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Literature and Foreign Languages Division

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The English Section

(Major) TEFL. Didactics 3rd Year

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CLASSROOM MANAGEMENT

Objectives : *By the end of this tutorial, you will be able to :*

1. *Identify classroom management ;*
2. *Be aware of its overriding importance in teaching ;*
3. *Know the different classroom management techniques ;*
4. *Plan its effective use in the classroom ;*
5. *Discuss its utility to promote learners' achievement and motivation.*

Terminology Used in This Tutorial :

Management, interaction, techniques, discipline, grouping, action and reaction pair and group work, disruptive behaviour ,classroom dynamics

Introduction

In addition to lesson planning and the different pedagogical aids used by the teachers (dealt with in the previous lectures), classroom management also involves classroom interaction, group dynamics, various work-forms and setting up activities such as organizations and giving instructions, discipline problems.

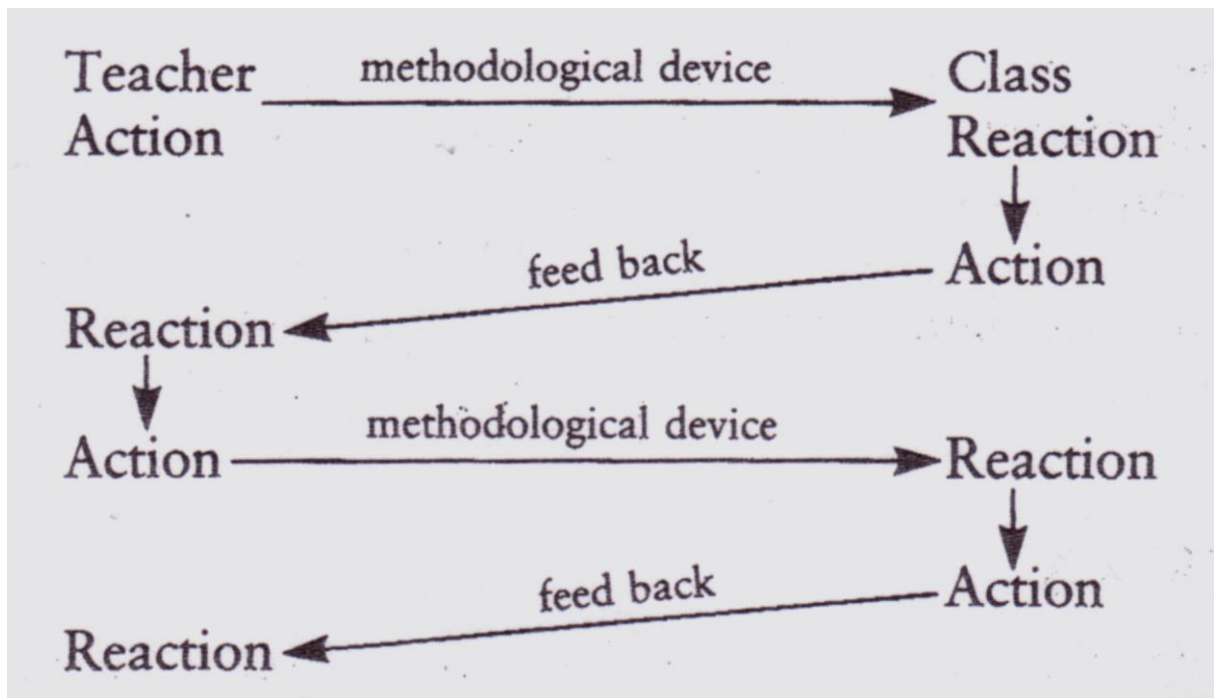
1. Classroom interaction

Action and reaction are not interaction. The teacher follows his plan of action and acts according to plan, he gets students to repeat, makes them do exercises, organises them for a game-type activity. The class react to the teacher's actions in different ways. They repeat some things well, some things badly, they give some answers correctly, and make mistakes with others; they follow the teacher's instructions with some activities, and fail to do with others. They demonstrate no apparent reaction. The teacher, however, fails to respond to these reactions. He does not probe the silence to see if it indicates understanding or confusion. He does not pick up the mistakes to see how he can correct them. He does not notice the confusion when he leaves the students to work in pairs. Interaction is more than action followed by reaction. Interaction means acting reciprocally, acting upon each other. The teacher acts upon the class, but the class reaction modifies his next action and so on. The class reaction becomes in itself an action, evoking a reaction in the teacher, which influences his subsequent action. There is a constant pattern of mutual influence and adjustment. Interaction is a two way process. It can be a positive state or a negative one. Every interaction situation has the potential for cooperation or conflict. Interaction has different subtypes such as:

- Teacher – Student interaction
- Student – Teacher interaction
- Student – Student interaction
- Course book – Student interaction

- Course book – Teacher interaction

A special type of interaction is pedagogic interaction, the interaction of teaching and learning. This is a continuous, ever changing process and the factors of context shift from minute to minute. The teacher acts upon the learners to cause a reaction. This reaction informs some action performed by the learners: a response to a question, an item in a drill, a word pronounced or spelt, a sentence written. The teacher studies this action and perceives in it the reaction to her original action. She in turn reacts and builds this into the subsequent action on the class and so on. This is illustrated in the figure below:



In: A. Malamah-Thomas: Classroom Interaction (1991: 39)

The teacher should constantly monitor the students reactions and take account of these reactions at every stage of the lesson. The learning even parallels the speech event. Pedagogic interaction parallels verbal interaction. Teaching acts can parallel speech acts. Every utterance in a speech event consists of two factors: propositional content and communicative purpose. The propositional content refers to these aspects of the real world that the speaker wishes to make reference to. The communicative purpose refers to the speaker's intention in making the utterance, the effect s/he wishes to create in the hearer.

An utterance consists of

1. propositional content :reference to real

communicative purpose: world reference to speaker's intentions

In: A. Malamah-Thomas: Classroom Interaction (1991: 86)

In a question: What are you laughing at? – the content is laughter and the cause of his laughter. The purpose is to get the person to stop laughing. Content of a methodological activity is the syllabus item or teaching point, the aspect of real language the teacher wishes to make reference to. Purpose refers to the teacher's intention in employing the activity, the effect s/he wishes to create in the learner.

An activity consist of content r(eference to reference toreal language) and purpose.(teacher's objectives) In: A. Malamah-Thomas: Classroom Interaction (1991: 87)

Student – Student interaction can be developed in group context, that is the reason why we have to put an emphasis on classroom dynamics to be treated in the following part.

2. Classroom dynamics

A research in social psychology confirms what teachers know instinctively: a cohesive group works efficiently and productively (Argyle: 1972). A positive group atmosphere can have a beneficial effect on the morale, motivation, and self image of its members, and thus significantly affect their learning by developing in them a positive attitude to the language being learnt to the learning process and to themselves as learners. Successful groups can be, as T. Douglas puts it “an instrument of behavioural or attitudinal change, an instrument of support and maintenance, a pool of resources, and an instrument to facilitate learning.”(Douglas: 1983)

An unsuccessful group can be described as follows:

- the individuals in the class do not cohere into a group,
- there is an uncomfortable, tense or negative atmosphere,
- some members of the group will not participate in group activities and some other members will tend to dominate group activities at the expense of shyer members,
- group members are not interested in each other and they are not self-reliant but dependent on the teacher,
- members of the group lack responsibility: they are reluctant to make an effort or to take the initiative.

A successful group will be one where:

- the group is cohesive and the members have a definite sense of themselves as a group,
- there is a positive and supportive atmosphere: members have a positive selfimage which is reinforced by the group,
- group members are interested in each other and feel they have something in common,
- the group is self-reliant and has a sense of responsibility; it is able to overcome problems and difficulties without the teacher,
- the members of the group trust each other,
- group members are open-minded, flexible, receptive to new ideas, they empathize with each other.

In both models three stages of group life can be distinguished: forming, maintaining and disbanding. Certain common goals and activities set by the teacher can help the students to form a group. Naturally a group consists of different persons with different ways of thinking. All of them will have various concepts and ideas about a task to perform. That is the stage of storming during which conflicts may arise among students. Tuckman called this phase storming stage. The period in the life of a group when conflicts are settled and handled properly is the norming stage of the group. Performing stage will give satisfaction to the group members, as they can perform something for which they have been preparing for a long time. After the peak time of group life all the members get exhausted so the group will disband. The memories and the conclusions of group activities will remain in the students for a long time. What should teachers do to form group cohesion and what are the stages of group formation? Teachers must give a lot of role play activities, project work, competitions and further tasks requiring common efforts from the students. Learners must feel the responsibility for achieving the common goals and they have to select the right persons for the various jobs in the group. A task like this will develop their emphatic attitude.

3. Classroom arrangement – various work-forms in classes

The teacher can group students in the classroom in as many ways as s/he wants to. Teaching a class as a whole group, getting students to work on their own, or having them perform tasks in pairs or groups all have their own advantage and disadvantages.

3.1. Whole class grouping (Frontal/Lockstep)

This work-form is used at the presentation stage of the lesson when students need the same input. It reinforces a sense of belonging among the group members, something which eachers need to foster (Williams and Burden1997:79).

