

The impact of time and space on learning behavior

Most teachers are aware of the impact of time and space on students' learning behavior, yet little is done to turn them into real learning resources. The management of English classroom requires that English teachers focus their attention on a number of influential factors affecting English Language learning inside the classroom. Among those factors are time, space, and behavior. This triad constitutes the basic pillars without which no learning takes place. The effective management of these three implies a profound understanding of the learning process and progress. No wonder that the sequence of time and space leaves remarkable effects on the learner's behavior and achievement. The time students spend engaging in a task- group work, project work, game...etc- ends with new outputs from the students' part. Likewise, the way the classroom is organized- the way the seating is arranged, the way the walls are decorated, the kind and power of light is supplied...etc- leaves more than impact on students' achievement and learning behavior. No wonder that any learning operation is surrounded and situated in space and time. The space here is the classroom and the time is the lesson duration. The focus will be therefore on what classroom in what time is adequate to a desirable learning behavior. What are the qualities of a modal learning space and time? How can both factors contribute to increasing students' achievement in an English class?

To start with, a classroom is adequate if it meets the utmost needs of the learner. These needs can be broken up into three categories. First are affective needs. A classroom should supply the learner with secure and stress-free atmosphere. Any learning action necessitates, without doubt, a strong desire and motivation. The latter is the first driver to boost the learner's attention to learning. A terrifying atmosphere- the space where the teacher, the wall displays, and all classroom objects generate fear and pessimism- blocks the passage of learning and impedes any action or intention for participation and involvement. Yet if the classroom is guided by an inspirational teacher- an actor who is aware of the learner's needs, admires his mission, and tries his best to vaccinate his students with some anti-hesitation vaccines and inputs- the interest in learning will burst out from within the heart of every learner regardless of their learning level, personality, and preferences. This affective factor counts more than any other factor, and it is the internal engine for any in-task driving force.

Second are cognitive needs. An English classroom should be rich in cognition. In other words, the learning space should be a source of knowledge required for the learner's cognitive development. Many elements inside the classroom would help achieve this need if integrated. For instance, the wise and purposeful incorporation of ICT into the class will surely widen and deepen students' applied knowledge of English and other relevant disciplines. It also develops the learner's independency and sense of achievement, because a computerized classroom implies variety in cognitive resources rather than one direct dominating source of

knowledge: the teacher. Another example is the wall displays. The classroom walls can be a rich learning input if selected and designed appropriately. The wall display (Magazine), the English course-related pictures, colours, and other visual elements of learning operate as learning inputs and time savers for effective inductive teaching.

Third are social needs. No doubt that learning in groups results in better achievement in ELL. A language class is social in nature and should therefore remain a positively noisy environment wherein students naturally learn from each other, acquire the habit of negotiation, the value of responsibility, collaboration, respect, listening, tolerance, democracy, and other germs of social and moral character. Imagine students working in groups! During the process of achieving a consensus, students surely learn how to organize their work, manage their time, take turns in discussion and decision making and learn the ABCs of leadership and meeting management. These practices, if executed appropriately, will considerably minimize behavioral disruptions and direct the learning behavior toward the desired purposes.

Another factor affecting students' learning behavior is time. It is one of the serious constraints teachers compete against. "The efficient use of time is an important variable in helping students achieve learning goals and making the classroom a pleasant place for teachers and students. Unfortunately, how you spend your time is all too often determined by state or district mandates, school policy, and rigid daily school schedules." (Joyce McLeod, SECTION ONE: Managing Time and Classroom Space p.3). These out-of-control factors impose their dictations and make time control a hard task for teachers. For example, some English curricula are rigorous courses for they specify many more objectives than can be taught to an appropriate depth. Such programs result in teachers wasting much time reviewing what students have not yet internalized. Meanwhile, It may happen that teachers run out of time, loss control of their plans while simultaneously being pressured to move on to other objectives before a session is over. In this case, disorder and chaos take place: off-task behavior dominates the class, students lose attention, instructions go with noise, and suddenly- the bell rings and students leave out with their minds empty. However, if each task is allocated its reasonable amount of time and the objectives are limited, clear, and precise, a minimum disciplined effort in the beginnings will undeniably guarantee happy endings.

Time and space management is and will still be the basic ground of effective ELT. Thereof, an effective teacher is an effective time and space manager. It is that philosopher and thinker who is profoundly aware of the effects time and space leave on behavior and it is he who exerts his utmost efforts to plan for his time and space before a New Year course begins.

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