

Unveiling the Creative Teacher’s Secret: A Systematic Review of Learning Variations for Active Classrooms

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ABSTRACT

The changing times require teachers to be more creative in creating learning that is not monotonous in order to increase student motivation and participation. This research aims to explain the meaning of learning variation and its role in building an active and interesting classroom atmosphere, identify variation skills such as teaching style, media, and interaction, and analyze the principles of their use. This research uses a qualitative approach with a library research method, where data is collected through document analysis from relevant books and journals. This research synthesizes contemporary pedagogical innovations, including AI integration and play-based strategies, to provide a comprehensive framework for creative teaching in the post-pandemic era. The results show that learning variations have a significant influence in overcoming learning boredom, improving understanding, and adjusting the learning process to students' diverse learning styles. Teachers who are able to creatively combine methods, media, and interactions prove more successful in creating a dynamic and meaningful learning atmosphere. In conclusion, learning variation is not only a teaching strategy, but also the key to creating a classroom that is inclusive, adaptive and supports the development of 21st century skills in students.

Keywords: *creative teacher, learning motivation, student engagement, teaching strategy, variation of learning*



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INTRODUCTION

The changing times require teachers to be more creative in creating learning that is not monotonous, especially with the significant impact of artificial intelligence (AI) technology on modern classroom instruction (Starko, 2021; Steele & Whitaker, 2019). While creativity is increasingly emphasized in global curricula, the journey to systematically support its promotion in the classroom remains a complex challenge (Anderson et al., 2021; Patston et al., 2021; Zielińska et al., 2024). Teachers are required to create learning experiences that excite and actively involve students. Creativity in a variety of methods, media and interactions is the key to bringing the classroom to life. Varied learning activities build motivation, a sense of being valued, and encourage critical thinking skills and cooperation. Educators need to innovate, read classroom dynamics, and dare to try new approaches. By optimizing existing potential, the learning atmosphere becomes more enjoyable and meaningful. Through variety, students more easily understand the material, develop skills, and find their own learning style. The classroom

turns into an inclusive and empowering space where ideas grow and flourish (Julrissani et al., 2020). Creativity in education is not merely a teaching technique but an organic philosophy that must be nurtured to allow students' intuition and academic potential to flourish (Piirto, 2021).

In many parts of the world, the challenge of maintaining student interest in learning is increasingly evident. Data from the UNESCO Institute for Statistics (2024) recorded a 12% decline in active student participation in developing countries in the last five years. This condition shows that the monotonous conventional approach is not able to accommodate the needs of today's students.

The rigid learning atmosphere often makes students feel bored and uninterested. The results of the OECD study (2023) found that 47% of students who were not actively involved in learning had lower academic achievement compared to those who actively participated. This situation is a serious concern for the world of education that is oriented towards developing student potential (li & Belajar, 2021). Therefore, self-belief and professional teacher development are the main foundations in integrating creativity organically in the classroom (Akbar, 2021; Vorontsov & Vorontsova, 2015).

Variations in learning methods are developing as a strategic step to bring about changes in classroom dynamics. A teacher who is able to combine various techniques, media and approaches will find it easier to build a dynamic and fun learning atmosphere (Liu et al., 2024; Zhao et al., 2017). Through creative combinations, the learning process can be aligned with the diverse characteristics and individual needs of students. This opens up opportunities for a more in-depth, personalized, and lasting learning experience. Technology integration is also a form of variation that has a real impact on the learning atmosphere.

Creative teachers always try to explore a variety of approaches to arouse students' enthusiasm for learning. Project-based approaches, educational games, experiments, and the application of gamification elements are part of a series of strategies to bring a more lively, interactive and memorable classroom atmosphere. Each method applied provides its own color in the learning process, encourages active student involvement, and fosters curiosity that continues to grow (Rahma et al., 2024). An adaptive and inclusive learning environment also affects student development, A classroom atmosphere that respects various learning styles encourages wider involvement from all students.

Efforts to create variety in learning cannot be separated from the need for teachers to continue to develop themselves. Participating in training, workshops and sharing good practices among teachers are ways to enrich insights and skills in managing an active and creative classroom.

