

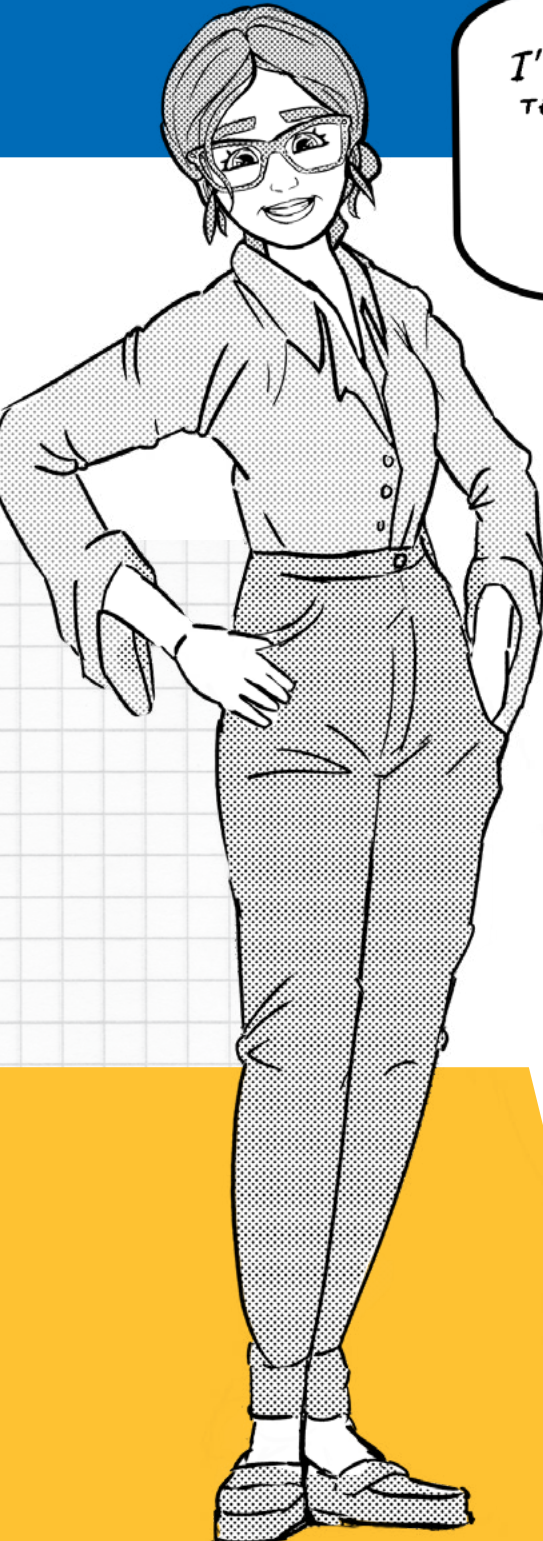


THE TEACHER IS ALSO A FACILITATOR



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Hi!
I'M JOLY, A VOCATIONAL AND TECHNICAL EDUCATION
TEACHER. IN ADDITION TO THIS WORKBOOK, YOU CAN
FIND MORE INFORMATION ABOUT RELATIONSHIP
MANAGEMENT IN THE CLASSROOM AT
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HAPPY READING!

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INTRODUCTION

When teaching, it is important to use a variety of strategies to engage students. It is essential to take the group into account, and it is crucial to foster positive relationships. Teachers must contribute to learning of content, while managing interactions and establishing a climate conducive to learning.

To do this, teachers may draw on the role of facilitator and its various functions. These relate to content (knowledge), procedures (classroom management) and classroom climate (relationships). Strategies of alternation, inspired by St-Arnaud (2003), also optimize communication between teacher and students.

Strategies of facilitation and alternation offer very concrete ways of acting in the classroom for teachers concerned with establishing a harmonious climate and effective management in order to achieve the course objectives.

WE SUGGEST

A workbook with two sections: facilitation acts, and strategies of alternation in communications.

Twelve acts of facilitation and various strategies related to the concept of alternation in communications will be described and explained in order to promote optimal management of relationships in the classroom.

TWELVE ACTS OF FACILITATION

DEFINITION

Group facilitation is defined by the various gestures and words used by the teacher to encourage, among other things, the participation of members within the group. Since the class is considered to be a group, facilitation activities will optimize learning and relationship management.

