

Carnegie Mellon University



Creating Space for Student Contributions in Foreign Language Literature Classes

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Overview

1. Warm-Up
2. Background Information
3. Transcript Activity
4. Debrief/Strategies for Discussion
5. Q&A

Think-Pair-Share

What are some difficulties you encounter with student participation during whole-class discussions?

What strategies do you use to overcome these difficulties?

Think-Pair-Share

Difficulties	Strategies
1. 2. 3.	1. 2. 3.

Background Information

General Classroom Discourse Patterns

- Discourse tends to be teacher dominated with limited opportunity for student participation (Forman & Ansell, 2001; Juzwik et al, 2008; Mehan, 1982)
- Patterns such as Initiate-Response-Feedback (IRF) are common in classroom discourse (Mehan, 1982; Sinclair & Coulthard, 1975)
- Patterns should be matched with instructional goals- IRF has potential to both support and limit student participation in classroom discourse (Boyd & Rubin, 2006; Cullen, 2002; Lee, 2007; McNeil, 2012; Walsh, 2002)

Background Information

Classroom Discourse Practices in Upper-level L2 Classes

- Discourse in L2 classrooms also tends to be teacher-dominated and discourse patterns, such as IRF, are common
- Student responses tend to be short, mainly in present tense, and require a lower cognitive demand (Adams, 2018; Mantero, 2002; Donato & Brooks, 2004)

Background Information

Classroom Discourse Practices in Upper-level L2 Classes

- Results indicate that student participation may be limited when it is perceived that there is one “correct” interpretation/answer (Mantero, 2002; Weist, 2004)
- Certain classroom discourse patterns may influence how students can interact in discussions (Adams, 2018)

Transcript Activity

Context

- “Introduction to Hispanic Literature and Cultural Studies”
- 3rd year upper-level Spanish course
- Films and texts from target countries (e.g., Spain, Bolivia, Dominican Republic)

Participants

- 11 students (8 females, 3 males)
- 1 instructor

Class Format

- 95%+ Spanish
- Lecture and whole-group discussions
- Occasional pair/small group discussions.

Transcript Activity

Read over transcript #1 and #2 and respond to questions with a partner.

Transcript Activity

What did you notice?

Strategies for Discussion

Be explicit

- Explain why discussion is important
- Recognize that there is more than one answer
- Teach students how to participate in the type of discussion you expect

Strategies for Discussion

Make space for students

- Avoid interrupting
- Ask follow-up questions
- Incorporate student responses into discussion

Strategies for Discussion

Plan out discussions/questions

- Create discussion topics that allow for multiple perspectives
- Use questions that move beyond recall and encourage different tenses and functions
- Plan for student-to-student interactions

Q&A

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