TEACHER FOR A DAY – A WAY TO IMPROVE CLASSROOM MOTIVATION

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Abstract. Student-teacher or teacher for a day is a project helping students develop better communication skills, better understanding of the process of teaching and making learning fun. Students choose a topic they would like to present, and there is quite a lot of preparation involved on their part as it is the teacher's. They have to limit themselves in time and activities, they have to choose how to present the chosen topic to their classmates, and they have to execute it in an appropriate way. This project is a learning experience for both the teacher and the student-teacher. The outcome is not always a great success, but it is always fun. And this is where motivation steps in. Because it involves all the students in the classroom, the motivation for reaching a goal in language learning becomes stronger. The goal is getting involved, as well as sharing knowledge and practicing communication skills. The role of the teacher is to give guidance so the students can reach their language goals themselves through motivation, fun and work.
Key words: EFL, student, motivation, lesson plan, teaching

1. INTRODUCTION

Student-teacher is not a new concept since it was known already in the 18th century in Britain ("Pupil-Teacher", n.d.). Of course, it was used in a completely different way.

Student-teachers, or teachers for a day as we call them, is a project allowing primary school children to become a teachers, to play this role in a lesson they prepare themselves. This enables pupils or students to get to know the process of teaching, to take responsibility for their own intellectual development and inclusion into the educational system. There are many goals we are reaching with this kind of activity. We offer an incentive learning environment, develop many skills such as teamwork, communication, using and developing different learning styles, strengthening self-confidence, and many others. So, this is a win-win situation for all participants, for the teacher and the pupils alike. Each person learns from others thus strengthening communications skills and allowing growth. Motivation is the key. And this time it comes from within. This makes pupils learn so much more than they would in just any odd presentation they do. This way we bring together cultures and different talents, and we encourage creativity that has no limits.

2. THE THEORETICAL PART

2.1. Who is a pupil?

Even before we are born, we are pupils: we learn from our environment; our "perceived world", which is, for all of our life, our "real world". Before we are born, we develop a sense of "duration" and after birth we quite soon form a sense of "distance", and it is here that we meet a critical point: we have, each of us humans, a built-in need to label the

invariants discovered, not only to express them to ourselves, but to communicate the discovery to others. Thus, we have a need to name the discovered invariants, our nouns. The next step in being a pupil is to begin the structuring of a host of noun symbols, i.e., word names. The final step is to try to complete the structure revealed in a part of the perceived world in which the "relationships step" has been tackled. Here we look for a pattern in the collection of relationships for the chosen topic. The pattern should be such as to present at least one way in which the nouns and relationships involved fall into place to make up a sensible whole structure. In such a case, one can show that if the pupil "sees" the pattern, the structure of the whole topic, then the details of names and relationships fall into place far more easily (Van Rooyen, n.d.).

2.2. Who is a teacher?

Every one of us is a teacher, whether professionally or inadvertently: at some time, other living beings, particularly humans, will learn from you! Every one of us, being by nature curious and questioning everything, should be a pupil from birth to death: to learn is to live and to live is to learn, and we must learn about our personal perceived world and those of all other living creatures, especially of other humans.

All of us are individuals. Both pupils and teachers have individual genetic "codes", though the differences are very slight. They come from ancestors and parents and small personal mutations. Furthermore, there is "growing up" and "being brought up" and "life experiences" to add to the mill of individuality. This is further influenced by such things as religion, politics, society, culture, financial circumstance, friends at various stages, language and more. Parents and schools and teachers can have formative influence on the mind and behavior of the pupil: fixed notions or confusion could result. As a result, each of us carries with us, pupil and teacher, some indoctrinated baggage. Professional teaching is a calling: a mission. All too often people see it as just another means to earn a salary! A teacher has two basic tasks: to learn with the pupils, and to build communication skills. Without communication, with oneself and others, there is no learning! Unfortunately, the teacher's task is bedeviled by those who dictate the administration involved, which usually takes time away from teaching, and the study material which is set on the basis of socio-political, training, cultural and religious agendas rather than an educational agenda, the object being to make "good little citizens" who "fit in". Faced with these restrictions, the teacher, who probably went through the system as well, must "make the best of it". In both tasks the teacher needs knowledge, patience and, very importantly, empathy with the individual pupils. A good teacher is an exceptional person! In building communication skills, it is vital to realize that given a number of nouns and a (mutually) discovered (invariant) relationship among them, that relationship can be expressed in a variety of differing sentences, and we can choose any one of those sentences: language skill is of paramount importance (Van Rooyen, n.d.).

