

Innovative Teaching Methodologies For Improving Student Learning Outcomes In Contemporary Education

¹Muh Habibulloh

¹Universitas Islam Negeri Sayyid Ali Rahmatullah Tulungagung, Indonesia.

habibulloh040689@gmail.com.

*Correspondence Email: habibulloh040689@gmail.com.

Abstract: This study examines how innovative teaching methodologies improve student learning outcomes in contemporary education through active learning, technology-supported instruction, and formative assessment. A qualitative descriptive design was used to explore classroom practices and participant perspectives in three secondary school classrooms involving six teachers and eighteen students. Data were collected through classroom observations, semi-structured interviews, and document analysis, then analyzed using thematic analysis. The findings show that active learning strategies increased student engagement by encouraging participation, collaboration, and purposeful interaction. Technology-supported instruction strengthened conceptual understanding by presenting ideas through visual, interactive, and contextual learning resources that made abstract content easier to understand. Formative assessment practices improved learning outcomes by creating feedback-rich environments that supported reflection, revision, and ongoing instructional adjustment. The discussion indicates that innovative teaching methodologies function effectively when they are aligned with pedagogical goals, student needs, and teacher competence. The study concludes that the integration of active learning, technology-supported instruction, and formative assessment offers a practical framework for improving student learning outcomes and fostering more responsive, student-centered classroom environments in contemporary education. development and institutional support to implement innovative pedagogy effectively.

Keywords: Innovative Teaching Methodologies, Student Learning Outcomes, Active Learning, Formative Assessment, Technology Integration, Contemporary Education

INTRODUCTION

Contemporary education is increasingly influenced by social transformation, digital expansion, and changing expectations about what students need to succeed in school and society. Educational institutions are no longer expected only to transmit subject knowledge. They are also expected to cultivate critical thinking, communication, collaboration, creativity, and learner autonomy as essential competencies for academic and social participation. This shift has encouraged teachers to reconsider conventional classroom practices that position students mainly as passive recipients of information. A growing body of educational research indicates that



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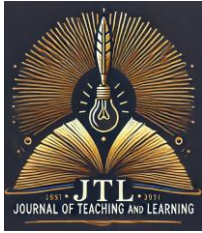
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meaningful learning is more likely to occur when students participate actively in constructing knowledge, engaging with peers, and reflecting on their own progress (Freeman et al., 2014). In this context, contemporary education calls for teaching approaches that are responsive to student needs, pedagogically flexible, and oriented toward deeper learning outcomes rather than content delivery alone.

Innovative teaching methodologies have emerged as an important response to these demands. These methodologies include active learning, collaborative learning, inquiry-based teaching, project-based learning, technology-supported instruction, and formative assessment practices. They are widely associated with student-centered pedagogy because they invite learners to interact intellectually, socially, and emotionally with the content and with the learning environment. Research on active learning has shown that students perform better in courses where instructional design moves beyond lecture-dominated teaching and creates opportunities for participation, problem solving, and knowledge application (Freeman et al., 2014). Evidence also shows that students in active classrooms may gain stronger actual learning even when they initially perceive the experience as more demanding than traditional lectures (Deslauriers et al., 2019). These findings suggest that innovative methodology is not merely a trend in classroom presentation. It reflects a pedagogical reorientation toward engagement, interaction, and cognitive challenge.

The need for such reorientation becomes more urgent because traditional instructional patterns still dominate many educational settings. Lecture-based teaching, textbook dependence, and assessment practices centered on final examinations continue to shape classroom life in many schools and universities. These approaches may offer efficiency in content coverage, yet they often limit classroom dialogue, reduce opportunities for feedback, and provide few openings for students to test ideas in authentic learning situations. Black and Wiliam (1998) argued that classroom learning improves when assessment is integrated into pedagogy and used to support student progress throughout the learning process. Bennett (2011) also emphasized that formative assessment has substantial value when teachers use evidence of learning to adapt instruction in real time. These perspectives highlight an important issue in contemporary education: students are



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less likely to develop deep understanding when learning is disconnected from participation, reflection, and continuous support.

Technology integration has become another defining feature of current educational practice. Digital tools now shape how students access information, communicate with others, and engage with academic content. Technology-supported pedagogy can enrich teaching by providing multimodal representations, interactive learning resources, flexible communication channels, and opportunities for self-paced study. Haleem et al. (2022) noted that digital technologies can enhance educational processes by expanding access to information and by supporting more dynamic learning experiences. The value of technology in education, though, depends on the quality of its pedagogical use. Graham (2011) explained that technology integration should be understood through its relationship with pedagogy and content knowledge rather than through technological presence alone. This view suggests that digital tools are most effective when they help students grasp difficult concepts, participate actively in tasks, and revisit materials independently. Technology in this sense supports conceptual understanding when it is embedded in sound instructional design.

