

Deep Learning Implementation In English Classroom Of Grade 8 Students At SMP Cinta Rakyat 3 Pematangsiantar

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Abstract

This study aimed to describe the implementation of the Deep Learning approach in Grade 8 English classrooms and to describe students' responses toward its implementation at SMP Cinta Rakyat 3 Pematangsiantar. This study used a descriptive qualitative research design. The participants were two English teachers and 158 Grade 8 students. The data were collected through non-participant classroom observations and questionnaires. The observation data were analyzed using thematic analysis, while the questionnaire data were analyzed using descriptive analysis based on frequency and percentage. The findings showed that the Deep Learning approach was implemented through three main principles: Mindful Learning, Meaningful Learning, and Joyful Learning. Mindful Learning was implemented through explaining learning objectives, asking questions, giving students time to think, encouraging them to express ideas, and conducting reflection activities. Meaningful Learning was implemented by connecting English materials with students' previous knowledge, personal experiences, daily lives, and real communication. Joyful Learning was implemented through enjoyable activities, songs, discussions, group work, presentations, and positive feedback. The students also showed highly positive responses toward the implementation of Deep Learning. The positive responses were 98.23% for Mindful Learning, 95.95% for Meaningful Learning, and 98.10% for Joyful Learning. These findings indicate that the implementation of Deep Learning created an active, meaningful, and enjoyable English learning environment and encouraged students to think, participate, communicate, collaborate, reflect, and connect English learning with their daily lives. Therefore, Deep Learning through Mindful, Meaningful, and Joyful Learning can support a more active, meaningful, and enjoyable English learning experience for Grade 8 students.

Keywords: Deep Learning, Mindful Learning, Meaningful Learning, Joyful Learning, English Classroom

Abstrak

Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mendeskripsikan penerapan pendekatan Deep Learning di kelas Bahasa Inggris Kelas 8 dan mendeskripsikan tanggapan siswa terhadap penerapannya di SMP Cinta Rakyat 3 Pematangsiantar. Penelitian ini menggunakan desain penelitian kualitatif deskriptif. Pesertanya adalah dua orang guru bahasa Inggris dan 158 siswa kelas 8. Pengumpulan data dilakukan melalui observasi kelas non partisipan dan angket. Data observasi dianalisis menggunakan analisis tematik, sedangkan data angket dianalisis menggunakan analisis deskriptif berdasarkan frekuensi dan persentase. Temuan menunjukkan bahwa pendekatan Deep Learning diterapkan melalui tiga prinsip utama: Mindful Learning, Meaningful Learning, dan Joyful Learning. Mindful Learning dilaksanakan melalui penjelasan tujuan pembelajaran, mengajukan pertanyaan, memberikan waktu kepada siswa untuk berpikir, mendorong siswa untuk mengemukakan gagasan, dan melakukan kegiatan refleksi. Pembelajaran Bermakna dilaksanakan dengan menghubungkan materi bahasa Inggris dengan pengetahuan siswa sebelumnya, pengalaman pribadi, kehidupan sehari-hari, dan komunikasi nyata. Joyful Learning dilaksanakan melalui kegiatan yang menyenangkan, nyanyian, diskusi, kerja kelompok, presentasi, dan umpan balik yang positif. Respon siswa juga sangat positif terhadap penerapan Deep Learning. Respon positifnya adalah 98,23% untuk Mindful Learning, 95,95% untuk Meaningful Learning, dan 98,10% untuk Joyful Learning. Temuan ini menunjukkan bahwa penerapan Deep Learning menciptakan lingkungan belajar bahasa Inggris yang aktif, bermakna, dan menyenangkan serta mendorong siswa untuk berpikir, berpartisipasi, berkomunikasi, berkolaborasi, merefleksikan, dan menghubungkan pembelajaran bahasa Inggris dengan kehidupan sehari-hari. Oleh karena itu, Deep Learning melalui Mindful, Meaningful, dan Joyful Learning dapat mendukung pengalaman belajar bahasa Inggris yang lebih aktif, bermakna, dan menyenangkan bagi siswa kelas 8.