2.3. Pupil – teacher in the past

Pupil teacher was a training program in wide use before the twentieth century, as an apprentice system for teachers. With the emergence in the beginning of the nineteenth century of education for the masses, the demand for teachers increased. By 1840, it had become evident that the academic preparation of students for teacher training in a college system was inadequate. In 1846, Britain formalized a pupil-teacher system, focusing on training middle-class teachers, in which a senior pupil of at least thirteen years old served as an apprentice, typically for five years, to learn the teaching profession. Pupil-teachers acted as teachers of younger children, learning from observation and practical application, while simultaneously completing their own educations.

This was widely criticized for its inability to provide adequate professional preparation, and in the 1870s and 1880s, pupil teachers began being offered instruction at centers nationwide throughout Britain, which were designed to improve their training. The centers provided professional training by the best teachers in the elementary school system but were not standardized. Most students who participated in center programs spent half of their training on theory at the centralized school and half of their training with hands-on teaching in schools ("Pupil-Teacher", n.d.).

2.4. Student motivation in EFL

2.4.1. Student motivation

Student motivation is an essential element that is necessary for quality education. Howdo we know when students are motivated? They pay attention, they begin working on tasks immediately, they ask questions and volunteer answers, and they appear to be happy and eager (Palmer, 2007; cited in Williams and Williams, 2011). Basically, very little if any learning can occur unless students are motivated on a consistent basis. The five key ingredients impacting student motivation are: student, teacher, content, method/process, and environment. For example, the student must have access, ability, interest, and value education. The teacher must be well trained, must focus on and monitor the educational process, be dedicated and responsive to his/her students, and be inspirational. The content must be accurate, timely, stimulating, and pertinent to the student's current and future needs. The method or process must be inventive, encouraging, interesting, beneficial, and provide tools that can be applied to the student's real life. The environment needs to be accessible, safe, positive, personalized as much as possible, and empowering. Motivation is optimized when students are exposed to a large number of these motivating experiences and variables on a regular basis. That is, students ideally should have many sources of motivation in their learning experience in each class (Palmer, 2007; Debnath, 2005; D'Souza and Maheshwari, 2010; cited in Williams and Williams, 2011).

Goal-directed activities are started and sustained by motivation. "Motivational processes are personal/internal influences that lead to outcomes such as choice, effort, persistence, achievement, and environmental regulation" (Schunk & DiBenedetto, 2020; cited in Sauber Millacci, 2022).

There are two types of motivation: intrinsic and extrinsic.
Intrinsic motivation is internal to a person. For example, you may be motivated to achieve satisfactory grades in a foreign language course because you genuinely want to become fluent in the language. Students like this are motivated by their interest, enjoyment, or satisfaction from learning the material. Not surprisingly, intrinsic motivation is congruous with higher performance and predicts student performance and higher achievement (Ryan & Deci, 2020; cited in Sauber Millacci, 2022).

Extrinsic motivation is derived from a more external source and involves a contingent reward (Benabou & Tirole, 2003; cited in Sauber Millacci, 2022). For example, a student may be motivated to achieve satisfactory grades in a foreign language course because they receive a tangible reward or compliments for good grades. Their motivation is fueled by earning external rewards or avoiding punishments. Rewards may even include approval from others, such as parents or teachers.

Self-determination theory addresses the *why* of behavior and asserts that there are various motivation types that lie on a continuum, including external motivation, internal motivation, and amotivation (Sheehan et al., 2018; cited in Sauber Millacci, 2022).

2.4.1.1. Ways to Boost Motivation for Learning Activity

Since the motivation is determined by a complex of variables, both inside and outside the subject, the teachers need to know what kind of motivation each student possesses in order to find the means and the ways to motivate him/her better for the activity of learning. Identifying each type of motivation can be facilitated by knowing some indicators that are specific to one type or another. For example, in the case of intrinsic motivation, Barth (2002; cited in Caprioara, 2019) considers that the main indicators are the following: a high level of concentration; the existence of spontaneous initiatives; the existence of an energetic attitude; the existence of a climate of free exchange and obedience to the other; expressing a shared pleasure; an expression of confidence. Based on the identification of the motivational structure of the pupils they work with, the teacher can design a specific strategy to amplify their motivation for the learning activity. The resources available to the teacher in this process are both the specialty literature and, above all, the didactic creativity, which is practically unlimited.

