

TEACHER'S ROLE AS MEDIATOR AND FACILITATOR

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Abstract:

This paper deals with some of the problems arising among teacher and students who come from different social and cultural backgrounds. For this reason teaching at the University of Durres has been kind of a challenge to me. This paper aims at how I deal with difficult situations and try to be kind of a mediator for resolving previous situations caused by such differences and the role of facilitator to help them build the bridge between old and new information. This paper defines what the role of the teacher is in the classroom and ways she can improve interaction and how it is managed during the lecture. Subject to such issues are my University Students which gave me the possibility to include personal experiences. This article argues that differentiation of social groups and discrimination during class hours occurs when students are observed or tested individually. Differences between sexes become more apparent when people are in both sex groups.

Key words: *interaction, differentiation, role, social background*

Introduction:

Teaching requires the use of various approaches on both parts, on the teacher and the student's part. Each of these two parts plays a specific role in the classroom which contributes to the effectiveness of the class hour. None of these roles is as easy as it seems to be. One difficult part of the teacher's role is to teach to the students to think critically and not to take everything for granted, so they have to doubt for everything and start elaborating their own ideas. This seems so easy but this task is one of the most difficult to be fulfilled and put into motion. Students, in addition to being part of an institution where different rules are applied, are above all human beings and this is what counts the most.

Assessing points of critical thinking for upgrading thoughts

1 All reasoning is done from some point of view (yours or other's)

- a) Understand and make known your point of view.
- b) Look for other points of view and identify their pros and cons.
- c) Try hard to be objective in evaluating all points of view.
- d) Do not take for granted all that is said before

2 All reasoning is based on INFORMATION and EVIDENCE.

- a) Limit your pretensions to those supported by the data you have.
- b) Search for information that opposes your position as well as information that supports it.
- c) Make sure that all information used is clear, exact, and related to the question at issue.
- d) Make sure you have collected sufficient information.

Creating a classroom that is positive, is one of the most important characteristics of a classroom. Having a democratic classroom creates self-motivation for students to strive for success. A democratic classroom also helps reinforce management of the class and the teacher's expectations. Motivating students to be engaged in the classroom can and does eliminate management issues. As a beginner teacher, classroom management can be the hardest task faced during the year. Understanding when the integrity of the classroom is at risk and when to draw the line can be sometimes a difficult area to walk through. Students with disabilities should not be reprimanded for classroom management issues because of their disability. The teacher can assume different roles in several situations, the one of facilitator, moderator, guide, supporter etc.

The role of the teacher is fundamental in the classroom to deal and resolve possible conflicts in her "territory and dealing with discrimination. We, as teachers exist because they do firstly exist I think that one of the main principles of a good teaching is definitively social interaction. What is it exactly? *Social interaction* is a dynamic sequence of social action between individuals or groups, in other words they are events in which people attach meaning to a situation, interpret what others' meaning are and respond accordingly. *Motivation*- is one of the goals that a teacher tries to reach during the classes, and she uses an individual or group motivation or behavior to create a positive learning environment and social interaction.

But motivation alone is not enough; you have to put your intellectual abilities and your heart in everything you do. And believe me this is the hardest thing to accomplish. If you do not love what you do there is no reason why you keep doing that job. Apart from motivation there are other things which you as a teacher should use as a strategy to have a successful hour. There are a number of teaching techniques that motivate and empower students to be responsible for their own learning. One of this is the interaction between teacher and student which needs to be professional and positive. It is not that difficult to determine the role of the teacher in the classroom but it's much more difficult to accomplish it properly. The role of the teacher will be to give directions and help lead the

students towards their own discoveries and serve also as an internal drive. “Nevertheless, we are not able to provide a magical formula for motivating all students in a classroom as many factors affect a given student’s motivation to work and learn.”³ (Bligh 1971)

Even though theoretically speaking everything seems easy to conduct, the reality is quite another thing. I never know what will happen in my next hour, because I am always surprised at the variety of events happening and opinions expressed in the classroom. But in fond of all I think this is the greatness of teaching, the surprise, astonishment, the unexpected. I try to be their link or connection to relate the old information to the new one, a process called scaffolding. Most of the cases I am preoccupied with the fact if I have motivated them enough or not, if I have given all of them the possibility to speak during my classes, or I have given this chance to some of them maybe who did not deserve that? I have lots of questions during the lecture, and I do not always find it easy to answer, or give a solution to situations in the classroom which seem hopeless. Sometimes I feel it is too much responsibility and stress for one single person. There are cases when you as a teacher are not satisfied with their work or preparation and you feel hopeless as if it was not worth trying. Two main claims are made based on the findings of interaction analysis research:

- a) that the more indirect influence the teacher uses, the more favorable are the pupils’ attitudes to school works and
- b) the more teacher uses indirect influence, the more the pupils learn.

