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GROUP WORK ACTIVITY IN LANGUAGE LEARNING

There exist in modern day teaching a range of educational reasons for wanting a small group activity in the classroom. The ways in which pedagogical, linguistic, and broader educational criteria interact are complicated and worth examining in some detail. It should also be noted that a special attitude to a small-group teaching may as well affect other aspects of teaching, such as syllabus organization and materials selection and design.

Keywords: *education; cognitive and affective development; affective interaction.*

Introduction. Conventionally, European education has been based on the deliberate creation of subgroups or school classes. Historically, since the 1930s there has been an increasing interest in interactions between teachers, or group leaders, and smaller groups, varying in size from three to fifteen. This movement developed partly from the concern to avoid authoritarian structures in schools and youth work. More scientifically the classic study of P. Jackson and J. Johnson [1] of authoritarian and democratic styles of leadership provided a major impetus for investigations of less directive ways of organizing classrooms. Other scholars (K. Willing) [2] have expressed their concern with the process of learning, rather than the content and provide the basis for an emphasis on group work as a more efficient way of teaching subject matter.

I. The democratic impulse is based partly on belief that authoritarian procedures inhibit learning, but also on a desire to create responsible and critical citizens. Either view claims that genuine learning can only result from an integration of cognitive and affective responses by the learner and this concept has been influential in latest foreign language teaching views.

Such trends reflect an increasing concern with interpersonal relations, and a drift away from purely transactional models of education. In education they also reflect a concern with counseling and with a view of the teacher as social worker and imparter of knowledge, that in turn may result from the demand for advanced education for all groups of students and not just for the academically inclined. If we are to make sense of these diverse traditions in establishing their relevance for language teaching, we shall need to examine the social characteristics of groups in relation to a securely established model of a language.

II. Characteristics of groups. A group is usually defined as a number of people who interact with one another, who are psychologically aware of one another, and who perceive themselves to be a group.

Psychological groups, as defined above, may be formal or informal, but educationally the two types should be kept distinct, for they fulfill different functions. Formal groups are more or less permanent with defined roles over a long period, or temporary but with the function of performing specific tasks. Such groups will have specified functions within the educational institution, and such functions may perhaps be exploited for language activity.

Informal groups, however, will occur primarily for social purposes whenever people interact, and consequently will emerge in any class. The language and interaction patterns of informal groups will differ from those of formal groups. Since language work is a preparation for informal rather than formal activities for most students in general classes, it is such groups that should be stimulated most often in the classroom. Informal groups are changeable and could not be regarded as permanent, but they will provide for certain psychological needs of their members during the period of their functioning. Here is a list of the major needs:

a) affiliation needs – for friendship and support;

b) a means of developing, enhancing and confirming a sense of identity and maintaining self-esteem;

c) a means of establishing and testing reality, by establishing consensus and thus security about the nature of the world;

d) a means of increasing security and a sense of coping with external threats;

e) a means of getting specific jobs done determined by the wishes and needs of group members.

Such needs pose problems for the teacher, for they conflict with the instrumental concerns of pedagogy, They need both to be recognized as potential causes for dysfunction and to be accepted as inevitable factors in group activity in situations where language will eventually be used. Accordingly, they can be seen as potential sources of strength, by being realistic, as well as of weakness, by conflicting with intended group functions. These psychological factors only operate within a social framework, and such a framework will affect the interactions within the situation of the group. By examining such factors as goals, possible roles, a repertoire of acceptable elements in the situation, sequences of behavior, shared concepts, difficulties and skills required we arrive at basic rules appropriate for all social situations:

a) make communication possible;

b) prevent withdrawal by other factors;

c) prevent aggression

d) begin and end encounters

They, too, add rules for all verbal communication:

e) don’t all speak together (except to help out the speaker);

f) observe rules for adjacency pairs;

g) observe specific rules for longer sequences

At the same time it is necessary to recognize that the pressures for conformity in groups may involve risks as well as gains. Part of teacher's task may be to monitor group performance and to ensure that such pressures do not result in too great a divergence from target norms. Unless we have some understanding of the role of affective interaction in the cooperative solutions of external problems, we shall risk confusing relationship activity with problem solving activity in classroom work.

What is clear from this is that any use of language by small groups in the classroom requires learners to operate with a great deal more than language alone. The teachers have limited options in providing instruction in this area. However, this need not prevent them from facilitating student activity; teachers could be better placed if they provide opportunities for small-group interaction through the medium of the target language than if they try to teach analytically the procedure for interaction. Once we accept that the teacher does not have to monitor and provide feedback for every utterance of the student, arguments for individualization and peer mediation can be converted, at least partially, to arguments for small-group activity.

Conclusion. Any use of group will largely increase the likelihood, in bigger classes, of students both producing and receiving language. It will also contribute to both cognitive and affective development according to some recent surveys of researchers [3]. Group cooperative rather than individual competitive procedures are held by these researchers to reduce anxiety, increase awareness of possible solution problems, and increase commitment to learning.

However, in spite of the impressive agreement by theorists that group work is desirable, recent observations indicate that group work is rarely used by teachers; and that when it is, the students are frequently working on their own. This in turn raises issues for teacher training, and also for theorists and the ways in which they present ideas.

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РОБОТА В МАЛИХ ГРУПАХ ПІД ЧАС ВИВЧЕННЯ МОВИ

У сучасній системі навчання існують причини для використання видів роботи в малих групах. Способи взаємодії педагогічних, лінгвістичних і ширших освітніх критеріїв потребують детального вивчення. Варто зазначити, що особливе ставлення до навчання в малих групах може вплинути на інші аспекти навчання, як-от: організація навчального плану, добір матеріалу, його презентація.

Ключові слова: *освіта; когнітивний та емоційний розвиток; емоційна взаємодія.*

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РАБОТА В МАЛЫХ ГРУППАХ ВО ВРЕМЯ ИЗУЧЕНИЯ ЯЗЫКА

В современной системе обучения существуют причины для использования видов работы в малых группах. Способы взаимодействия педагогических, лингвистических и более широких образовательных критериев требуют детального изучения. Следует отметить, что особенное отношение к обучению в малых группах может повлиять та другие аспекты обучения, например: организация учебного плана, подбор материала, его презентация.

Ключевые слова: *образование; когнитивное и эмоциональное развитие; эмоциональное взаимодействие.*

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