Through the application of learning variations, teachers not only create enjoyable learning experiences, but also foster 21st century skills in students, such as critical thinking, communication and collaboration. Teacher creativity is key in shaping a classroom atmosphere that supports students' intellectual and emotional growth amidst the challenges of the times.

Based on the above background, this study aims to explain the meaning of variation in teaching and learning and its role in creating an active and interesting classroom atmosphere, describe aspects of skills in making variations including variations in teaching styles, variations in teaching media and materials, and variations in interaction, analyze variations in learning activities through the use of diverse methods and providing examples and illustrations that support student learning motivation, describe the purpose and benefits of learning variations in building a dynamic learning environment and encouraging the development of critical thinking skills and collaboration, and examine the principles of using variations in learning activities so that teachers can choose and apply approaches that are in accordance with the characteristics and needs of students.

METHODS

This study employs a qualitative approach with a systematic library research method. Qualitative research is an assessment that presents data in descriptive form such as written words, writings, and even the behavior of the individuals studied (Sundari et al., 2024). This type of research falls into the category of *library research*, where the main sources are books and various literature relevant to the topic of discussion. The data that researchers get comes from non-human sources. Non-human data sources are obtained from analyzing documents related to the material discussed in this article, such as: books and journals. The collection procedure is done by document analysis. Document analysis is carried out by studying book literature and journal articles related to the material discussed in this article.

To ensure the validity of the findings, a systematic selection process was implemented based on specific inclusion and exclusion criteria. The inclusion criteria involved: (1) peer-reviewed articles published within the last five to ten years (2014–2024) to ensure contemporary relevance; (2) studies focusing on K-12 or higher education settings; and (3) research specifically discussing teaching variations, classroom engagement, or creative pedagogy. The exclusion criteria removed documents that did not provide full-text access, non-English or non-Indonesian languages, and articles that lacked empirical or theoretical depth regarding classroom interactions.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Definition of variation in teaching and learning

Changes that teachers make to learning activities to overcome student boredom and increase student engagement and attention during the learning process are known as variations in teaching and learning. To create a dynamic, interesting and effective learning atmosphere, teachers must master these basic skills in teaching.

Educators' skills to make variations are needed to attract students' attention and motivation in the learning process and to reduce the boredom and saturation felt by students when receiving material delivered by the teacher. Variation is also intended to apply differences that are made consciously to create different learning experiences (Trisnawati Trisnawati & Diena San Fauziya, 2024). Variation in the learning process aims to eliminate boredom and increase students' motivation and curiosity and encourage their active involvement in learning. The application of variation in the learning process is also able to strengthen the active participation of students.

This variation strategy makes it possible to achieve the set learning objectives. Students' enthusiasm for the subject is an important component that determines learning success. One way to increase interest in learning is to use various techniques and make adjustments to the content and characteristics of learning media (Anggrayani et al., 2023).

The use of teaching materials and educational media is very important for the success of the teaching and learning process in the classroom. Learning media are tools used and assist in the learning process, increasing the importance of the contact and communication process. One variation of learning media is the use of various forms of media to present subject matter. Learning media are usually divided into three categories: visual, audio, and audio-visual.

Aspects of developing variety skills in the teaching and learning process

Variations in teaching style, use of learning tools, forms of interaction, and learning activities. organize variations in the learning process. This variation aims to prevent boredom, optimize students' interest in learning and create a more effective and supportive learning atmosphere. Teachers need to change voice intonation, body position, and combine lecture, discussion, and practice methods to keep learning dynamic. In addition, the use of media such

as pictures, videos, or props also plays a role in deepening students' understanding of the learning content taught.

1. Variety of teaching styles

Teaching style variation is a technique used by teachers or educators to deliver material to students in different ways so that the learning process becomes more effective and interesting (Yunus, 2022). Every teacher who is active in learning must have the ability to apply various learning approaches. In the learning process, teachers often carry out activities or routines such as entering the classroom, directing students, delivering subject matter, and then giving homework.

