**Describing Teachers**

Using metaphors to describe what teachers do inside their classrooms is more helpful than trying to define teaching itself. The reason for this lies in the fact that the verb to teach is broad and vague and can be synonymous to socialise, train, coach, civilise, lesson, school and many other verbs.All teachers say that they are like actors because they feel as if they are on a stage. Others talk about themselves as orchestral leaders because they direct conversation and set the pace and the tone, yet others feel like gardeners because they grow seeds and then watch them grow.

Zoltan Dornyei and Tim Murphey see the business of teaching as the exercise of group leadership. For them teachers’ principal responsibility is to foster good relationships with the group in front of them so that learners can work together cooperatively in a spirit of friendliness and harmonious creativity. In order to achieve this, Zoltan and Tim suggest that, « A group conscious teaching style involves an increasing encouragment of and reliance on the group’s own resources and the active facilitation of autonomous learning that is in accordance with the maturity level of the group. »

When teachers and learners meet each other for the first time, the former suggest and the latter expect leadership and direction. This gives the learners a clear focus and makes them feel secure at the same time. But as the group develops its identity, teachers will want torelax their grip and foster more democratic class practices where learners are involved in the process of decision making and decision finding.

When considering the teaching craft, two things need to be said. In the first place, being democratic and letting learners participatein decision making takes more efforts and organisation than controlling the class from the front. Furthermore, promoting learners’ autonomy, not just learn by their own, but take responsibility for their learning, is only one view of the teaching/ learning relationship.In some situations, teachers and learners as well feel more confortablewith a more autocratic leadership style, and while this might not suit the preference of some, it is highly attractive to others. Regardless of the leadership style teachers choose, these latter are called to play many roles in their classrooms. Their ability to carry these roles out effectively depends heavily on the rapport they establish with their learners and on their level of knowledge and skill.

In the classroom, learners pick up much from the way their teachers walk into the room at the start of the first lesson. The way they dress, the stance they adopt and the attitude to the class make usually immediate impressions on learners. In this context, teachers need to make some kind of distinction between who they are, and who they are as teachers.This does not mean that they should be dishonest, but they must be congruent and present a professional face to the learners which they find interesting and effective.

**The Roles of a Teacher**

Since the aim of all committed teachers is to facilitate learning, teachers are called to play different roles which will help them reach their goal. However, it is worth nothing that some of these roles come naturally to most teachers, while others have to be thought about more carefully.

**The Teacher as a Controller**

When a teacher acts as a controller s/he is in charge of the class and the activities taking place and is often leading from the front. Controllers take the register, tell students things, organize drills and read aloud and in various ways show the characteristics of a teacher- fronted classrom. Being a controller has less obvious advantages .First, it denies students access to their experiental learning by focusing everything on the teacher. Second, it cuts down on opportunities for learners to speak because the class is acting as a whole, just few learnerswill have a chance to say something.Third, over-reliance on transmission teaching can result in lack of variety in activities and classroom atmosphere in general.Of course, there are a lot of instances when acting as a controller makes sense. For example, when giving examples, organising question and answer work, lecturing, making announcements or restoring order in the class. However, it is worth noting that sticking to one mode of behaviour deniesourselves and the learners many possibiities and modes of learning which are not just good for learning itself, but for our learners’ enjoyment of that learnig.

**The Teacher as a Participant**

Traditionally during role-play, learners discussions or group activities, teachers prefer to stand back and give their learners the chance to get on with the activities and only interveningto offer feedback and correct mistakes. However, there are also times when teachers want to join and even asked by learners to do so not only as teachers, but as participants. There are good reasons why the might want to participate. For instance, a teacher can liven things up from inside instead of prompting and organising from outside. When everything goes well, learners enjoy having teachers with them and for the teachers, participating is often more enjoyable than acting as a source. The danger when teachers act as participants is that they can easily dominate the preceedings. This fact is not surprising as teachers have more English at their disposal compares to learners. Equally important, teachers are perceived as authoritative figures and hence are listened to with greater attention than other learners.

**The Teacher as a Prompter**

Once involved in role-play, for example, learners lose the thread of what is going on, or they may have the thread but unable to proceed for lackof vocabulary. What should teachers do in these circustances ? Let the learners work things for themselves ornudge them forward in a discrete and suppotive way ? If teachers opt for the latter, they are adopting some kind of prompting role. In such situations, teachers find themselves in delicate position. On one hand they want to help but on the other they think that it is not appropriate, at this stage, to take charge. This can be explained by the fact that teachers are keen to encourage learners to think creatively than to hang on their words.Thus teachers occasionally offer words or phrases, suggest that the learners say something. For example, « Ask him/her how to say that, or suggest what could come next in a paragraph. When prompting, teachers need to do things in a sensitive and encouraging ways, but above all, with discretion because if adamant, teachers risk to take the intiative away from the learners and if too retiring, they may not supply learners with the right amount of encouragement.

