

AN EXPERIMENTAL RESEARCH ON REVITALIZING SOCIAL STUDIES; THE ROLE OF ACTIVITY BASED LEARNING (ABL) ON STUDENT ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT

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ABSTRACT

The study aimed to investigate the effect of Activity-Based Learning (ABL) on academic performance and retention of students while teaching social studies. ABL enhances creativity and higher-order thinking skills in learners, allowing them to investigate topics independently, thereby preserving the content knowledge longer. The study conducted to investigate the effects of activity-based learning (ABL) on students' academic achievements and their engagement comparing it with traditional teaching methods. The study was conducted using an experimental research design, with two groups of secondary school students from a private school in the Gulshan District, Karachi. The experimental group use ABL based strategies, and the control group follow conventional way of teaching. Pre-test and post-test were conducted with both experimental and control group. The findings reveals that experimental group shows excellent test scores on post-test as compared to the control group which indicates the effectiveness of using ABL in classroom setting. The findings reveals that ABL proves to be beneficial due to its ability to meet diverse student needs, foster collaboration among learners, and encourages critical thinking through differentiated learning styles. The findings reveals ABL as a highly effective teaching method for enhancing students' academic achievement, active participation, and engagement as compared to traditional teaching methods used in schools. Therefore, school needs to implement ABL activities within their classroom setting.

Keywords: ABL, Traditional method, Pre-test, Post test, Retention, Academic achievement and Collaboration.

INTRODUCTION

Students, today, need to have learning skills and be able to adjust to the quickly evolving information era. It is only achievable by discarding conventional teaching methods and techniques in favor of creative methods and strategies. Different methodologies and designs are used to characterize different approaches to teaching and learning. Examples of commonly used strategies in social studies courses today includes question-and-answer sessions, in-person lectures, role-playing, field trip observations, drama, projects, discussions (e.g., panel, debate, forum), demonstrations, case studies and group/individual work. The skills necessary to succeed in the modern world have evolved. For instance, complex abilities like creativity, logic, and problem-solving have

emerged as critical competencies that people frequently employ in daily life. Today, individuals should adapt themselves to the rapidly changing and developing information age and have learning skills. The effectiveness of a teaching learning process is dependent on teaching style. Activity based learning proves to be effective in retaining interest of students (Okoro, 2019).

Techniques in favor of innovative methods and strategies should be adopted in order to cater student's needs. Many ideas, including education, training, curriculum and teaching strategies, have seen updates and changes in their subject knowledge recently. As a result, educators need to keep up with the latest techniques and approaches in order to adjust to the ever-evolving field of

education. It would be a grave error to teach all students in the same way and expect them to all flourish. Various methods, approaches, instruments, and materials need to be applied at different times and places to each student. Teaching must be individualized based on learning styles because every individual has their particular one (Erbil, et al., 2020).

Researches proves that using activity-based learning while teaching social studies proves to be effective method because students will learn and retain the subject knowledge much longer as compared to the traditional method of teaching. Activity based learning help student's to achieve the desired objectives set by instructors when imparting social studies knowledge. Activity based learn foster student creative and high order thinking skills and helps student to explore independently (Sarpong, et al., 2020). This study was conducted to find the effectiveness of activity-based learning on students' academic performance and retention.

Background

The acquisition of skills like critical thinking and problem-solving are the part of broad social studies, cannot be accomplished using traditional approaches in social studies education. To gain such knowledge and necessary abilities new learning methodologies should be consider that offer diverse viewpoints to the teaching and learning process should be used. In order for learning to be effective, the learner must organize their own knowledge through problem-solving and creative problem-analyzing. In social studies education, there are two domains: student and learning inquiry-based teaching and teacher and knowledge transfer-based teaching. Students who actively engage in Social Studies sessions will be able to observe the world, learn new things, gain new experiences, and apply what they have learnt to everyday life (Uzun, et al., 2022)

For this purpose, this study is conducted to addresses the long-term issues while using conventional method when teaching social studies. This study focuses the difference between two methods traditional method and activity-based learning. There are two ways that students can learn in a classroom either actively or passively. Passive students do not take part in the learning process they just acquire knowledge passively as

receptacles. However, they just sit passively in classroom. Passive learning in the classroom will result in a loss of focus and attentiveness. Various approaches are used to gauge student understanding such as group discussions, debates, role acting, experimentation, open-ended questions, personal inquiry, critical thinking, and presentations. According to Singal et al. (2018), actively based learning is sometimes referred to as student-centric, with the goal of giving all students challenging, interesting, and flexible learning opportunities. Students receive scaffolding from activity-based learning and develop relationships with their peers, which favorably impacts motivation and effort. One of the things that might stimulate learning and boost motivation is altering the way that it is taught. Teachers can employ several strategies in the classroom to ensure that students acquire the necessary knowledge and abilities that are expected to equip them for the real world. ABL is a productive learning method that will assist students in understanding the necessary results, which are determined by the instructor (Albadi,et al., 2019).

