of the teacher's performance in teaching in class and how much students understand the material that the teacher has conveyed.

From here the researchers observed that all teachers applied this project-based learning model very well. They all use steps that are in accordance with the SOP and the basis for the application of this PJBL. With the application of clear project-based learning syntax, it will make it easier for teachers in English to apply this learning method. If the application is correct and follows the standards, then the results and achievements are in accordance with the initial objectives.

### b. Flipped Learning

The second implementation of the learning model is using a flipped learning model or can be said to be flipped learning. Where learning activities that are usually done in class are done at home. Conversely, learning activities that are usually done at home are done in the classroom. The purpose of applying this learning model is to develop student learning creativity. Students are free to do what kind of learning as long as it suits the student's own comfort. There are 3 activities listed in the flipped learning model, namely:

#### 1. Before class begin

As for the narrative of E

“Nah kalo cara saya ini biasanya ngirim materi ke siswa dalam bentuk pdf atau video. Seringnya sih video, karna supaya anak ga bosen belajarnya. jadi ga cuma baca tok. Tapi kalo suruh nyari materinya sih saya bebas, boleh dari youtube, website, buku, apapun itu. Terus juga kan ada tuh tiap kelas punya grup wa masing-masing, nah yaudah tugasnya dikirimnya disitu”

*“Well, my method is usually sending material to students in the form of pdfs or videos. Most of the time it's videos, because that way the students don't get bored of learning, so they don't just read. But if you tell me to find the material, I am free, it can be from YouTube, websites, books, whatever. Then there's also the fact that each class has its own wa group, so the assignment is sent there”*

This states that the teacher takes the first step in implementing the flipped learning model. And from these results, it states that before the activity begins, the teacher has sent a material to students through the wa chat group for students to study at home, then will be discussed together later in the day.

#### 2. When class starts

And Mrs. K also said

“Dikelas tinggal nerangin singkat aja, sama mengingat materi aja yang udah dipelajari siswa secara mandiri.”

*“In class, I just need to explain briefly, and remember the material that students have learnt independently.”*

Not only the initial activities that the teacher applies, the process when learning begins is still used by the teacher. The teacher interacts with students in the form of questions about the material discussed at that time. When in class, the teacher's interaction with students must go well. This is done to fulfill the requirements in accordance with the steps contained in this flipped learning model.

### 3. After class

H said

“Pada sesi akhir ini guru bakal meminta mengevaluasi siswa atau memberikan review pembelajaran kepada siswa apakah worth it apa tidak diaplikasikan dalam pengejaran di kelas ini. Terus abis itu ngasih tugas ke siswa untuk dipelajari dan dikerjakan di rumah.”

*“In this final session, the teacher will ask students to evaluate or provide a review of learning to students whether it is worth it or not to be applied in the pursuit of this class. Then after that, give assignments to students to study and do at home.”*

As in other learning models, in this learning model also when the class ends an evaluation is carried out. Where the teacher provides feedback to students on the results of the project they have done and students provide responses or reviews to the teacher as a form of student understanding during the provision of class material.

After the researchers observed that the teacher applied this flipped learning model well in accordance with the activities that had been previously listed. This can make it easier for teachers in the teaching and learning process in class.

#### c. Mind Mapping

Mind Mapping is one of the learning models that can stimulate students to be more interested in the subject matter presented by the teacher and train students to concentrate. So this mind mapping learning model is also one of the learning models taken by teachers so that students are not bored and saturated in learning. Because with this model students are free to create and develop their writings according to their respective tastes. In this mind mapping learning model, there are 5 components that can be applied as follows:

##### 1. Theme/topic to be taught

E argues

“Seru tuh mbak kalo pembelajaran pake model mind mapping. Karena ke kreatifan anak tuh berbeda jadi hasil pembuatannya beragam. Lucu-lucu kalo liat hasilnya tuh.”

*“It's fun when learning using the mind mapping model. Because the children's creativity is different so the results of the making vary. It's funny to see the results.”*

Determining the topic or material at the beginning can make it easier for the teacher to see whether this material will be easier for students to understand or students will find it difficult. The material provided by the teacher is of course material that is in accordance with the lesson plan that has been made or based on the package book that is a reference in learning. Because not just any material can be developed into this mind mapping teaching material itself.

