



ENHANCING EFL OUTCOMES THROUGH SITUATED LEARNING STRATEGIES

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Abstract: The article explores situated learning, emphasizing the value of acquiring knowledge through real-world contexts and active participation. It highlights applications in EFL teaching, like role-playing and task-based learning, showing how these methods enhance motivation, practical skills, and long-term retention. The topic remains relevant as modern education seeks to integrate practical, collaborative, and technology-driven approaches to foster meaningful learning experiences.

Keywords: authentic activities, collaborative learning, community of practice, practical skills, retention

Situated learning is a learning idea that focuses on the setting where learning happens. The idea suggests that people learn better when they actively take part in real activities within a particular social group. Jean Lave and Etienne Wenger developed this idea in the early 1990s. This idea is built on Legitimate Peripheral Participation (LPP), where learners slowly move from the edge to the center of the community as they become more skilled.

Main ideas of situated learning include learning in context. That means that learning works best in the same place where it will be used. For example, skills learned at work are more likely to be remembered and used well if the training occurs there. A lot of talking and working with others is involved in learning. The theory shows how talking and interacting with others helps with learning. Knowledge is constructed collaboratively by discussion and collaboration with others, so the social context is a critical factor in effective learning. Authentic activities provide authentic learning opportunities when realistic life tasks, which reflect the messiness and nuances of real-world practice, become the primary focus of instruction rather than traditional approaches that teach abstract concepts without any practical application.



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Situated learning helps students think critically and solve problems. It builds skills they can use in everyday life and work. More recently, technology has been added to the learning methods that take place in real-life situations. This change has opened more opportunities for learners to do real tasks from afar and to get better at using knowledge in different situations.

In general, situated learning is different from traditional education because of the emphasis on practical experiences connected to real-life issues and enhanced understanding through active participation.

Examples of this in EFL teaching include role-playing activities, where learners are supposed to act out situations similar to those one might come across in real life, such as ordering food in a restaurant or going for a job interview. This practical experience allows learners to apply language skills in real-life situations and improve their speaking and listening skills. It's also referred to as community-based learning; that is to say, those people who want to know another language should go and take part in native-speaking clubs or cultural gatherings and activities. Interacting with them and other fellows in real situations, they try to use their knowledge in social issues.

Another example of situated learning in the context of EFL teaching is task-based learning. Teachers design tasks that are reflections of real-life problems, for example, students might be asked to plan a trip, conduct a marketing campaign, or carry out a survey in which they are forced to use English actively with each other, hence facilitating learning through realistic situations.

Virtual language environments use Second Life or other virtual worlds, enabling learners to speak to peers and native speakers in 3D space. The setting allows carrying on real conversations or sharing cultures in a fun and very engaging way.

Peer teaching means the students help each other, one by one, in learning some of the language skills or subjects. For example, there might be a student describing the cooking words while showing a recipe. This way, learning makes them understand more and makes them motivated to use the language in an active sense.

Digital storytelling projects invite students to create digital stories using multimedia tools. They can share personal experiences or make up stories in English. It's a project that makes them use language in a creative way and blends technology with learning.



The integration of situated approaches to EFL language instruction as demonstrated in the examples above, is furthering of the useful contexts for language using, promoting joint efforts, and connecting what is done during the lesson in the class to the goals outside the world.

Considering the above statement, clear differences are believed to exist between the results of students' achievements in conventional methods and their situated counterparts, it may be said that situating any learning context has implications on how much that child would remember, motivation, the knowledge, the skills, learnt and how these would be utilized after the situation has ended.

An essential form of learning is however seen in the case of traditional learning where teachers are strategic in dealing with learners who are mostly passive listeners of information. This method tends to be based on and in many cases overemphasizes memorization of facts and rules, thus resulting to more stress being placed on teaching abstract ideas or concepts that may not be easy to apply in practice situations. This indicates that students cannot be able to practice what they have been taught in class. Consequently, such learners may end up with a case of cognitive dissonance, in other words low motivation decisively impacting on learning (Henning, 1998). It is possible that other more structured learning methods do yield better results, especially in standardized assessments, but these types of methods do not seem productive if the aim is to reinforce concepts for practical usage (Duffy & Cunningham, 1996).

On the other hand, situated learning encourages and transforms the students through genuine issues that are pertinent in their lives. Research says that the learners who practice situated learning have high motivation and degree of satisfaction as they tend to find the course content useful in practice (Zheng, 2010; Catalano, 2015). Moreover, Situated learning also fosters meta-cognitive behaviors as students reflect on their experiences and engage in cooperative learning within a community of practice (Land & Hannafin, 2000).

Besides, situated learning environments are argued to have better memory retention among learners as they function in tasks that replicate real world problems. For example, one of the studies revealed that even though some students learning in situated contexts did not do well in the traditional tests as those trained using books, they did well in terms of communication and participation in the activities (Huang et al., 2017). This indicates that while immediate test scores may not reflect superior achievement in



terms of knowledge acquisition in situated contexts, the long-term benefits include enhanced intelligence and better preparedness to use the knowledge in practice.

To conclude, it may be said that most of what learners acquire through rote learning, which is mostly examination-oriented, is of little importance. students learn through situated learning, which leads to more integration and motivation because learning is contextual and therefore more appropriate for real world transfer situations. The combination of both approaches, however, may produce a better environment for learning that equips the learner's not only in passing the tests but in the application of the acquired skills in real life situations.

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