Problem Statement:

Social Studies provides valuable knowledge to learners in terms of facts about the real world. However, it does not capture significant interest of students and making the subject to be viewed as boring or outdated. This indifference in return ends with poor grades and lack of necessary knowledge concerning this subject. Lecture based and using textbooks are the part of the traditional teaching method remains unsuccessful in catering diverse need of learners. Due to passive learning students are not getting the desired output sets by their instructors and exhibits problematic behaviors (Michael, et al., 2022)

To overcome these problems, Activity-Based Learning (ABL) is presented as an effective instructional approach. ABL is a teaching method in which learners are motivated to actively engage themselves in the learning process through activities that enhance their critical thinking and problem-solving skills. Hence, making social studies more interesting and content based. Practically, to address these gaps an empirical study needs to be conducted regarding the effect of ABL on students interest and their academic performance in social studies (Singal et al., 2018).

The present study is focused on finding the impact of ABL on student engagement in Social Studies classes and academic performance using quasi-experimental research. The research hypothesis indicates that when ABL is applied it will lead to high levels of students' engagement in various activities and enhanced performance which make the learning environment conducive and make students more productive. (Sarpong, et al., 2020).

Objectives of the Study

This study will specifically investigate the effects of ABL on students' academic performance, comprehension and overall interest in social studies. The main objectives of this study are listed as follows:

- Analyze the impact of activity-based learning (ABL) on student's academic performance in social studies.
- To investigate whether ABL fosters greater student engagement in comparison with traditional teaching methods.
- Explore the role of ABL in enabling students to connect social studies lessons with real-life experiences.
- To evaluate the impact of ABL on student's ability to solve complex societal issues.
- Provide suggestions for integrating ABL into social studies curriculum for educators and policymakers.

Research Questions

- What are the impact of using activity-based learning on student achievement and engagement?
- Is there any significant difference observed between the two-method conventional teaching and an activity-based learning?
- What are students' perceptions while having experience with activity-based learning strategies within the classroom?

Significance of Study

This study contributes to the literature on educational methodologies in social studies. It helps fill in one gap in research by empirically testing the impact of ABL for student learning outcomes; laying down a foundation for further studies in this area, therefore establishing further understanding for the use of innovations on student

learning. The insights gained from this research can then be used as a reference for further investigations into innovative teaching practices and their effects on student learning.

Scope of the Study

In this study, it has comprised evaluation of ABL in terms of social studies education. The focus of this research is on the impact of ABL on students' academic results, participation, and knowledge retention. This research will determine how ABL proves to be fruitful in enhancing student's overall academic outcomes, aims to draw a comparison between traditional teaching methods and activity-based learning. Moreover, the study will focus on student engagement and assess active participation of learners using ABL. Furthermore, the study will investigate the long-term effects of ABL comparing it with traditional teaching.

Limitations of the Study

Even though this study goes an extra mile and assumes to be insightful into the effectiveness of ABL for social studies education, there are nonetheless limitations that must be considered:

- The population for the study included secondary students in Gulshan, Karachi. Consequently, the results may not be generalized to other districts or educational settings.
- A larger and more heterogeneous sample size in future studies may lead to improved generalization of the results.
- It may limit the ability to see lasting impacts of ABL on the outcomes of the students.
- This study relies totally on a self-reporting measure of student engagement and learning perception, thus is subjected to bias. However, through triangulation with observation data and assessments, the strength and validity of findings can be made more significant.
- The external factors like socio-economic conditions, teacher training, and school level resources influence the engagement and performance of students under study. These need to be considered in the interpretation of the findings.
- Although the study is based on social studies, its implications cannot be generalized to other subject areas. ABL teaching and learning

may assume forms that are specific to the subject matter and to the pedagogical needs of that subject.

