

## **ENSURING TOTAL LEARNER PARTICIPATION IN LITERATURE CLASS**

Learners in any English or Literature class are diverse in many ways. Sometimes, the challenge is to ensure that each learner is fully engaged in class and actively thinking. As has been seen, some learners are naturally energetic or endowed with a high level of activeness. They are those who often raise their hands and appear to be all-knowing. Learners who never tend to stand and speak, on the other hand, do exist. This is why every teacher in English, especially those teaching literature, should be loaded and armed with techniques and strategies to subdue this reality.

The following are some of the most recent strategies and techniques that a teacher could employ to curb daydreaming in class. These not only ensure a high degree of participation among pupils or students, but they also allow learners to exert effort to think critically. These techniques and strategies are aimed at both collaboration and communication skills. Some of the following teaching tips also provide every teacher with ideas on how to integrate the use of interactive technology in teaching. As teachers, we have the authority to contextualize and modify these teaching techniques. The purpose is to tailor it to the peculiarities of our own classes.

### **a. Rippling and Bouncing Answers**

Proposed by Himmele and Himmele (2011), this teaching strategy is intended to elicit answers that will be processed by the entire class. It is classified as a collaborative teaching approach. Moreover, it depends upon the skill of the teacher to craft controversial, higher-order, and critical questions. It also banks on the learners' reflective and divergent thinking skills and relies on effective communication and collaboration of ideas among the learners. This technique can be used either as a pre-reading or post-reading activity.

*Step-by-Step Directions:*

- 1. The teacher writes an open-ended question about the text.*
- 2. Provide ample time for the learners to think about their answers.*
- 3. All learners respond individually to the prompt or question or controversy.*
- 4. All learners share their responses in dyads or triads.*
- 5. Volunteers then share. Pairs or small groups will read a sentence summary when they are asked to share.*

### **b. Link-It Cards!**

Encouraging the learners to share their thoughts is easy, but ensuring that they have words to mumble and share is another story. The tenets of constructivism as a teaching theory may be applied to allow the learners to take the initiative for their own thought-sharing experience. Hence, using "Link-It Cards" heavily relies on the power of scaffolding or learner-support in the early stages of thought processing in order for him or her to be an active learner. This activity uses prompting statements as scaffolds,

especially for those who might encounter difficulty in starting their thoughts. The learners will continue the prompt cards they pick. Before selecting the prompt cards, show them all incomplete statements on the board and give them enough time to organize their answers. In this method, “wait-time” is given to both fast and slow learners.

#### *Step-by-Step Directions*

1. *The teacher writes the instructions including the prompts. For instance, “Look for the meaning of your classmate’s answers by asking him or her a question starting with any of the following statements:*

- a. I did not understand that part on...*
- b. I understand that part, however, I am not so sure about...*
- c. How about if...*
- d. So you are saying that...”*

2. *The questions are written on the cards.*

3. *Distribute the cards or let each learner choose a card.*

4. *Allow time for conversation*

5. *Process the responses in large group sharing*

#### **c. Finding Partner in a Music Mingle**

This is a discussion-based activity technique that ensures total participation (Himmele, P., Himmele, W., & Potter, 2014). Learners are blindfolded as they look for partners to converse with afterwards. Music plays a crucial role in this activity as a variation to consider auditory learners. The teacher has to come up with controversies, open-ended, and reflective questions about the text. A teacher uses this activity to develop the divergent thinking ability of the learners and their speaking literacy. It can be done at least thrice. Rules must also be discussed prior to this activity, like: avoid leaving someone when the music stops, respect the opinions and answers of your classmates, stopping and speaking with the same person twice as well as side chatter or side conversation are prohibited.

#### *Step-by-Step Directions:*

1. *The teacher prepares a piece of lively music- something that the learners can relate to and enjoy.*

2. *The controversy or open-ended question about the text to be read is posted on the board.*

3. *Allow time for answers to be conceptualized*

4. *Blindfold the learners*

5. *Rearrange their positions and remind them to keep silent*

6. *Play the music and allow them to freely roam around the classroom*

7. *Stop the music and allow them to find their pair*

8. *Let them remove their blindfolds and allow time to share*

#### **d. Expanding Your Network**

This activity is best suited for debriefing or wrapping up a lesson. The teacher’s responsibility is to provide stimuli for debriefing such as questions, or incomplete statements. The teacher should offer metacognitive questions to engage the learners in

conversation effectively. The aim of this activity is for the learners to expand their network. They accomplish this by sharing their views with their peers, with whom they have not yet spoken throughout the lesson.

*Step-by-Step Directions:*

- 1. Have the debriefing question or prompt posted on the board.*
- 2. Allow time for answers to be conceptualized*
- 3. Ring a bell or use any sound signal for them to look for a partner with whom they have not spoken in the whole period.*
- 4. Allow time for conversation and sharing*
- 5. Ring a bell again and play the sound signal*

### **e. Human Likert Scale and Savvy Survey**

This activity will give learners the chance to enhance their decision-making skills and let them take a stand on an issue. At the same time, learners will have the opportunity to converse with their classmates who share their viewpoints. It is an excellent way to focus on themes and concepts within the text being discussed. It results in the generation of a wide array of options. The paramount requirement for it to be successful is a set of highly debatable and controversial issues or topics.

*Step-by-Step Directions:*

- 1. The teacher identifies four spots in the room such as: Strongly Disagree, Disagree, Agree, and Strongly Agree.*
- 2. The highly debatable question or issue is posted on the board.*
- 3. Allow time for the conceptualization of answers*
- 4. Ring a bell or use any sound signal for them to stand at the designated post that corresponds to their level of agreement.*
- 5. Allow time for conversation and sharing with their groupmates*
- 6. Ring a bell or play the sound signal*

One variation of this is the use of the savvy survey. It integrates the use of the gadgets of the learners to answer survey questions. It allows them to discuss and defend their answers. One app that can be used is Kahoot ®, which can be an interactive way to conduct a survey.

The total participation techniques outlined above are just a few of the many techniques literature teachers can use. Remember that what matters in the class is not the entertainment, but rather the learning and literacy growth of the learners. After all, academic time is precious.

References:

1. Himmele, P., Himmele, W., & Potter, (2014). Total Literacy Techniques. Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development
2. Himmele and Himmele (2011). Total Participation Techniques: Making Every

Student an Active Learner. *Institute of Education Sciences.*  
<https://eric.ed.gov/?id=ED522224>