



Active Learning Strategies And Their Importance In Developing Language Skills Among Algerian Secondary School Students “First-Year Common Core Science, As A Sample”

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ABSTRACT

The study aims to identify the most important active strategies used by secondary school teachers in Algerian schools for effective language acquisition, and it also aims to understand the diverse language skills this learning develops in learners, and thus, to uncover the difficulties they face in implementing it, where a purposive sample was selected from the research community, consisting of 92 learners from the first year of the common core of science and technology, as well as five Arabic language teachers from Abedli Ahmed High School in Ouargla were selected to monitor the experiment.

To investigate the research objectives, we developed a questionnaire to explore the reality of using the active learning strategy and its impact on developing language skills among first-year secondary school learners, where the study culminated in important findings and recommendations for this research, adopting a descriptive approach dictated by the nature of the topic.

Keywords: active learning, strategies, language skills, learner, secondary stage.

Introduction:

Scientific and technological progress today plays a fundamental role in developing all aspects of individuals' lives, including the curricula offered by schools through the adoption of teaching strategies based on active learning, as this type of learning contributes to the development of higher-order skills among learners, increases their interaction within the classroom, and leads to increased academic achievement and the creation of a collaborative learning environment, which translates school knowledge into a lived reality by establishing a modern pedagogical method based on the competency-based approach, employing a range of modern strategies such as cooperative learning, role-playing, brainstorming, and others.

Importance of the topic:

- This study helps propose training programs to overcome many of the difficulties encountered when applying active learning strategies.
- Providing an appropriate environment for appropriately activating active learning, using modern technological means, especially in Algerian schools.
- Opening the door for researchers to conduct other studies related to active learning.

Study problem:

What is the importance of implementing active learning strategies in the secondary stage of Algerian schools? What are the most important language skills acquired by first-year students of the common core sciences in secondary education?

Sub-questions:

This main question leads to other sub-questions, as follows:

- 1- What are the most important modern and active strategies used by secondary-level Arabic language teachers to enhance linguistic cognitive achievement among learners at this level?
- 2- What are the obstacles facing secondary-level Arabic language teachers when implementing modern teaching strategies at this level of secondary school?
- 3- What are the objectives and competencies achieved by first-year secondary-level students in the common core of science in Algerian schools? What are the limits of teacher and learner engagement in this active learning?

Hypotheses:

Based on the previous sub-questions, we proposed the following hypotheses:

- Active learning strategies have a positive and effective impact on the academic achievement of secondary-level Arabic language learners, enabling them to acquire multiple linguistic abilities and skills.

Study Objectives:

The study objectives were:

- To explore the impact of active learning on learners' language skills.
- Identifying the most significant obstacles and constraints facing secondary school teachers in implementing modern teaching strategies.
- Clarifying the roles of both the teacher and the learner in active learning.
- _Exhibiting the reality of Algerian learners receiving knowledge in an active environment using modern, advanced strategies, and identifying appropriate content for them in secondary school, to discover their language skills.
- _Attempting to find other proposals that would provide learners with a linguistic and cognitive asset to build community bonds.
- _Benefiting from modern educational research that addresses the development of language skills according to active strategies.
- _Using pioneering Arab and foreign studies on active learning and its strategies.

Methodology:

In this study, we adopted the descriptive-analytical approach, a primary tool in this research to develop the language skills of first-year students in the Common Core Science and Technology program (the sample for the study), and we also collected the opinions of teachers and learners in a questionnaire to explain and interpret the results of using active strategies and the language skills achieved by the selected sample.

2. Active Learning (Its Characteristics and Importance):

It is a teaching style that relies on self-activity and the active participation of the learner, as through this learning, the learner conducts research using a range of scientific activities and processes under the supervision, guidance, and evaluation of the teacher, activating and maximizing the learner's role, where active learning does not focus on memorization and indoctrination, but rather on developing thinking, the ability to solve problems, and collaborative teamwork, as it is a teaching method that requires the learner to do more than simply receive¹.

In this study, active learning, procedurally, refers to a set of procedures used by the Arabic language teacher in educational situations to encourage the learner to work hard, exert effort, and engage in continuous active participation, where the teacher serves as a guide, mentor, and designer of the necessary situations, generating creativity and inspiration through the completion of the largest possible number of projects, works, and activities, to reveal the learner's intellectual, artistic, research, mathematical, and scientific abilities.

