

The Impact of Warm-up Activities for a More Classroom Engagement

What Effects they Reflect on the Educational Environment?

Ahmed Ismail Qutb Mohammed¹, Abuzar Abdualaziz Ali² and Sultan Al Sawafi³

University of Technology and Applied Sciences – Sultanate of Oman -Ibri

Abstract

Students do best when they are engaged consciously in the learning process and class environment. This engagement refers to the ultimate desire and willingness of all class-members to participate in the material discussed; regularly attend classes and work on and submit their tasks on time. Warm -up activities are as important as teaching. In order to get a good idea about the importance and necessity of warm-up activities in classrooms, the researchers have distributed a questionnaire to (20) male and female lecturers of English at the Preparatory Studies Center (PSC)- University of Technology and Applied Sciences – Sultanate of Oman - Ibri. The findings were amazing: almost all responses show that warm-up activities before starting classes are of much benefit. Recommendations, discussion, and description will be discussed deeply throughout this paper.

Keywords: activity, approach, classroom, launch, motivation, quiz, reflection, warm-up

(Received: 23 June 2025; Revised: 14 July 2025; Accepted: 21 August 2025; Published: 30 September 2025)

Introduction

The purpose of this paper is to fathom the effectiveness and usefulness of performing warm-up activities in the classroom before starting discussing the topic at hand, and what possible approaches to follow. Some teachers, and maybe researchers, would like to determine ahead the sort of warm-up activities to follow. Others recommend activating students' background knowledge-schemata- while others focus on previewing, reviewing, and using pictorials, etc. All of that leads to "Motivation" that students need in order to well engage in class discussion. This paper highlights the importance of warm-up activities and the effect they reflect on creating a healthy and innovational educational environment.

Statement of the Problem

At higher education institutions, students and teachers should be fully aware of the exact meaning of warm-up activities that assist faculty members and students, and keep all on the right track to get good results while explaining the topic at hand.

Objectives of the Study

This study pursues the following:

1. Identifying the exact meaning of *warm-up* activities at academic institutions.
2. Examining the criterion to follow for understanding and applying the utterance *warm-up*.

Literature Review

... warm-up activities — typically defined as those completed at the start of class in preparation for learning — signal the need to put aside distracting thoughts. In contrast, classes that immediately delved into lectures or content frequently prompted stifled yawns and bored expressions from students. (Mani Vijay, 2023, Para.2).

Warm-up activities represent the starters needed to draw students' attention to keep them focused, especially in the first classes. These warm-up activities are looked at as a sort of "hook" that captures students' attention and free them of laziness and boredom. All students are attracted into the material with maximum interest. "Every lesson begins with a hook. A hook (also known as a walk in or do now) is an opening activity or prompt that draws students into the lesson. A successful hook pulls students into the lesson with interest and inquiry." (Ferlazzo, 2018, Para.18). Not only do teachers take the burden of creating warm-up activities, but students, as well. Upon the request and recommendation of the teacher, students may browse the Internet and find related materials to use in the classroom as starters. "Allow students to recommend additional learning activities they find online that address the content so that they are also contributing to the activity list." (Ferlazzo, 2018, Para.14). These activities have so many advantages and positive remarks that help students participate well by motivating their intellectual work from the first moment they step into class.

It is used to motivate students to be interested and participate in the lesson of the day and focus students on intellectual work from the moment they enter the class. These two goals can be generalized to be an indicator of effective classroom management policy. (Loftus, 2007, Para.2).

Sometimes the warm-up activity seems unachievable; students might not be in the mood of participating, as they spend considerable time socializing with their colleagues which results in lack of motivation, in addition to personal, or social issues.

The current problem with warm-ups is that not all students participate in it. This may happen because they come in the room and begin socializing, are not motivated by the warm-up, or do not see the purpose of it. If any of these factors are in place, students will not have the desire to do the warm-up. (Loftus,2007, Para.4).

Nobody underestimates the importance of warm-up activities—they represent a crucial part of the daily lesson. However, not all techniques prove useful in conducting these activities, which means it is the teacher who can shift from a certain method to another. The smart and old-handed teacher always has alternatives.

Though warm-ups are generally considered a part of good educational practice, there are a variety of approaches to them. Most teachers share ideas about what works best in their individual classrooms, but it is still unknown which technique is the most effective overall. Rather than using warm-ups simply as a procedure for keeping students quiet, they should be utilized as a tool to begin a successful lesson. If certain examples are superior to others in achieving this goal, they should be used more frequently. (Loftus,2007, Para. 16).