At the same time, the effectiveness of innovative teaching methodologies depends strongly on how teachers design and mediate learning experiences. Classroom innovation does not occur simply because new tools or activities are introduced. It requires teachers to align strategies, learning goals, student needs, and assessment processes in a coherent manner. Taimalu and Luik (2019) found that teachers' professional knowledge of technology and its integration has a direct effect on classroom technology use. This suggests that innovative pedagogy is shaped by teacher competence as much as by instructional resources. Similar concerns appear in assessment research. Formative assessment is effective when feedback is timely, specific, and connected to students' next steps in learning (Black & Wiliam, 1998; Bennett, 2011). The same principle applies to active learning. Students benefit when participation is structured, purposeful, and linked to conceptual goals rather than treated as activity for its own sake.

This article addresses these pedagogical concerns by examining three interrelated dimensions of innovative teaching methodologies in contemporary education. The study focuses



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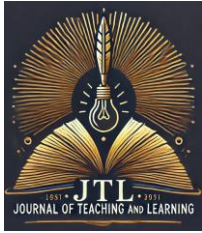
on active learning strategies, technology-supported instruction, and formative assessment practices because these dimensions represent central mechanisms through which teaching can influence learning outcomes. The investigation is guided by three research questions: How do active learning strategies influence student engagement in contemporary classrooms? How does technology-supported instruction contribute to students' conceptual understanding? How do formative assessment practices support the improvement of student learning outcomes? These questions are closely connected to current debates in teaching and learning because they link classroom practice with observable educational benefits. Through this structure, the article seeks to explain how innovative teaching methodologies function not only as instructional alternatives but also as practical foundations for improving student learning outcomes in contemporary education.

METHOD

This study employed a qualitative descriptive design to investigate the implementation and perceived impact of innovative teaching methodologies on student learning outcomes in contemporary classrooms. A qualitative approach was considered appropriate because the study sought to understand classroom processes, participant perspectives, and pedagogical practices in their natural settings. This design allows researchers to describe educational phenomena in a detailed and context-sensitive manner while maintaining close connection with participants' lived experiences (Creswell & Poth, 2018; Sandelowski, 2000).

The study was conducted in three secondary school classrooms that had implemented student-centered learning practices. Participants consisted of six teachers from different subject areas and eighteen students selected through purposive sampling. Teachers were chosen on the basis of their experience in applying active learning, technology-supported instruction, and formative assessment. Students were selected to represent diverse levels of academic achievement and classroom participation. This sampling strategy supported the identification of rich and relevant information related to the study focus (Patton, 2015).

Data were collected through classroom observations, semi-structured interviews, and document analysis. Observations were used to record instructional strategies, student engagement,



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classroom interaction, and feedback practices. Interviews with teachers and students explored their experiences and perceptions of innovative teaching and learning. Documents such as lesson plans, teaching materials, student assignments, and assessment records were examined to strengthen contextual understanding of classroom practice. The combination of these techniques enabled data triangulation and provided a more comprehensive picture of instructional implementation (Miles et al., 2014).

Data were analyzed using thematic analysis. The researcher read all observation notes, interview transcripts, and documents repeatedly to build familiarity with the dataset. Relevant meaning units were coded and grouped into categories derived from recurring patterns. These categories were then developed into themes aligned with the research questions. Trustworthiness was enhanced through source triangulation, member checking, and systematic comparison across data sources to improve credibility and interpretive consistency (Nowell et al., 2017).

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Active Learning Strategies and Student Engagement

The findings indicate that active learning strategies played a substantial role in strengthening student engagement in the observed classrooms. Teachers consistently used group discussion, problem-solving tasks, think-pair-share activities, and brief student presentations to create a more participatory learning environment. These instructional practices changed the classroom dynamic from one-directional explanation to shared interaction. Students were not limited to listening and note-taking. They were invited to articulate ideas, respond to questions, negotiate meaning with peers, and present their understanding in front of the class. This pattern suggests that engagement increased when students were given structured opportunities to become visible contributors in the learning process. Such a result aligns with the view that student engagement is closely connected to participation in meaningful academic activity and to the quality of classroom interaction that supports that participation (Skinner & Belmont, 1993).



