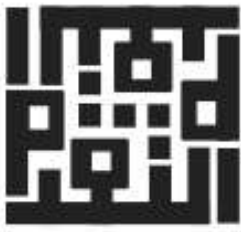


Direct Method in Small Group ELT Sessions: Investigating Students' Perceptions of Comprehension and Engagement

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ABSTRACT

Direct Method is a teaching strategy that emphasizes the full use of the target language. Its application can encourage students' active engagement and in-depth understanding of the target language. However, its application in large groups has several limitations, such as limited time for individual feedback and low student participation. Therefore, the use of the Direct Method in small group sessions can improve students' comprehension and engagement in English learning. This study explored students' perceptions of the Direct Method in ELT small group sessions, focusing on comprehension and engagement. Using a qualitative approach, data were collected through semi-structured interviews with five English Language Education students who had experienced the application of the Direct Method in small group sessions. The results showed that the Direct Method significantly improved students' comprehension, especially in vocabulary, listening, and speaking skills, by familiarizing them with English and providing opportunities for them to express their ideas. Furthermore, the small group sessions allowed for more focused interaction between teachers and students, resulting in more detailed feedback and increased student confidence. The study also highlighted the importance of teachers as a key role in fostering student engagement through interaction, motivation, and feedback, as well as the importance of incorporating relevant and interesting learning topics to increase participation. Despite challenges related to students' varying levels of English proficiency, these findings confirm the effectiveness of the Direct Method in small group sessions in promoting active learning and improving comprehension.

Introduction

English serves as a lingua franca, connecting individuals from diverse cultures (Kirkpatrick, 2014). Its widespread use has strengthened its position as the

most frequently used language in the world. English has emerged as an important language in education and has gained widespread influence. It is shown that the importance of mastering English is crucial for Indonesian students in order to

compete in the era of globalization (Jon et al., 2021). However, English learning still practically faces various challenges, such as low student engagement, a lack of confidence in speaking, and less communicative learning methods (Pancerselvam & Mohamad, 2019). Therefore, teaching methods are needed in developing students' linguistic abilities, while also fostering students' active engagement and a deep understanding of the target language, one of which is the Direct Method.

The Direct Method is a teaching approach that emphasizes the exclusive use of the target language in the teaching process (Richards & Rodgers, 2007). The direct method originates from the idea that meaning is to be immediately linked with the target language, without requiring translation into the students' mother tongue (Larsen, 1986). This method, in practice, emphasizes oral communication, spontaneous responses, interactive learning, and the association of meaning with language without the use of translation in questions and responses (Haliwanda, 2019).

In Indonesia, the application of the Direct Method has brought both benefits and challenges to ELT. Some previous studies show that the direct method has proven effective for building students' confidence in their English proficiency level (Abas & Zainurrahman, 2022; Marpaung et al., 2024; Yuliani, 2020). Since English is taught as a foreign language, students have limited exposure to using authentic English outside of the classroom. Despite these issues, this method has been found to enhance comprehension and interactive participation by students.

However, in practical implementation in large courses, the main difficulties may be the obstacles of limited time for giving personal feedback and the low participation of students (Lee, 2023). Furthermore, the typical Indonesian classroom setting includes large groups of students (Erlina et al., 2022), which decreases the interactive direct method and limits individualized attention. These challenges raise the question of how the method can be adapted to meet the needs of the Indonesian educational context.

However, the Direct Method's effectiveness relies greatly on a facilitating learning environment, one of which is small group ELT sessions. There is a tendency that an intimate and interactive learning environment allows students to participate more actively (Borkowska, 2023), receive direct feedback from the instructor (Cahyani et al., 2024), and feel more comfortable expressing themselves in the target language (Warrick, 2024). The present study will examine students' perception of the use of the Direct Method during the learning process within small-group ELT sessions, which have been deliberately chosen for their pedagogical advantages.

Small groups can create an opportunity to engage students in the process of constructing knowledge actively (Wu, 2008). In contrast to big groups, in small groups, there is a greater possibility for meaningful teacher-student and peer-to-peer interaction (Kraatz et al., 2020). Teachers can provide individualized feedback and adjust their instruction to address specific learning challenges faced by the students. Also, this intimate setting encourages active participation and

reduces anxiety associated with speaking in a big group, fostering a more favorable setting for language acquisition (Indah, 2018). Small group sessions point out such benefits of personalized attention and increased interaction in enhancing the learning of students (Wong, 2018). Hence, the direct method implemented in small group contexts has the potential to promote students' comprehension and engagement in learning the language.

