

AVG 2.1 Parables of Classroom Interaction

Considering the Impact of Assessment in Teaching



Think About

- What is the work of the student in making the instructional input comprehensible?
- Click this link to download the [Active Viewing Guide](#) and use it to take notes as you view the video segment.
- If you want to view this video later go <https://equitypress.org/-BXs>. This video comes from Understanding Language Acquisition. Click on Session 6 on the left hand side of the screen and then click on the video segment 6.2. Then scroll up and start the video.

Conceptual Outline

In planning for interaction, consider how you position second language learners for communication.

Content-Area Literacy in Second Language Acquisition

- Communication
- Input
- Interaction

Second language learners who engage in meaningful interaction learn language and process academic content at a deeper level.

Meaning Making

Plan for interaction?
My cultural awareness?

Annala Teemant (Brigham Young University)

Students' verbal participation may reflect their stage of development.
When students feel safe and linguistically ready, they participate verbally.

My focus on interaction?
Teaching culture?

Beginning language learners need to have nonverbal ways to participate.

Participation differences may be based in culturally different interaction patterns—their cultural ways of being. When I first arrived in Hungary, it seemed to me that people were arguing. Then I realized, Hungarians talk over the beginning and ends of each others' sentences. In Finland, I learned that you do not greet people you do not know.

When you learn a language, you also learn new cultural ways of being and interacting.

Interaction as a tool for planning reminds us second language learners have different social and cultural expectations. Teachers help students figure out interaction patterns in our culture—social and academic.

Roland Tharp (University of California, Santa Cruz)

My classroom patterns of interaction?

Culture is learned between parents, children, and extended family, and within the social, religious, economic, and other institutional structures: It occurs in interaction not isolation.

From the ways students interact with each other, the adults, and even materials, teachers can see culture. Students, even in kindergarten, bring to school with them repertoires of interaction patterns:

- How to interact with peers
- How to react to adults
- What the role of the teacher is
- How to treat respected adults
- What the courtesies and conventions of conversation are

The teacher sees these patterns not in students but in their interaction.

Jean Clandinin (University of Alberta)

Conceptual Outline	Meaning Making
I'm more thoughtful now to not assume that everyone has a story that's similar to mine. I think that a culture is an amazing shaping force. I think we're mostly unaware of it.	My students story? My story?
David Corson (University of Toronto) Most schools are little islands of isolation in communities that are very different from the cultural community the school creates.	The school community?
Mary McGoarty (University of Northern Arizona) The teacher, as an authority figure in a classroom, has a very important role because I think students learn far more from the silent examples of teachers than they do from the overt teaching.	My silent example?
Priscilla Helm Walton (University of California, Santa Cruz) [Teachers] can teach them English, but I've seen that done in a context of great contempt, as well as in a context where the teacher really appreciates where the children are coming from.	My disposition?
Jane Zuengler (University of Wisconsin, Madison) I don't believe many of us, certainly not I, can go into a class thinking, "I'm equipped through my life experience to handle all of this."	My flexibility? My Preparation?
Carol Lynn McConnell (Secondary ESL Teacher) Unless you've been taught how to deal with someone from another culture —how to relate to them, you don't just automatically know those things. You need to be taught.	Lessons for my students?
Enrique Trueba (University of Texas) This is not the enchilada culture—which is a superficial knowledge of people's cuisine. It is more getting to the soul inside of them, understanding why they do whatever they do.	Culture as soul?
Priscilla Helm Walton (University of California, Santa Cruz)	

Conceptual Outline

Meaning Making

[Teachers] can teach them English, but I've seen that done in a context of great contempt, as well as in a context where the teacher really appreciates where the children are coming from. Students come with their own stories. Some are like yours and others are culturally far removed from yours.

Courtney Cazden (Harvard University)

Teachers and schools start out as strangers. Because of increasing migration through the world, teachers are strangers in a double sense:

- not knowing a child's history and life outside of school.
- not knowing the child's culture.

If students are from families like the teacher's own, they can make some good guesses. But the more different a student is from the teacher's culture and individual background (for example African American, Hispanic American, Navajo, Upic in Alaska, Hmong, etc.), the harder it is for the teacher to make deep connections and have complex conversation with the student.

My life and my students' lives?

My culture and my students' cultures?

Annela Teemant (Brigham Young University)

Our cultural way of being has consequences for interaction and for interpretation of interaction. When we are very like our students, culture is less obvious, but when someone stands too close, refuses to look in our eyes, or is ever agreeing, cultural patterns can interfere with our communication. Then students' work means being flexible or becoming bicultural. Teacher's work is bringing a cultural perspective (multiple perspectives) to interactions with our second language learners.

A lens for interpreting my classroom?

Roland Tharp (University of California, Santa Cruz)

Patterns of activity—activities considered normal, normative, comfortable, and understood—are very different in different communities. They can vary by age, by gender, etc. Understanding how that works and knowing students' expectations about school from what they participate in outside school, teachers can design better learning experiences.

My classroom norms?

Stefinee Pinnegar (Brigham Young University)

Direction of support?