Technology has a major role in warm-up activities and motivating students before starting the lesson. The teacher may give students a certain activity of multiple-choice form and ask students to do that and the results appear on the big screen in class. One cannot imagine how happy students seem when seeing their correct answers shown.

In this digital age, interactive polling tools like Kahoot! or Mentimeter can be your best pals. Create a fun and engaging multiple-choice quiz or a word cloud activity. Display the results in real-time for that instant feedback loop, and watch your students' faces light up as they see their answers on the big screen. It's like having a live studio audience! (Education World, (n.d), Para.4).

Another possible warm-up activity takes the shape of giving a new word daily. The teacher gives students a word of his/her choice, explains it, pronounces it, and gives the meaning of it. This shows which ones can use it during the whole day, the next day there will be another new word.

Expand your students' vocabulary one word at a time with a "Word of the Day" warm-up. Choose a new word daily, complete with its meaning, usage, and an example sentence. You can even compete to see who can use the word correctly throughout the day. It's like planting a tiny vocabulary seed and watching it grow. (Education World, (n.d), Para.5).

Pictionary! The game of creativity and communication skills. Though it is an old-fashioned game, but it is very much useful. It enhances challenge among students and shows how fast and skillful students are.

Who doesn't love a good game of Pictionary? You can use this classic game as a warm-up activity to enhance creativity and communication skills. Divide your class into teams, pick a word or phrase, and let the drawing frenzy begin. Not only is it fun, but it's also a fantastic way to practice teamwork and quick thinking. (Education World, (n.d), Para.7).

When the warm-up activity is carefully chosen, students easily and confidently get the ultimate benefit of it, whereas badly chosen ones get students stuck and frustrated. “The correct warm-up exercises can help your students feel more at ease and confident, as well as make your session seem more enjoyable, whether you're teaching children or adults, a huge class, or just one student”. (Blonska,2023, Para. 6).

Regarding ESL warm-up activities, it is wise to create the proper and suitable ones that suit their level so as to let them behave freely; they can speak, discuss matters, and express themselves in a good way. “ESL warm-up activities may not seem as critical as other aspects of your course, but they are essential for giving your students a sense of security when they are in your class and speaking English”. Blonska,2023, Para. 5).

In the academic institutions, everything is chosen according to a high caliber criterion. In this way, warm-up activities are not randomly chosen. They convey a message for students to be cautious and attentive, and start the lesson in a good mood.

Warm-ups might seem trivial, but they are the game-changer that flips a boring school day into something more exciting. They give us a respite from the stress and offer a breather to reflect, enjoy and connect during a packed schedule. They help us shift into the thinking, reasoning and learning frame of mind that is required for subject mastery and success in school. (Mani Vijay, 2023, Para.7).

However, teachers may get some benefit from their students while doing their warm-up activities. Here is a teacher who admits that he does not feel shy, or even embarrassed about sharing students' work. It is a reciprocal way.

Since my first day of teaching, I have always had my students at work at a warm-up task when they enter the room. The tasks have evolved over the years, and they are now at a point where I am not too embarrassed about sharing them! Here's how my system works. (Deehan,2016, Para.2).

Teachers should be aware that the warm-up activities are not considered part of the lesson plan they prepare daily, and the teacher is free to conduct this activity any time during the school-day which makes students accustomed to doing it.

For teachers, please keep in mind that these warm-ups are not intended to be a part of a bigger lesson plan. I would do one of every morning, and sometimes after lunch, as a way

to engage my students early and get them thinking in English right away. (Reeleder, 2016, Para2).

One more warm-up activity is giving students any topic of their teacher's choice. Students are asked to write as many words as possible related to that topic. It is similar to the "Brain Storming" stage in writing. Upon finishing, students exchange what they had written and see the words that are very much related to the topic. This activity motivates students and elicits more vocabulary. "The teacher gives the students any topic. Students then have 2 minutes to write down as many words as they can associated with that topic. Students exchange lists and can challenge whether the words are valid or not". (Reeleder, 2016, Para12).

Warm-up activities do help students perform well during the class and become more engaged and motivated for learning. It is time to explore their strength points in solving problems they might encounter.

Research shows that effective warm up activities can help students to perform better during the class and support student engagement and motivation for learning. They can also provide a chance for students to be creative and problem-solve right at the start of class. (Candelario,2024, Para 1).

Some ESL students get bored, or lack the desire to continue learning. The skillful teacher can see whether his students are no longer paying attention. He can shift into any activity of his own and make students get back to the track.

ESL warm-up activities and icebreakers can also be used in the middle of the lesson if your students need a break. If you notice that students are no longer paying attention, are bored or tired, or just need a respite from difficult content, pull out a warm-up activity in the middle of class to get things back on track! (Kawazaki, 2021, Para. 5).