Literature Review

According to Sarong et al., 2020 the use of activity-based teaching methods is based on constructivist learning theories, which seek to engage learners actively in the construction of their own knowledge through experience. Traditional lecture methods were replaced with new interactive strategies that focused on student involvement and cooperative learning. It is in the social studies that this shift becomes most important many social problems are complex phenomena, and we need students to be able to think critically. Similarly other research conducted on activity-based teaching methods shows improved student learning outcomes. These methods are said to revitalize social studies concepts with concrete activity and can lead to increased participation from students and fosters self-directed learning (Patil et al., 2016).

The literature review highlights this fact that activity-based methods can prepare students to meet contemporary educational needs especially in social studies. Such an approach makes learners self-directed and reckless, transforms them from memorizers to owners of social problems (Anwer, 2019). The results of the study strongly demonstrate the difference between traditional learning methods and online activity-based methodology, with clear benefits for those in favour of the later. ABL places a lot of stress on student involvement in activities and encourages human interaction and participation for better outcomes. Studies prove that using a win-win while teaching reported the increased learning motivation, comprehension and remembrance as well.

The move to ABL also reflects world movement in education for education to focus on critical thinking and problem solving necessary for students in an ever-complex globalized environment. It is now essential that teacher training programmes include ABL strategies to enable educators to deliver the approach effectively and in a sustainable way. ABL is essentially gamified learning technology that reshapes the existing concept of how children learn through collaboration, creativity and innovation increasing not just the model for what education looks like in the future but also enriching why and

how students will want to come to school (Akhtar & Saeed, 2021).

The flipped classroom model is one of the best examples of such a student-centered approach that is very divergent from pedagogical techniques which we have used for centuries. Moving the work from teacher-centered, to student-centered allows students to interact with content before class, which helps students understand and recall at a deeper level. Such a model increases student engagement as students have to bring something to contribute and they are not just attending lectures. In addition to this, incorporating in cooperative learning strategies will allow participants to learn as part of a team and engage with classmates creating the community feel often missed in more typical settings. The flipped approach also fosters higher-order thinking, i.e. with students more frequently use critical thinking, problem-solving and decision-making through in-class activities rather than strictly rote memorization (Erbil et al., 2020).

Furthermore, a study conducted on Oman reveals the benefits of using ABL learning that ABL does not only enhance a student understanding of the subject matter but also increased their sense of responsibility and strive them to learn better. After analysing the enhanced impact of ABL in student academic and performance this study is to be considered a more effective pedagogical approach as compared to traditional learning approaches used in classroom, as it caters higher students engagement and better in the learning process. Therefore, enhancing their understanding and retention of knowledge (Albadi & David, 2019).

Previous research by (Akkus et al., 2015) emphasizes on the need to develop pre-service teachers' skills in the use of activity-based teaching methods. Results indicate that these teachers were able to improve significantly their planning and implementation skills for activity-based instruction together with acquiring key knowledge and competencies applicable in their respective teaching fields. This work demonstrates that teacher education through activity learning is crucial for effective training and adaptable to diverse classroom environments contributing to revitalizing social studies education efforts.

However, recent research conducted by (Tas et al., 2023) study explores how differentiated instructional activities based upon learning styles

affect academic achievement and retention among primary students in social studies. The results of academic success tests and interviews demonstrate significant differences between the experimental group's performance on both aspects compared to those in traditional classrooms. Thus, designing learner-centred methods that consider individual differences in cognition and socio-emotional abilities, rather than passively imparting knowledge in traditional ways, new methods of teaching are created which are both inclusive and effective overall. This research serves to make social science education more exciting with activity-based learning as it presents a demonstration of how differentiated instruction facilitates the interests of the students and their achievements.

