



## CLASSROOM COMMUNICATION: APPLICATION OF FLANDERS' INTERACTION ANALYSIS CATEGORIES SYSTEM (FIACS)

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### Abstract

Communication is an expression of our attitudes, thoughts and beliefs and through communication we can interact with the environment around us. Communication is necessary in many aspects of human life- one of such aspect is teaching-learning process. Both teachers and students should understand each other's minds and thoughts for achieving learning outcomes successfully. Communication can be verbal or nonverbal and it is required in every classroom, be it primary grade or any professional course. This paper tries to focus on classroom communication in teacher training course and sheds light upon it from the standpoint of Flanders' Interaction Analysis Categories System (FIACS). The paper also shows how communication can be continued in teacher training course with help of an example.

**Keywords:** Communication, trainee teachers, FIACS, barriers, classroom



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### Introduction

Humans are social creatures as they live in families, work in social institutions and enjoy life as a part of the same community. Every day they communicate to satisfy their goals, to share their feeling and to maintain relations with others (Fatimayin, 2018). The meaning of English word 'communication' has evolved over time (Muste, 2016). Initially it came from a Latin word 'Communis' which means common or share (World Sense Dictionary, 2022).

Following evolution it is found that communication represents sharing feelings, information, opinions or emotions of one person with another person (Jargons, 2022). The sharing may be in the form of one to one or between groups of people or through face to face

or virtual mode. Good communication prerequisites a common language and understandable common concepts. Moreover, communicate is necessary to transmit culture, society, or civilization across generation (Evans, 2021).

School is a miniature form of society and the main purpose of school is to conduct teaching learning process. Classroom communication is pivot to the teaching learning process and teachers' efficient communication results in improve student achievements.

### **Purpose of Communication in the Classroom**

The main purpose of communication in classroom teaching is to deliver concept and information to pupils thereby helping them in concept formation. (Syamsuddin, 2021). Communication also helps:

- To enhance the conceptual understanding of students.
- To ensure both way classroom communication among teachers and students.
- To encourage students to actively participate in the classroom through effective communication.
- To help students develop higher order thinking.

### **Types of Communication**

Communication can be of various types as verbal, non-verbal, written and through various modes as speech, visual aids, written modes, google meet, zoom video conferencing, blogging on different content (Fatimayin, 2018).

#### ***Verbal Communication***

Comprising of words, language and speech this form of communication can be either Interpersonal communication or Public speaking where in case of former teacher interacts directly to a student while in latter teacher addresses to a large group.

#### ***Non-verbal Communication***

Non-verbal communication comprises of all information, messages and ideas expressed without using words; through body language, facial expressions, physical contact or through music, dance, painting, drama, sculpture, symbols and sign language.

#### ***Written Communication***

The only form of communication which can be edited or corrected this communication is the most strongest and unambiguous among all forms.

### **Modes of Classroom Communication**

Classroom Communication can be of the following three types (Everstudy, 2022):

- ***Teacher to Student Communication***

In classroom situation, teachers are found to communicate with one or more student which is termed as teacher to student communication. This communication is necessary to clarify concepts or to continue any discussion.

- ***Students to Students Communication***

This communication can be one to one or group interaction mode where students discuss their doubts about a topic.

- ***Student- Teacher Communication***

In this case communication is initiated by the students to clarify query and enhance their understanding.

### **Barriers to Effective Communication**

Though communication is a vital part of teaching learning process but there exists some barriers to effective communication (Garner, 2020):

#### ***Physical Barriers***

Sometimes teachers use non-verbal cues and gesture to communicate but students may fail to recognise them. Other than that, physical disabilities of teachers and students such as hearing impairment or speech difficulties results in poor communication. Insufficient infrastructure like congested class room, poor ventilation etc. leads to inattentive students who are difficult to communicate.

#### ***Conceptual Barriers***

Differential perceptions of students and teachers may result in communication gap and affect conceptual understanding as teachers' experience differs from those of students.

#### ***Emotional Barriers***

The teachers' personal emotion may conflict with some concepts or principles causing their inability in transacting the same.

#### ***Cultural Barriers***

When teachers and students are from similar social settings, ideologies, rituals, it helps in developing oneness. Contrarily clash of culture act as a communication barrier.

#### ***Language Barriers***

The medium of communication is language. So if teachers and students speak different language and different accents, then it is very difficult for students to grasp the

concept easily. Simple and clear language improves communication compared to complicated, unfamiliar and technical words.

### ***Interpersonal Barriers***

Interpersonal barriers are the type of personality barrier which prevents a teacher from expressing freely and communicating his ideas to the students.

### **Objectives of the paper**

- To understand classroom communication
- To analyse the FIACS as an important model of communication in teacher education curriculum.

### **FIACS in Classroom Communication**

Classroom is a place of communication of thoughts, ideas and feelings. In an ideal classroom, teacher-student interaction should be adequate both in quantity and quality (Sharma and Tiwari, 2021). Classroom interaction needs to be observed to analyse whether teaching methodology is proper (Sharma and Tiwari, 2021) and to modify teacher behavior (Li, Shouhui and Xinying, 2011). One of the most famous models of analyzing classroom interaction is Flanders' Interaction Analysis Categories System (FIACS) developed by Ned Flanders. Though classroom communication may be Verbal or Non Verbal in nature (Singha, 2019), FIACS mainly records verbal interaction in the classroom in form of a series of teacher behavior and student response (Li, Shouhui and Xinying, 2011). The categories of interaction are mainly of two types-teacher talk and student talk where the former is divided further into direct and indirect influence (Evans, 1970). Through direct influence teacher tries to reduce freedom of students in classroom while indirect influence enhances freedom (Smith, 1976).