##### 2. Learning Objectives

Before giving assignments, teachers are asked to convey the learning objectives first which aims to see the goals to be achieved which contain the competencies expected by students. Similarly, K said in the interview

“Harus dong ada tujuan pembelajaran, wajib itu mah di setiap materi yang mau diajarkan.”

*“There must be learning objectives, it is mandatory in every material that you want to teach.”*

It can be seen from the results of the interview with the English teacher that in their opinion all learning objectives must be in every material or topic that will be delivered. Learning objectives can be conveyed to students before the teacher delivers the core material.

##### 3. Learning Materials

H said

“Ya kaya tadi saya bilang diawal mbak. Materi buat pake mind map ini ga semua bisa dipake, jadi pilah pilih aja sesuai sama pembelajaran dan pengajarannya.”

*“Yes, as I said at the beginning. Not all materials for using mind maps can be used, so just choose according to the learning and teaching.”*

The selection of learning models must be adjusted to the material and learning objectives. That is the information from the English teacher. Determining the learning model must match the material, because this can facilitate teachers and students in the teaching and learning process. As in this learning model, the teacher chooses grammar material. Because this material is very suitable for use in the use of mind mapping learning models. This can make it easier for students to learn grammar on a skill result that students make.

##### 4. Media and Learning Resources

E also argues

“Media sumber nya model pembelajaran mind mapping ini juga mudah kok mbak di dapetnya. Mungkin kalo udah punya sebagian bahannya bisa dimanfaatin aja jadi ga perlu ngeluarin dana banyak banget juga. Toh pengerjaannya kebanyakan berkelompok.”

*“The source media for this mind mapping learning model is also easy to get. Maybe if you already have some of the materials, you can just use them so you don't need to spend a lot of money too. After all, most of the work is done in groups.”*

It can be seen from the results of the interview above about the media and learning resources used in this mind mapping learning model. That the media that is often used for project work is mostly stationery. Likewise, sources that can be accessed to search and find information or ideas can be from anywhere, whether books, the internet, or from the students' own ideas.

## **5. Learning Evaluation**

K again stated briefly

“Ada evaluasi buat dijadikan pembelajaran kedepannya.”

*“There is an evaluation for future learning.”*

The evaluation process here is carried out when the core activities in the learning process have ended, where teachers and students give each other feedback which plays an important role in the world of education. Because it can improve what is lacking and improve what has not been obtained. This learning evaluation process is also carried out by teachers and students. With students who provide criticism and suggestions during the learning process that has been carried out.

Researchers observed that the teaching and learning process in class could run smoothly because everything had been planned and prepared beforehand. And the process of each teacher is mostly almost the same as seen from the results of interviews with the three English teachers.

## **Strategies used by English teachers in public junior high schools in Surakarta**

In this study, researchers observed that there were 6 strategies employed by teachers to motivate students to be active in learning, namely: conditioning the learning atmosphere, learning grouping, applying interesting learning variations, creating competitive rivalry, giving praise, and finally giving punishment.

### **1. Conditioning the learning atmosphere**

E said in the interview

“Untuk kondisi kelas nya pun jelas berbeda-beda mbak. Apalagi saya mengajar siswa kelas 8, karena setiap kelas pun anak-anak nya punya sifat dan kepribadian yang berbeda-beda. Kadang pertemuan hari ini pada semangat, kadang juga untuk pertemuan selanjutnya pada lemes, pada ngerasa bosan. Jadi pintar-pinter nya kita sebagai guru aja gimana menghidupkan kondisi kelas jadi lebih baik dan nyaman.”

*“For the condition of the class, it is clearly different. Moreover, I teach grade 8 students, because each class has different characteristics and personalities. Sometimes today's meeting is enthusiastic, sometimes the next meeting is lethargic, bored. So it's just our smartness as teachers how to liven up the classroom conditions to be better and more comfortable.”*

It can be seen from the results of the interview above, that the conditioning of the learning atmosphere includes 2 aspects, where the conditions of students are orderly, disciplined, and organized, with clean, tidy, and fragrant classroom conditions being one of the strategies employed by teachers to motivate students to be active in the learning process.

### **2. Study Group Discussion**

H well stated

“Kalo di kelas sih saya biasanya pake metode pengelompokan belajar supaya si anak aktif dalam berdiskusi. Bisa bertukar pendapat sesama kelompok. Biasanya saya kasih tugas kelompok itu kebanyakan mendefinisikan, pertanyaan-pertanyaan yang diawali dengan bagaimana tanggapan anda, sama presentasi kelompok sih. Kan kalo pengelompokan belajar mesti dibagi-bagi nih mbak tugas nya, kan gitu juga yang bakal bikin siwa itu jadi aktif. Dan keaktifan anggota juga nanti masuk ke nilai mbak.”

