

INTERACTION PATTERNS

1. Group work

Students work in small groups on tasks that entail interaction; conveying information, for example, or group decision-making. The teacher walks around listening, intervenes little if at all

2. Closed-ended teacher questioning (IRF)

Only one “right” response gets approved. Sometimes cynically called the “Guess what the teacher wants you to say” game.

3. Individual work

The teacher gives a task or set of tasks, and students work on them independently; the teacher walks around monitoring and assisting where necessary.

4. Choral responses

The teacher gives a model which is repeated by all the class in the chorus; or gives a cue which is responded to in chorus.

5. Collaboration

Students do the same sort of tasks as in “individual work”, but work together, usually in pairs, to try to achieve the best results they can. The teacher may or may not intervene. (Note that this is different from “Group work”, where the task itself necessitates interaction.)

6. Student initiates, teacher answers

For example, in a guessing game: the students think of questions and the teacher responds; but the teacher decides who asks.

7. Full-class interaction

The students debate a topic or do a language task as a class; the teacher may intervene occasionally, to stimulate participation or to monitor.

8. Teacher talk

This may involve some kind of silent student response, such as writing from dictation, but there is no initiative on the part of the student.

9. Self-access

Students choose their own learning tasks, and work autonomously.

10. Open-ended teacher questioning

There are a number of possible “right” answers, so that more students answer each cue.

CLASSIFYING FORMS OF INTERACTION

Look at the various patterns of interaction described above and note for each one how active the teacher and students are in their participation, using the following code:

TT = Teacher very active, students only receptive
T =Teacher very active, students mainly receptive
TS =Teacher and students fairly equally active
S =Students active, teacher mainly receptive
SS =Students very active, teacher only receptive