Kata Kunci: Deep Learning, Mindful Learning, Meaningful Learning, Joyful Learning, Kelas Bahasa Inggris

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INTRODUCTION

Education in the twenty-first century requires students to develop not only academic knowledge but also critical thinking, creativity, communication, collaboration, and independence. Therefore, learning should not only focus on memorizing information but also give students opportunities to understand, use, and reflect on what they learn. In English learning, this is important because students are expected to use English for communication in real-life situations. One approach that supports these needs is the Deep Learning approach. In education, Deep Learning does not mean artificial intelligence or machine learning. It is a learning approach that helps students develop a deeper understanding through active, reflective, meaningful, and enjoyable learning experiences. It focuses on understanding the meaning of lessons, connecting new knowledge with previous knowledge, using knowledge in real situations, and developing students' thinking, social, and emotional skills.

In the Indonesian education context, the Deep Learning approach is related to three main principles: Mindful Learning, Meaningful Learning, and Joyful Learning. Mindful Learning focuses on students' awareness of learning goals, active participation, thinking, and reflection. Meaningful Learning connects learning materials with students' previous knowledge, personal experiences, and daily life. Joyful Learning creates a positive, comfortable, and enjoyable classroom environment that encourages students to participate actively. Recent studies support the use of these three principles in education. Andayanie et al., (2025) explain that Deep Learning can create more reflective and student-centered learning through Mindful, Meaningful, and Joyful Learning. Azzahra & Jaya, (2025) also found that these three principles can help students understand lessons, increase motivation, and connect learning with real-life situations.

The implementation of Deep Learning is also important in English Language Teaching (ELT). Ricita et al., (2025) studied teachers' and students' perceptions of Deep Learning in ELT classrooms and found positive perceptions of the use of Mindful, Meaningful, and Joyful Learning. This shows that these three principles can be used in English classrooms. Previous studies by lecturers from the University of HKBP Nommensen Pematangsiantar also support the importance of active and meaningful English learning. Napitupulu & Manalu, (2022) studied a scientific approach-based English learning strategy and focused on learners' satisfaction and learning obstacles. Their study shows that good learning strategies are important for students' English learning experiences. Siahaan et al., (2021) studied social competence and students' learning creativity, while Siahaan and Sianturi studied Quantum Teaching through storytelling and word games. These studies show the importance of interaction, creativity, motivation, and enjoyable activities in learning. In addition, Siahaan, B. L., & Siahaan, (2023) studied Project-Based Learning connected with digital technology to improve students' speaking competence. Their study shows the importance of the teacher as a facilitator and the importance of active learning activities.

Although previous studies have discussed Deep Learning, active learning, and English teaching strategies, there are still limited studies that describe how the three principles of Deep Learning are

implemented in Grade 8 English classrooms. Therefore, this study investigates the implementation of the Deep Learning approach in English classrooms at SMP Cinta Rakyat 3 Pematangsiantar. This study aims to describe (1) how the Deep Learning approach is implemented by English teachers in Grade 8 classrooms and (2) how students respond to the implementation of the Deep Learning approach.

METHOD

This study used a descriptive qualitative research design. This design was chosen because the study aimed to describe the implementation of the Deep Learning approach in a natural classroom setting and to understand students' responses to the learning process. The research was conducted at SMP Cinta Rakyat 3 Pematangsiantar, North Sumatra, Indonesia. The participants were two English teachers and 158 Grade 8 students. The students came from five classes: VIII A with 33 students, VIII B with 33 students, VIII C with 31 students, VIII D with 31 students, and VIII E with 30 students.

The data were collected through non-participant classroom observations and questionnaires. Four classroom observations were conducted with two English teachers. The observations focused on teaching activities, teacher-student interaction, student participation, and the implementation of three Deep Learning principles: Mindful Learning, Meaningful Learning, and Joyful Learning. The questionnaire was given to 158 students after the classroom observations. It consisted of 15 positive statements, with five statements for each principle. The Mindful Learning statements focused on students' understanding of learning goals, thinking, reflection, and expressing ideas. The Meaningful Learning statements focused on daily life, real examples, real situations, learning purposes, and students' experiences. The Joyful Learning statements focused on classroom enjoyment, fun activities, motivation, positive teacher feedback, and student participation. The questionnaire used a four-point Likert scale: Strongly Agree (SA), Agree (A), Disagree (D), and Strongly Disagree (SD).