The proposed facilitation acts aim to meet each student's needs in terms of content comprehension. Their purpose is to promote active and equitable participation of each student in the group, all in an appropriate, pleasant, relaxed and respectful climate where everyone feels like they belong.

RELEVANCE

From the outset, it is important to make sure that everything is clear in terms of content, i.e., both the teacher's explanations and the actions that the students must perform. The fact that the teacher can establish links between the different notions and between the different interventions will facilitate comprehension and assimilation of the content. Punctuating the teaching with summaries and syntheses will also have a beneficial effect on learning retention.

Taking into account all the students in the group and involving them as equitably as possible in the exchanges will create a climate conducive to learning. When managing time and turns of speech effectively, the teacher provides a reassuring structure for all students.

Finally, teachers who can show warmth, lighten the mood, welcome every personality with integrity, and manage emotional situations encountered in class with tact and transparency will consolidate the feeling of belonging to the group and will establish a climate favourable to learning.

IMPLEMENTATION

We propose the following twelve facilitation acts classified under three categories: content, procedure, and climate

Content

Define

It is important to define the topics covered as well as the terms that might not be clear to all students. It is suggested that teachers define key and important terms in three different ways to ensure that all students understand. People do not always understand things the same way, or after the first explanation. This facilitation act takes this into account. Clearly defining concepts sets the table and ensures that the groundwork is laid and that everyone is talking about the same thing.

Rephrase

Rephrasing consists of repeating the student's comment or answer in your own words. This strategy is used to validate understanding or to explain again, in a different way, what has just been said. It is important not to rephrase systematically, but to only do so when necessary or appropriate. You must rely on your perception and interpretation of the group's body language and nonverbal cues to decide whether to rephrase or not. Observe the group and note your words' effect on the students.

Make connections

Teachers can make connections between similar or opposite ideas and statements. Making connections allows one to associate or dissociate ideas and opinions. It also allows for a more complete look at a situation and sometimes even a better understanding of certain content. It is also relevant to make connections with previous or upcoming lectures, between different skills, and with the labor market.

Summarize/synthesize

Summaries are made in chronological order. The teacher could summarize a discussion or a section of the lesson by mentioning elements that were discussed at the beginning, middle, and end of a given section. A synthesis, on the other hand, allows the ideas discussed to be grouped into categories, topics, opinions, etc. In syntheses, chronological order is not important. The teacher will synthesize part or all of the discussion by addressing salient points and pairing ideas. A synthesis often provides a fresh perspective on the content covered in class. Students then pursue their own reflections and learnings after class. Mind maps are good visual examples.

Procedure

Engage the quiet ones

Participation of all students in a group is valuable. Some are naturally quiet or shy and are unlikely to speak up in a group. The teacher will thus sometimes need to solicit their participation. If, from the outset, the teacher stresses how important it is for everyone to express themselves, the act of soliciting participation will be natural as it will not come as a surprise.

You can use a variety of techniques to solicit student participation:

- tell the group "I'd like to hear from those who haven't spoken much";
- address a student directly: "what do you think, Chloe?";
- let the student know beforehand that you would like them to answer the next question;
- scan the classroom, pausing to smile or nod empathetically, etc.

Over time, these students will gradually become comfortable in the group and you will not need to directly solicit their participation as much. However, if you never do this, they may remain quiet throughout the semester. Eliciting student participation also allows the teacher to validate everyone's comprehension.

Limit the talkative ones

Some students naturally take up a lot of space in class. Their energy and participation are often very much appreciated by teachers, and rightly so! These students should not be suppressed. However, it is important to make room for others. Teachers thus sometimes need to limit their spontaneity somewhat, and monitor their participation. You can do this for example, by prioritizing the less talkative ones when hands go up. You can also give them a time limit ("in a few words"). It is also possible, in more "extreme" cases, to finish their sentence (since talkative students tend to repeat themselves a lot) and subtly move on to another student. Make sure you're in control!

Time management

If teachers manage time efficiently, students will feel supported and structured. They will therefore be able to concentrate fully on learning. Teachers can provide verbal cues about time, for example, how much time is left before the break, how much time is allotted to each content, how much time is left to complete a learning activity, etc. It can also be useful to indicate the time allotted for speaking (this will help the most talkative ones to develop a structure).