Utilizing videos in conducting warm-up activities is also possible, provided that they are taken from recommended websites and prove useful to students. "We begin many of our Lessons of the Day with short videos — some from the article itself, some from related pieces in The Times and some from a reliable outside source, like National Geographic or the BBC." (The Learning Network, 2021, Para. 14). Moreover, warm-up activities can provide students with the vocabulary related to certain topic, wither during the class time, or for the future.

Undoubtedly, a warm- up lesson will set the tone for what is to take place during the class. This is a great idea for many reasons. Students will have some idea of what to expect, and the topic can easily be introduced to them. For example, if one were teaching a business class about imports and exports, one could have a warm-up exercise where the students can test their own knowledge of related vocabulary. It will allow them to start off in a single

train of thought in order to keep them on track for the remainder of the class. (BUSYTEACHER_ADMIN, (n.d), Para.3).

Methodology

This study employs a quantitative research design using a survey method to gather data on warm-up activities at academic institutions. The use of surveys is appropriate for collecting standardized, comparable data across a sample of participants, allowing for statistical analysis of their responses.

Participants

The participants -20 male and female lecturers- teach at the Preparatory Studies Center / University of Technology and Applied Sciences-Ibri in the Sultanate of Oman. They come from different countries-Ukraine, Russia, America, South Africa, Iran, Pakistan, India, the Sudan, Egypt, etc.). They are all experienced and have taught at different universities and colleges around the globe.

Sampling Strategy

Due to logistical constraints, the sample size was limited to (20) participants. A convenience sampling method was employed, as the lecturers were readily available to the researchers at the time of the study. However, the small sample size limits the generalizability of the results and is considered a limitation of the study.

Research Instrument

Data was collected using a questionnaire created by the researchers that had (15) questions. The survey asks (**Yes/No**), (**Agree/Disagree**), and (**Multiple Choice**) questions to gauge respondents' opinions on the subject of warming-up activities, which included empathy, fairness, and communication skills. A pilot study with five lecturers was used to validate the device in order to ensure clarity and reliability, and any necessary changes to the wording were made in response to their input.

Data Collection Procedure

Surveys were distributed to participants during their free time at the Preparatory Studies Center. Before participation, they were given a detailed explanation about the purpose of the study, informed of their right to apologize anytime, and assured of their anonymity. Participants provided written consent, and surveys were completed within (10) minutes during a scheduled session.

Ethical Considerations

This study followed ethical research guidelines. All subjects gave their informed consent, and they were promised that their answers would be kept private.

Data Analysis and Discussion

Table1

I. Do you agree that "warm-up activities" are necessary to start the lesson with?	Yes	No
	20	0
	100%	0%

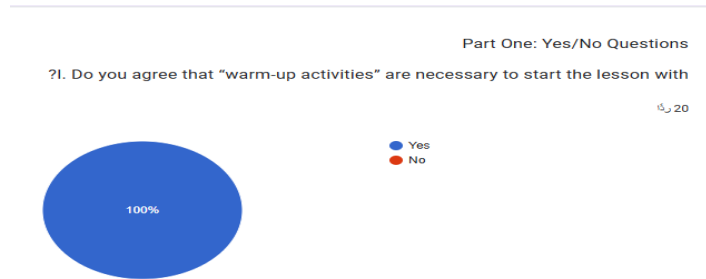


Table 1 shows that all participants (100%) agree that warm-up activities are necessary to start the lesson with

Table2

4. Warm-up activities create students' interest and attracts their attention towards learning for the whole day.	Yes	No
	19	1
	95%	5%

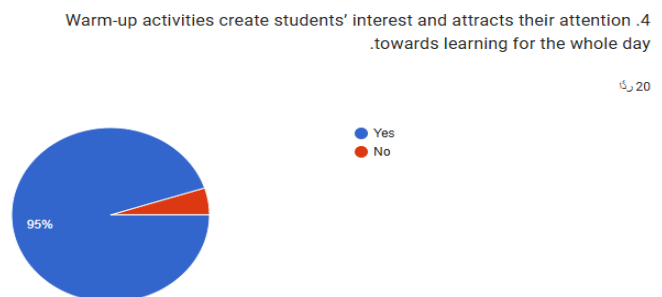
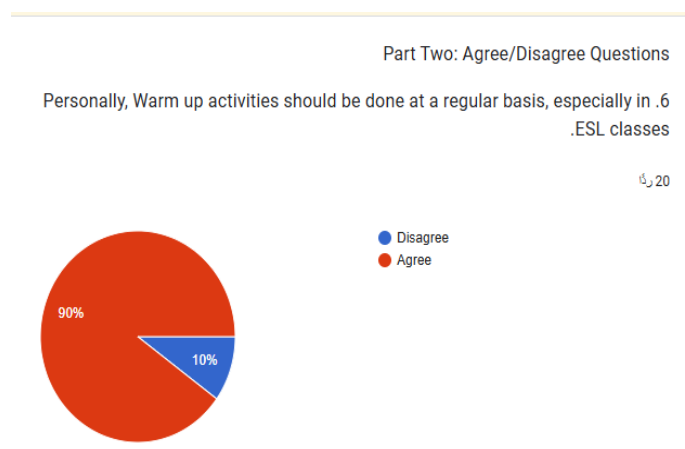