Advantages of whole class grouping:

- it is suitable for activities where the teacher is acting as a controller,
- an ideal way of showing pictures, texts or audio/video tape,
- it is cost efficient as well,
- it is the preferred class style where students and teachers feel secure when the whole class is working in lockstep and under the direct authority of the teacher.

Disadvantages of whole class grouping:

- individual students do not have much of a chance to say something on their own,
- a lot of students are inhibited to participate in front of the whole class since they do not want to take the risk of public failure,
- this work-form does not encourage students to take responsibility for their own learning, it is the teacher who is responsible here for the learning process,- frontal activities are not suitable for communicative language teaching specifically for task-based sequences, communication between individuals is more difficult in a group of twenty or thirty than it is in groups of four or five.

3.2. Individualised learning

Individualised learning is a vital step in the development of learner autonomy. Students do exercises on their own in class teachers are able to spend time working with individual students. If we wish students to work on their own inclass, we can allow them to read privately and then answer questions individually, students can write compositions, essays on their own as well etc.

Advantages of individualized learning:

- it allows teachers to respond to individual student differences in terms of pace of learning, learning styles, and preferences,
- this work-form is less stressful for students then performing in a whole class setting,

- it will develop learner's autonomy and will promote skills of self-reliance. Disadvantages of the work-form:

- this work-form does not encourage cooperation between students and it does not develop a sense of belonging,
- it demands more time from the tutor than interacting with the whole class.

3.3. Pairwork

In pairwork students can practice language together, they can take part in information-gap activities, they can write dialogues, they can work simultaneously with other pairs.

Advantages of pairwork:

- it increases student talking time one student gets in the class,
- it makes for teachers possible to work with one or two pairs while the other students go on working,
- this work-form is quick and easy to organize.

Disadvantages of pairwork:

- pairwork is very noisy, sometimes teachers lose control of their class,

- students often use their native language,
- not each mistake or error can be corrected in pairwork,
- students would rather relate to the teacher as individuals than interact with another learner who is just as weak linguistically as he is.

3.4. Groupwork

Students in groups can write a group story or they can role play a situation involving four or five students. Small groups of around four or five students provoke greater involvement and participation than larger groups.

Advantages of groupwork:

- like pairwork it dramatically increases the amount of talking for individual students,
- personal relationships are less problematic here, there is a greater chance of different opinions and varied contributions than in pairwork,
- there are plenty of chances to cooperate and negotiate with one another than in pairwork,
- it promotes learner's autonomy.

Disadvantages of groupwork:

- it can be noisy,
- some teachers can lose control over the class,
- sometimes groups are fossilised, some of the students are passive whereas others may dominate,
- it can take longer to organise groups than pairs.

4. Discipline problems

The phrase classroom discipline is hard to define in words. According to Ur, P. (1996)

4.1. Discipline means that:

- learning is taking place in a disciplined classroom. The relationship between discipline and learning is not direct at all. There might be well-disciplined classes where no learning is taking place and some learning might happen in undisciplined classes, but we can say in general that more learning is likely to take place in a disciplined classroom because:- more time will be spent on task than on organisation and dealing with disruptive behaviour,
- the teacher can monitor better what is going on and can help when needed to prevent problems in learning
- the teacher is in control – this does not mean that s/he dominates the class or is standing in front of the class telling everyone what to do. The teacher may hand over the initiative in a particular situation to the students and then s/he can take it back.
- teacher and students are cooperating smoothly – so that is the class can proceed smoothly, the students need to cooperate with the teacher and with each other as well.
- the lesson is proceeding according to the plan – a lesson which is going according to the plan is more likely to be disciplined, because the teacher knows where s/he is going, activities are well-prepared and organised, and the awareness that the process is clearly planned tends to boost teacher's confidence and students trust, which in their turn also contribute to discipline. On the other hand changes and improvisation do not necessarily lead to discipline and may even prevent it.
- teacher and students are aiming for the same objective – a shared knowledge of and agreement on lesson objectives is not, therefore, absolutely necessary for a disciplined classroom but it contributes to it, it will raise students' motivation and a likelihood of cooperation.

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4.2. Why discipline problems occur

There are many reasons for problem behaviour it can stem from students' reactions to their teacher's behaviour, from other factors inside the classroom, or from outside factors.

