

Interacting with Lower-Level Students and Overcome their Problems in Classes

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Abstract: Diversity-related issues influence how educators and students see the value of the classroom and what ought to take place there. This variety includes a range of demands, perspectives, learning styles, and socioeconomic origins. For instance, some kids could feel as though they don't "belong" in the classroom, which might cause them to participate less and become distracted by other things. Instructors might presume a uniform level of student achievement or make inaccurate assumptions about the ability of their pupils. This tendency led to the discussion of some typical issues that come up in the classroom in this paper, along with some recommendations for fixes.

Keywords: class, method, lower-level students, ability, outcome, teacher-centered, knowledge.

Introduction

One of the difficulties that may arise is that students with prior understanding of the subject tend to dominate the class. It is quite normal for people who know the most to say the most, giving little opportunity for others who are less knowledgeable to express their opinions. When addressing questions, these kids are bright and confident, and they are frequently the most involved in group discussions. The issue is that they tend to dominate every activity that takes place in the classroom.

Furthermore, some pupils dislike talking or participating in learning activities. As a teacher, you may observe that certain pupils dislike participating in classroom activities or other conversations. Some of the obvious reasons are that they are stupid, resistive, and unprepared. When kids are absent

Because of a lack of comprehension of a subject, clever people tend to speak less or say nothing. According to my observations, these pupils are terrified of being embarrassed if they provide incorrect information. So, to avoid problems or other unpleasantness, they opt to stay uninvolved and separated. Furthermore, some pupils are unprepared. They have nothing to offer with the class during class discussion.

Furthermore, some people are extremely resistant. Individual psychological concerns, according to Goodman (2007), are one of the reasons why pupils are reluctant. Students are typically less open to studying the oppression of others and how they contribute to it when they are focused on their own challenges, identities as members of oppressed groups, or safeguarding their notions of self. As a result, some pupils may respond unfavorably to the instructor, questioning the educator's integrity, ability, or neutrality, particularly if they belong to an oppressed minority. Many pupils are likewise afraid of change.

Main part

Beside the above challenges, you may also face difficulty in making decision of your instruction. In a heterogeneous class, which comprises students with different abilities, making decision on how to deliver information to cater to this diverse group of students is extremely difficult. These challenges are described by Kerry and Sands (n.d.), "...as dead time, boredom, lack of motivation, disruption, provision of special work, increased preparation time by the teacher, linguistic and cognitive levels of worksheets and texts, emotional and pastoral problems.

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First, dead time is the time when a student finishes one activity and starts another. Some students complete work quickly because tasks are often too easy for them. Other students can manage only a sentence or two, and then they feel they have exhausted the topic. Second, boredom results from students spending too much time waiting for the teacher to correct the work. Third, lack of motivation is another problem in which students who are often unoccupied and bored can easily lose interest. Fourth, disruption happens in the classroom when bright students continually seek new diversion while the less able simply be looking for something more relevant to do, and at the same time, the bored students are usually potential trouble makers. Fifth, provision of special work is another difficulty that the teacher must provide special work for students of different abilities. Sixth, increased preparation time is what the teacher needs to do in order to prepare lessons according to different special work. Seventh, linguistic and cognitive levels of worksheets and texts is another problem in a mixed-ability class in which the teacher tends to prepare lessons catering to only the average group. Part of special provision, the teacher also needs to cater for students who need to be stretched intellectually and to cope with others for whom the language of text or instructions may not be clear. Eighth, emotional and pastoral problems happen when sometimes bright students are rejected as “teachers’ pet”, and slower learners are labeled ‘thick’. Therefore, teachers need to bear relationship problems in mind when organizing classroom work and activities.