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Observation data showed that students displayed stronger attentiveness during lessons that required direct involvement. Their responses became more immediate, classroom talk became more evenly distributed, and peer interaction became more purposeful. Interview data reinforced this pattern. Students reported that they felt more interested in lessons when they were asked to discuss, solve problems, and explain their reasoning rather than only receive information from the teacher. Several teachers also noted that active learning activities made student engagement easier to identify because participation patterns revealed who was confident, who was hesitant, and who required additional support. This finding is consistent with research showing that active learning environments increase opportunities for behavioral engagement and allow teachers to observe student learning processes more clearly during instruction (LaDage et al., 2018).

The findings also suggest that active learning contributed to cognitive engagement, not only behavioral participation. Students who were involved in collaborative tasks appeared to invest greater mental effort in interpreting ideas, connecting concepts, and evaluating responses. Classroom activities such as think-pair-share were especially useful because they provided time for individual reflection before peer discussion and whole-class sharing. This sequence supported students who needed time to formulate responses and reduced the dominance of a small number of vocal learners. Evidence from previous studies indicates that think-pair-share can improve in-class participation and support collaborative reasoning, particularly for students who may be reluctant to speak immediately in whole-class settings (Mundelsee & Jurkowski, 2021). The present findings reflect a similar pattern. Students became more willing to contribute when participation was scaffolded through small-scale interaction before public sharing.

Another important result concerns the social dimension of engagement. Active learning created a classroom climate in which students learned with others rather than alongside others. Group tasks and paired discussions encouraged communication, listening, peer explanation, and mutual support. These experiences appear to strengthen students' sense of belonging within the learning environment. Engagement is often sustained when students perceive that the classroom is relationally supportive and that their contributions matter. Furrer and Skinner (2003) found that relatedness plays a meaningful role in academic engagement and performance. The current



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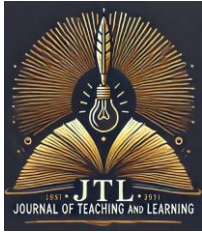
findings support this perspective because students described active learning sessions as more enjoyable, less monotonous, and more motivating due to the opportunity to exchange ideas with classmates.

The data also reveal that successful active learning depends on deliberate instructional planning. Teachers who achieved stronger engagement did not simply ask students to work in groups without direction. They gave clear task instructions, established time boundaries, monitored interaction, and guided discussion toward learning goals. In classrooms where activities were carefully structured, students remained focused and understood the purpose of their participation. In classrooms where instructions were less explicit, some students became uncertain about expectations and interaction lost momentum. This pattern indicates that innovative teaching methodology should be understood as purposeful pedagogical design rather than activity variation alone. Active learning becomes effective when participation is aligned with conceptual goals, classroom management, and feedback practices. Research on student engagement in small-group active learning also emphasizes that teacher facilitation is central to sustaining productive involvement and meaningful academic exchange (Järvenoja et al., 2024).

Taken together, these findings show that active learning strategies strengthen student engagement through behavioral participation, cognitive involvement, and social connection. Students become more attentive and motivated when they are given meaningful roles in classroom learning. Teachers gain clearer insight into student understanding when learning is made visible through interaction. This discussion suggests that active learning is a practical and pedagogically grounded pathway for improving the quality of classroom engagement in contemporary education.

Technology-Supported Instruction and Conceptual Understanding

The findings show that technology-supported instruction contributed to stronger conceptual understanding among students across the observed classrooms. Teachers used presentation software, learning management systems, educational videos, interactive quizzes, and digital simulations to present concepts in more accessible and varied forms. These tools expanded the way students encountered content. Lessons were no longer limited to verbal explanation or printed



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text. Students engaged with visual, auditory, and interactive representations that made difficult topics easier to grasp. Observation data indicated that students responded with greater confidence when teachers used digital resources to illustrate processes, compare examples, and provide guided practice. This pattern suggests that technology-supported instruction can enhance conceptual learning when it is used to make knowledge more visible and easier to interpret. Such a finding is consistent with educational research showing that digital tools can support deeper conceptual understanding when they are integrated into instruction with clear learning purposes (Tamim et al., 2011).

In science and mathematics lessons, digital simulations played a particularly important role. Students were able to observe movement, change, and relationships that would have been difficult to explain through speech or static images alone. Simulated environments allowed them to test ideas and connect abstract concepts with observable patterns. This experience appears to strengthen understanding by reducing the cognitive gap between explanation and mental representation. Research on educational simulations has shown that interactive digital environments can improve students' conceptual learning because they provide opportunities to manipulate variables, visualize systems, and receive immediate responses from the learning task (Rutten et al., 2012). The classroom findings in this study reflect this benefit. Students described simulations as helping them "see" how concepts worked rather than merely hear about them.

