IMPROVING EFFECTIVE STUDY GROUPS IN SPEAKING CLASS THROUGH INSIDE-OUTSIDE CIRCLE

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Abstract: Inside-outside circle is a teaching learning method implemented in speaking class to improve effective study groups. Nowadays, students are required to be independent in learning process so they are going to be autonomous learners. By implementing inside-outside circle, the students are expected to be active and consciously participating in speaking activities, both in classroom and independent learning within study groups outside the classroom. The students, therefore, will have better comprehension of the material learnt in speaking class. This method allows students to have enough time to speak and there will be no students who hide behind friends’ back like if the speaking class conducted just by sitting on the chairs, they are also not going to be attached only to one similar person in every ‘dialogue in pairs’ activities. It also accommodates psychomotor aspect. The students will constantly move to have new partners and not only sitting behind the desk holding pen and paper. Besides, it fosters mutual relationship among the students. They will exchange information, interact, correct and give positive feedback to their partner directly. This helps partners in improving their speaking proficiency and, eventually, effective study groups are created.

Introduction

First year in college is the significant time for the students to adapt and socialize with the activities and campus routines. In English Education Department of Teachers Training and Education Faculty, Sebelas Maret University, the students are going to have four different English proficiencies. These cover listening, reading, writing, and speaking. For some new students who are not accustomed to be active or those who are lack confidence, speaking is one of the scariest subjects. In speaking class they are supposed and forced to participate speaking English actively. Therefore, a lecture should be able to conduct an effective teaching learning process that trigger the students to take part in every single task, improve their confidence, and motivate them in a positive way. By this process, there will be an effective study groups that will support each other and strengthen their willingness to increase their speaking ability.

Study Groups

D. Thompson (2001) defines study groups as a group of students taking the same course, often the same section of a course, who work together to increase their learning in the course. Such groups can make a significant difference to student success. Thompson adds some benefits of the study groups as follows:

Students have reported a wide range of benefits from participating in study groups. Study groups can create: A cooperative, rather than competitive, learning opportunity; A chance to make friends and have fun; An opportunity to increase your learning and do better in your courses; An opportunity to develop your study strategies; Increased motivation - participants have a sense of commitment and accountability; Teamwork skill development (Include your participation in the study group on your resume so that employers know you have teamwork experience).

While, Fleming mentions that study group forces students to alter their old ways of thinking and it changes their less effective patterns of behavior. So, creating study groups to stimulate and improve the students’ learning motivation in order to achieve maximum result in the teaching learning process is significant.

Besides creating study groups, the quality of teaching and learning process in speaking class can be improved in many other ways. For example, by utilizing allocated time in every meeting effectively; showing some models of conversations from natives; giving a good monitoring along the classroom activities; stimulate the students to participate actively in every meeting, or implementing a good teaching method that is suitable with classroom condition. A good teaching learning method is a method that makes students learn in a comfortable way. This will encourage their spirit in learning the material and they will get a better learning experience that result in their ability to learn better individually or together in a group.
There are at least 9 techniques for teaching speaking as mentioned in Sekolahkoe sites. They are ask and answer; describe and draw; discussion; guessing; remembering; miming; ordering; completing a form/questionnaire; and role play. However, the most common way happens in reality is the teacher will ask the students to create a certain script of conversation that is going to be role-played in front of the class. By using this model, students tend to memorize the script without comprehend the language function and this does not reflect their real speaking ability. A right method need to be implemented to give a big impact in creating effective study groups. What method, then?

**Why Inside-Outside Circle?**

In some references, inside-outside circle is also known as inner-outer circle (Wilson, 2011) or fishbowl (Barkley, et al, 2005). Barkley states that fishbowl challenges the students to participate in discussion intensively. While, Denny (1995) mentions that inside-outside circle is a good ‘ice-breaking’, ‘warm-up’, or ‘review’ activity and should be used for short period of time to get students to interact in the target language.