The observation data were analyzed using thematic analysis. The researcher read and understood the data, identified important information, made codes, grouped similar information, and developed themes. The three main themes were Mindful Learning, Meaningful Learning, and Joyful Learning. The questionnaire data were analyzed using descriptive analysis by calculating the frequency and percentage of students' responses. The observation and questionnaire data were then compared to support the credibility of the findings through methodological triangulation.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The findings of this study show that Deep Learning was implemented in Grade 8 English classrooms through three main principles: Mindful Learning, Meaningful Learning, and Joyful Learning. The findings were obtained from classroom observations and questionnaires. The observations showed how the teachers applied the three principles during the opening, main, and closing activities. Meanwhile, the questionnaire results showed how students responded to the implementation of Deep Learning.

Implementation of Deep Learning in English Classroom

The first finding shows that Mindful Learning was implemented by both English teachers. The teachers helped students understand what they were learning, why they were learning it, and how they could use the knowledge. During the opening activities, the teachers greeted the students, checked attendance, prepared them for learning, and explained the learning objectives. For example, Teacher 1 taught Asking and Giving Opinion in Class VIII A on 12 May 2026 and explained the learning objectives before starting the main activity. This helped students understand what they needed to learn.

During the main activities, the teachers asked questions that encouraged students to think and express their ideas. When students had difficulties, the teachers did not immediately give the answers. Instead, they gave additional questions and guidance so that students could find the answers by themselves. At the end of the lesson, the teachers also asked students to reflect on their learning by summarizing what they had learned, identifying their difficulties, and explaining how they could use English in daily communication. These activities show that students were encouraged to be aware of their learning process.

The questionnaire results supported the observation findings. From 790 responses to the five Mindful Learning statements, 437 responses (55.32%) were Strongly Agree, 339 responses (42.91%) were Agree, and 14 responses (1.77%) were Disagree. No students chose Strongly Disagree. Therefore, the total positive response was 98.23%. These results show that most students understood the learning objectives, had time to think before answering, reflected on their learning, and felt confident expressing their ideas. This finding is in line with Andayanie et al., (2025) who explain that Deep Learning supports reflective and student-centered learning. It also supports Napitupulu & Manalu, (2022), who emphasize the importance of suitable English learning strategies in supporting students' learning experiences.

The second finding shows that Meaningful Learning was implemented by connecting English materials with students' previous knowledge, daily experiences, and real-life communication. For example, when teaching Asking and Giving Opinion, Teacher 1 asked students about situations when they usually ask for their friends' opinions. Students discussed group assignments, making decisions, and communicating with classmates. This helped students connect the English lesson with situations they had experienced.

Teacher 2 also asked students to share personal experiences when learning about recount texts. Students talked about memorable events, such as family vacations, birthday celebrations, school competitions, and religious holidays. The teachers also used discussions, pair work, storytelling, reflection, and contextual tasks. Students were not only asked to memorize English expressions but were also encouraged to use them in real communication.

The questionnaire results showed positive responses toward Meaningful Learning. Most students chose Agree and Strongly Agree for the five statements. They felt that the English lessons were related to their daily lives, the teachers gave real examples, the tasks were related to real situations, and the teachers asked about their experiences. The total positive response toward Meaningful Learning was

95.95%. This finding is in line with Azzahra & Jaya, (2025), who explain that Meaningful Learning connects classroom learning with students' real-life situations. It is also in line with Siahaan, B. L., & Siahaan, (2023), whose study on Project-Based Learning and digital technology showed the importance of active learning and the teacher's role as a facilitator in developing students' speaking competence.

This finding is also supported by Manalu, (2026), whose systematic review found that deep learning in higher education is associated with student engagement, meaningful inquiry, higher-order thinking, active learning strategies, and the transfer of knowledge to authentic contexts. The review also reported that deep learning involves learning processes in which students interpret, evaluate, apply, and reflect on what they learn. This finding supports the present study because the English teachers connected classroom materials with students' previous knowledge, daily experiences, and real-life communication. The students were not only asked to memorize English expressions but were also encouraged to use their knowledge in situations related to their own experiences.

This finding shows that students can understand the purpose of learning English more easily when they see how English is used in real situations. In this study, students not only learned English expressions but also practiced using them in communication. Therefore, Meaningful Learning helped students connect classroom learning with their own experiences and daily lives.