In relation to the strategies that can amplify students' motivation for learning, we will selectively present some points of view by specialists. Thus, Osterrieth (1978; cited in Caprioara, 2019) considers that among the most important possible ways of enhancing students' motivation are the following: permanent information of the pupils about the performances obtained at different types of activities; ensuring success in learning; the use of praise and not blame. Another author worthy of mention, Beauté (1994; cited in Caprioara, 2019) lists other ways of enhancing motivation such as emphasizing the importance of content in different contexts of use, and making students aware of the fact that learning inevitably implies the consensus on the special efforts they have to make.

On the same note, Biehler and Snowman (1986; cited in Caprioara, 2019) offer a series of suggestions for teachers, of which we selectively present the most important ones: making sustained efforts from teachers to make each subject interesting; using behavioral modification techniques to help students work for distant purposes; taking into account the individual differences between pupils in terms of their abilities, attitude towards school, individual work rhythm etc.; meeting the needs of the pupils (psychological, safety, affiliation, respect, etc.); increasing the number of attractive activities and diminishing the danger of non-involvement of students; providing (or creating) direct learning experiences that provide a realistic level of aspirations, enhancing self-confidence etc.; encouraging students who have problems, difficulties in overcoming them and developing self-confidence; the requirement for students to translate what they have learned into different educational disciplines and into practice.

Very interesting and very effective are the proposals of other authors when it comes to enhancing students' motivation for instruction and learning. For example, Viau (1999; cited in Caprioara, 2019) emphasizes the role of determining factors (conditions) for school motivation as levers of action to trigger and amplify it: the perception of the value of an activity; the perception of one's own ability to carry out an activity; the perception of the controllability (level of control over an activity). Regarding the perception of the value of an activity, it should be noted that the higher the value of an activity, the greater the degree of motivation of the students will be amplified. On the other hand, the more an activity is perceived as less valuable, the less motivated and less interested in participating in its realization the students are. As regards the student's perception of his/her competence to perform an activity, it can be stated that the pupil will become more motivated for an activity when he/she realizes that he/she possesses the necessary skills to accomplish that activity and they will be less motivated in the opposite situation. Consequently, students need to be

helped to develop skills to carry out the various school activities and to match their competencies to the various categories of tasks they will have to solve in the different moments of their training. They also need to be helped by the teacher to improve their perceptions of their competencies. In this sense, some authors (Marzano et al., 1992, cited in Viau, 1999, p. 176; cited in Caprioara, 2019) offer teacher suggestions to help students improve perceptions about their own skills: students need to set their own standards of success in a realistic manner and not to constantly be appreciated through their colleagues; students should not be judged too severely when committing mistakes and they should understand the role and importance of errors in the learning process (to distinguish between error and guilt/fault); in the work with mediocre students, the teacher divides activities into microactivities; when the context is favorable, the teacher allows each learner to define his/her own learning goals (goals must be clear and short-term), depending on their own capacities (the teacher must ensure that students know and want to use learning and self-regulatory strategies); students are aware of what they are doing well and what needs to be improved. Finally, with regard to the perception of the controllability of an activity, controllability means that the student anticipates, on the one hand, the way in which an activity will take place (its moments and sequences) and, on the other hand, the consequences or what follows of its deployment.

Viau (1999; cited in Caprioara, 2019) offers a series of suggestions to improve students' perceptions of the level of control they can have on how learning is done: a) empowering pupils with the learning process in which they are involved, which assumes organizing, planning, and managing learning. The teacher has to teach them how they can control their own learning and create the conditions to do it; b) organizing training and learning activities to enable students to make choices and take up learning; c) planning activities with a level of difficulty and complexity corresponding to the students' real abilities and possibilities, which are desirable factors in the causal attribution of the achievements (successes or failures) obtained in learning; d) instrumenting students with learning and self-regulatory strategies and their awareness of their importance in learning; e) raising students' awareness of the importance of attribution perceptions on motivation for learning and, implicitly, on school results/performance; f) avoid embarrassing or debilitating situations that can determine/affect the affective-emotional state of the students; g) emphasize the importance of the effort and time investment in learning, which are essential factors for success (Caprioara, 2019).

2.4.2. EFL
English as a Foreign Language, or EFL, refers to learning and using English as an additional language in a non-English speaking country. It can be compared with ESL and ESOL, which refer mainly to learning English as a new resident in an English-speaking country.

In the classroom, EFL materials tend to be written for learners either studying English in their own country or on a short course in an English-speaking country (British Council, n.d.).