Moderate turn-taking

It is appropriate to vary the ways of taking turns to speak: raising hands, spontaneous, speaking object, teacher designation, etc., while explicitly announcing the procedure adopted. Do not assume that raising hands is the only appropriate way of turn-taking, quite the contrary! Decide according to the topic and the desired exchanges.

Climate

Greet

This includes starting the class with greetings, informal discussions, jokes, etc., to create a pleasant atmosphere. Above all, the idea is to welcome all ideas and opinions with fairness and openness. Teachers' opinions can have a tremendous influence on the opinion of the group. Ideally, teachers should remain neutral in the exchange of opinions in class, so that everyone can express themselves honestly, without censorship. Teachers may guide discussions or answer questions, but under no circumstances should they pass judgment on what a student says. This would undermine their sense of ease and freedom of expression. Of course, when content and knowledge are being shared, teachers may correct the students' answers and comments, but always with respect and without judgment.

Relax

A relaxed and pleasant atmosphere greatly influences learning in the classroom. Do not hesitate to use humour and to play down the importance of situations when necessary. Feeling good, feeling comfortable, and having fun in class is a winning combination!

Verbalize

This facilitation act is not as frequently used as the others, but is very useful when there is an uncomfortable moment in class or when something is wrong. This includes naming the feeling of uneasiness, and allowing the students to talk about it. The worst thing to do is ignoring the situation, sweeping it under the rug, and pretending it never happened. The act of verbalization is about naming things and taking time to address the situation with an open mind. If the relevant students do not wish to talk about the situation, that should be respected. However, teachers must ensure that the classroom climate is not disrupted and that everyone feels comfortable expressing themselves.

Objectivize

Another facilitation act not frequently used. It comes in handy when a conflict emerges between one or more students. To objectivize, one needs to separate the facts from the emotional charge. The discussion should then continue with the rest of the group until the tension subsides.

ALTERNATING BETWEEN COMMUNICATION CHANNELS

DEFINITION

This strategy allows teachers to switch between different communication channels for reception, facilitation, content information, and maintenance of the relationship.

Definition of different communication channels:

- Reception (R) corresponds to the teachers' listening mode (silence), when they are open-minded and attentive to verbal and nonverbal cues expressed by the students.
- Facilitation (F) is used to engage students and to promote interactions. This includes asking questions to a student or to the group.
- Maintenance of the relationship (MR) seeks to structure the relationship, the course, and the learning activities.
- Content information (CI) relates to course material and content.

RELEVANCE

Alternating between communication channels promotes interactions between teachers and their students. By varying the channels of communication, teachers keep the students attentive, motivated, and involved. This will have a positive impact on the classroom climate and on the cooperative relationship.

IMPLEMENTATION

The following are examples of application for each of the four communication channels used in alternation.

Reception (R)

Active listening

Active listening is more than simple passive listening. It involves showing the speaker that we are genuinely interested in what they are saying, for example, by nodding, using phrases such as “uh-huh,” smiling, looking them in the eyes, avoiding distractions, rephrasing what they are saying, etc. It is also important to avoid judgment and keep an open mind.

Use of silences

When asking a question or after teaching an important concept, the use of silences allows students to speak up and express themselves. Silences also provide opportunities to “digest information.” A moment of silence can last up to ten seconds. During this pause, teachers can also take a few seconds to organize their thoughts.

Scanning

“Scanning” the class with their eyes allows teachers to observe the students’ nonverbal cues, and assess their reactions to instruction, their understanding of the content, and their level of attention, as well as moderating turn-taking.

Supervision of exercises or learning activities

The teacher moves around the classroom, workshop or laboratory, making being available when necessary.

Facilitation (F)

Question

Ask open-ended or closed-ended questions depending on the context. Questions can be used to validate understanding, to assess students' current knowledge of the topic, or to spark curiosity and interest.

Ask students to come up to the board

Rephrase what the students say or have them rephrase it

Refer to the twelve facilitation acts mentioned earlier.

Get students engaged

To do this, use a variety of teaching methods that encourage students to participate and avoid them being passive.

Maintenance of the relationship (MR)

(This is all the information given regarding the relationship, planning, and interactions).

Communicate the common goal

This includes naming the goal or sub-goals of the course, activity, or exercise, and making sure that everyone present fully understands.

Giving instructions

Clearly state all instructions describing how an activity will unfold, e.g., the sequence, everyone's roles and responsibilities, the duration, etc.

