

Variation for the Improvement of Teaching And Learning

TEXTILE INSTITUTE
AMERICAN CHAMBER OF COMMERCE
WOO HON FAI SECONDARY SCHOOL

Level: S.3

Subject: English

Topic: Oral Discussion skills

Period of Study: February 07 to June 07

Members

School teachers: Mr Law, Wan Ping, Mr Poon, Ching Yiu

Ms Au, Ching Yee &

Ms Wong, Man Fung

Members from HKIEd: Ms Zita Yu & Ms Lancy Tam

Background:

Students are weak in English and don't speak up
but they have to attend the TSA and exam!



The difficulties of students in group discussions are:

- Students cannot think about points to say
- The weaker students make the discussion more difficult as they don't say anything

What we expect our students to learn:

- how to elaborate ideas
- To have more confidence in speaking English

Tentative object of learning:

How to elaborate ideas in the context of a discussion

Pilot-test & Pre-test

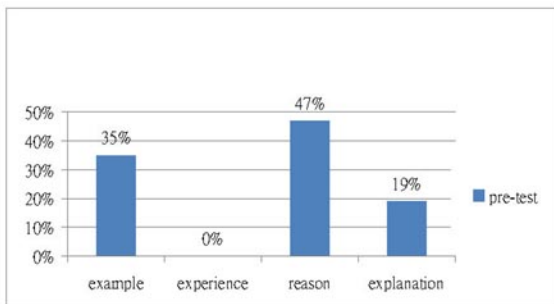
Grouping	: 2 groups of 4 students with mixed ability
Preparation Time	: 10 minutes
Discussion Time	: 5 minutes
Topic	: You and three other members of the Class are going to help organize a picnic. You need to discuss the plan for the event. In your discussion, you may include: <ul style="list-style-type: none">•when and where the picnic will take place•who will take part•how you will tell other students about the picnic•what the safety rules (安全守則) will be•any other details that are important

Results

- Students lacked vocabulary
- Students were weak in the fluency in spoken English.
 - Students shifted to another point very quickly
 - The weaker Ss ended in having nothing to say

Possible critical features: Elaboration could be: An experience or An example or A reason or An explanation

Pre-test Results (Overall)



Confirmed object of learning:

To elaborate ideas in the context of a discussion

Critical features:

Elaboration in form of a reason or an explanation.
Elaboration in form of an experience or an example.



Research Lesson 1st cycle of implementation

- Teacher : Mr Poon
- Class : 3C
- Class time : 50 min



Teaching Plan & the use of Pattern of Variation

Activity	Critical aspect(s) be discerned	Varied	Kept constant
1) Construction of a response using examples	Students should know when to response using an example (follow a group n.)	Group nouns	Sentence pattern Yes, such as _____.

Sample dialogue extract

Student A: I think he can buy **some clothes** (Group n.).

Student B: **Yes,** such as **shirts and jeans.**

Activity	Critical aspect(s) be discerned	Varied	Kept constant
2) Practice of talking about experiences	There are 4 blocks in the response to an example i.e. Example + good + experience + feeling	Example	Sentences Pattern _E.g._(Disneyland)_? Good, Experience(went to Disneyland last week.) Feeling (I like that.)

Sample dialogue extract

Student B: We can go to **Disneyland.**

Student C: **Disneyland?** Good, I went to

Disneyland last week. **I like that.**



2nd cycle of implementation

Teacher : Au Ching Yee • Class : 3D

Teaching Plan & the use of Pattern of Variation

Activity	Critical aspect(s) be discerned	Varied	Kept constant
Play a Video	- Get ss' attention of a holistic picture of group discussion		
Construction of response by using example: diff. between group noun & examples	- In what situation do ss give examples? (after hearing a group noun)-How do they give examples?	Group noun & examples	Sentence pattern Yes, such as _____.
Constructing a response by sharing experience	In what situation do ss share experience?(after hearing an example)	Experience & feeling	Sentences Pattern _E.g._(Disneyland)_? Good, Experience(went to Disneyland last week.) Feeling (I like that.)

3rd cycle of implementation

Teacher: Wong Man Fung •Class : 3B

Teaching Plan & the use of Pattern of Variation

Activity	Critical aspect(s) be discerned	Varied	Kept constant
Show students the Script of discussion	To expose students to the relationship of "suggestion" and "response"	examples	The relationship of suggestion and response
Introduce two ways of responses to a suggestion	To distinguish between a group noun and its members	Various group nouns and the members	The relationship btw a group noun & its members
Practice of using examples to a suggestion	There are 3 blocks in the response to a group n. i.e. Yes + such as + members of the group n.	Various group nouns and the members	Sentence pattern Yes, such as _____
Practice of Constructing a response by sharing experience	There are 4 blocks in the response to an example i.e. Example? + Good + experience + It's (adj.)	Examples & Experiences	Sentence Pattern _E.g._ (Disneyland)_? Good. Experience (I went to Disneyland last week.) Feeling (I like that.)