2.1. The Importance of Active Learning:

The importance of active learning lies in increasing interaction among learners within the classroom by developing their various higher-order thinking skills: analysis, synthesis, and evaluation, as this collaboration enables students² to solve issues and problems, thereby increasing their academic achievement, where active

¹Sayed, Osama Mohammed and Al-Jamal, Active Teaching and Learning Methods, Science and Faith Publishing and Distribution, 2009, p. 259

² Adapted from: Al-Maliki, Abdul-Malik bin Musfar, "The Effectiveness of a Proposed Training Program on Teaching Mathematics Teachers Some Active Learning Skills and on Their Students' Achievement and Attitudes," PhD dissertation, College of Education, Umm Al-Qura University, Makkah Al-Mukarramah, 2010, p. 52.

learning, in light of technological development and the proliferation of modern educational tools and methods, relies on important strategies that help learners acquire numerous linguistic skills.

2.2 Active Learning Strategies and Their Impact on Developing Language Skills:

Teaching strategies are supportive tools used by teachers to achieve optimal learning for learners, including all procedures followed, including observation, providing feedback, and assessing learners' levels, which aims to develop the educational process³ by interacting with colleagues to answer multiple questions⁴, which goes beyond listening, to include speaking, reading, writing, asking questions, movement, and interaction, by adopting a set of active and modern strategies, such as brainstorming, role-playing, mind maps, and other strategies that rely on important and effective criteria and foundations to achieve the desired goals.

- Brainstorming, or idea generation: is a strategy where the teacher opens the door for learners to share their ideas about solving a problem, where the teacher attempts to stimulate them with phrases that generate more ideas, and he may also offer his ideas⁵.

- Cooperative learning strategy: This is an educational activity organized so that the learner becomes dependent on a collective exchange of information among learners, then the group members present the group presentation to the rest, and the teacher finally evaluates them⁶.

-Role-Play Strategy: Each learner participating in the activity assumes a role, and the others interact within the boundaries of their role⁷.

-Peer teaching strategy: This is a method where individuals teach each other, such as some learners teaching their classmates, to improve their performance in certain skills and acquire new ones⁸, where the learner assumes the role of the teacher, who is merely a guide and mentor.

-Confession Chair Strategy (Hot Chair): The learners sit in a circle, and the hot chair is placed in the center to present the activity, by asking questions about the topic, where the teacher assists in directing the conversation about the topic⁹.

- Mind Mapping Strategy (Conceptual): The strategy revolves around documenting a central theme, as this method is used to generate additional ideas by selecting and defining the main theme of the mind map, where sub-ideas directly related to the main idea are then added by drawing lines connecting these ideas, finally, further lines are added to connect each sub-idea to other ideas and observations.

The implementation of these strategies results in important language skills acquired by the learner, including listening and speaking, reading, and writing, as these four elements require different cognitive activities that allow learners to clarify issues, ask questions, and discover knowledge.

The listening skill is a process that includes:

First, perceiving spoken linguistic symbols through auditory discrimination;

Second, understanding the meaning of these linguistic symbols;

Third, perceiving the communicative function or message contained in the spoken words or symbols;

Fourth, understanding the interaction of experiences conveyed in this message;

Fifth, critiquing, evaluating, and judging these experiences in light of appropriate objective criteria¹⁰.

³Jaber Abdul-Hamid Jaber, Teaching and Learning Strategies, Al-Fikr Al-Arabi House, Cairo, 1st ed., p. 26.

⁴Sayed Fathi Al-Wishi, Teaching Strategies: Between Theory and Practice, Al-Wafa House, Alexandria, 2003, p. 40.

⁵Farman Qaht Rahima Al-Janabi, Active Learning and Its Effectiveness in Developing Teaching Skills, Al-Radwan Publishing, 1st ed., 2019, p. 87.

⁶ Bakr Samih, Strategies for Individualizing Teaching and Cooperative Learning, Al-Zaman Publishing and Distribution, 2011, p. 236.

⁷Al-Qaytan, Mohammadi bin Taqi, Learning by Playing Strategy, Sultanate of Oman, 1st ed., 2008, p. 125.

⁸Shaheen Abdul Hamid Hassan, Advanced Teaching Strategies, Learning Strategies, and Learning Styles, Faculty of Education, Alexandria, 2010, p. 32.