Nevertheless, in spite of that, most prior research relating to the direct method has focused on larger general classroom settings, which means that a lack remains in fully understanding its impact within small-group contexts, particularly within the Indonesian ELT framework. It is assumed that small-group contexts have the potential to develop students' comprehension and engagement by introducing Direct Method principles such as direct interaction, spontaneous correction, and full use of the target language. This study addresses the gap in exploring students' perceptions of the potential of the Direct Method in promoting comprehension and engagement in small-group ELT sessions. Thus, by combining the principles of the Direct Method with the benefits of small-group learning, this research seeks to contribute to the broader discussion on effective teaching strategies in Indonesia and beyond, following these research questions:

1. How do students perceive the use of the direct method on ' English comprehension in small-group ELT sessions?
2. How do students perceive the influence of the direct method on

their engagement and participation in small-group ELT sessions?

Literature Review

Direct Method in ELT

The Direct Method is a language learning approach that emphasizes the full use of the target language in all classroom interactions without translation (Richards & Rodgers, 2007; Larsen-Freeman, 1986). This approach is based on the belief that language can be acquired effectively through direct exposure, spontaneous responses, and associations of meaning formed naturally through context. In practice, the Direct Method places a primary focus on speaking and listening, followed by principles of teacher modeling, direct correction, concrete demonstrations, and the use of questions to encourage spontaneous language production (Haliwanda, 2019). Several studies in Indonesia and other EFL contexts have noted that the Direct Method can significantly improve fluency, vocabulary acquisition, and oral comprehension (Yuliani, 2020; Abas & Zainurrahman, 2022).

In the Indonesian context, this approach provides students with greater opportunities for communication practice than traditional grammar-translation-based methods. This method has been shown to produce promising results, especially in speaking and listening skills at beginner and intermediate levels (Dakhalan & Tanucan, 2024). However, its implementation is not without challenges. Studies by Al Hazmi & Lengkanawati (2020) and Lee (2023) suggest that implementing the Direct Method in large classes can potentially reduce its

effectiveness due to the lack of opportunities for personal feedback, varying ability levels, and students' anxiety in spontaneous language production. Therefore, small-group learning contexts may seem more appropriate for optimally implementing the principles of the Direct Method.

The Direct Method is firmly grounded in a naturalistic view of language acquisition, which assumes that learners will develop language competence intuitively if they are exposed to rich and meaningful input. By eliminating translation and explicit explanations of grammar, this approach encourages learners to associate sounds, forms, and meanings directly. This approach also aligns with Krashen's input hypothesis, which emphasizes the importance of exposure to comprehensive input, and interactionist perspectives, which place the negotiation of meaning as key to language acquisition.

In Direct Method sessions, students actively interpret messages, ask questions, seek clarification, and receive correction directly in order to support the development of both receptive and productive skills (Wardhani et al., 2024). It positions the teacher as an active language model facilitating direct interaction. Techniques such as teacher questioning, recasting, and elicitation provide opportunities for students to produce language repeatedly in a variety of contexts. However, several critical studies have highlighted the limitations and risks of this method. Low-proficiency students often feel overwhelmed when entire sessions are conducted in the target language, especially when they lack a sufficient basic vocabulary to understand the instructions

(Alghamdi & Siddiqui, 2016). When the level of difficulty is too high, this approach can lead to anxiety, loss of motivation, or failure to achieve in-depth understanding.

In modern learning contexts, classroom dynamics, activity organization, and student relationships all have a significant impact on the success of the Direct Method. Overly large classrooms or varied environments frequently present significant issues because not all students have the opportunity to participate or receive timely feedback. This is in line with the findings of Lee (2023), who discovered that the larger the class, the wider the difference in speaking opportunities among students. Thus, the effectiveness of Direct Method is strongly dependent on the affordability of face-to-face communication and fast response.

The literature shows that while the Direct Method has great potential for improving oral skills and comprehension, its success is highly contextual. Its application requires conditions that support intensive interaction and the acquisition of meaning through context. Small group settings are one of the most ideal conditions for realizing these principles, making research examining the effectiveness of the Direct Method in small group contexts relevant and significant for the development of ELT nowadays.