**The Teacher as a Source**

Taking on some of the aforementioned roles may be inappropriate in some activities. For example, in writing, or preparation for a presentation, acting as a prompter or as a participant may be unwelcome. However, learners may still have need of their teachers as a source. They might need to ask : « How to say or write something or what a word or a phrase means ? » They might as well need an information in the middle of an activity. They might also need to know where tolook for a specific information. In such situations, teachers can be te most important sources for their learners.

Two things need to be said about the teachers who decide to be a source for their learners. First, no teacher knows everything about the language. So questions like « What is the difference between A and B ? Why can’t I say or how to say.. ? » , are not easily answered. In these situations, teachers offer guidance as to where learners can go to look for information and may even direct them to a good dictionary. Second, teachers should be courageous to say we do not have the answers for the questions who have asked right now, but we will tell you tomorrow. When acting as a source, teachers want to be helpful and available, but at the same time want to resist the urge to spoonfeed the learners.

**Describing Learners**

Decisions about what to teach and how to teach something depend to a large extent on the age of the learners. Learners of different ages have different needs, competences and cognitive skills. This is why teachers must tailor their lessons according to the type of learners in front of them.

**Young Learners**

**1/** They respond to meaning even if they do not understand individual words.

**2/** They often learn indirectly. They do not learn from one source or topic.

**3/** Their learning does not result from explanation only. They use all their senses when learning.

**4/** They find abstract topics very difficult to grasp.

**5/** They display enthusiasm and curiosity about the world.

**6/** They have need for individual attention and approval**.**

**7/** They are keen to talk about themselves and respond well to learning that uses them and their own lives as main topics in the classroom.

**8/** They have a limited attention and can get bored and lose interest if the activities are not engaging.

**Adolescents**

Adolescents are seen as problem learners because they are in a pronounced search for identity and self-esteem They need to feel good about themselves and valued. Teenagers have a cuteneed for peer approval and are extremly vulnerable to negative judgment of their own age group. Most adolescents have some characteristics in common. They all understand the need for learning and with the right goals they can be responsible enouh to do what is required from them.

**Adults** are notable for a number of special characteristics.

1/ They can engage with abstract thought.

2/ They have a wide range of life experiences to draw on.

3/ They tend to be more disciplined and prepared to struggle despite boredom.

4/ They have a clear understanding of what they are learning and what they want to go out with it.

Adult learners, however, have a number of characteristcs which can make learning and teaching problematic.

1/ They can be critical of some teaching methods.

2/ They may have experienced failure or criticism which can make them anxious and under-confidentabout learnig a language.

3/ Many of them worry that their intellectual powers have diminished with age.

**Interacting with Students**

In order to interact successfully with students, teachers need to be knowledgeable about the following characteristics :

1-**Recognizing students** : Students want their teachers to know who they are .They would like their teachers to know their names, but they also appreciate when teachers have some understanding of their character. Teachers can use many strategies to enable themselves to recognize their students.

a-Put name cards in front of them during the first weeks.

b-Draw up a seating plan and ask students to sit in the same places

**2-Listening to students** : Students are responsive to teachers who listen to them. Although this is demanding, teachers are advised to make themselves as available as they can to listen to their students opinions and concernes both inside and outside the class. Nothing demotivates students more than when teachers are dismissive or uninterested in what they have to say.

**3-Respecting students** : Correcting students is always a delicate event because while some students are happy to be corrected robustly, others need more support and positive reinforcement. To put it otherwise, as students have different learning strategies and intellegences, so their reactions vary when it comes to being corrected. Regardless of the method teachers use, it is vital to treat learners with respect and avoid the use mockery and sarcasm or expressing despair at their efforts.

**4-Being even –handed** : Most teachers react well to students who take part, are cheerful and cooperative, who take responsibility for their own teaching, but there are moments when teachers are less enthusiatic about students who are less forthcoming and who find learners automony a bit challenging. The reasons why some students are not forthcoming are varied ranging from shyness to their cultural and family backgrounds. Sometimes students are reluctant to take part because of the stronger members of the group. The quiet students will be negatively affected when they see that far more attention is being paid to the more robust classmates .Treating students equally does not only help establish and maintain a good rapport between teachers and students , but it is a mark of professionalism .