⁹ Qasim Al-Bari, The Effect of Using the Hot Seat Strategy on Improving Oral Expression Skills, Jordanian Journal of Educational Sciences, Volume 17, Issue 4, 2021, pp. 493-500.

¹⁰Ali Ahmed Madkour, Teaching Arabic Language Arts, Institute of Educational Studies and Research, Cairo University, Shawwaf House, p. 60.

- Speaking skills: This is the ability to express inner feelings, emotions, thoughts, and meanings in clear, concise terms¹¹, as this skill requires effective linking of ideas and organizing the steps of thought, enabling the learner to interpret the symbols received through the written word, ultimately concluding with meaning¹².

- Writing skills: This is the art of drawing and literal forms that represent spoken words, expressing what is in the mind; Ibn Kheldoun says that it is the second level of linguistic meaning and a noble craft, as it is one of the most distinctive human characteristics¹³.

To achieve active learning, the learner must engage in critical reading, which requires scrutiny, gathering ideas, summarizing information, understanding matters, and connecting points to be carefully documented.

Field Applied Study:

Applying Active Learning Strategies to Secondary School Learners - First Year Common Core Science (Abedli Ahmed Secondary School, Nasr Neighborhood, Khafji-Ouargla)

1- Objectives of the Study:

The objective of the field study we conducted was to:

- Identify active learning and gain a comprehensive understanding of the subject's aspects.
- Understand how to apply active and modern strategies in secondary school.
- Research the language skills achieved by learners as a result of applying these strategies.
- Investigate the most important factors controlling the inability to implement active learning in the classroom in Algerian schools.

2- Areas of Study:

- A. Temporal Scope: The study was conducted in the secondary school educational field from March 23, 2022, to May 15, 2022.

B. Spatial Scope: The field study was conducted at "Abedli Ahmed" Secondary School, Nasr Neighborhood, Khafji-Ouargla, Algeria, which was selected intentionally.

C- Human field: We selected the study sample of first-level students in the common core of science and technology, their number was estimated at ninety-two students, and five Arabic language teachers.

3- Study Tool:

To investigate the problem, we used the "questionnaire" tool to collect information consistent with the nature of the descriptive approach, based on exploration and prediction, where the questionnaire was distributed to a group of learners and teachers from Abedli Ahmed High School in Al-Nasr neighborhood, Khafji, Ouargla, as the goal was to identify the most important active strategies that impacted learners' skills, as well as the extent to which objectives were achieved at the cognitive and linguistic levels.

Questionnaire Description:

It contains:

Specific questions with options appropriate to the topic (strongly agree), (agree), (disagree).

The questionnaire for learners includes two axes:

The first axis contains general information related to personal data: male, female, age, and class; The second axis concerns the role of active strategies in developing language skills; The questionnaire for teachers includes three axes:

The first covers personal data, experience, and age; The second axis is titled "Active Learning and its Role in Developing Language Skills"; The third axis covers the obstacles and difficulties of implementing active learning in Algerian schools, as some questions are common to both samples.

Questionnaire Distribution:

After completing the questionnaire's construction, refinement, and presentation to the referees, it was distributed to the various members of the study's intended sample, comprising ninety-two (92) first-year science students and five (5) Arabic language teachers, as distribution was conducted using the direct method.

Questionnaire Analysis Methodology:

After distributing the questionnaire to the number of students and teachers, we adopted frequency and statistical measures, summing up similar responses related to each axis, then we extracted the percentages

¹¹ Abdul Fattah Hassan Al-Baja, *Methods of Teaching Arabic Language Skills and Literature*, University Book House, 2015, p. 43.

¹² Mustafa Arslan, *Teaching Arabic*, Dar Al-Thaqafa for Publishing and Distribution, 1st ed., 2005, p. 109.

See, op.cit., p. 175.

¹³ Ibid, p. 175.

related to each question, calculating the frequency by multiplying it by 100, and then dividing it by the number of members of the study's intended sample.

- Study Methodology:

We adopted the descriptive approach to studying and analyzing the phenomenon, by identifying its characteristics and dimensions and describing the relationships between them, to arrive at a comprehensive scientific description.

Study Sample:

The sample was selected intentionally. We first conducted a comprehensive survey of all first-year cohorts in the Common Core (Science and Technology) program, as well as all Arabic language teachers for the selected phase and level, then we selected a small sample of five (05) educational cohorts and five (05) Arabic language teachers.