4th cycle of implementation

Teacher: Law Wan Ping

•Class : 3A

Teaching Plan & the use of Pattern of Variation

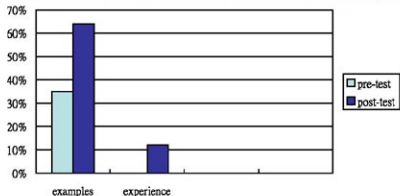
Activity	Critical aspect(s) be discerned	Varied	Kept constant
Introduction to the Script Combined with showing of Video clips	To highlight students to the relationship of "suggestion" and "response"	examples	The idea of suggestion and response
Introduce two ways of responding to a suggestion	To distinguish between a group noun and its members (A Big Box)	Various group nouns and the members	The relationship btw a group noun & its members
Practice of using examples to a suggestion	There are 3 blocks in the response to a group n. i.e. Yes + such as + members of the group n.	Various group nouns and the members	Sentence structure , Yes + such as + e.g.
Practice of using experiences to respond to a suggestion	There are 4 blocks in the response to an example i.e. Example? + Good + experience + It's (adj.)	Examples & experiences	Sentence Pattern _E.g._ (Disneyland)_? Good. Experience (I went to Disneyland last week.) Feeling (I like that.)

Major difference(s) between cycles of teaching & its impact on the corresponding students' learning

outcomes Objectives of the lesson was told to students *explicitly* in later cycles → students know what they are going to learn, & how they apply the knowledge

- A video clip of the model dialogue was shown in cycle 2 & 4 → easier for students to understand the concepts
- Ms Wong (cycle 3) placed more emphasis on identifying suggestions → students were better in spotting suggestions
- A teaching tool to teach *group noun* in cycle 4 → easier for students to grasp the abstract concept
- More chances to do oral practices in later cycles → easier for students to apply what they learn and have more confidence

Comparison of Pre-test and Post-test Results (Overall)



Data analysis

- Students used examples more as responses during the discussion, after the research lesson. It increased by 29%.
- More Students were able to use experiences to interact after the lesson. It increased by 10%.
- It was because the research lesson focused on giving examples and sharing experience.
- They have learnt how to construct sentence structures of examples and experience- more confident.

Task Completion (overall)

Marking Scheme (Tick)

Example		Task Completion (Full mark: 4%)
Experience		0 1 2 3 4
Reason		remark:
Explanation		

Score	Task Completion – Ideas and Intelligibility
4	Express and/or response to ideas that are relevant with supporting details like examples, experience, reasons and explanations. The ideas are clearly communicated.
3	Express and/or response to ideas that are relevant, occasionally providing some details like examples, experience, reasons and explanations. Most ideas are clearly communicated and with occasional hesitation
2	Give short, simple responses to ideas that are relevant to the topic. Little or no details are provided. Communicate some ideas clearly and some hesitation.
1	Give limited responses to ideas that are relevant to the topic, generally prompted and no details are provided. The ideas are disjointed and with lots of hesitation.
0	Do not express any relevant or understandable information OR Make no attempt at all

Data analysis

- If Students got 2 marks or above out of 4, they could complete the task and considered to be average- high.. After the lesson, students with passing marks increased from 37.2% to 47.5%.
- Ss who got '0' mark decreased from 25.7% to 16.5%. It was mainly contributed by 3C and 3D which are the two comparatively weaker classes. So diversity in the four groups was made closer.
- It is encouraging to see students at least getting some ideas of participating in the discussion by giving examples and sharing experiences, even for the weaker students.

Further recommendations for improving the research lesson

- Students could learn more through peer observations – groups who perform well in oral practices could perform in front of the whole class
- More variations in the sentence structures and vocabulary can be taught to students with higher ability
- More chances for oral practices
- Allow students to practice the new phrases in a less controlled situation

Teachers' reflection (Mr Poon)

- The way teachers present their materials to students have a great influence on students' learning
- Visual stimulation is very helpful in teaching

Teachers' reflection (Ms Wong)

- It is easier for them to learn from easy to difficult parts so scaffolding of the learning process is important
- It is easier for them to focus on one item each time, especially the weaker students. Students need time to practise more before they can internalize what they have just learnt.
- More practice should be done to consolidate students' learning.
- It is better to use appropriate teaching aids like colour pens to make the variation more vivid. It is better for them to take in what they learn by appealing to their visual sense.
- Teachers see the importance of peer observation..

Teachers' reflection (Ms. Au)

- Instead of getting student to recite some formulaic expressions, teachers could get students to grasp the scaffolds of expressing opinions.
- Teachers should try to think from the eyes of students.
- Teachers should make variation more explicitly for students to discern the features, esp. for weaker students.

Teachers' reflection (Mr Law)

- Group discussion is a very important learning point nowadays and should be addressed
- For weaker students, teachers should be aware of the limitations of their students.
- Scaffolding of conversation can help weaker students engage in group discussion.
- Visual impact is effective in helping students learn, such as posters and authentic teaching materials.