In my study of the differences between expert and novice teachers, I learned the following

- Novice teachers expected students to appreciate how hard they worked.
- Expert teachers understood that in teaching support goes from the teacher to the student. They knew students are not responsible for making teachers look better as teachers. Teachers are responsible for making students look better as learners.

Carol Lynn McConnell (Secondary ESL Teacher)

You help these students where they are. You are committed to doing what it takes to support them. Some get in trouble. I see them in the office and think, "There you are again." I used to think, "I am trying to do my part, and what are you doing? I won't bother with you." I've realized that loving somebody isn't dependent on how they behave—you just do it. It makes a big difference in my ability to work with kids. They can get kicked out of school. I can stop a fight and I love them anyway. They know that and they respond to it. For me, that's advocacy.

My limits?

My advocacy?

Stefinee Pinnegar (Brigham Young University)

Expert teachers forgave students for not doing homework, for cheating on tests, for lying about book reports. They never allowed themselves to be in a position where a student could completely betray their trust, because once trust is broken, a teacher can no longer completely support a student's learning.

In turn, if students are to learn from teachers, we must be completely trustworthy. We have to guard against violation of their trust in us. When a student trusts a teacher, then learning begins. Trust is fragile, especially in cross-cultural interactions. Expert teachers simultaneously forgive, consider more positive interpretations, and yet hold students accountable for learning.

We need to be certain that as teachers we do not interpret cultural difference in such a way that it breaks trust with our students.

Forgiveness, trust, learning?

Classroom Parables of Cultural Interaction: Epics of Humor and Conflict

Cultural Ways of Being

- Differences in Disciplining
- Age Group Interaction
- Definitions of Success
- Cooperative Orientations
- Gender and Autonomy

Differences in Disciplining

Cynthia Ballenger (Elementary School Teacher/Researcher)

Children were being referred because they wouldn't behave when the teachers spoke to them in the ways that American teachers are used to speaking to children: "If you run in the hallway you'll fall." It would sometimes make children laugh. I now see that it seemed quite odd to them that they were being given a reason, as if it were a discussion between them and the adult as to whether or not they thought that consequence was worth undergoing rather than just saying, "Don't run in the hall," "Don't hit him."

There was a whole crowd of Haitian kids and they wouldn't behave. The kids were always disruptive. The teacher was feeling somehow responsible, but she was only an intern. But one day this little girl stayed in the stairwell and wouldn't even enter the class. The teacher could take it no longer. She went up to the director and said, "I have something I have to say to the Haitian children." She brought all of them together. She said, "Did your mother send you to school to fight? Did your mother send you to school to kick kids?" And the kids would say, "No." "Did your mother send you to school to not obey the teacher?" And the kids would say, "No." It was a very group process and it made a great difference evidently to these children. Now only one child was necessarily bad that day, the one in the stairwell, but the whole group received reminders of the reasons their mothers had sent them to school. Of course, this woman didn't know the mothers, but she knew what the mothers wanted. I learned a great deal from that story. I used to try to discipline the kids individually, as Americans do. If one kid was paying attention and two weren't I'd say, "Geraldine, what a good job you're doing paying attention," and Geraldine would then fall off the chair, laughing. It would make her so nervous to be singled out like that. It was both the group process and the idea that you invoke their parents because you do know what they want. With American kids—I don't know how many of you have had the experience of saying, "Does your mother let you put your feet on the table?" And the American kids are likely to say, "Yes." They're not used to this sort of solidarity, but the Haitian children responded to it quite well

My story?

High expectations?

Multiple perspectives?

Knowledge-based practice?

Accountability?

Cultural responsive pedagogy?

Age Group Interaction**Roland Tharp (University of California, Santa Cruz)**

For example, the schools really expect kids to arrive, whether it's Kindergarten or first grade, whenever they arrive at school, we expect kids to be able to attend to the teacher, obey the teacher, follow instructions, be able to be under self-control, to work individually, to have a certain sufficient amount of discipline, to be able to follow instructions, to not be too noisy, and certainly to orient toward the teacher and to expect to

High expectations?

Multiple perspectives?

Knowledge-based practice?

Accountability?

Culturally responsive pedagogy?

closely follow the teacher's guidance. That is not the way that Polynesian society is organized. Polynesian society is a much more age-graded society, in which most of the social organization is, for example, among children, and then among adolescents, and among young adults, and so forth. And there is a great deal of autonomy and self-regulation within those particular groups. So the kids are accustomed, they come to school expecting to relate to their peers, to gain information, to share information, to work jointly, to solve problems together, and to intrude on adults (unless invited) very little. And if the adults want something, they'll let them know. Otherwise, kids go about your business and work on your own recognizance and work with each other.

That is not the common expectation of the first-grade teacher in ordinary education.

Definitions of Success

Enrique Trueba (University of Texas)

American society's so geared to success. And we assume success means the same thing for every- body, and it doesn't. We looked at competition as a means to discriminate failure from success, and some authors say that we engineered the failure of some and the success of others. An entire branch in sociology deals with that issue: the social creation of success for some and failure of others.