2.4.3. Student as teacher activities
Student as teacher type activities are not new in the EFL field and are often referred to using a range of terms with slightly varying meanings such as *peer-teaching* or *partner learning* (Kalkowski, 2001; cited in McAleese, 2019). Studies have shown such activities to be beneficial in a number of areas, from improving competence on the subject to building confidence and teamwork/leadership skills (Mynard & Almarzouqi, 2006; cited in McAleese, 2019).

3. THE METHODOLOGICAL PART - TEACHER FOR A DAY IN MY CLASSROOM

The project method was used in this case, following the four steps (as described by Bordia, 2022): project selection, planning, execution, and evaluation. Below is a detailed description of the teacher for a day as performed in my classroom.

3.1. Initial dilemma

At first, I was very skeptical about the idea of primary school children teaching their peers. The main concern was of course incorrect content, and which students would actually be prepared to act as teachers and how they would cope with the entire situation. Nonetheless, I decided to give this a try because the students would be teaching content that had already been covered in class. They would probably come up with interesting ways of reviewing that material.

Step one was to present the project to the students in detail. Quite a few questions were asked as to the number of students being able to participate. I was very much surprised by the incredible interest on the part of the students. Their next question was whether it was possible to work in pairs. From past experiences, I knew that students preparing and teaching a lesson in small groups was most effective. Group work makes them feel less intimidated when standing in front of a class teaching. So, the decision was made for the students to work in pairs, this way each student would participate in an equal amount of work. The students desiring to participate paired up nicely. In almost all cases there was one high(er) ability student with a lower ability student.

3.2. Preparation (topics, time limits and support)

The pairs participating in the project were given a number of topics to choose from and each decided on their own which they would like to teach. This enabled a number of contents to be reviewed and keep the other students interested. The time limit for the actual lesson was set to 5 to 10 minutes per pair. It was obvious that the pairs would need much more time to prepare and actually teach the lesson, as things never go as planned as far as students are concerned. In the preparation stage, I thought it best to give the students as much creative freedom as possible. They could come for advice at any point if they were lost. Some students took great advantage of that and wanted to make their teaching experience as authentic as possible, while others were more confident in themselves and needed little help. The suggestion for all the participating students was to have some sort of interaction on the part of the class, be it a handout, a quiz, spot-the-difference game, or something else. They were also asked to prepare all the material they needed for that class in advance so it could be reviewed and changed if needed.

3.3. Execution

I came up with this idea of wanting to try this student-teacher experience in only one of my classes. Since there were many students wanting to participate in the project we divided them into two groups, according to the topic of their lesson. The first two pairs were scheduled on one day (Thursday), and the second two on the next (Friday). This would give us ample opportunity to do all the lessons without haste and extra stress.

3.3.1. The Thursday group

There were two pairs in this group. We started with a short introduction, immediately followed by the lessons.

- Pair number 1 presented Great Britain and its hidden facts and treasures (we had previously discussed Great Britain, comparing it to Canada). I gave the pair total control of the classroom with all the necessary tools and facilities. This first pair was a high ability couple who cruised through their lesson with no problems whatsoever. Their lesson was fun and engaging, especially toward the end with a special online quiz. They more or less stuck to the timeframe and were very confident. During the presentation they had to get some students' attention since some students have a very short attention span. But, in the end, everything turned out as they had planned. My intervention was not needed at all, so I could sit at the back of the classroom and just enjoy the show.

- Pair number 2 talked about the topic of Halloween. We had been discussing holidays and special days in the UK and the USA just shortly before that. This pair consisted of one high and one low ability student. Their lesson was a bit confusing, so my intervention was needed a few times in between. They ignored questions from other students, they spoke too quickly, and they used some misinformation. Their timeframe was over the limit a great deal. At the end though, students in the classroom were motivated to do their q & a type of handout as the topic was interesting, and everybody had a great time correcting each other's answers.

At the end of the lesson, I congratulated all the participants on their great work and effort, and they told the other students and me their feelings while preparing for the lesson, during the lesson itself and the end.

3.3.2. The Friday group

There were also two pairs in this group. Again, we started with a short introduction of the pairs and their topics.

- Pair number 3 focused their attention on a grammatical point, namely the difference between adverbs and adjectives in English. That was a topic we had previously discussed in detail, so this was a great way for reviewing the contents. This pair consisted of two similarly average ability students. Their presentation was confident, within the timeframe and very interesting for the students listening to it. They prepared a handout with an exercise at the end, a spot-the-mistake type of exercise and everybody happily went about doing the exercises. There was a lot of laughter because the student-teachers wrote down some really funny examples.