Moreover, (Kanchana et al., 2024) investigate the utilized activity-based learning (ABL) to encourage the learners to be actively engaged in their learning. They also state that it provides a pleasant and teachable surrounding where students would delve deeper into key theories and concepts by taking part themselves in their teaching-learning process. On how they did this research, other methods like flipped learning are individualistic while the technique of pair-share falls under ABL methodologies. This was an agile methodology as these research results showed that e-learning with m-learning significantly impacts mental growth and learning objectives. It is a way through which new teaching approaches can help empower students' capacity for real-time decision-making as well as be able to reform education institutions into future. Thus, this approach proves that these group communication strategies have large group applicability making it important both in higher education and schooling systems. This study helps scholars understand diverse methods of implementing learner-centered classrooms and making them more interactive so that students have This work by Hasri et al. (2024) attempts to articulate what the best practices in teaching social studies in Asahan Regency public elementary schools should be. It shows how various activities are arranged and implemented during lessons. Teaching social studies can be a real challenge as teachers aim at preparing learners who understand society's character and can cope with its problems as well as its differences. Comprehensive lesson plans (RPP) are needed that take into consideration

subject matter as well as students' needs; this piece asserts that important aspects of creating good lesson plans are: RPP should be prepared comprehensively based on both factors; good learning strategies and methods must be designed; teaching aids should be utilized to make classes more interesting for learners while assessments help determine student achievement. One major discovery is the effectiveness of cooperative learning in social studies that encourages collaboration among students and thus, it helps them to have a better understanding of the content. Through this, it is possible to implement the overall strategy on social studies education recovery based on the activity-based approach that puts an accent on cooperation in learning, a hands-on model that, thereby, is catalytic in establishing a dynamic and effective learning environment.

Therefore, the studies showed that activity-based methodology of teaching improves student retention & academic achievement level in social studies as well as develops critical thinking and better understanding on social issue problems. Cooperative learning, when incorporated in the teaching of social studies, results in enhanced academic achievement, improved motivation and participation as well higher order thinking skills among the students. Given the expanding use of technology emerges as a potentially beneficial strategy for improving social studies instruction and student outcomes. The latter aligns with the changing educational paradigm, where active learning and student-centered approaches are dominating the field.

Methodology

This paper examines the impact of Activity-Based Learning (ABL) on secondary school students' academic performance and retention in social studies. The research design used in this study was experimental, which was comprised of two groups of students at a private school in Gulshan District of Karachi. The one group was provided with experiences based on ABL strategies while the other one followed regular teaching methodologies.

This study comprised two classes of secondary school-going students. One class formed the experimental group, while the other was the control group. Both groups had approximately 20 students, making it possible to have a sample that allows for

optimum data collection and analysis. Finally, the participants were further limited to those who had enrolled in social studies classes for the school year.

To test ABL, an overall research instrument had been developed that included both pre-tests and post-tests to ascertain students' academic performance and knowledge retained. The pretest was aimed at testing the background knowledge before the implementation of intervention, while the post-test tested knowledge retention coupled with understanding after the implementation of ABL strategies. Multiple-choice questions were placed in both pre-test and post-test with more relevance to the social studies curriculum.

Data collection involves a number of phases. The first was test administration wherein both groups underwent a pre-test at the start of the study to set up baseline knowledge levels. Then came the intervention phase. The experimental group engaged themselves in ABL activities that motivated students toward involvement and critical thinking. These activities involved some role-playing, collaborative projects and activities, and interactive discussions that incite student participation. The third stage is post-test administration. After the intervention period, both the groups were given a post-test to guarantee some changes in academic performance and retention. The final stage of this research involved data analysis; all the data gathered was analyzed through Bar graphs based on statistical significance between scores of pre-tests and post-test for two groups. Independent sample t-test was conducted in the comparison of mean for two groups to get

validation for the effectiveness of ABL compared to traditional methods.

Result & Discussion

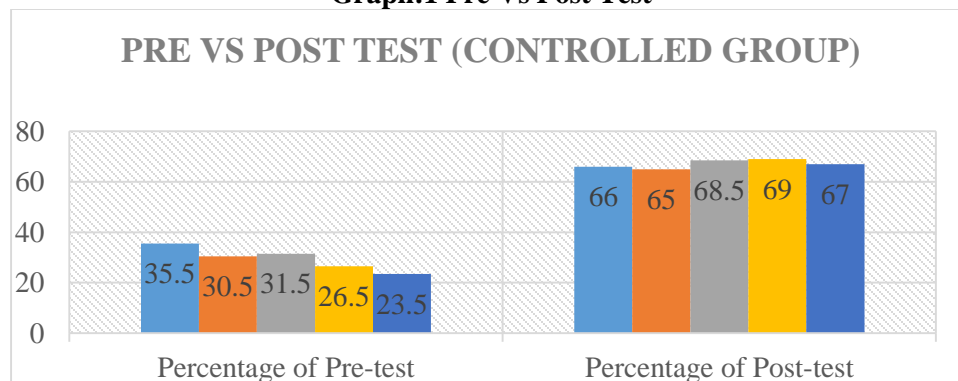
The study aimed to assess the impact of ABL while teaching Social Studies in improving student overall learning and academic performance. The researchers of this study uses an experimental group and a control group for this study. Pre-test and a post-test were used with both groups. The experimental group learned by ABL, while the control group learned by the traditional lecture method. The results showed that the experimental group significantly outperformed the control group in the post-test.