Inside-outside circle fully accommodates all students in a class, reduces students’ dependency to the teacher, raises the ability to observe, analyze, and control to each student. Kagan (1994) says that inside-outside circle is a learning technique that allows students moving freely and interacting to others. This inside-outside circle is used in cooperative study, as well.

Referring to Barkley terms, Collaboration Technique Cards also points this technique as fishbowl. It shares the procedure of implementing this technique. A small group of students arrange themselves in a circle in the center of a room. This is called the fishbowl section of the collaboration. This small group has a discussion together while the rest of the students watch. The outside circle can take notes, and later pose questions and gives comments about what they observed. Teachers should select students for the inside circle who are skilled at group discussion – or might deliberately choose one or two who are new to it so that the center does not seem too ‘perfect’ for those who are observing. Once the group is established, the teacher should set some ground rules. Students might initially be self-conscious as part of the group ‘on stage’, but they generally grow more comfortable as the conversation flows.

**Ground rules might include:**

a. Students within the “bowl” should only state supported ideas, agree with a speaker and add supporting information, disagree with a speaker and offer refuting information, or connect contributions.

b. The speaker has uninterrupted time to complete their answer.

c. Everyone gets a chance to speak prior to a speaker taking a second turn.

The guidelines for the outside circle: listen quietly, take notes on discussion skills, and note nonverbal communication. Each ‘outside’ student might be assigned an ‘inside’ student to observe or the ‘outside’ students can be asked to observe everyone.

To begin the discussion, the teacher or a student within the fish bowl offers an open-ended question, and the fish bowl group discusses it. After a set time of discussion, the outside students discuss what they observed. This may take the same amount of time as the fish bowl discussion itself, or more. The teacher invites the outside students to add their thoughts to the fish bowl conversation. The inside students listen and then respond to the comments. The inside students can reflect on the discussion first or after the outside.

**How To Conduct?**

For real implementation, in a speaking class of English Education Department usually consists of 20 students per class. Using inside-outside circle, students will be divided into two big groups, ten students each. Then these two big groups will be divided again into two smaller groups. Five students as the inside circle and five others as the outside circle. Each students in the inside circle pairs with those who are in the outside circle. These pairs will be changeable in a certain period of time. Every inside circle students has a card of defined information that should be passed to those from outside circle. Meanwhile, the outside circle responds to that information. The outside circle will keep moving to have different partner from inside circle, so that they will have different experience talking to different students. In addition, they are forced to stay active and consciously involve in the teaching learning process without any excuses.

Wilson (2001) proposes some steps in conducting teaching learning process using inside-outside circle as follows:

1. Take the students to a large enough area where they will have room to move around easily, (outside if it is nice outside or in the gym or cafeteria). Ask the students to get out of seats and follow you to designated area.

2. Have the students get into two equal groups. One group will make a small, tight circle while the other group makes a looser circle around the inner, tight circle. Tell students to move into inner-outter circle spots.
3) Pass out the note cards to the students, allowing one note card per student.
4) Tell students to show the term on their card to the person across from them. Let their partner describe to them what the term means. After the partner gives the definition for the term, have the student with the card read the written definition to their partner while showing them the words on the card. Explain these directions and how it will help the auditory and visual learners, while the moving will address the kinesthetic learners’ needs.
5) Tell the inner and outer circles to each follow step 4 and then switch cards with their partner. Both partners learn definitions, and then switch cards.
6) Tell the outer circle students to move over one person to the left and the inner circle students to stay then to repeat steps four and five.
7) Make sure all cards get switched every time and that the students rotate all the way until they end up with the same card they started with and the same partner.
8) Keep the energy fun and upbeat by having the students praise their partners if they get the answer correct, high-fives, good-jobs, etc.

During the process, students are supposed to stand in a certain position set by the teacher.

Gb.1 Adapted from Beyond Monet The Artful Science of Instructional Intelligence, Barrie Bennett/ Carol Rolheiser (http://pketko.com/Unit%20Design/popups/instructtactics.htm)

Gb. 2 http://www.ateacherstreasure.com/2012/02/seusstastic-ideas.html

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