Well, the interesting part is that in a multicultural population, success for some is a failure of others. For example, academic success (in some of the Asian cultures) with the abandonment of the language and culture is failure. The leaving of the family values, the neglecting of the community is the worst failure that can be identified among Chinese, Korean, Japanese, and so on.

There are interesting studies of Koreans that do anything to support the Korean brother to go to school in the US. I think that what we miss here is that success is not a one shot, a one time, and forever. The most clear definition of success, in the study we're doing with Asian and Latino

High expectations?

Multiple perspectives?

Knowledge-based practice?

Accountability?

Culturally responsive pedagogy?

successful high school kids, is that there's a long-term strategy in which they go up and down, but they never stop trying to go up. And in that situation, what the kids learn is how to understand the politics of success in American society without betraying ethnic identity. Meaning they will continue to learn how to make good decisions, how to use the environment well, who to ask for information, when to do what, how to learn to take tests, but they do all that always keeping a high respect for their families.

For American mainstream society, we have created a fictitious environment of "If you fail in school, you fail in life." Academic achievement is not everything. It's more important for a child to remain part of the group, to feel he belongs somewhere, not to become marginalized, to have self-confidence, to be feeling that he's a good and important person, rather than having high grades. The grades may or may not come, but when somebody feels marginalized and stupid for life because he cannot do as well in class, I think it's disastrous

Norma Garcia Bowman, Secondary School Teacher

I said, "Jose, down in the counseling department, they need somebody who is responsible, can speak English and Spanish. You're smart, extremely intelligent, honest and trustworthy. So I recommended you to help in counseling and help parents who come in that don't speak English." I said, "I want you to go down right now. Miss King is waiting for you."

I get a note from her about two weeks later. She wrote, "Jose is so nice and he's so responsible. He's just what we needed. We just love him." The next day he comes into the class.

"Jose. I got a note for you from Miss King." He says, "Really? Is it a good note?" I say, "It's a really nice note, and I'm so proud of you because you're proving wonderful things for all of us—for yourself and for the rest of us. You're proving good things for the Spanish kids." I read the note. The kids were teasing him. But the kids were so surprised to see somebody like that write a note about somebody like him. He was so surprised. "Really, Ms. Bowman, she wrote this, really?" I said, "Jose, you're doing a really good job. You're doing exactly as I knew you could do."

One of the things that we do in our culture, the Mexican or junior high Mexican culture, or high school Mexican culture. We watch one of us who is willing to stick his neck out and try something. We'll say, "Let's see how this person does. Let's egg him on" and we push him to do it, and then we can all see if he can do it. And we encourage each other, but at the same time, not everybody's going to stick their neck out. One person will stick their neck out and the others will watch to see what happens. And if that person fails, that ruins it for everybody else. But if that person succeeds even a little bit, the other people think, "Hey, he got this far. I think I can get that far." And then you just keep building on that.

Knowledge-based practice?

Culturally responsive pedagogy?
Accountability?

Multiple perspectives?

High expectations?

Conceptual Outline**Meaning Making**

It brings encouragement to the group. It's a whole group thing—not all individual, we work in groups. We see if somebody's going to make it, then we participate. Move a little bit and then we watch, move a little bit. That's the way we work.

Gender and Autonomy

Roland Tharp (University of California, Santa Cruz)

The way people group themselves, I'm reminded of some of our own disasters that we've had in our school design in not fully appreciating (when we were working with Navajos) the degree to which gender separation begins to happen in that society so early. It's perfectly obvious. You can't go anywhere on the reservation without seeing that men are there and women are here in almost every activity. We had no appreciation for the fact that it would begin in second grade—but it did and it does. So, not understanding that, we were mixing up the kids in different kinds of activities that they found just unendurable and stupid. Until we figured that out, we were really trying to go against the grain, and it wasn't necessary. It was perfectly possible to teach that at some point, for certain purposes in school, they need to also work cross-gendered, they need to do that too. But we were really bulldozing it just out of ignorance.

Native Americans, going by my example, (this is not true of every tribe, but by and large), they have enormous autonomy given to children that are very, very young. Sheep herding kids at 5-years-old will stay out all night alone. They have that expectation in the classroom that they can and should decide things. Those decisions are respected by Native American adults. In African-American society, for example, it's much more often the case that small children are kept under very tight rein by adults. Kids expect that, and when they are tightly controlled and guarded and marched along, that's a sign of affection and respect. No one expects them to be able to decide exactly what they want to do when they're very small children. And mainstream society is probably somewhere between.

Teachers play an important role in creating culturally and linguistically safe classrooms where children from different cultures can freely interact.

Multiple perspectives?

Knowledge-based practice?

Culturally responsive pedagogy?

High expectations?

Accountability?

Culturally responsive pedagogy?

Peggy Estrada (University of California, Santa Cruz)

Classrooms may be the only place where students from different cultures can come together around a common activity and begin to learn to develop a community. They begin to see that other students, who on the surface look different, live in a different neighborhood, speak a different language, come from a different culture, share interests and have expertise.

Multicultural space?

Shared respect? New expertise?



This content is provided to you freely by Equity Press.

Access it online or download it at https://equitypress.org/diverse_assessment/AVG_2.