Small Group Sessions

Small-group learning is a pedagogical strategy that emphasizes collaboration, negotiation of meaning, active participation, and intensive interaction between students and teachers (Wu, 2008; Kraatz et al., 2020). In small groups, students receive significantly more

opportunities to speak than in large classes, allowing them to process input more deeply, test language hypotheses, and receive immediate feedback (Crisianita & Mandasari, 2022). This increased frequency and quality of interaction facilitate language acquisition through the mechanisms of comprehensible input and pushed output, two essential elements of second language learning. Furthermore, the small-group atmosphere generally reduces performative pressure, thereby alleviating speaking anxiety, a common obstacle for EFL learners (Indah, 2018).

The structural advantages of small groups lie not only in increased practice opportunities but also in the interpersonal closeness and pedagogical flexibility they foster. Teachers can monitor each student's progress more closely, identify difficulties more accurately, and adjust learning strategies in real time (Wong, 2018). This more personalized approach improves the quality of feedback and allows for more effective learning interventions, especially for students who need additional support. In the Indonesian context, where language learning often takes place in large classes with an uneven distribution of speaking opportunities, small groups provide an alternative space that is more conducive to the development of communicative skills.

When combined with the Direct Method, the characteristics of small-group learning become even more relevant. Because the Direct Method relies on direct interaction, consistent use of the target language, and spontaneous verbal responses, small groups offer optimal conditions for effectively implementing these principles (Borkowska, 2023). The more intimate

environment allows students to take linguistic risks without excessive fear, receive direct correction more naturally, and practice communicating at a more intensive pace. Therefore, small groups are not only the context in which they are implemented, but also a key supporting factor that strengthens the Direct Method's potential success in improving students' language skills.

Students' Engagement and Comprehension

Engagement refers to the extent to which students are cognitively, affectively, and behaviorally involved in learning (da Silva et al., 2024). In the context of ELT, engagement is a key determinant of successful language acquisition because active involvement in discussions, interactions, and problem-solving accelerates language internalization (Zhang, 2020). Research shows that engagement increases when teachers provide a supportive environment, provide constructive feedback, and avoid judgments that hinder students' courage (Warrick, 2024). Learning topics relevant to students' lives has also been shown to increase participation and help them develop language skills more naturally.

On the other hand, comprehension is achieved through meaningful input processing, understanding context, and opportunities to connect language to real-life experiences (VanPatten & Cadierno, 1993). In language learning, comprehension develops when students receive authentic input, consistent exposure, and opportunities to produce language spontaneously (Benson, 2011). Direct Method, such as direct dialogue, visual context stimulation, question-

answer exchanges, and direct correction, have been empirically proven to strengthen comprehension, especially in listening, vocabulary, and speaking skills (Yuldoshova & Khudoyorova, 2021). Thus, the relationship between engagement and comprehension is reciprocal, mutually reinforcing, and both are supported by the practice of the Direct Method in small groups.

Research Method

This study employs a qualitative research design, exploring in depth a program, event, activity, or process involving one or more individuals (Creswell, 2009). This study only focuses on small group sessions, which are beneficial for engaging and motivating students in order to enhance their comprehension in ELT. This study was conducted in the English Language Education study program at a public university in Indonesia, since there is a tendency for the direct method to be used in the learning process. Using semi-structured interviews to collect the data, the researcher wants to seek the students' perception of their learning comprehension and engagement when the teacher implements the direct method. Purposive sampling was used as the sample selection method in this study, involving five students who had experienced the implementation of the direct method in small group sessions at the university level and were willing to participate in this study. The participants' identities were coded in order to maintain anonymity, and any personal information was kept private. The demographic data of the participants can be seen below.

Table 1.
Participants' Demographic Information

Aspects	Participants				
	S1	S2	S3	S4	S5
Gender	Female	Male	Female	Female	Male
Age	23	23	23	23	24
Number of students	8-10	8	8-10	3-5	5

The interview questions were developed referring to the literature review of the Direct Method (Richards & Rodgers, 2014) and were adjusted to look for the students' perception of comprehension and engagement in small group ELT sessions. The guidelines had been piloted on the students to ensure that students understand the questions. Subsequently, the data obtained from the interview were described and analyzed qualitatively using the thematic analysis technique (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Besides interviews, documentation was used to support the results of the interview analysis. The researcher paid more attention to the results and conclusions of the studies related to the implementation of the direct method since our objective was to know the impact of the direct method on students' perceptions of comprehension and engagement in small-group ELT sessions.