A similar pattern appeared in language and social science classrooms. Teachers used short videos, digital texts, and presentation slides to connect concepts with real-life contexts. Students reported that these materials made lessons easier to understand and easier to remember because examples were linked to familiar situations, current events, or concrete visuals. Conceptual understanding often depends on the learner's ability to connect new knowledge to prior experience. Multimedia resources supported this process by providing contextual cues and varied representations of meaning. Mayer's (2021) cognitive theory of multimedia learning explains that students learn more effectively when verbal and visual information are combined in ways that support active processing. The findings of this study align with that explanation. Students appeared



Journal of Teaching and Learning

Volume 2 No 2 January 2026

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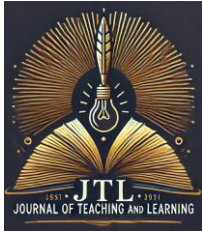
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to develop stronger conceptual clarity when teachers selected digital materials that were relevant, focused, and connected directly to lesson objectives.

The study also found that technology-supported instruction was most effective when digital tools were aligned with pedagogical intention rather than used as a symbol of modern teaching. Teachers who integrated technology successfully chose tools that matched student needs and curricular goals. They did not use digital resources only to attract attention. They used them to explain difficult content, organize learning sequences, and create opportunities for practice and review. This result reflects an important pedagogical principle in technology integration research. The educational value of technology depends on the relationship between technological tools, teaching strategies, and content knowledge. Mishra and Koehler (2006) emphasized that effective technology integration requires thoughtful interaction among these domains rather than simple technological adoption. The present findings support that view because meaningful use of technology in the classroom was linked to teacher judgment, not merely tool availability.

Teacher readiness emerged as another significant factor. Observation and interview data suggested that students benefited most when teachers were confident in selecting, adapting, and facilitating digital resources. Teachers who demonstrated stronger readiness were able to move smoothly between explanation, demonstration, and student interaction. They could anticipate where students might struggle and use digital tools to support understanding at those points. Teachers with limited preparation tended to rely on technology for display rather than for conceptual scaffolding. This distinction indicates that technology-supported instruction depends not only on infrastructure but also on pedagogical competence. Ertmer and Ottenbreit-Leftwich (2010) argued that effective classroom technology use is shaped by teacher beliefs, knowledge, and instructional vision. The present study shows a similar pattern in practice.

Student autonomy also emerged as an important outcome of technology-supported learning. Several students explained that digital platforms and online materials allowed them to revisit lessons independently outside classroom hours. This opportunity supported self-paced review and increased confidence in understanding complex topics. Students were able to pause videos, reread explanations, and repeat quiz activities according to their own needs. This feature is especially



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valuable in contemporary education, where learners are expected to develop independent learning habits alongside subject mastery. The findings suggest that technology-supported instruction can strengthen conceptual understanding while also encouraging learner autonomy, provided that digital resources are intentionally designed and pedagogically grounded.

Formative Assessment Practices and Learning Improvement

The findings indicate that formative assessment practices had a strong influence on the improvement of student learning outcomes in the observed classrooms. Teachers applied questioning techniques, exit tickets, reflective writing, peer feedback, draft revision, and continuous written or oral comments during the learning process. These practices enabled teachers to monitor student understanding on an ongoing basis and to identify misconceptions before they became persistent barriers to learning. Observation data showed that assessment was not treated merely as a tool for assigning grades. It functioned as an instructional process through which teachers gathered evidence of student thinking and used that evidence to shape subsequent learning activities. This pattern supports the view that formative assessment is effective when it is embedded in daily teaching and used to inform instructional decisions in real time (Wiliam, 2011).

A notable finding from classroom observations was the creation of a feedback-rich learning environment. Students regularly received information about what they had understood, what remained unclear, and what they needed to improve in order to meet learning goals. In several lessons, teachers used short written prompts at the end of class to identify students' confusion, then adjusted the following lesson accordingly. In other cases, teachers responded to drafts and classroom tasks with targeted comments that directed students toward revision rather than final judgment. Students explained in interviews that such feedback helped them see learning as a process of gradual improvement rather than as a single moment of evaluation. Research has shown that feedback has a substantial effect on student achievement when it provides clear information about progress and supports action toward improvement (Hattie & Timperley, 2007). The findings of this study reflect that principle. Students benefited when feedback was specific, understandable, and linked to immediate next steps.