Study Results:

Results of the questionnaire administered to learners: The study sample's responses revealed the following:

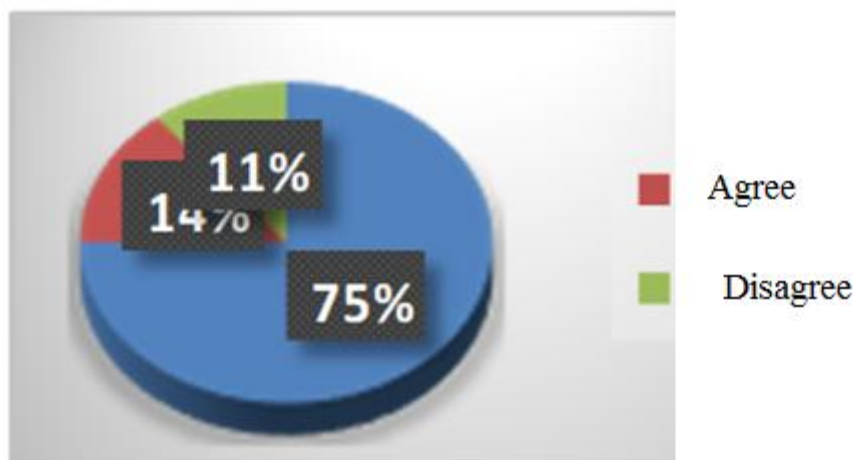
- Presentation of the results of the questions

1 - Learners' opinions on active learning and its suitability:

Table 1: Active Strategies Help You Understand Better

Phrase	Frequency	Percentage
Strongly agree	69	75.0
Agree	13	14.1
Disagree	10	10.9
Total	92	100.0

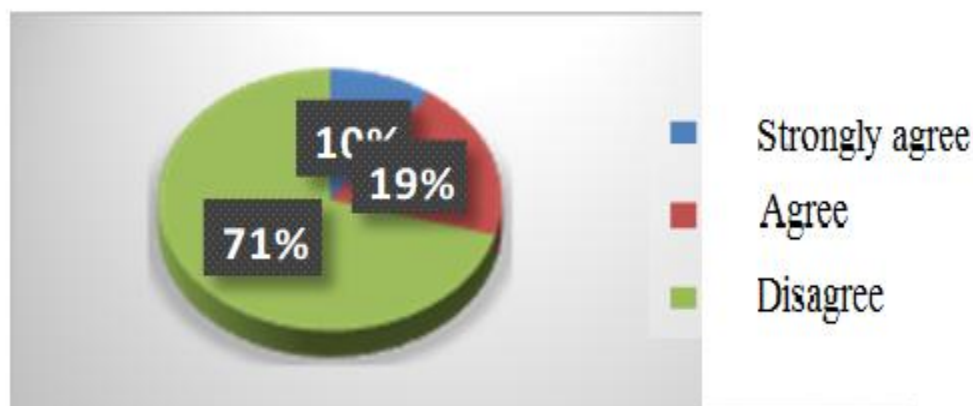
Figure 1. : Active Strategies Help You Understand Better



As noted in Table (1), according to a survey of learners' opinions, 75% believe that modern strategies help with comprehension and understanding within classrooms, which demonstrates learners' receptivity to this type of modern education in all its forms, as the response was "strongly agree," which is due to several reasons, including cognitive, psychological, and even kinesthetic.

Table 2: Working in a group allows you to acquire new skills.

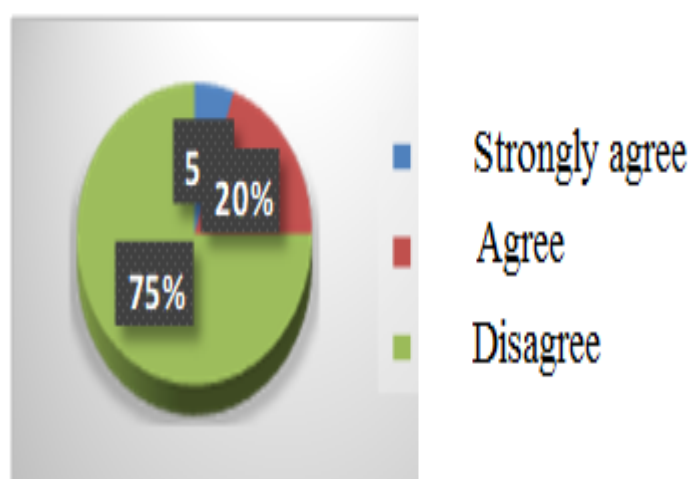
Phrase	Frequency	Percentage
Strongly agree	9	9.8
Agree	18	19.6
Disagree	65	70.7
Total	92	100.0

Figure 2. Working in a group allows you to acquire new skills.