*“In class, I usually use the learning grouping method so that the children are active in discussions. They can exchange opinions among the group. I usually give group assignments that mostly define, questions that begin with how do you respond, and group presentations. If the learning grouping must be divided into tasks, that will also make the students active. And the activeness of the members will also go into the score.”*

Teachers have their own ways to maximize learning to students. In this study group, students are asked to make groups of 3 to 5 members. The researcher observed that there were advances in students becoming active students in class after teachers used this strategy in teaching. So it can be concluded that this method is very worth it in increasing student activeness during learning.

### 3. Rivalry competition

K briefly said

“Udah banyak ko siswa yang ikut kejuaraan, baik tingkat sekolah maupun diluar sekolah.”

*“There are already many students who participate in championships, both at the school level and outside the school.”*

It can be concluded from the results of the interview above, that the intended healthy competition is holding and participating in a competition. Both in the academic and non-academic fields. In the academic field in the form of essay writing competitions, poetry competitions, quiz competitions, etc. While in the non-academic field in the form of futsal competitions, basketball, martial arts, etc. And this method is also not only able to motivate to be active in learning, but dare to do increasingly higher stages and also enthusiasm without despair in studying.

### 4. Interesting Learning Variations

H politely conveyed

“Di sekolah ini juga biasanya ada beberapa mata pelajaran yang bisa dilakukan di luar kelas, kaya outing class, kemarin baru aja kelas 7 itu belajar di luar lingkup sekolah. Belajar arti atau hal-hal baru dalam bahasa inggris. Jadi siswa diminta untuk menulis itu benda apa atau itu apa lah, entah hewan, benda, tumbuhan terus dicari bahasa inggrisnya apa. Terus juga kemarin kelas 8 baru aja study tour ke Bali. Terus juga mengikuti ajang perlombaan, baik se-kabupaten, provinsi, maupun nasional. Jadi belajar diluar juga perlu supaya si anak ga bosan belajar. Masa iya harus itu-itu terus pemandangannya. Supaya dapet ilmu baru juga kalo belajar di luar sekolah.”

*“In this school, there are also usually some subjects that can be done outside the classroom, such as outing class, yesterday the 7th grade just learned outside the scope of the school. Learning the meaning or new things in English. So students are asked to write what it is or what it is, whether animals, objects, plants and then look for what English is. Also, yesterday the 8th grade just had a study tour to Bali. They also participated in competitions, both at the district, provincial and national levels. So learning outside is also necessary so that the child does not get bored of learning. The scenery has to be the same. You can also get new knowledge if you study outside of school.”*

The learning variations used by English teachers in junior high schools in Surakarta are seen from the point of view of environmental conditions. A different learning place than usual that makes the learning process varied or interesting. So that students and teachers are not bored with the learning atmosphere that is just so-so. So this variation of the method is what they use. So that researchers can observe that learning outside the classroom such as outing classes and study tours is a strategy employed by teachers to increase student motivation to actively explore the knowledge to be gained. With this, students can explore more in gaining knowledge from outside the scope of class and school.

### 5. Giving Praise

E gently conveyed

“Gaada anak yang mau dicela, itu malah buat mereka makin down. Kasih terus pujian ke mereka supaya energy positif nya tersalurkan. Pujian itu sebagai bentuk dorongan dari guru kepada siswa untuk terus mau belajar dan jangan nyerah. Toh itu juga demi keaikan mereka kan?!”

*“No child wants to be criticised, it makes them even more down. Continue to praise them so that their positive energy is channelled. Praise is a form of encouragement from the teacher to students to continue to want to learn and not give up. After all, it's also for their own good, right?”*

Observing the results of the interview, the teacher always motivates and encourages students by giving words of praise such as “congratulations”, “proud of you”, “good job”, etc. By appreciating the process and results of student learning. So that students can be moved to become students who excel because they are disciplined and active in learning. This benefits both parties, both teachers and students themselves.