**Grouping**

In many classrooms, students sit in orderly rows and in front them stand teachers frequently on raised platform so that all students can see them .In some situation, you can find students sitting in large circles. Some smaller groups of them may work in different parts of the classrom. Sometimes they are arranged in a horseshoe shape around the teacher. Each seating arrangement has its own objectives and characteristics

**1/Orderly Rows**

When students sit in orderly rows they have a clear view of their teachers. This makes lecturing easy since it enables the teacher to maintain eye contact with his/her students. It also makes discipline easier since it is fifficult for learners to be disruptive when sitting in a row .Rows allow teachers to walk easily up and down making more contact with learners and watching what they are doing.Orderly rows imply teachers working with the whole class . Some activities are especially suitable to this kind of organisation such as explaining a grammar point, watching a video, using the board …etc. Here it is vitally important to remain in constant contact with students so as to keep everyone involved.

**Advantages of whole class grouping**

a/ It reinforces the sense of belonging among the group members.

b/It is suitable for activities where teachers act as a controller.

c/It allows the teachers to gauge the mood of the class in general. It is a good way to get the general understanding of the students progress.

d/It is a preferred style in many educational settings where students and teachers feel secure and the whole class is under the authority of a teacher.

**Disadvantages of a whole class grouping**

a/It favours the group rather than the individual.

b/ Individual students do not have opportunities to say anything

c/ Many students are unwilling to participate in front of the whole class since this may mean the risk of public failure.

d/it may not encourage students to take responsibility for their own learning

e/ It is not the best way to organise communicative language teaching (task –based activities)

**2/ Circle and horseshoe**

In smaller classes both teachers and students prefer cicles and horseshoe. In a horseshoe , teachers will probably be at the end of the arrangement since it is there where the board , overhead projector or data show…. etc are situated .There is a greater feeling of equality when all students sit in circles among the advantages of sitting in circle or horseshoe is to lower the barrier between the teachers and their students . It also allows students to see each other without having to turn. The classroom as a whole becomes a more suitable place place where students can show their real potential.

**3/Seperate tables**

In some classes students sit in groups in seperate table whether they are working as a whole class, in group or in pairs. In such classrooms, you might see the teacher walking around checking the students’ work and helping out if they are having difficulties, prompting the students at this table, or explaining something to other students in the corner.

A huge advantage of seperate tables is that group work is easy to arrange .Seperate tables seating is useful in mixed ability classes where students belonging to different groups can benefit from concentrating on different tasks meant for different ability levels. Here is worth mentioning that students need not to be stuck with the same group for ever as this may minimise the benefits they can get from belonging to different groups.

**4/ Group Work**

Group work is another kind of grouping used by teachers as it allows them to do a wide range of activities targetting different objectives.

* Write a group story, role-play, preparing a presentation, discuss an issueand come toa group decision.
* Students can watch, write or perform a play

When teachers decide to divide the learners into groups, they should not forget that groups of 4or 5 students provoke greater involvment and participation because they are small enough for real interaction, yet they should not be too smal as this may lead to over-reliance among students.

5/ Pair Work

In pair work students can practise language together, study a text, look for specific language points and take part in information group activities. They can as well write dialogues, predict the content of reading texts or compare notes on what they have listened to or seen. It is worth noting that good teachers know when to use the different classg rouping and while doing this, they will figure out which kind of the seating arrangements is more successful and effective.

**Classroom Management**

Management refers to issues like supervision, refereeing facilitating and even academic discipline.it is commonly known that not all learners behaviours need intervention but some are serious enough to require formal disciplinary actions. Here are some techniques that will help achieve effective group management and control.

**1/Focusing**

Teachers need to be sure that they have the attention of everyone in the classroom before they start their lesson.They should not attempt to teach over the chatter of learners who are not paying attention. Inexperienced teachers sometimes think that by beginning their lesson the class will settle down .The learners will see that things are underway and it is time to go to work. Sometimes this works , but the learners are also going to think that teachers are willing to compete with them and that they do not mind talking while they talk , or that they are willing to speak louder so that they can finish their conversation even if teachers have already started their lesson .

The focusing technique means that teachers will ask for attention of every body before they begin .It also means that they will wait and not start until everyone has settled down. Experienced teachers know that silence on their part is very effective .They will punctuate their waiting by extending it three to five seconds after the classroom is completely quiet and then start the lesson using a quieter voice than normal .A soft spoken teacher has often a calmer , quieter classroom than one with a stronger voice .

**2/Direct instruction**

Uncertainty increases the level of excitement in the classroom. The technique of direct instruction is to begin each class by telling the learners exactly what will be happening .The teachers outline what they and the learners will be doing this period .Teachers may set time limits for some tasks.