From Table (2), we note that 70.7% of learners strongly agreed that working in a group helps them acquire new skills, particularly listening skills when listening to one another, and 19.6% also agreed, as working in a group leads to a homogeneous group; while for learners who rejected this strategy, their percentage did not exceed 10%, due to several reasons, including individual differences among learners, intellectual and cognitive incompatibility, and some learners exaggerating their reactions, which creates significant hostility within the group.

Table 3. illustrates the importance of mind maps, which help learners interpret results correctly.

Phrase	Frequency	Percentage
Strongly agree	5	5.4
Agree	18	19.6
Disagree	69	75.0
Total	92	100.0

Figure 3. illustrates the importance of mind maps, which help learners interpret results correctly.

We note from Table (3) that 75% of learners strongly agreed that mind maps play an important role in conveying information correctly, while 19.6% somewhat agreed that mind maps are important and help learners interpret results correctly because they are the most effective tools learners can use during their learning, as they enable them to cover all the information contained in educational materials concisely and comprehensively, as they generate a wealth of ideas for learners that help them connect information, making it an important process that they can remember, retain, and understand more easily and quickly.

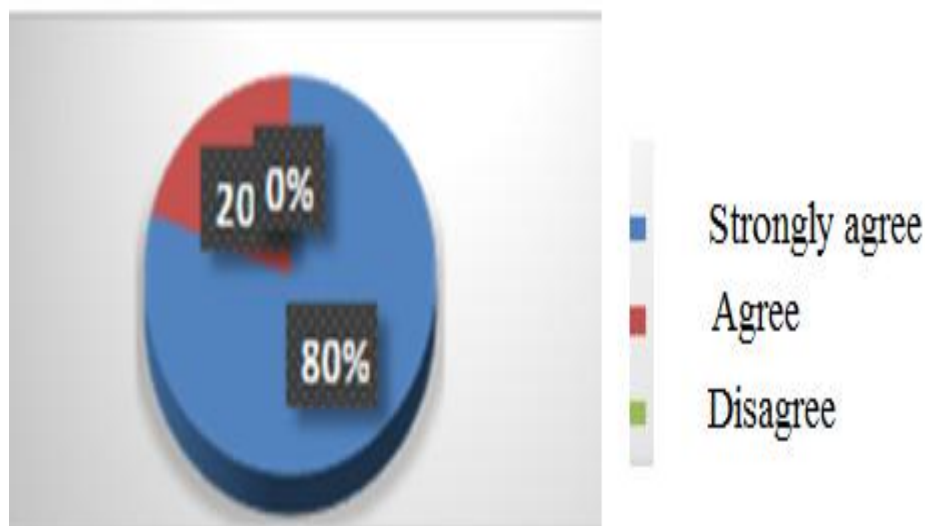
Table 4. Active strategies that help learners navigate the lesson smoothly.

Phrase	Frequency	Percentage
Agree	3	60.0
Strongly agree	2	40.0
Total	5	100.0

The answers in Table (4) to the first question indicate that the majority of teachers acknowledge the effective and significant role of active learning, which contributes significantly to the smooth running of the lesson and the spread of vitality and activity within the classroom, as the percentage was estimated at 40%.

Table 5. Comparison between old and modern teaching methods

Phrase	Frequency	Percentage
Strongly agree	4	80.0
Agree	1	20.0
Disagree		
Total	5	100.0

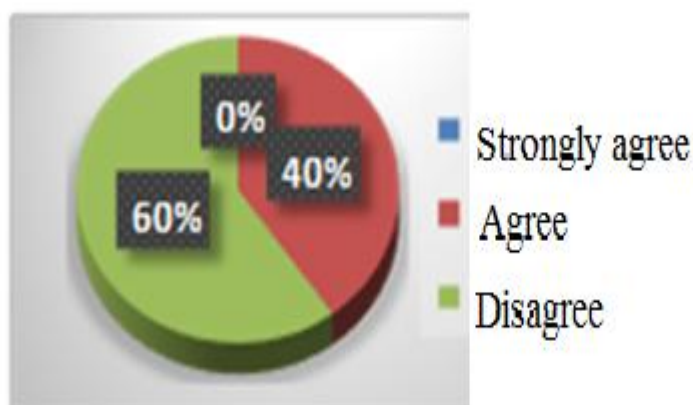
Figure 5: Comparison between: old and modern teaching methods

The majority view was that old teaching methods cannot be successful and effective, with an 80% approval rate, which indicates that the competency-based approach is the most effective and efficient approach to implement in Algerian schools, provided the appropriate resources are provided.