The academic accomplishments of the two groups were seen through graphs using MS Excel. This plotting of the data made it possible to easily see the effect that ABL had, or didn't have, on student performance and to compare it directly with the effect that the traditional lecture method had on the performance of an equivalent group of students as they worked their way through almost the same content. The study involved two sections of a secondary students. One section was assigned as the control group, and the other was the experimental group. Each group consisted of 20 students. Both groups took pre-tests and post-tests to establish their equivalence.

The researcher evaluated the effect of ABL on students' academic achievement by comparing pre and post-test tests. From these tests, the researcher derived the relationship between ABL and student performance. The use of ABL in teaching produces a significantly greater effect on students' academic achievement than traditional teaching methods.

Controlled Group Analysis

Graph:1 Pre Vs Post Test

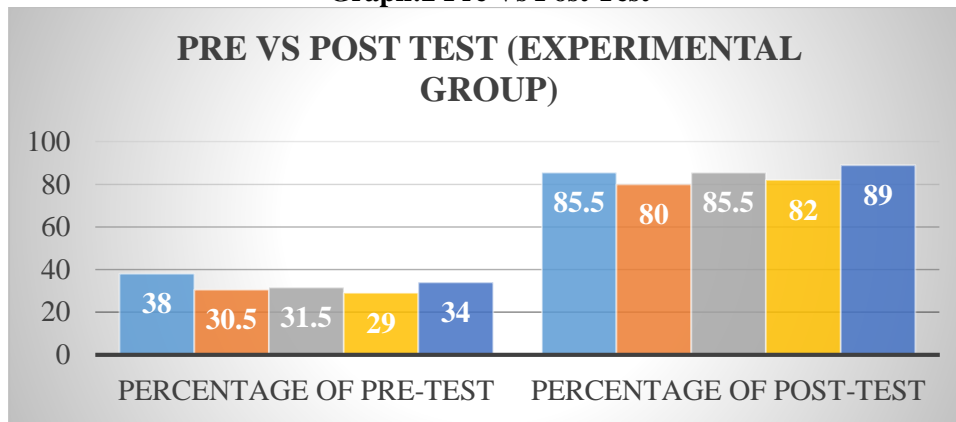


In control group a pre-test, given before any instruction, produced an average score of 29.1%. It should be noted that this score is a measure of where the students are at starting. For these participants of either traditional teaching, the post-test average was significantly higher, at 67%.

Traditional teaching methods improved students learning but the magnitude of this improvement while significant but still leaves a room for further improvement. The result depicts that traditional method works but may not lead to a higher level of thinking and learning.