- **the family** – sometimes indiscipline can be traced back to a difficult home situation,
- education – students’ expectations of learning experience can be coloured either by unpleasant memories or by what they were once allowed to get away with,
- **self-esteem** – a lack of respect from teacher or peers can make students feel frustrated and upset, in such a situation disruptive behaviour is an attractive option,
- **boredom** – when the chosen topic or activity is inappropriate, students show their lack of interest by behaving badly,
- **external factors** – teachers notice significant behaviour changes in different weathers, sometimes a high wind tends to make their students go wild,
- **what the teacher does** – students who feel their self-esteem to have been damaged especially if we are unfair, it is more likely for the students to be badly behaved in the future,
- **time of the day** – the class is in the afternoon or early in the morning so students are tired, or sleepy, or hungry,
- **a desire to be noticed** – adolescents often need to be noticed or have a desire to be noticed in some way. Solution: teacher should challenge these students with activities that should not let them take over centre stage.

4.3. The teacher’s role in maintaining discipline

4.3.1. How to prevent disruptive behaviour

- **by careful planning of the lesson** – when a lesson is clearly planned and organised students’ attention will be kept on the task and the formation of a vacuum will not be allowed which may be filled by distracting activities; particularly for the classes that might cause trouble the teacher has to appear to be well-prepared and knowledgeable about the subject.- creating a code of conduct – have a clear code of conduct established through discussion – at the beginning of a course reach an agreement on eg.arriving on time or not bringing food to the classroom, doing homework etc. through examples – if you expect your students to be punctual, you should arrive on time too.
- **consistency** – do not ban students something one week and allow it the next week because it can lead to the loss of respect.
- **fairness** – teachers should always try to avoid having favourites or picking on particular individuals. Most teachers have students that they like or dislike more than others, but a major part of their job is not to show these preferences or prejudices in the classroom.
- **attitude** – do not have a negative attitude to learning, a teacher, who does not really care about his job who is insensitive to students’ reactions to what is happening in the classroom will lose the respect of the students and it is the first step to problems of disruptive behaviour.
- **interpersonal relationships** – if students respect you ad each other, they are more likely to cooperate. Fostering a feeling of respect and of good will is an important factor.
- **methodology** – do not give boring classes; students who are interested and enthusiastic do not generally exhibit problem behaviour. The greatest simple cause of indiscipline is boredom. You should vary your teaching techniques and you should time activities very carefully.
- **instructions** – problems sometimes arise due to students’ uncertainty about what they are supposed to be doing.
- **professionalism** – students respect teachers who show that they know what they are doing, it can be demonstrated not only by our knowledge of our subject but also by evidence that we have invested time in thinking about and planning our lessons; professionalism also means practising what we preach.

4.3.2. Dealing with the rising problems

- **be firm** – a relaxed and friendly atmosphere is desired but not at all cost,
- **immediate action** – students often try to find the limits how you can tolerate

misbehaviour, do not let things get out-of-hand, react to these problems immediately,
- **deal with it quietly** – immediate action does not mean making a scene, keeping a low profile of deviant activity is important,

- **do not take things personally** – try to relate to the problem not the student as the object to be attacked and dealt with, do not let students pull you into personal conflicts,

- **do not use threats** – teachers who threaten students with terrible punishments and then do not carry them out are doing both the class and themselves a disservice.

4.3.3. When the problem has exploded

- **do not raise your voice** – the display of anger should be short trying to establish control by raising your voice and shouting has disastrous consequences for it contributes to the general raising of the level of noise in the classroom,

- **reseating** – an effective way of controlling a student who is behaving badly is to make the student sit in a different place immediately, troublesome students should be separated,

- **change the activity** – if the majority of the class seem to be gradually getting out of control, a change of activity will often restore order,

- **talks after the class** – when one of the students is continually causing trouble the teacher should take that student to one side after the class is over and the student should be given a chance to say why s/he behaves in this way.

5. Classroom management techniques

Remember strategies are no substitute for good teaching. Good teaching is a preventative measure. It keeps students so involved and interested that they don't want to cause discipline problems. No technique works for everyone all the time. However, if you are using techniques that are successful with most students most of the time in most situations, then most students, are often 'on task' and you can use your energies for 'the exceptions'.

5.1. Techniques

a) Show respect for students - names, thank you, individual attention, listen.

b) Clearly define the boundaries of behaviour. - fences - cows - rules. procedures - be organised / over- prepared

c) Behaviour modification

- catching students being good

- have a partner teacher for support / withdrawal from class.

d) Professionalism

- don't hold a grudge / take it personally

- Be punctual - return tests. assignments promptly.

e) Class Techniques

- eye contact - secure attention.

- use 'we' not 'you' - standing up conveys

authority, - moving forward conveys authority - firm well modulated

voice conveys authority

f) Teacher's role - to be friendly but not friends

- legitimate power do not abuse

- give warnings but make sure you carry them out

g) Know your students: - recognise student diversity

- surprise them. 'How did you know that...'