Table 6. The availability of resources within the institution encourages the implementation of active strategies.

Phrase	Frequency	Percentage
Agree	2	40.0
Strongly agree	3	60.0
Total	5	100.0

Figure 6. Comparison shows that old teaching methods are more successful than modern methods.

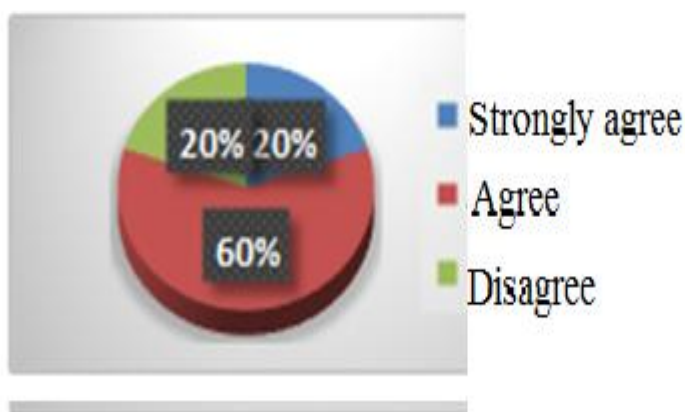


The answers recorded in Table (6) above indicated that the teacher can implement modern strategies given the availability of modern and advanced technological means, as the percentage was estimated at 60%, indicating that the availability of modern means contributes to enhancing the activity of the class.

Table 7. Lesson Presentation in Groups - Cooperative Learning

Phrase	Frequency	Percentage
Disagree	1	20.0
Agree	3	60.0
Strongly agree	1	20.0
Total	5	100.0

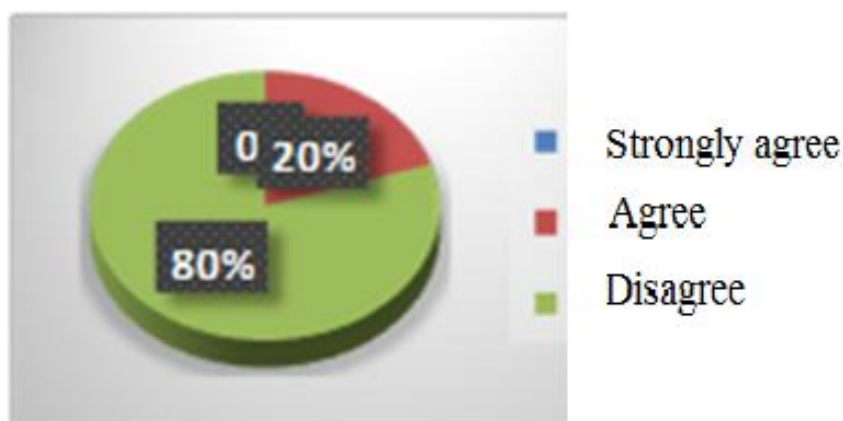
Figure 7: Lesson Presentation in Groups - Cooperative Learning



Regarding the cooperative learning strategy, or working in groups, most of the sample, 60%, confirmed that teaching in groups or teams makes it easier for the teacher to present and simplify the lesson because cooperative learning strategies have numerous benefits, but this requires appropriate pedagogy for the lesson.

Table 8. Mind maps help you summarize the lesson.