Result and Discussion

Result

Direct Method is one of the approaches in language teaching that emphasizes learning the target language directly, without using the mother tongue as a medium of instruction. This approach is really helpful for students in order to get used to the

language itself. However, the participants also agree that the use of the direct method is not only interesting and exciting but also challenging. It happens because of the influence of the student's ability when the direct method is implemented.

"It's 50% interesting but sometimes I feel scared because I have to respond it with English because I'm not really fluent in English and sometimes it's hard for me to express my idea directly. And also I'm not used to talk English daily." **(Response from S3)**

"It depends on the students' ability in English. I feel not interested because the teacher resists me to understand because they talked with full English which I don't understand." **(Response from S5)**

The reasons why the students sometimes feel uninterested in the use of full English in classroom learning are because of the students' lack of English proficiency skills, and likewise, English is not the students' first language, and is barely used in their daily communication.

This study aims to explore students' perceptions of the implementation of the Direct Method in small group ELT sessions. The findings were analyzed using Braun & Clarke's (2006) thematic analysis approach and presented based on themes and subthemes formed from interview data.

1. Students' Improvement in English Comprehension

The first theme is answering the first research question. The result revealed that the students feel an improvement in their English comprehension in small-group sessions, especially vocabulary mastery, listening, and speaking, through habitual

exposure and giving the students a chance to express their thoughts.

a. Develop Fluency through Habit

Most students stated that direct use of English in class helped improve their fluency by giving the students a habitual exposure to English so that they can improve their English proficiency well.

"It is the most effective, when it becomes a habit, it comprehends us in terms of vocabulary mastery." **(Response from S4)**

"It is effective in speaking and listening but it is less effective in grammar and writing skill." **(Response from S5)**

b. Increase Confidence in Expression Ideas

Since it is in the small-group context, the use of the direct method is also beneficial in enhancing students' comprehension by giving the students a chance to express their ideas or opinions. Moreover, the students also feel more intense and more details with the teacher's explanation. This is shown by the students' feeling confident when answering the teacher's question in English.

"It gives us a chance to express our ideas and the tutor can easily correct our mistakes." **(Response from S2)**

"I really like the small group because it makes me feel less tension and not really scared at that time because if I did mistakes I feel more confident rather than a large group. And the interaction with my teacher was really good. I can talk a lot in a small group session. That's

really effective because it is more intense and more detail.” **(Response from S3)**

The use of direct methods in small group learning sessions has proven to be effective in improving students' English comprehension, especially in vocabulary, listening, and speaking skills. The habit of using English regularly helps students understand English skills better. In addition, this method provides opportunities for students to express their ideas and opinions, thereby increasing their confidence when answering questions in English. More intensive interaction with the teacher also allows for more detailed explanations, which have a positive impact on the students' learning process.

2. Development in Students' Engagement

The next theme answers the second research question. The result revealed that the students are engaged in the direct method implementation in small-group sessions through teacher's interaction by giving them feedback and motivation, and brought up an interesting topic to discuss during the learning process.

a. Teacher's Feedback and Motivation

Student engagement increases when teachers are supportive, provide constructive feedback, and create a safe space to speak without fear of judgment. It is shown from the interview that the students feel close to the teacher in terms of interaction in small-group sessions. Based on the students' explanation, the teacher also plays a role in the learning process by bringing out interaction,

giving feedback, justification, motivation, and appreciation to the students.

“It makes us feel closer to each other because when I make a mistake, the lecturer doesn't directly judge my English. Instead of judging, he tends to correct my mistakes while answering my questions. Compared to the larger group, as an introvert student, it makes me feel safe to express my idea and to interact with the lecturer in English.”

(Response from S1)

“When the teacher asked about our opinion and experience because there was no justification and judgment so I can express myself freely in English. Not all students have high proficiency in English, but giving appreciation is really helpful to motivate students in expressing using English.” **(Response from S4)**

“First time I feel motivated because in small group there are students that have specific purpose. It also increases my motivation because the teacher focus in each student in small group. The students in small group need attention in learning by guiding and facilitating. I can practice my English directly in small group with experts in English by expressing your idea. Teacher's appearance is also the factor that engages me.” **(Response from S5)**

b. Relevance and Interest in Discussions

Moreover, the students are also engaged if the teacher brings up interesting topics to be discussed in classroom in order to sharpen their communication skill in English. It is shown that relevant and engaging learning topics have been shown to

increase students' desire to speak and sharpen their communication skills.