Another big problem that students of low abilities may find learning content uninterested, thus feeling demotivated in their learning. One possible cause is the implementation of a teacher-centered approach inside the classroom. Referring to ESL Glossary (n.d.), a teacher-centered classroom is where methods, activities, techniques, what is to be learned, what is to be tested, and how the class is to be run are all decided by teachers. Often the teachers are in the center of the classroom giving instruction with little input from students. The teachers decide the goals of the class based on some outside criteria (para. 1). As a matter of fact most teachers in the teacher-centered classroom have to use textbooks to teach students and need to cover all contents by the end of the term as set in the curriculum. As the result, students are demotivated since they have no chance to involve in choosing what content they are interested in learning. In this case, those who already have low abilities and difficulties in catching up with the lessons will continue to be worse. Bowers and Flinders (1990) describe the teacher-centered model using an analogy from industrial production in which students become “products,” and behaviors are expressions of “exit skills,” “competencies,” and “outcomes.” Implicit in this model of instruction are the following assumptions:

1. Any educational process is considered culturally neutral as well as linear and rationale
2. Language serves as a conduit for the transmission of information and
3. The teacher becomes the “manager” of the classroom with the learning process heavily depending upon the pronouncement and enforcement of rules.

Learning outcomes are usually clearer to students if they are written in the form. For example: "At the end of the course students will be expected to have..." or "At the end of the first year, students taking the Biology option will be expected to have:

- acquired a general knowledge of the principles and mechanisms underlying cell biology, animal physiology, genetics, ecology, animal behaviour, reproduction and development;
- acquired a basic knowledge of physics and chemistry sufficient to understand the physical and chemical bases of biological subjects taught in the course;
- acquired the ability to use mathematical and statistical techniques relevant to the biological subjects taught;
- carried out practical work related to the biological subjects above, and produced word-processed reports of that work;



- spent a minimum of 4 days on supervised field trips in the local area, becoming familiar with the ecology and climate of the area and with the procedures and equipment used for ecological investigation;
- spent a minimum of one week on placement in a local school, company or commercial laboratory shadowing personnel engaged in biological teaching or research and appreciated the day-to-day planning and time-management required for such activities;
- given one presentation in a seminar of peers, including the use of visual aids;
- acquired the skills to use library and internet resources independently".

In a classroom, students with low abilities tend not to participate in any discussion willingly and those of average tend to involve little since the discussion is usually dominated. The problem is that they have difficulty in catching up with the lessons; thus sometimes they have no ideas of what to share. ("University Center for Advancement of Teaching: Managing Discussion," 2009, para. 3). In this case you need to set clear expectations and structure the class in a way that encourages these students to be involved. It is also important to reinforce participation by using different strategies, such as combining voluntary participation with rotating calling on students. One way to approach non-participating students is to organize small group activities, in which these students are more likely to participate. Smaller groups may help put these students more at ease. Another strategy is to occasionally ask them opinion questions (e.g., "How do you feel about this?"). This may encourage participation by reducing students' fear of answering incorrectly. Yet another strategy is, as mentioned above, to have students write out their answers to a question before calling on them. Having the words written out may make it easier for a shy or fearful person to speak up. Since group discussions can be handled differently depending on the types of participation within the class (Georgii, 2009, para, 8-12). You may assign a group to pick their own student facilitator. Then you analyze how the group functions and then customize the group for future discussions. You may keep rotating students so that students are performing in different groups. After that, you assign the weakest participant in each group to be the facilitator of the group. This will give the poorest participant a chance to participate and perhaps astound the other class members with their knowledge. In addition, you may break up the students who always dominate classroom discussions and put one of these students into another group and put a weaker participant in the dominating group. Then you analyze how this group functions and pay close attention to whether the weaker participants receive a chance to speak.

Conclusion

Since the class consists of students of different abilities – in which those who are bright seem to lose interest in learning due to unchallenging learning content over the year, some are well prepared and always ask for learning material ahead of time, and some others have difficulty in catching up with the lessons – I believe that only student-centered approach is the most suitable learning approach and best suit this heterogeneous classroom. It is undeniable that in a student-centered learning environment, students are allowed to participate in choosing their favorite activities, which are built upon learning objectives, and contents from other sources outside the textbooks. Students of all abilities will be motivated and find classroom a more enjoyable learning setting. This result attributes to the inquiry-based learning approach (used in student-centered approach) which encourages collaborative learning in which students (regardless their abilities) learn to work in group in order to find a solution to the assigned problem and take roles in presenting their finding information. Thus learner-centered approach is the best choice to be implemented in English language classrooms for young learners.

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