### 6. Providing Punishment and Opportunities

As stated by H

“Kalo dikelas saya sih, syukurnya gaada anak yang gimana-gimana. Semua masih bisa terkendali. Toh karna ini siswa nya anak kelas 7, anak-anak nya masih cimit-cimit belum yang berani neko-neko atau buat masalah. Tapi kalo pun ada yang melanggar ya udah saya siapin hukumannya sih. Paling kaya ngasih tugas tambahan. Yang mana tugas nya lebih banyak daripada siswa yang lain. Biar si anak jera dan gaakan ngulangi kesalahannya lagi.”

*“In my class, thankfully, there are no children who are like that. Everything is still under control. After all, because these students are grade 7 students, the children are still small, not yet daring to do anything or make trouble. But even if there are violators, I have prepared the punishment anyway.”*

*Mostly like giving additional assignments. Which is more work than other students. So that the child is deterred and will not repeat his mistake again.”*

From the points above, it can be concluded that giving punishment and opportunities to students is an action that is equally positive. Which can change students' bad habits into good things. So that students who have problems with these two points can take lessons from the actions they take. Teachers give punishment to students who do not obey the rules during the learning process in the form of additional assignments. Meanwhile, the teacher provides opportunities for students who have not met the assessment procedures below KKM in the form of remedial exams. This includes motivational actions that can improve students' good habits.

## Discussion

This researcher has described the learning models used by teachers to produce active learning and the things that teachers give to motivate students to be active in the learning process at junior high schools in Surakarta. The researcher first discussed the findings about the learning models used by junior high school English teachers in Surakarta, namely the Project-Based Learning (PJBL), Flipped Learning, and Mind Mapping learning models.

The first finding is the Project-Based Learning. Project Based Learning (PJBL) is one of the learning models that teachers use to support student learning to be active in class. One of the reasons for using this PJBL model is because this model leads students to be able to think critically and skillfully in solving problems. So that this approach is supported by constructivist learning theory, which emphasizes the importance of active involvement of students in their learning process (Neo & Fadilla, 2024). The findings of this study indicate that the implementation of project-based learning has a significant impact on early childhood education, especially in improving critical thinking skills.

The second finding is the flipped learning model. To create a classroom atmosphere and active student involvement, teachers also use a flipped learning model. It aims to provide opportunities for students to learn in advance or learn independently. Meanwhile, the teacher's job here is only to provide feedback to students regarding the material that must be learned. Jon Bergmann and Aaron Sam, 2012, teachers studied the use of technology in education and created the flipped learning method. They changed the style of learning to make it suitable for disabled students. This method helps students who do not attend school (Vijayakumaran, Ismail, & Jalil, 2022). This is in accordance with the findings of (Yulianto & Kurniawan, 2022) obtained a group theory module for the user class of the online flipped classroom learning model with unity of sciences content that is valid and effective as a learning media in the form of modules in the introductory algebra structure 1 course which can increase student activity in online lectures and contain the breath of unity of sciences.

The third or final discovery in the learning model used by teachers is mind mapping. With the use of this mind mapping learning model, students are not only focused on being creative. They are also able to practice brainstorming better and are able to improve collaboration in learning groups. The use of this mind mapping learning model is also not always used during learning, teachers use this strategy when they need it. Mind mapping was first developed by T. Buzan as a note-taking technique used to save time while keeping the eyes interested (Buzan & Buzan, 1993). This is in line with the findings of Susilawati, et al (2023) concluded that the application of the mind mapping model has a moderate positive effect on science learning and the findings of Hariyadi, et al (2023) The application of the STEM-based mind mapping learning model has a significant effect on students' science literacy in the era of the industrial revolution 4.0.

Furthermore, the researcher has also found six strategies employed by junior high school teachers in Surakarta to increase students' motivation to be active in the learning process. The strategies employed are sequentially as follows: conditioning the learning atmosphere, learning group discussions, competitive rivalry, interesting learning variations, giving praise, and giving punishments and opportunities.

The first strategy is in the form of conditioning the learning atmosphere. Learning conditioning is a fundamental activity that needs to be done as a teacher's ability to facilitate a safe, comfortable, pleasant, natural learning atmosphere so that children can learn and develop their potential optimally. This can increase students' enthusiasm and motivation to participate in the teaching and learning process. The learning environment is not only focused on a facility, but also needs to pay attention to the comfort and tranquility of the environment so that attention can be centered on the lesson (Hanipah, Amalia, & Setiabudi, 2022). This is in accordance with the results of research by Gafur and Mustafida (2019), it can be concluded that in learning activities teachers need to have classroom management skills. This is done in order to create a conducive learning atmosphere and support the achievement of learning objectives.