“If the teacher talks about something that related to us, for example politics. It gave us new knowledge using new language.” **(Response from S2)**

“The interesting topic and I can engage because I want to talk in English and show I can speak English and sharpen more my communication skill in English. I can ask a lot of questions directly to my teacher.” **(Response from S3)**

The implementation of direct methods in small group sessions can increase student engagement in learning. This can be seen from the closer interaction between students and teachers. Teachers play an important role in the learning process by creating interactions, providing feedback, justification, motivation, and appreciation to students. In addition, students are also more involved if the learning topics discussed are interesting and relevant, which ultimately helps sharpen their communication skills in English.

Discussion

The results of this study show that incorporating the Direct Method into small group ELT sessions significantly improves both students' comprehension and engagement, providing a more comprehensive understanding of how instructional methods and classroom structures interact to influence language learning processes. These findings not only confirm theoretical expectations for the Direct Method but also provide empirical insight into how its effectiveness is amplified or constrained by classroom context, particularly in the Indonesian EFL setting, where large classes and limited

communicative practice remain common challenges.

Students regularly reported significant improvements in comprehension, particularly word retention, listening accuracy, and oral fluency. These results are consistent with the Direct Method concepts, which emphasize target-language immersion, inductive learning, frequent exposure, and the continuing use of English as the major medium of communication (da Silva et al., 2024). The immersion allows learners to comprehend form and meaning simultaneously, allowing for deeper absorption of linguistic structures (Richards and Rodgers, 2007). The students' descriptions in this study accurately reflect this internalization process, since several stated that they were accustomed to comprehending English without first mentally translating it. The Direct Method goal is to move from translation-dependent processing to direct comprehension, which is widely correlated with greater fluency and listening skills.

Additionally, this study demonstrates that the small group environment is critical in allowing these comprehension gains to occur. In large classrooms, the Direct Method is sometimes criticized for overburdening students who are unable to keep up with quick exchanges or the constant usage of a foreign language (Al Hazmi & Lengkanawati, 2020). Furthermore, teachers in large classes frequently struggle to provide individualized scaffolding and precise remedial comments (Xu & Harfitt, 2019). In contrast, the small group setting in this study allowed the instructor to more carefully monitor learners' understanding, modify the pace of instruction in real time,

and provide quick, individualized correction, all of which students described as critical to their comprehension. This study supports Kraatz et al.'s (2020) theory that small groups enable cognitive interactions, in which the teacher's presence is more responsive, and instruction becomes adaptively adapted to learners' cognitive needs.

Along with comprehension, this study shows that using the Direct Method in small groups significantly boosted learners' engagement. Students often stated that their increased participation was the result of feeling protected, driven, and encouraged to express themselves without fear of being judged negatively. This sense of emotional safety is commonly mentioned in the engagement literature, which states that supportive interpersonal dynamics dramatically increase students' desire to interact (Fredricks et al., 2004; Wong, 2018). The students' perceptions show how emotional involvement can lead to increased participation and long-term cognitive investment.

Furthermore, the study demonstrates that the interpersonal nature of small group learning improves the quality of interaction, which in turn increases engagement. When students gather in small groups, the distribution of conversation time is more balanced, and each student feels a greater sense of duty to contribute. Unlike in large classes, where passive participation is prevalent, small groups highlight stillness and encourage active participation. Students in this study reported that they were unable to "hide" in small groups, which encouraged them to think, reply, and interact more actively. This is consistent with Long's (2015)

interaction theory, which states that negotiating meaning during learner-learner and learner-teacher exchanges is critical for developing understanding and communicative skill. The small group structure efficiently implements this theory by ensuring that each participant is consistently engaged in meaningful communicative bargaining.

Despite these benefits, the study identifies challenges which require careful pedagogical evaluation. Several participants reported feeling overwhelmed by the extensive usage of English, especially when encountering new words or fast-paced discussions. These observations represent a typical critique of the Direct Method which might place high cognitive demands on students, particularly those with lower competence levels. While small groups help to alleviate some of the difficulty by allowing teachers to slow down or clarify as needed, the method still needs tremendous mental processing ability from students. This implies that the Direct Method cannot be implemented strictly or consistently. Instead, teachers must be responsive to their students' readiness, shifting their pace, modifying their questioning strategies, and providing scaffolding as needed (Tomlinson, 2003). Gestures, paraphrase, simpler input, and brief metalinguistic clarification may be necessary to avoid cognitive overload.