Valuing

Valuing is used to encourage and praise students. Words such as "Well done!" "Congratulations!" "I'm proud of you!" etc. may be used. Teachers should also praise students for what they did well or for the key element of a good answer. Valuing is thus a positive and descriptive feedback: "Well done! You did a really good job applying the dye."

Any other information NOT related to the content (topic) of the course, such as guideline reminders or informal discussions with students.

Maintaining the relationship is not a habit that teachers develop naturally. They must give it some thought because the relationship does not structure itself alone. Someone has to make sure that the relationship is well established and it is the teacher's role to do this. Maintenance of the relationship also occurs when disruptive events arise in the classroom: What's going on?

Content information (CI)

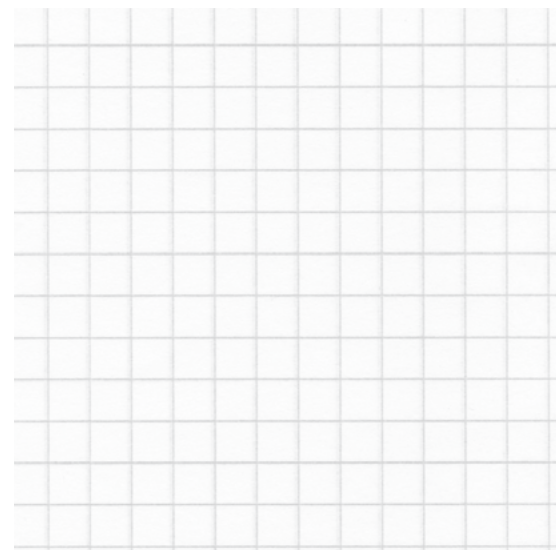
(This is all the information related to the content of the course)

The act of teaching

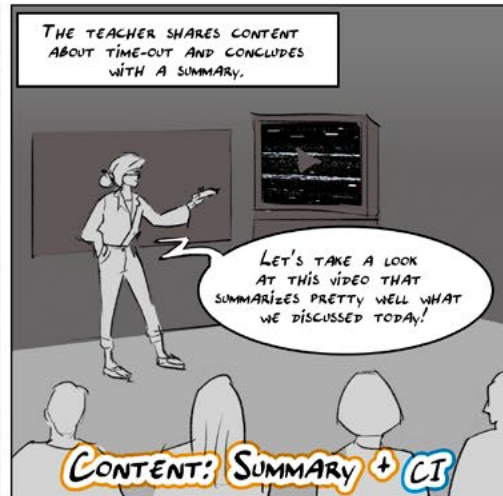
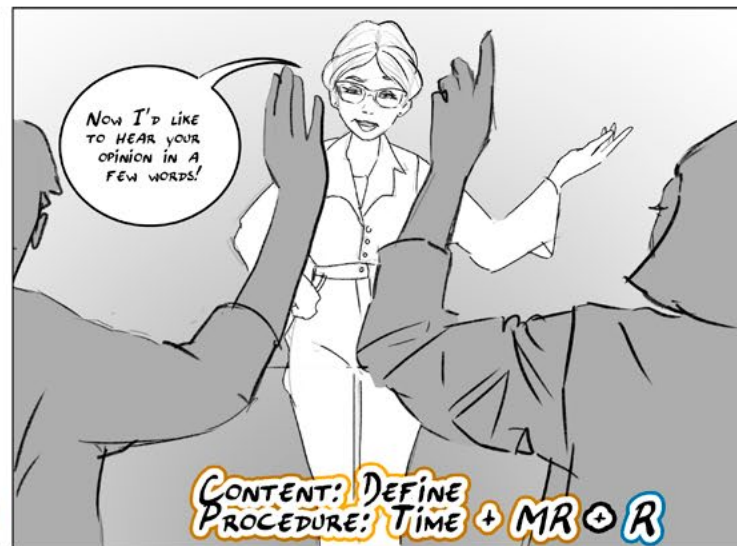
This refers to all teaching methods of conveying information, e.g., lecturing, demonstrating, giving examples, etc. Ideally, teachers should vary their strategies every 20 minutes.

Explanations related to the content (topic) in response to student questions.

Teachers may answer themselves or have the students answer among themselves. They can then add to the information following the students' responses.



ANIMATION + ALTERNATION



INSPIRATIONS AND COLLABORATIONS

THE MATERIAL PRESENTED IN THIS DOCUMENT IS INSPIRED BY:

UQAM TEACHERS

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