The third finding shows that Joyful Learning was implemented through positive classroom interaction, enjoyable activities, collaboration, songs, discussions, presentations, and positive feedback. For example, Teacher 2 used the song *Rukun Bersama Teman* during the lesson. Students actively sang the song and then discussed friendship, cooperation, respect, and helping others. This activity created a lively classroom atmosphere and connected the lesson with students' social experiences.

The teachers also gave positive feedback when students participated. When students made mistakes, the teachers did not directly criticize them. Instead, they appreciated students' efforts and guided them to better answers. This helped students feel more comfortable and confident when speaking English. Students also worked in pairs and groups, exchanged ideas, helped their classmates, and completed learning tasks together. These activities created a supportive classroom environment.

The questionnaire results showed that 98.10% of students responded positively to Joyful Learning. Students reported that the class was fun, the teachers used enjoyable activities, the teachers encouraged them to learn, and they were active during the lesson. This finding is supported by Siahaan and Sianturi, whose study on Quantum Teaching used storytelling and word games as learning activities. These activities show that English learning can use enjoyable and interactive methods to support student participation. The finding is also in line with Andayanie et al., (2025) who explain that Joyful Learning is an important part of Deep Learning because it can support student participation and create a positive learning experience.

Student' Responses toward Deep Learning

The questionnaire results demonstrate that students had highly positive responses toward the implementation of Deep Learning in English classrooms. The results are presented below.

Deep Learning Principle	Positive Response
Mindful Learning	98.23%
Meaningful Learning	95.95%
Joyful Learning	98.10%

The highest positive response was found in Mindful Learning (98.23%), followed by Joyful Learning (98.10%) and Meaningful Learning (95.95%). These results show that most students experienced English learning as active, meaningful, and enjoyable. They understood the learning objectives, were encouraged to think and reflect, connected the lessons with their daily lives, and participated in enjoyable classroom activities.

The findings are similar to Ricita et al., (2025), who found positive perceptions of Deep Learning among teachers and students in English Language Teaching classrooms. Their study focused on the use of Mindful, Meaningful, and Joyful Learning in English teaching. The results also support Napitupulu & Manalu, (2022), who emphasize the importance of learning strategies in students' English learning experiences. In addition, the findings are in line with Siahaan et al., (2021), who highlight the importance of social competence, creativity, and motivation in learning.

Overall, the observation and questionnaire results showed similar findings. The observations showed that the teachers implemented Mindful, Meaningful, and Joyful Learning, while the questionnaires showed that students experienced these principles during English lessons. Therefore, Deep Learning in this study was not only a theory but was also seen in classroom activities. It was reflected through clear learning objectives, questions, reflection, real-life activities, group work, pair work, positive feedback, and enjoyable activities. These findings indicate that the implementation of Deep Learning created an English learning process that encouraged students to think, connect learning with their experiences, participate actively, and enjoy the learning process.

CONCLUSIONS

Based on the findings, the Deep Learning approach was successfully implemented in Grade 8 English classrooms at SMP Cinta Rakyat 3 Pematangsiantar through three main principles: Mindful Learning, Meaningful Learning, and Joyful Learning. Mindful Learning was implemented by explaining learning objectives, asking questions, giving students time to think, encouraging them to express their ideas, and doing reflection activities. Meaningful Learning was implemented by connecting English materials with students' previous knowledge, personal experiences, daily lives, and real communication. Joyful Learning was implemented through fun classroom activities, songs, discussions, group work, presentations, and positive feedback from the teachers.

The students also showed very positive responses toward the implementation of Deep Learning, with positive responses of 98.23% for Mindful Learning, 95.95% for Meaningful Learning, and 98.10% for Joyful Learning. These results show that students experienced English learning as meaningful, useful, enjoyable, and motivating. The observation and questionnaire results also showed that Deep Learning created an active and student-centered English learning environment. It encouraged students

to participate, think, communicate, work together, reflect on their learning, and connect English with their daily lives. Therefore, the implementation of Deep Learning through Mindful Learning, Meaningful Learning, and Joyful Learning can support a more active, meaningful, and enjoyable English learning experience for Grade 8 students.

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