**3/Monitoring**

The key to this principle is to move .Teachers get up and get around the room while the learners are working in order to check on the progress of the learners .Effective teachers will make a pass through the whole room about two or three minutes after the learners have started an assignment .Teachers check that each learner has started and they are all on the correct page .The reason why the teachers wait for two or three minutes is that they want their learners to have a problem or two finished so they can check answers are correct .Learners who are not on task will be quick to start as they see the teacher approaching. Teachers should not interrupt the class or try to make general announcement unless they notice that many learners have difficulty with the same thing.

**4/Modeling**

Teachers need to provide models for their learners to follow. Teachers who are courteous , prompt , enthusiastic , in control , patient and organized provide examples for their learners through their own behaviour. This is so because values are caught, not taught. Through (Do as I say, not as I do) teachers send mixed messages that confuse learners and invite misbehaviour

**5/Non-Verbal Cuing**

Over the last years, teachers have succeeded in making use of non- verbal cues in their classrooms. Some flip light switches while others keep clickers in their pockets. No –verbal cues can also be facial expressions, body postures and hand signals. Teachers are advised to be careful in choosing the types of cues they want to use their classrooms. Equally important, teachers need to make it clear for their learners what they want them to do when they see the cue.

**6/Environmental Control**

A classroom can be a warm cheerful place. Learners enjoy an environment that changes periodically. Classrooms with pictures and colours invite enthusiasm for your subject. Young learners like to know about their teachers and their interests. Include personal items in your classroom. A few items from your hobby or collection on your desk will trigger personal conversation with learners. As they get to know them better, teachers will see fewer problems with discipline.

**7/low-Profile Intervention**

An effective teacher will take care that students are not rewarded for misbehaviour by becoming the focus of attention. Teachers monitor the activity in their classrooms, moving around anticipating problems before they occur .This approach to a misbehaving student is very discreet .Other students in the classroom will not be distructed. When lecturing,teachers should make effective use of name-dropping .If a student is talking or is off task , teachers can drop his/her name in their dialogues in a natural way .

**8/ Assertive I Messages**

These messages are statements that the teacher uses when confronting a student who misbehaves. They are intended to be clear descriptions of what a student is supposed to do. The teacher who makesgood use of ths technique will focus the student’s attention first and foremost on the behaviour he/she wants, not on the bahaviour. « I want you to…. », or « I need you to…. », or « Iexpect you to…. ». Inexperienced teachers may incorrectly try « I want you to stop….. » only to discover that this triggers confrontation and denial. The focus is on the behaviour and the student is quick to resort to : « I was not doing anything. » or « Since when there is a rule against… », and escalation begins.

**9/ Humanistic I Messages**

These messages are expressions of someone’s feeling. They should be structured in tree parts.first, include a description of the student’s behaviour. « When you talk while I teach… »

Second, relate the effect this behaviour has on you as a teacher. «I have to stop my teaching. » Third, let the student know the feeling it generates. » This makes me mad, frustrates…. »

**10/ Positive Discipline**

Teachers are adivesd to use classroom rules that describe behaviours they want instead of listig things that students cannot do.For example, instead of «  No running in the school. » teachers should use «  Move through the building in an orderly manner. » Instead of « No fights » teachers are asked to use «  Settle your conflicts appropriately/ peacefully. » Instead of « No gum chewing. » teachers are exhorted to use « Leave your gumat home. » let your students know how you would like them to behave in the classroom by referring to your rules as expectations.In order to maintain positive discipline, teachers are urged to make ampleuse of praise. When yu see a good behaviour acknowledge it and try to reinforce it. This can take many forms such as a nod, a smile or simply a thumb up.

**The Goal of Classroom Management**

There are three main reasons for working hard in order to manage classrooms successfully because silencing or quietening learners for the sake of keeping them calm and disciplined is an empty goal in itself.

1/ More time for learning : Valuable minutes are lost everyday on getting organized, late starts rough transitions ; interruptions and discruptions .Thus all the lesson time is not spent on teaching. Teachers have to do their best so as to devote all the time on teaching (Allocated time) making more time for learning will not lead necessarily lead to achievement. To be valuable, time must be used effectively.Learners learn what they practise and think about .Time spent actively doing particular task is called (Engaged time). Time on task does not guarantee learning because learners may struggle with a difficult material or may use wrong strategies.Working with a high rate of success is called academic learning time.

2/Access to learning : In order to increase academic learning time , teachers must keep learners actively engaged in worthwhile appropriate learning activities .To achieve this goal ,learners need to know particiation structure.This latter refers to rules which govern who talks , about what to whom when , where , and for how long.

3/Encourage self-management, self-control and responsibility. In order to attain self-management, self-control and responsibiity learners need to know how activities must be accomplished, how materials and assignments are distributed and collected, under what conditions can learners leave the room and how grades will be determined.