Phrase	Frequency	Percentage
Agree	1	20.0
Strongly agree	4	80.0
Total	5	100.0

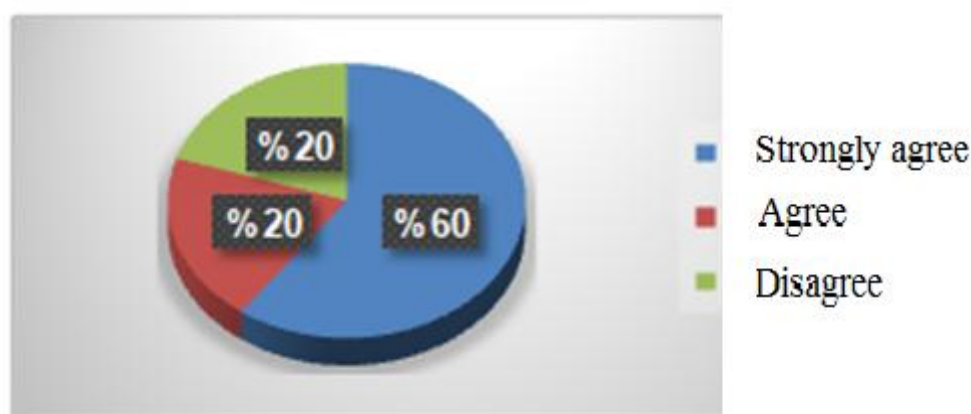
Figure 8. Mind maps help you summarize the lesson.

The percentages recorded in Table (8), represented in the graph, indicate that mind maps help both teachers and learners summarize the lesson and present it simply and understandably, as the percentage of agreement was estimated at 80%, a finding acknowledged by most teachers.

The responses recorded in the table above indicated that note-taking is one of the most widely applied strategies in the field, with a percentage estimated at 100%, this strategy contributes to the development of language skills, beginning with listening. The learner listens to the topic or text on which they will provide their observations, then express their thoughts and formulate them into ideas, thus, they have achieved writing skills, then they read the notes they have taken so that others can listen and discuss them.

Table 9. Generalization of the application of active learning in Algerian schools

Phrase	Frequency	Percentage
Agree	3	60.0
Strongly agree	2	40.0
Total	5	100.0

Figure 8. Generalization of the application of active learning in Algerian schools

It is clear from the percentages recorded in Table No. (9), and shown in the graph, that most teachers agree to generalize and apply active learning in Algerian schools, as active learning is a new method approved for transferring information with different strategies, which work to provide learners and teachers with new skills and knowledge.

Conclusion:

At the end of this study, we affirm the validity of the hypothesis that the learner is the focus of the teaching-learning process, therefore, teachers must improve their performance and raise their level of academic achievement to guide and mentor learners, which can only be achieved by selecting the most effective

strategies for conveying knowledge according to modern standards and methods, avoiding traditional strategies that stifle creativity and innovation, and selecting appropriate tools and equipment to achieve the desired goals.

We also prove the validity of the hypothesis that states: We can implement active strategies in our educational institutions, provided we control the number of learners and make a successful choice of content and tools to support the implementation of various active strategies.

Based on the previous results presented in this study, we concluded that many secondary school teachers use active teaching strategies in classrooms, to varying degrees, with a limited number of learners, due to the scarcity of modern, advanced teaching methods, particularly those suitable for secondary school students in Algerian schools.

The study results also showed that many learners were able to adapt to active methods, such as the "confession chair" strategy, the "send a question" strategy, and the "role-play" strategy. These modern and dynamic strategies benefited learners and transformed them into an atmosphere filled with fun and enjoyment within a purposeful, scientific, and educational framework.

Study Recommendations:

- Encourage teachers to employ active learning strategies, allocating a timeframe for training them in educational innovations and methods, both in terms of developing programs and curricula and in terms of methods and tools appropriate for each educational segment.
- Allocate sufficient time and appropriate modern technological means to implement active learning strategies in the educational process, such as computers and projectors, for example.
- Renew educational content for the secondary level in Algerian schools, including the first year of the common core sciences, with what is consistent with active strategies.
- Limit the number of learners per class to fifteen to enable the implementation of active learning strategies, eliminate individual differences among them, and encourage innovation and creativity.

To achieve success on an individual and societal level, we must encourage the learner to move forward with the data of civilizational progress and to possess new tools that qualify him for this, and it is necessary to reconsider the educational field and the problems surrounding it to overcome them, to arrive at a proposal with modern, active strategies that correct the obstacles to traditional learning to develop language skills.

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2. Adapted from: Al-Maliki, Abdul-Malik bin Musfar, "The Effectiveness of a Proposed Training Program on Teaching Mathematics Teachers Some Active Learning Skills and on Their Students' Achievement and Attitudes," PhD dissertation, College of Education, Umm Al-Qura University, Makkah Al-Mukarramah, 2010, p. 52.
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