Table 2 shows that the largest group of participants (95%) agree that warm-up activities create students' interest and attracts their attention towards learning for the whole day.

Table3

6. Personally, warm up activities should be done at a regular basis, especially in ESL classes.	Agree	Disagree
	18	2
	90%	10%



The findings indicate that the participants, about (90%) believe that warm- up activities should be done at a regular basis, especially in ESL classes.

Table4

10. Teachers should take some training on warm-up activities.	Agree	Disagree
	20	0
	100%	0%



Table 4 shows that all participants (100%) agree that Teachers should take some training on warm-up activities.

13. As a teacher, do you know how to overcome the problems you face while conducting the warm-up activities to make the environment more enjoyable?	Not interested	Yes	No
	1	17	2
	5%	85%	10%

Table5

As a teacher, do you know how to overcome the problems you face while .13
?conducting the warm-up activities to make the environment more enjoyable

٤,20

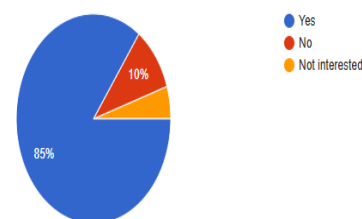


Table 5 shows that of the participants (85%) agree that the teacher knows how to overcome the problems he faces while conducting the warm-up activities to make the environment more enjoyable.

Conclusion

Throughout this study, the teacher recognizes the importance of the warm-up activities for students. These activities are normally performed at the beginning of the lesson so as to make students as focused and active as possible, with no boredom whatsoever.

When using questions as warm-up activities, they should be very much related to the content at hand- interesting, motivating, and to the point. From our experience, as teachers and experts in the field of education, we have reached a point that simple and easy questions are not so important as the challenging ones. The teacher should also be aware of the different levels of students in class--weak, moderate, or strong. Another worthy point while performing warm-up activities is related to the type of answers or responses given by students. It is wise to ask questions that have more than one possible answer, as this develops the sense of creativity among students.

In order to fathom the use of warm-up activities, teachers may follow some techniques to see the results beyond conducting these activities, such as surveys and questionnaires. Moreover, caring teachers may also consider some ways for rewarding students, such as giving extra points, or some gifts.

To sum, teachers should not overlook the importance of conducting warm-up activities and should know the effectiveness of them to have a perfect time with better classroom management to enhance students learning.

Recommendations

1. Teachers are recommended to always conduct warm-up activities, as they encourage students to be in a good mood and active for the whole class.
2. Teachers may ask students to conduct warm-up activities from their own as a sort of training to see how important and essential warm-up activities are.
3. Utilizing technology such as videos in conducting warm-up activities is also possible, provided that they are taken from recommended websites and prove useful.
4. If the warm-up activity seems unachievable, the teacher may change it, or find some sort of motivation that can refresh students' mood.
5. Teachers should be aware that the warm-up activities are NOT part of the lesson plan.

Acknowledgement

The researchers would like to express their utmost gratitude to all participants whose involvement was essential for the accomplishment of this study.

References

- Blonska, S. (2023). Warm Up Activities & Games for ESL Lessons. From: <https://allright.com/>
- BUSYTEACHER_ADMIN. (n.d.). Why you should always start with a warmer. From: <https://busyteacher.org/>
- Candelario, M. (2024). 8 Engaging ESL warm up activities for online classes. From: <https://preply.com/en/>
- Deehan, J. (2016). An Easy Warm Up Routine to Set the Tone for Class. From: <https://www.edutopia.org/>
- Education World. (n.d.). 10 Ideas for Quick and Engaging Warm-Up Activities. From: <https://www.educationworld.com/>
- Ferlazzo, L. (2018). A Warm-Up 'Mindset' Helps Students & Teachers. From: <https://www.edweek.org/>
- Kawazaki, J. (2021). 10 ESL warm-up activities for English classes at every age. From:

<https://bridge.edu/tef>

Loftus, K. (2007). Action Research on Effective “Warm-Up” Activities. From:

<https://www.sas.upenn.edu/>

Mani Vijay, V. (2023). Class warm-ups are a crucial part of learning process. From:

<https://hhsepitaph.com/>

Reeleder, J. (2016). Getting more eyes on your company story. From: <https://www.linkedin.com/>

The Learning Network. (2021). 18 Warm-Up Activities to Engage Students Before They Read Nonfiction

Texts. From: <https://www.nytimes.com/>

About the authors

Ahmed Qutb is a senior lecturer at the Preparatory Studies Center -PSC-, University of Technology and Applied Sciences-Ibri- The Sultanate of Oman. He holds a PhD in English Linguistics from the University of Port Said in Egypt. He has an MA in Applied Linguistics and Translation from the University of Mansoura. In addition, he holds a CELTA certificate from Cambridge. He has been teaching English for more than 15 years. His main areas of interest are educational assessment, teaching applied linguistics, composition and rhetoric, and translation.

Abuzar Abdulaziz Ali is an English lecturer currently serving as a part-time faculty member in the Preparatory Studies Centre at the University of Technology and Applied Sciences, Ibri College, Sultanate of Oman. He holds a Ph.D. in Translation from Sudan University of Science and Technology, as well as a CELTA certification from Cambridge. With over 11 years of experience in the fields of translation and teaching English as a second language across Sudan and Oman, Abuzar specializes in English language instruction and translation studies. His academic interests center on foreign language acquisition, educational methodologies, and translation practices. Ahmed Ismail Qutb Mohammed is a senior lecturer at the Preparatory Studies Center, University of Technology

Sultan Al Sawafi is an English Lecturer at the Preparatory Studies Centre, University of Technology and Applied Sciences (UTAS), Ibri, Oman. He is currently serving as the Head of the English Language Curriculum and Assessment Unit. He holds a Bachelor's degree in Education majoring in English Language from Sultan Qaboos University and a Master's degree in Education in TESOL from the University of Southern Queensland, Australia. With over nine years of teaching experience in Omani schools and more than eleven years at the university level, he has developed extensive expertise in English language teaching, curriculum design, and assessment. His academic and professional interests include foreign language acquisition, teaching methodologies and approaches, and the integration of AI in education.

Questionnaire

This questionnaire consists of three parts; **(Yes/ No)**, **(Agree/ Disagree)**, and **(Multiple-Choice)** questions, and is mainly geared to teachers. The questionnaire is about **warm-up** activities.

Part One Yes / No Questions.

I. Do you agree that “warm-up activities” are necessary to start the lesson with?

(Yes)

(No)

2. Are you very much familiar with ice- breaking / warm-up activities in class?

(Yes)

(No)

3. Warm-up activities help students get rid of shyness while doing activities.

(Yes)

(No)

4. Warm-up activities create students’ interest and attracts their attention towards learning for the whole day.

(Yes)

(No)

5. Warm-up activities help build intimate and friendly relationships with other classmates on one hand, and the teacher, on the other hand.

(Yes)

(No)

Part Two Agree/ Disagree Questions.

6. Personally, warm up activities should be done at a regular basis, especially in ESL classes.

(Agree)

(Disagree)

7. Do you think your students feel relaxed and comfortable to participate in warm- up activities in English language classes?

(Agree)

(Disagree)

8. From my point of view, practicing warm -up activities in class is useless and considered as waste of time.

(Agree)

(Disagree)

9. Warm-up activities do not suit all levels.

(Agree)

(Disagree)

10. Teachers should take some training on warm-up activities.

(Agree)

(Disagree)

Part Three: Multiple –Choice Questions

11. Do you -sometimes- face any difficulties / problems in conducting Warm- up activities?

A. No

B. Yes

C. Sometimes

12. What kind of difficulties and (problems) do you normally face?

A. lack of students' participation

B. Some students are not serious

C. Students are still lazy and -to some extent- sleepy, especially in the first class- starting at 8:00 a.m.

13. As a teacher, do you know how to overcome the problems you face while conducting the warm-up activities to make the environment more enjoyable?

A. Yes

B. No

C. Not interested

14. Do you sometimes consult with your colleagues for more knowledge and advice about conducting Warm-up activities?

A. Yes

B. No

C. I used to do that

15. Do you sometimes utilize modern technology in conducting Warm-up activities, such as short you- tubes followed by questions?

A. Yes

B. No

C. always