The first claim is better supported by the evidence and also makes more sense intuitively. If a teacher scores highly for being indirect it means she accepts and uses the pupils’ ideas and feelings rather than judging and criticizing them, and it does seem reasonable that students will be happier when accepted rather than rejected! The second claim is more dubious. It makes less intuitive sense and the research findings are less clear-cut. Indeed a vicious debate is still in progress about the claims of academic improvement in relation to teaching style.

A few years ago the teacher was seen as the only source of information to the pupils and students. No other basis was available and he was seen as the only living God to provide them with sufficient educational knowledge. This was what used to happen several years ago but nowadays the role of the teacher has drastically changed. It has changed into the role of the *Modern Teacher*. But some are wondering now what this real position of such a modern teacher is? You can find almost anything on line and the internet has proved to be a very useful and reliable source of information. There is no such need for a teacher, we can absorb nearly everything up to the most intimate details, by reading, watching and navigating on the internet. So obviously you are asking what can the role of the teacher be nowadays. What do we need them for, if we can do everything ourselves. Well the fact is that we need a guide, someone much more experienced than us to show us the route to follow. Finding the right person to guide

is not such an easy task. So in this case you need a good teacher to tell you what to do and what not. It is fundamental someone else's advice to show us some basic rules of how to gather information. As Douglas Barnes (1968: 3) puts it. "Education should strive not for the acceptance of one voice but for an active exploration of many voices". As collaborator and guide, the teacher sets the topic and puts things into motion, but it is up to the students to decide the course the lecture will take.

Learning, students' names and classes of students, may help sometimes because it is sign of familiarity, and that you are following him and his preparation. Learning to interact positively with one's peers is an important skill that everyone usually acquires during the preschool years. As how's stresses, for young children with disabilities, however, development of peer social interaction skills is often delayed .Different types of intervention approaches have been developed to promote the acquisition of social interaction skills. These interventions might be grouped broadly into three different types. In "environmental arrangement" interventions, teachers arrange features of the classroom environment to foster interaction among peers. Such arrangements as

Brown puts it ,might include restricting the area of the classroom in which play activities occur, providing play activities that promote social interaction and providing a socially competent peer group .

Here is an example from a recent study I conducted in my class. During a discussion in one of my classes the boys and girls started to point out some differences in behavior. They were asked to debate on a topic, but boys did not accept influence on the part of girls. The question is why psychologist usually found the answer to this question in the nuclear families for the origin of behavior patterns seen in them. They were taught power assertive behavior and girls were taught politeness. It is a matter of observational learning which means that they have seen how parents behave at home and their fathers might be more influential than their mother, or parents have made kind of an agreement and in the eyes of the children the father is the authority. Their concept is especially visible in patriarchal Albanian families. It has always been some kind of this type of discrimination in my classes and trying to balance the problems which aroused in such discussions was not the easiest thing in the world. One main factor why these divergences occurred was maybe because of the sex issue. Girls are considered as the weakest sex and are left apart in discussions such as fear, phobia or love. Girls stay passive when it comes to such topics because of these prejudices they had seen and experienced.

Conclusion:

So the problems which arise during the lecture are various and trying to find a solution to all of them seems a difficult task, but where we focused was mainly my role as a moderator and facilitator, in an environment which sometimes can be hostile, and interaction among students themselves and the teacher. We tried to explain by giving arguments to better understand why such occurrences happen in the classroom. It was based on methods such as participant observation on my part which seemed to be helpful but as any other article and as any other research it has its own limitations. These come from the diverse nature of human beings which sometimes is very difficult to be

understood and yet explained. As we are unique in what we do and what we are, it is difficult to give a final solution to problems of the role of the modern teacher in classroom environments. More research needs to be done on this issue to further elaborate on it and try to answer several questions that may arise when we read it.

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