Furthermore, the study emphasizes the impact of teachers' behavior and feedback style on learners' perspectives. The students repeatedly stated that they felt comfortable since the teachers corrected mistakes in a friendly manner. This research emphasizes that the Direct

Method does not call for harsh or punitive correction; rather, the tone of correction has a substantial impact on learners' psychological comfort and openness to learning. This result is consistent with Warrick's (2024) research on feedback and readiness to communicate, which discovered that students' willingness to talk rises when feedback is constructive and presented in a non-threatening manner. Thus, the effectiveness of the Direct Method may be determined as much by teachers' affect and interpersonal style as by methodological principles themselves.

These findings suggest that the efficiency of Direct method instruction is determined by the interaction of technique, context, and teacher practice. The method's strengths, including immersion, interaction, and fast feedback, are best when combined with small, supportive, and engaging learning environments. However, the possible difficulties, such as cognitive overload and anxiety, must be addressed by adaptable, student-centered instructional techniques. These findings provide a more complete understanding of how classical language teaching approaches might be modified for current EFL situations, particularly in Indonesia, where high classroom sizes and exam-oriented learning sometimes limit communicative chances.

Finally, this study contributes to the greater ELT discourse by demonstrating that instructional methods cannot be evaluated in isolation from their implementation context. The Direct Method, which is sometimes criticized as unworkable, becomes beneficial when used under the correct conditions. Small group learning creates these settings. The findings imply

that future ELT instructional design should take into account not only which methods to utilize, but also how classroom format and teacher assistance might influence learners' engagement, comprehension, and emotional experience. Using this comprehensive understanding, educators may develop more effective, responsive, and human-centered language learning environments.

Conclusion

In sum, this research has demonstrated that the Direct Method in small-group ELT sessions enhances students' comprehension and participation. The frequency of using more English within a class contributes to significant development in speaking, listening, and vocabulary skills. Small groups offer students space to outline ideas and opinions, receive more comprehensive feedback, and build closer interactions with the teacher. A supportive, interactive learning environment makes students more comfortable and motivated, especially via encouragement, correction, and motivation from the teacher. However, the findings also revealed that the effectiveness of the Direct Method is hugely influenced by challenges that arise in the field. The Indonesian context for implementing the Direct Method is highly hindered by large sizes of classes that restrict a teacher from giving individual attention, monitoring language acquisition intensively, as well as using consistent English. Therefore, the outcomes of this study confirm that small classes are a more promising context for the implementation of the Direct Method compared to large classes and can be an effective way to improve students' comprehension and

participation in learning English.

Recommendation

Based on the study's findings, various recommendations may be made for future practice and research to improve the Direct Method's use in small group ELT settings. First, teachers and institutions should think about including structured small group sessions as a regular aspect of language training, especially in programs where large class numbers limit opportunities for meaningful engagement. Small groups have been found to produce settings that improve both comprehension and engagement; thus, they should not be considered as extra activities, but as pedagogically strategic spaces that allow communicative strategies to work more successfully. Teachers who use the Direct Method are urged to take a flexible approach that blends immersion with attention to students' language readiness. While the method emphasizes the use of the target language, teachers should be aware of signs of cognitive overload among lower-proficiency learners and incorporate brief scaffolding strategies, such as simplified input, paraphrasing, visual cues, or slowed pacing, to ensure accessibility without sacrificing communicative intensity.

Second, teacher education programs should include clear training on how to encourage small group learning, control interactional flow, deliver supportive corrective feedback, and monitor peer dynamics. The findings of this study reveal that learners' comfort and willingness to participate were highly influenced by the teacher's interpersonal style. As a result,

training that stresses feedback literacy, affective sensitivity, and interactional competence is critical for optimizing the Direct Method's advantages. Institutions may also create guidelines or modules to help teachers design small group projects that adhere to the principles of immersion, meaning negotiation, and spontaneous language production.

Finally, future research should look into how the Direct Method and small group training integrate across different competence levels, age groups, and instructional modes, such as blended or totally online settings. Longitudinal research is also needed to see whether the gains in comprehension and engagement shown in short-term interventions are sustained over time. Given the growing importance of technology in language instruction, researchers could look at how digital tools, such as AI-assisted feedback, virtual breakout rooms, or multimodal input, can support or extend Direct Method practices outside the classroom. Through these channels, researchers and educators can gain a better understanding of how immersive and interaction-driven techniques can be tailored to the changing demands of modern ELT.

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