Journal of Teaching and Learning

Volume 2 No 2 January 2026

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The data also show that formative assessment strengthened student awareness of their own learning. Through reflective writing, peer review, and teacher questioning, students were encouraged to examine their understanding, identify weaknesses, and revise their work. This process made learning more transparent. Students no longer completed tasks only to satisfy teacher requirements. They began to recognize how performance could be improved through revision and reflection. Nicol and Macfarlane-Dick (2006) argued that formative assessment supports self-regulated learning when feedback helps learners compare current performance with desired goals and develop strategies for closing that gap. The present findings align with this perspective because students described feedback as a guide for improvement rather than as a statement of failure. Their confidence increased when they saw that errors could be addressed through support and revision.

Teacher interviews revealed another important dimension of formative assessment. Teachers valued these practices because they provided immediate insight into student progress and allowed instructional adjustment during the lesson sequence. This was particularly evident in questioning strategies and exit tickets, where teachers could quickly identify whether concepts had been understood by most students or whether reteaching was needed. Such responsiveness is central to the educational purpose of formative assessment. Heritage (2010) explained that formative assessment is rooted in the continuous use of evidence to support learning decisions by both teachers and students. The findings in this study demonstrate this dynamic clearly. Assessment was used to make learning visible and to guide the next pedagogical move rather than to conclude instruction.

The study also found that formative assessment reduced student anxiety in meaningful ways. Students reported feeling less pressure because their performance was not judged only through final tests. They were given multiple opportunities to demonstrate learning, receive support, and revise misunderstandings before formal evaluation. This experience appears to create a more supportive classroom climate in which mistakes are treated as part of learning rather than as evidence of inability. Carless and Boud (2018) noted that feedback practices are most powerful when they build student capacity to use information productively. The current findings support this



Journal of Teaching and Learning

Volume 2 No 2 January 2026

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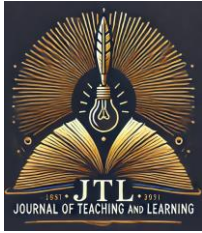
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argument because students became more willing to engage with challenging tasks when feedback was framed as guidance rather than correction alone.

These results suggest that formative assessment is most effective when it is integrated consistently into daily instruction. It should not appear as an isolated activity or occasional classroom technique. Its influence becomes stronger when feedback, reflection, and revision are normalized as part of the learning culture. In such classrooms, student learning outcomes improve through continuous guidance, greater self-awareness, and meaningful interaction between teacher and learner. Formative assessment, in this sense, functions as a central pedagogical mechanism for learning improvement in contemporary education.

CONCLUSION

This study demonstrates that innovative teaching methodologies provide a strong pedagogical foundation for improving student learning outcomes in contemporary education. The findings show that active learning strategies increase student engagement by encouraging direct participation, collaborative interaction, and cognitive involvement in classroom activities. Students become more attentive and motivated when learning requires them to discuss ideas, solve problems, and present understanding rather than receive information passively. Technology-supported instruction also plays an important role in strengthening conceptual understanding. Digital simulations, educational videos, interactive quizzes, and learning platforms help students access knowledge through multiple representations and connect abstract content with concrete examples. Formative assessment practices contribute to learning improvement by embedding feedback, reflection, and revision into the daily instructional process. Students gain a clearer sense of their progress, teachers receive timely evidence of understanding, and classroom learning becomes more responsive to actual needs. Taken together, these findings indicate that improved learning outcomes emerge when teaching is designed as an interactive, adaptive, and student-centered process.



Journal of Teaching and Learning

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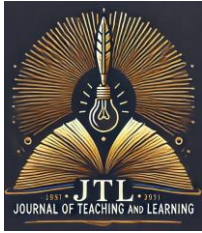
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The study also highlights that the effectiveness of innovative teaching depends on teacher competence and institutional support. Teachers need professional capacity to design active learning experiences, select digital tools that match instructional goals, and apply formative assessment practices consistently and meaningfully. Schools also need to create enabling conditions through infrastructure, collaborative culture, and policy support that values pedagogical innovation. Innovative methodology should not be treated as the simple adoption of new activities or technologies. Its value lies in how teaching strategies, learning objectives, and assessment processes are aligned to support deeper understanding and sustained student participation. These findings suggest that future educational improvement efforts should focus not only on curriculum reform but also on the daily pedagogical practices that shape how students experience learning. In this way, innovative teaching methodologies can serve as a sustainable pathway toward more meaningful, inclusive, and effective education in contemporary classrooms.

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