A change in the learning process is to apply many learning variations to achieve learning objectives. Students often feel bored and unfocused when learning, even though they have plenty of time. The role of teachers in implementing effective education, which is different, is to create a learning atmosphere that is able to arouse the interest of learners. Teachers can do this by creating learning approaches that encourage active interaction and create positive and enjoyable learning experiences (Peters & Heraud, 2019; Piirto, 2021; Subhan & Ningsih, 2024).

2. Variety of teaching media and materials

Learning media and teaching materials are two components in education that help teachers deliver lessons to students. Learning media can be visual, audio, or a combination of both that function as a means of transferring information or presenting teaching materials to students. Meanwhile, teaching materials refer to a collection of materials that are systematically designed to facilitate the learning process of both educators and students.

Types of Learning Resources: Print learning resources such as textbooks, modules, handouts, and student worksheets. The most common and most accessible form. Visual teaching materials, such as pictures, graphs, maps and diagrams, which provide more detailed explanations. Audiovisual teaching materials, such as learning videos or educational animations. Digital/interactive teaching materials, such as learning apps, e-modules and e-learning platforms.

Types of Learning Media: Different types of media are used in learning to match the different learning styles of students, such as visual, auditory, and kinesthetic. Some types of learning media are as follows: Visual media: whiteboards, drawings, photographs, or PowerPoint slides; Audio media: songs, stories, or recorded dialogs that help learning to hear; and Audiovisual media: learning videos or documentaries. Interactive Media: computers, learning apps and simulations that allow students to learn actively.

Benefits of Variation in Media and Teaching Materials: There are many benefits of using a variety of media and teaching materials. Attracts students' attention: Interesting media can prevent students from getting bored and keep them focused. Improves understanding: Explaining difficult topics becomes easier to understand with the help of certain visual or audio tools. Supports a variety of individual learning styles: Every student has unique learning characteristics. A variety of media can cater to this need. Encourage independent learning: Students can learn on their own at home with resources such as learning modules or videos (Dyftania et al., 2023). In the learning process, differences in the use of media and teaching materials are very important. By choosing the right media and teaching materials, teachers can increase students' interest in learning, help students understand the material better, and make learning fun and interactive (Wu et al., 2024; Veerasinghan et al., 2021; Yusriadi, 2021).

3. Variation of interaction

Interaction variation refers to the way individuals or groups interact with each other in various social, cultural and environmental contexts. This variation can occur in a variety

of ways, such as digital interaction, verbal or non-verbal communication (Cremin & Chappell, 2019; Isawi et al., 2024). Understanding these differences is important as they can affect relationships between individuals, group dynamics and interaction outcomes.

Different patterns of interaction between educators and students, which include two sides, namely:

- a) Students carry out the learning process independently without direct assistance from the teacher.
- b) Students demonstrate appropriate listening attitudes when teachers communicate with learners (Prasetyo & Putri, 2025).

Both of the above are possible possibilities. For example, an educator can communicate with a small group of learners by asking a few questions or curves while talking to individual learners. They can also create a situation where learners can exchange opinions with each other through demonstration, demonstration, or discussion. To ensure students' success in achieving the objectives, this interaction pattern is used to create an interesting and not boring classroom atmosphere.

Variation in learning activities

Variety in learning activities refers to the variety of methods, media and strategies used by teachers to create an interesting, non-monotonous learning atmosphere, and according to students' needs. The aim is to increase students' motivation, participation and understanding of the subject matter. By presenting variations such as group discussions, simulations, educational games, use of videos, or independent projects teachers can accommodate different learning styles and prevent boredom, so that the learning process becomes more effective and meaningful.

1. Variation in the use of learning methods

An important skill that a teacher must have is a diversity of learning methods. Teachers can make lessons more interesting and effective by choosing the right approach, such as varied lectures, question and answer, discussions, presentations or role plays. In this way, students' interest and attention can increase and they are more engaged and motivated to learn. Therefore, teachers must be wise in selecting and choosing the right learning methods to achieve the desired learning objectives. In this way, students will have a better learning experience and achieve better results (RimahDani et al., 2023)

In addition, a variety of learning methods can also help teachers adapt learning to the diverse learning needs of students. Since each student has a different learning style, the application of various learning methods allows teachers to accommodate these differences. Thus, students can learn more effectively and achieve optimal learning outcomes.

