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IMPLEMENTING GROUP WORK IN YOUR CLASS

It is important to realize that teachers need to know different approaches and techniques to make teaching more comfortable and the learning process easier.

The purpose is to investigate group techniques in teaching.

Pair work is more appropriate than group work for task that are short, linguistically simple and quite controlled in terms of the structure of the task. Appropriate pair activities (that are not recommended for the structure of more than two) include:

1.practicing dialogues with a partner

2.simple question-and-answer exercises

3.performing certain meaningful substitution"drills"

4.quick(one minute or less) brainstorming activities

5.checking written work with each other

4.preparation for merging with a larger group

7.any brief activity for which the logistics of assigning groups and getting students into the groups is too distracting.

Typical group tasks are:

1. Games. A game could be any activity that formalizes a technique into units that can be scored in some way. Guessing games are common language classroom activities. Twenty questions, for example, is easily adopted to a small group. For example, one member secretly decides that he or she is some famous person; the rest of the group has to find out who, within twenty yes/no questions, with each member of the group taking turns asking questions. The person who is "it" rotates around the group and points are scored.

2. Role-play and simulations. Role-play minimally involves giving a role to one or more members of a group and assigning an objective or purpose that participants must accomplish. In pairs, for example, student A is an employer; student B is a prospective employee; the objective is for A to interview B.

Simulations usually involve a more complex structure and often larger groups(of 6 to 20) where the entire group is working through an imaginary situation as a social unit, the object of which is to solve some specific problem.

3. Drama. Drama is a more formalized form of role-play or simulation, with a pre-planned story line and script. Sometimes small groups may prepare their own short dramatization of some event, writing the script and rehearsing the scene as a group[1, p.182–184].

Teaching drama to large groups places a number of demands on the teacher.

When teaching drama we can expect:

• a fairly high level of conversational noise

• different groupings, with students standing, moving, sitting, and using space to express themselves

• different groups working at different paces towards different goals [2].

4. Projects. For learners of all ages, but perhaps especially for younger learners who can greatly benefit from hands-on approaches to language, certain projects can be

rewarding indeed. If you were to adopt an environmental awareness theme in your class, for example, various small groups could each be doing different things: Group A creates an environmental bulletin board for the rest of the school; Group B develops fact sheets; Group C makes a three-dimensional display; Group D puts out a newsletter for the rest of the school; Group E develops a skit, and so on. As learners get absorbed in purposeful projects, both receptive and productive language is used meaningfully.

5. Interview. A popular activity for pair work, but also appropriate for group work, interviews are useful at all levels of proficiency. At the lower levels, interviews can be very structured, both in terms of the information that is sought and the grammatical difficulty and variety. The goal of an interview could at this level be limited to using requesting functions, learning vocabulary for expressing personal data, producing questions, etc.

6. Brainstorming. Brainstorming is a technique whose purpose is to initiate some sort of thinking process. It gets students' "creative juices" flowing without necessarily focusing on specific problems or decisions or values. Brainstorming is often put to excellent use in preparing students to read a text, to discuss a complex issue, or to write on a topic. Brainstorming involves students in a rapid-fire, free-association listing of concepts or ideas or facts or feelings relevant to some topic or context.

7. Information gap. Information-gap activities include a tremendous variety of techniques in which the objective is to convey or to request information. The two focal characteristics of information-gap techniques are their primary attention to information and not to language forms; the necessity of communicative interaction in order to reach the objective. The information that students must seek can range from very simple to complex.

At the beginning level, for example, each member of a small group could be given the objective of finding out from the others their birthday, address, etc., and filling in a little chart with the information. In intermediate classes you could ask groups to collectively pool information about different occupations: necessary qualifications, how long it takes to prepare for an occupation, how much the preparation costs, what typical conditions are, etc. In advanced classes, a small-group discussion on determining an author's message, among many other possibilities, would be an information-gap technique.

8. Jigsaw . Jigsaw techniques are a special form of information gap in which each member of a group is given some specific information and the goal is to pool all information to achieve some objective. Imagine four members of a group each with a [fictitious] application form, and on each form different information is provided. As students ask each other questions (without showing anyone their own application form), they eventually complete all the information on the form. Or you might provide maps to students in small groups, each student receiving different sets or information (where the blank is, where the park is, etc.). The goal for beginners might be simply to locate everything correctly, and for intermediate learners to give directions on how to get from one place on the map to another, requiring a collaborate exchange of information in order to provide complete directions.

9. Problem solving and decision making. Problem solving group techniques focus on the group's solution of a specified problem. They might or might not involve jigsaw characteristics, and the problem itself might be relatively simple (such as giving

directions on a map), moderately complex (such as working out an itinerary train, plane, and bus schedules), or quite complex (such as solving a mystery in a "crime story" or dealing with a political or moral dilemma). Problem solving techniques center students' attention on meaningful cognitive challenges and not so much on grammatical or phonological forms.

10. Opinion exchange. An opinion is usually a belief or feeling that might not be founded on empirical data or that others could plausibly take issue with. Opinions are difficult for students to deal with at the beginning levels of proficiency, but the intermediate level, certain techniques can effectively include the exchange of various opinions[1, p.184–186].

Conclusion: The task of a teacher is to maximize students' learning potential. As we have seen, group work is very efficient in teaching.

References:

1. Brown Duglas. Teaching by principles: an Interactive Approach to Language Pedagogy.– NY.– 2001. – 480p.

2. Teaching English through Drama. EDB Professional Development for teachers. British Council Hong Kong [Електронний ресурс]. – Режим доступу: www.edb.gov.hk/.../drama%202009-10.pdf