- Pair number 4 dealt with yet another grammatical point, this time it was about the Going to Future Tense. This also had been previously discussed in our lessons. The pair consisted again of two average ability students, and they did a great job. The review was short and concise with lots of practical examples to follow. They also did a presentation quiz with lots of pictures and funny answers. Theirs was perhaps my most favorite of the lessons taught by the students. They were confident and no intervention on my part was needed. It was a bit on the short side, but nonetheless it was liked by everybody.

Again, I congratulated all the participants on their great work and effort at the end of the class, and they told other students and me their feelings while preparing for the lesson, during the lesson itself and at the end.

3.3.3. Evaluation in the classroom

After all the four pairs of student-teachers finished their lessons, we did a short evaluation in the classroom. First, I had some questions for them in connection with their feelings when standing in front of their classmates. Some said they liked it, others not so much. Some mentioned it was really difficult because their classmates were not listening to them. My next question was whether or not they would change anything now that it was all

over, and they had seen how their lessons turned out. Again, some said yes, some said no. Moreover, I wanted to know the feelings of the students in the classroom, if they understood the lessons, if they were presented clearly enough, and whether they learnt anything from them. The class was quite enthusiastic about the entire experience and expressed a desire to have more lessons taught by students in the future.

4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

As already mentioned above, the results of this student-teacher or teacher for a day project absolutely speak in favor of it. All the participants stated having learnt a great deal in the process. The same is true for classmates. Some of them realized it was no easy job being a teacher as a lot of students keep interrupting or commenting in a way "do we really need to do that?" or "do we really have to do homework?" etc. All the participants stated that this made them see how some students' behavior can disrupt all the preparation, all the hard work that is put into teaching. Others stated they would never want to be teachers themselves because this job is really hard, and they have no patience for it. They all realized how much work is put into a lesson, a quiz, a handout, an online quiz, etc. Still others, on the other hand, said that it was really nice explaining things to their classmates because they explained it the way everybody would understand. This is namely a skill I am trying to teach them in my classes. Explaining things so that everybody will understand. And it is no easy task and skill to learn. Most children think that learning a foreign language is super easy and demands no effort at all, the only thing you need to do is play videogames or listen to music. Of course, this is true to some extent but this will not give you the confidence in speaking, writing, and reading, which are all important skills when learning a language.

It is a fact that many students are afraid of standing in front of a group or in front of their classmates, let alone carrying out a lesson or an activity. Projects like this make the transition from listener/student to speaker/presenter/teacher much easier, students are much less intimidated and their attitude changes for the better.

As Viau (1999; cited in Caprioara, 2019) mentions, this activity empowers students with the learning process, they have to organize, make choices, plan activities, it raises their awareness, emphasize the importance of effort and time investment in learning, which all together increases classroom motivation.

An important lesson that one can learn about being a teacher is that a teacher is not there to teach as much as he or she is there to guide students to learn to be responsible for their own learning process and knowledge.

5. CONCLUSION

It can be deduced that projects like a teacher for a day or student-teacher are very productive, and almost always their result is having fun for the students, the teacher and other participants. It is true that these projects cannot be used all the time and in every possible situation or lesson. However, they are great for reviewing lessons in a creative way whilst having fun. They build self-confidence, improve teamwork skills and students' motivation, they make correcting mistakes by peers work miracles as this is definitely preferable to the teacher always doing it; last but not least, they result in great atmosphere with lots of laughter. The quality of the lessons definitely varies from one lesson to another, but usually all the students get involved. And that's the goal of every teacher – to get the students fully involved while sharing information and working on communicating.

Teacher for a day can be a good example of students understanding they have to work for their learning goals, that things need to be planned, discussed, thought about, that the right activities need to be chosen for the right learning situation. All of this together can increase classroom motivation by students realizing that things they learn in a foreign language class can be used straight away in any given situation, while meeting a foreigner in the street in this globalized world, travelling, playing videogames, chatting online, etc. These are all goal directed activities being more typical of intrinsic motivation, which is much harder to achieve in any person, not just a student. Its advantages are being an active learning experience, in calculating a sense of responsibility, improving collaboration among students, improving communication skills and critical thinking skills (Bordia, 2022). They are intended for practicing all their language skills (listening, speaking, reading, and writing) and, as mentioned before, they produce laughter which is a great way for learning in a relaxed and fun environment, producing higher levels of learning achievement. The goal of a foreign language teacher is helping students find their own way of developing communication skills and confidence in expressing themselves by means of support, guidance, motivation, and goal- oriented activities, such as teacher for a day.

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