Teachers can use a variety of learning methods to achieve learning objectives. For example, they can use lecture method to explain complex concepts, discussion method to encourage discussion and exchange of ideas, or presentation method to present students' work. By using various methods, teachers can make learning more interesting and effective, and improve students' understanding of what they are learning.

2. Variation in examples and illustrations

In learning, examples and illustrations are very important because they can make students more focused and motivated. Students can more easily understand the subject matter if they use direct examples that are around them and that happen actually. Direct examples such as pictures, magazines, newspapers, radio news, TV, or events that occur in the school environment and society can also increase students' motivation and enthusiasm for learning (Ningsih et al., 2025).

Thus, teachers can use relevant and actual examples to make learning more interesting and effective. This can help learners to understand the subject matter better and increase their learning motivation.

Purpose and benefits of learning variation

Learning variations have several purposes and benefits, among others:

1. Increase students' attention and interest: By making learning variations, teachers can make the learning process more interesting and fun, thus increasing students' attention and interest in learning.
2. Meet the different learning needs of students: Learning variations can meet the different learning needs of students, so that each student can learn better.
3. Increase student participation: By making learning variations, teachers can increase student participation in learning activities, so that students are more involved and active.
4. Eliminate boredom and boredom: Learning variations can eliminate boredom and boredom in the learning process, so that students are more excited and motivated to learn.
5. Increase student motivation: Learning variations can increase students' desire to learn and explore, enhance their passion for learning and increase their motivation to learn.
6. Forming positive student attitudes: By making learning variations, teachers can make students have a positive view of educators and schools, so that learners appreciate and like the learning process more.
7. Students learn individually: Learning variations can enable students to learn independently and more effectively. each student can obtain better learning outcomes (Tinggi et al., 2024).

Diverse learning is essential to produce a more efficient, enjoyable and meaningful learning process. By using a variety of approaches, teachers can not only attract students' attention and increase motivation, but they can also accept different learning styles, encourage active participation, and foster a positive perspective on learning. Learning variation becomes an important strategy to improve students' learning process and outcomes.

Principles of using variety in learning activities

The Principles of Using Learning Variations are as follows:

1. Using different types of variation: Teachers should use different types of learning variations to achieve the desired learning objectives
2. Use variation in learning smoothly and continuously: Variations should be used smoothly and continuously so as not to disrupt the learning process and students' attention.
3. Structured planning: Teachers should plan the use of learning variations in a structured and flexible manner, so as to adjust to the needs of students.
4. Has a planned direction and purpose: Variations in learning need to be designed with clear aims and objectives, aligned with learning outcomes and considering the characteristics of students (Sufiati & Afifah, 2019).

The principles of using learning variation emphasize that diversity, continuity, structured planning and clear objectives for each strategy applied are essential. In order to keep the learning process focused and not confuse students, teachers must combine various variations in a smooth and planned manner. In addition, each variation should have goals that are aligned with learning achievements and student characteristics, so that the overall learning process is more effective and better.

Overall, the synthesis of recent literature suggests that the secret of creative teachers in bringing the classroom to life lies in seven interrelated features of creative pedagogy: exploration of ideas, granting autonomy, playfulness, problem solving, risk taking, collaboration, and the teacher's own creativity.

CONCLUSION

Variation in learning is an important strategy that teachers master to create an active, interesting and meaningful classroom atmosphere. Through the use of various methods, media, interactions, and appropriate examples, teachers can provide motivation, participation, and understanding of students and accommodate different learning styles. The implementation of planned and sustainable variations helps overcome learning boredom and shape students' positive attitudes towards learning. Therefore, learning variation is key in providing an effective, enjoyable learning process that equips students with 21st century skills.

This study provides a theoretical contribution by synthesizing seven key features of creative pedagogy, such as idea exploration, student autonomy, playfulness, problem solving, risk taking, collaboration, and teacher creativity as a practical framework for educators. Furthermore, the study emphasizes that the integration of future technologies such as artificial intelligence (AI) is not merely a tool but an essential element in modern learning variations to enhance digital literacy and active student engagement.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST

No conflict of interest for this study.

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