

Lesson observation

The purpose of this lesson observation is to examine how the different interaction patterns work in the classroom.

I visited two classes of 12-13-year-old students. The name of schools are: Városligeti Általános Iskola and Váci utcai Ének-Zene Tagozatos Általános Iskola and the teachers were Vera Magyarai and Andrea Varga.

I am going to give a list of interaction patterns that were used while recollecting the classroom situations. After that I try to articulate my reflections regarding the efficiency of the given patterns in the given context.

1 Close-ended teacher questioning

1.1 The warmer of the Andrea's lesson was a task in which she asked the student to choose one of the labels that were stucked on the board and there was a number on each of them. In the back of the labels questions could be found that she read out. The questions were about certain parts of the USA and the task was to provide geographical information on the given areas. Only one answer could be accepted. As all the labels had been removed the student could see the picture that was covered by the labels. The aim of this lesson was to collect geographical knowledge regarding the USA.

1.2 At the end of the individual work checking inevitably turned into close-ended teacher questioning. There was a listening task in Andrea's class in which the students were asked to listen to the text on the tape that contains information about three famous natural landscape such as the Dinosaur National Monument, The Grand Canyon and the Yellowstone National Park. In the book they could find three questions concerning these places and they had to pair the places with the questions. They checked the solution together and of course only one answer was accepted.

The purpose was to make the students be familiar with some geographical and cultural details concerning the USA, which consists of learning facts. The close-ended questioning can be very efficient when we want the children to memorize factual data.

1.3 There was a task at the end of the Vera's lesson provided by their course book. That was a close task in which the missing linkers had to be replaced. They did the whole task together, however, it should have been done individually. It happened like this because there was not enough time to give them as an individual work and check it later. Only one right answer was suggested by the book.

Vera's purpose was to make her pupil collect communication formulas and to improve their self-awareness in using them.

2 Open-ended teacher questioning

2.1 The warmer of Vera's lesson was to recollect the most important pieces of information that were introduced in the previous lesson. Several answers were accepted and many children could take part in it.

2.2 The second step in Vera's lesson was that she asked the children to show how they can express surprise, ask for repetition, congratulate, etc.

As Vera's purpose was to teach them how to communicate she let them use their creativity and express their personality and the open-ended questioning was a very suitable pattern for this.

2.3 Later Vera asked her pupils to describe a typical party in Hungary. The girl who was chosen to do the task was supposed to create a short but integrated text. After that Vera asked them how they will celebrate their 18th birthday.

Needless to say, this kind of task can easily improve the communication skills and the source is the child's personality itself.

2.4 Then Vera was interested in how many linkers the children knew and she wrote on the board what they said. The children collected so many linkers that Vera was tempted to inspire them to use these words in the future when they communicate.

This was good to show the children that they really know a lot of things they rarely use.

2.5 In Andrea's lesson there was a collaboration task in which they had to deal with tasks that were created by Andrea herself. Technically, it was a sheet of paper with 4 exercises in it. One of the questions was: *Which places would you like to visit?* Of course they had to choose a place in the USA. Additionally, one of the other tasks was to write questions about these places.

Open-ended teacher questioning can arouse interest and it motivates children.

2.6 There was a very short part of Vera's lesson when she warned her student to pay attention to verb-patterns and they should know which verb is followed by ING-form and which is followed by infinitive. She started sentences like "I really enjoy" and the children were supposed to finish the sentence by any verb using the correct form of it.

3 Individual work

3.1 The listening task in Andrea's lesson was individual work, actually. The children had to answer the questions in the book individually and at the end they checked it together.

3.2 Vera organized the listening task similarly.

It seems to be wise to do the listening as an individual work.

3.3 Vera gave an interesting task to her students. They had to make up an interesting, fascinating personality for themselves and they could make notes as well. They got 5 minutes for this task.

Vera was walking around and have a look at the students' notes and sometimes she made some helpful remarks.

3.4 In Andrea's lesson the reading task was supposed to do individually.

4 Collaboration

4.1 As I have already mentioned Andrea gave her students a sheet of paper in which there were four exercises. The first task was to name the places that were signed in the map in the book. The second task was to write questions about the place. The third task was to choose a place that they would like to visit and they had to explain why. The last task was a vocabulary builder in which they had to pair words with their explanation or image.

4.2 They did the same task and Andrea told them to help each other, they could discuss the solution and they are supposed to share their thought with their partner. They worked in pairs, she was walking around and helped them or contributed to the conversation or just had a look at them.

5 Group work

5.1 As it was mentioned, Vera asked the children to create a very interesting personality for themselves. As they had finished she formed pairs from them and they had to improvise a conversation imagining that they meet each other first in their life. They had to introduce their fascinating personality and their partner had to express their surprise and pleasure as they could meet such an interesting person. The pairs had to performance the conversation in front of the whole class without practicing it before. Admittedly, the children were so good at English that this was not a problem at all. In this task they have to convey information, so they needed to work together. As a matter of fact, the role plays, in which participants have to cast different roles, are can be defined as group work. The task is not the same but their performance depends on their mutual work.

It was very entertaining and I am convinced that it is the role play that really improves oral communication skills.

6 Student initiates, teacher answers

6.1 Andrea asked her children to find unknown words in the text they read and asked her for the explanations of the words. At this point the student asked and the teacher answered.

6.2 In Vera's class sometimes happened that the children asked her what this or that word is called in English. Once a boy asked it in Hungarian: *Tanárnő, hogy van angolul az, hogy szemét?*

Anyway, speaking in the mother tongue was very rare in both classes. The teachers never used a word in Hungarian. Apart from some exceptions, the students used their mother tongue only when the task was translation into Hungarian.