Experimental Group Analysis

Graph:2 Pre Vs Post Test

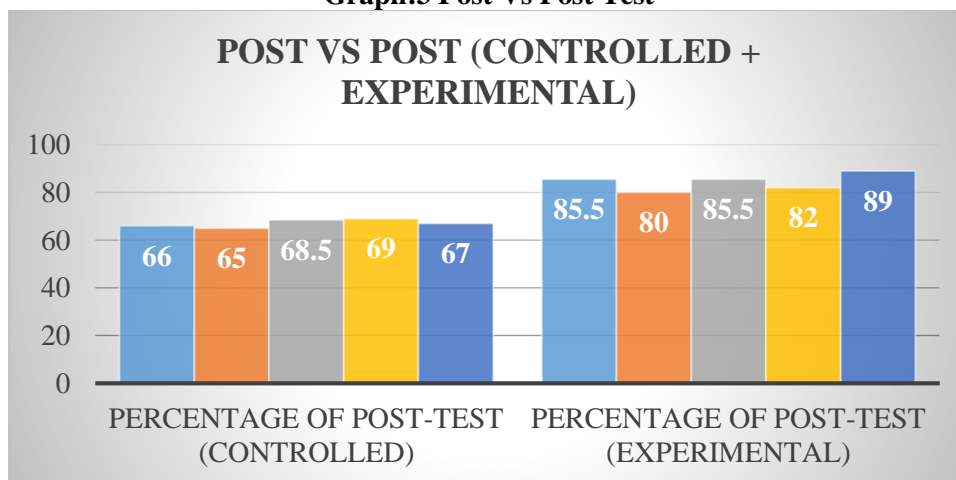


Experimental group then uses ABL as a teaching strategy. A baseline average of 32.6% on the pre-test was observed suggesting students at their initial levels. Later after applying ABL strategies the post test results depicted a remarkable improvement in which the average grade leads to 84.4%. In ABL, there are usually activities where

students work with their peers to solve problems and participants spend time working by hands on activity. A second assumption is that the ABL results in better memorizing or application of knowledge, which seems to be effective and catering a higher level of bloom taxonomy which enhances student’s learning.

Comparative Analysis

Graph:3 Post Vs Post Test



The control group, after receiving traditional teaching through lecture method, achieved an average quiz score of 67%, while the experimental

group, which uses ABL, achieved an average score of 84.4%, depicting that ABL had a more profound effect on student learning outcomes. The potential

reasons behind ABL's success its ability to cater to diverse student's need, foster collaboration, and promote critical thinking by using differentiated learning. Moreover. The findings depicts ABL as an effective approach to improve student academic achievement and active participation as compared to traditional teaching methods.

Discussion

Activity-Based Learning (ABL) positively influence student academic performance and proven by various educational research. The ABL experimental group in a recent study not only surpassed the control group, which was taught using traditional approach, but it also shown significant improvement.

Group	Respondents	Average Post-Test Results
Control	20	32.6%
Experimental	20	84.4%.

The average pre-test score was 32.6% for the ABL group and the post-test average was observed to be 84.4%. depicting ABL as an effective teaching method. It not only ensures ABL effectiveness, but it also corresponds with previous researches. Albadi and David (2019), find out that ABL increases both academic achievement and student motivation. ABL's effect on student engagement and performance has also been reported by other researchers. As Anwer (2019) conducted a study on activity-based teaching and explores that ABL stimulates student's intrinsic motivation, which strive them for success. ABL activities encourages students to think more deeply which leads to better comprehension and retention of knowledge (Patil et al. 2016 and Erbil et al., 2020).

Moreover. Findings of Sarpong et al, 2020 evident that activity-based education leads to memory retention as well as better academic performance. According to Uzun and Uygun (2022), the more holistic approach used in ABL depicts a high score on post-test performance due to the use of hands-on activities that allows students to engage within learning in a meaningful way.

The findings suggest educational settings to use ABL as an effective teaching method within the classroom. This shows that ABL has an effect not only improved academic performance which is

depicted from the post-test results of experimental group and also contributes to an active engagement of learner. Thus, the findings proves as evidence that ABL is a more effective way of teaching as compared to conventional teaching approaches used within the classrooms.

Conclusion

The results of this study are supposed to present a comprehensive difference in the performance of students between ABL teaching and traditional teaching strategies. This pre-test will set the baseline knowledge about how students are experiencing social studies. Then, after using ABL strategies for intervention, it can be hypothesized that results of the post-test will present significant improvements in retention as well as understanding.

The results that are anticipated as a result of this research reinforce the effective manner in which ABL supports the development of an interactive learning environment that promotes critical thinking and engagement with one's peers. Results of these activities reflect better retention by the students and more profound comprehension of the content presented in social studies. The results validated the belief that such innovative teaching methods as ABL are what the social studies education needs to be renewed at the best level according to the modern requirements of educational systems with an emphasis on participation and activeness.

In addition, these pedagogies ought to be embraced as there arises the newly emerging educational needs. Teachers' uninterrupted professional development should be highly encouraged so that they can incorporate these contemporary strategies and ways in the classrooms provided. This step makes students motivated and part of the culture that thrives after studying in various lifelong learning institutions or environments.

This paper will contribute to what would appear to be precious knowledge on how best to teach social studies in effect by basing insights into the positive impacts of Activity-Based Learning on the achievement and engagement of learners. Thus, future research will focus on the longitudinal effects of the implementation of ABL in varied educational contexts to further validate this efficacy as a transformative education approach.

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