The second strategy is study group discussions. Study group discussions are conducted only when needed. Each English teacher schedules study groups 3-4 times a month with different materials. With the aim of honing their responsibility skills and cohesiveness in this study group. So that students can actively learn together and discuss voicing their opinions. According to Rahman & Firman (2019), there are three major groups, namely visual learning styles, auditorial learning styles and kinesthetic learning styles. This is similar to the research of Hanisyah, et al (2024) that different student learning styles will affect the level of students' mathematical communication skills. The grouping of student learning styles will be different based on different theories.

The third strategy is competition. According to Samudi, Competition is an activity to pit the ability between two or more people or groups in a matter. The race can also be said to be part of a game. This is in accordance with the results of Anggraeni's research (2019) the results of this study also explain that there is an increase in the competitive spirit of students, namely the existence of healthy competition to get the highest scores and grades in the class. In addition, students also have the motivation to learn and compete in class.

The fourth strategy is interesting learning variations. With the existence of variations in the learning process, it is intended to overcome boredom, boredom, so that in the learning atmosphere students always show perseverance, enthusiasm, and attentiveness. According to Arianti (2018) motivation can be said to be the overall driving force within students that gives rise to learning activities, which ensures the continuity of learning activities and can provide direction to learning activities, so that the goals desired by the learning subject can be achieved. This is in line with the research of Syafitri, et al (2024) The results showed that teaching variations involving collaborative activities, simulations, the use of technological media, and the application of active learning strategies had a significant impact on increasing student motivation and learning outcomes. Therefore, teachers are advised to continue to develop and integrate teaching variations in learning activities to create a more effective and enjoyable learning experience for students.

The fifth strategy is giving praise. Giving praise can increase student confidence and student enthusiasm in learning. Therefore, the teacher must give reasonable praise to students. Giving praise by the teacher can be seen as motivation that can change the behavior of the students concerned, related to the cognitive, affective, and psychomotor domains, (Djamarah, 1994: 148). This is in accordance with Fau's research (2021), so it can be concluded that interest and rewards have a significant effect on the learning motivation of BNKP Telukdalam Christian SMPS students together by 39.6%. This means that the higher the student's interest in learning and the rewards obtained by students while studying, the higher the student's learning motivation.

The strategies employed by teachers to increase students' motivation to be active in the learning process are punishment and opportunity. Punishment is given to students who violate school rules or classroom order during the teaching and learning process in the form of additional assignments that the student must do. Meanwhile, opportunities will be given to students who have not met the assessment criteria. Which opportunity is in the form of remedial exams to improve student grades that are less than KKM. These two things are done to sanction and motivate students to have a disciplined and active spirit in learning. So that it will not get this. M. Ngalim Purwanto (2011: 185) states that punishment is an educational action that is deliberately and consciously given to students who make a mistake, so that the student realizes his mistake and promises in his heart not to repeat it. This is in line with the research of Wani and Sutarini (2022) The impact of giving Reward and Punishment on the Thematic Learning Process of Class IV Students of State Elementary School 064955 Medan mostly shows a positive impact on students in the learning process, namely making them more motivated in learning, improving achievement, being responsible and disciplined.

## Conclusion

This researcher has explained about active learning strategies in teaching English in junior high school in Surakarta with independent curriculum. The researcher found the learning model used by English teachers in public junior high schools in Surakarta as well as the strategies used by teachers to increase student motivation to be active in the learning process. And here researchers found three learning models used by teachers in the learning process, namely project-based learning models (PJBL), flipped learning models, and mind mapping-based learning models. The three learning modes are used to improve and obtain learning outcomes in accordance with learning objectives.

Then, the strategies employed by junior high school English teachers in Surakarta to increase students' motivation to actively participate in the learning process include conditioning the learning atmosphere, creating study group discussions, holding competitive competitions in the form of competitions, then creating interesting learning variations, giving praise, and giving a punishment in the form of additional assignments for students who do not comply with the rules according to the learning agreement, and opportunities in the form of remedial exams for students who are not maximized in grades that are still below the assessment standard.

The findings of this study have contributed knowledge in the use of active learning strategies, especially in learning models and strategies employed by teachers to increase student motivation to actively participate in the learning process. Following up on the findings of this study, active learning strategies in the merdeka curriculum at junior high schools in Surakarta should be further optimized through the design of lesson plans, learning resources, and learning assessments in each learning model used.

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