The categories of FIACS are as follows: (Amatari, 2015)

- **Teacher's talk- indirect influence**
  1. *Accept feeling*- Teacher must accept and understand how a pupil feels even if the feeling is negative
  2. *Praises or encourages*- teacher can praise or encourage student's classroom behavior, even jokes can be incorporated to create a warm friendly climate. Praise can act as a positive reinforcement and motivate the student to participate actively in the classroom.

3. *Accepts or use ideas of students*- here teacher listens to student's opinions and ideas and elaborates upon it. From here teacher can go deep into the topic as she starts from entry level knowledge and builds upon it.
  4. *Ask questions*- Questioning is essential part of transaction as the teacher must assess how far learner has understood. Questions can be about the topic or any procedure used in transacting it.
- **Teacher's Talk- Direct Influence**
    5. *Lecturing* – Teacher discusses a topic in details incorporating his or her viewpoints as well.
    6. *Giving Directions*- Teacher in a class often is like a captain of a ship. Command or order needs to be given so that students can understand their course of action. Young students often need direction in class and otherwise will be off the track. This helps in smooth functioning of the classroom.
    7. *Criticising or justifying authority*- Unacceptable student behavior is an issue which should be dealt with criticism and teacher may feel the need to show his authority
  - **Student Talk**
    8. *Response* – Here student responds only after teacher asks a question or asks for student opinion but student actively do not initiate this communication.
    9. *Initiation*- In some occasion students may initiate a communication to clarify doubts, express their opinions or feelings
  - **Silence** – In some instances there may be silence in classroom where no communication is going on. Pauses can be given after asking a question which allows student to think. It can be given at the end of explaining a concept so that students can reflect on it.

A study by Mardiyana, Zainuddin and Gultom (2018) states that percentage of teacher talk is about 59.76% while that of student talk is only 36.72%. This study was conducted on grade 9 students in their English class. Moreover, the most used category of teacher talk was giving direction to students (40.41%) and the most used category of student talk was response (57.6%). A Master's Thesis by Robertson (1969) also shows teacher talk to be occupying greater time in classroom.

### **FIACS in B.Ed. Classroom-An Example**

Researchers try to use FIACS to create an example of what should be the appropriate type of communication in a B.Ed. classroom. B.Ed. is a training course for prospective teachers and unlike graduation or post-graduation courses it is not theoretical in its approach. In the former courses, students are taught about conceptual framework of any subject while in B.Ed. it is application oriented where students learn how to teach any subject. Learners in B.Ed. programme are called teacher trainees while teachers are known as Teacher Educators. Let us now clarify with example how Teacher Educators should communicate in their classroom.

#### **Category 1: *Accepts feeling***

**Teacher Educator:** why are you so tense?

**Teacher Trainee:** I am worried about my upcoming exam

**Teacher Educator:** you will perform well if you follow the class properly

#### **Category 2: *Praises or encourages***

**Teacher Educator:** Can you tell me how many types of teaching aids are there?

**Teacher Trainee:** Three types

**Teacher Educator:** Good

#### **Category 3: *Accepts or use ideas of students***

**Teacher Educator:** Who can tell me reasons of low classroom motivation among pupils and how can you enhance it?

**Teacher Trainee 1:** Lack of teacher preparedness and it can be increased if teachers prepare learning design before taking classes

**Teacher Trainee 2:** Monotony of lecture which can be reduced by use of teaching aids

**Teacher Educator:** Both of you have pointed out correctly some main problems though many more like infrastructure scarcity, difficult content may exist

#### **Category 4: *Ask questions***

**Teacher Educator:** Can anyone tell me the difference between Pedagogical Analysis and Learning Design?

**Teacher Trainee:** The former focuses on a unit of study while latter is restricted to the lesson transacted in a single class.

**Teacher Educator:** Well done

#### **Category 5: *Lecturing***

**Teacher Educator:** Evaluation is an essential part of the teaching process as it can only determine whether learning outcomes have been achieved or not. Evaluation can be of many types as formative and summative where .....

**Teacher Trainee:** Trainees listen to the lecture and take notes

**Category 6: Giving Directions**

**Teacher Educator:** Priyanka while writing on blackboard you must divide it into sections if it is a large board. Each section will be for separate work.

**Teacher Trainee:** I understood

**Teacher Educator:** Follow this during practice teaching

**Category 7: Criticising or Justifying authority**

**Teacher Educator:** Why are you talking in the class while the lesson is going on?

**Teacher Educator:** Do you think your behavior is appropriate?

**Category 8: Response**

**Teacher Educator:** So tell me have you understood stages of Piaget's Theory of Cognitive Development?

**Teacher Trainee:** Yes

**Category 9: Initiation**

**Teacher Educator:** Teacher has taught about Piaget's Theory of Cognitive Development.

**Teacher Trainee:** Trainee though not probed, voluntarily shares her experience with her siblings and how she can relate to object permanence or irreversibility.

**Teacher Educator:** Class as you just heard the beautiful experience of Ruhi

**Category 10: Silence**

**Teacher Educator:** After teaching the first stage of Piaget's Theory of Cognitive Development, teacher pauses a while so that trainees can grasp the concept.

**Teacher Trainee:** Maintains silence

**Conclusion**

FIACS model helps us to understand how a teacher can effectively use communication to create a successful teaching-learning process. Though FIACS model is not useful for non- verbal communication or for analysing classroom situations where no communication occurs.

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