

TEACHING LARGE, HETEROGENEOUS CLASSES

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WHAT IS A LARGE CLASS?

20?

30?

50?

100?

200?

More?

A large class is a class where :

There are so many learners that:

- You feel you cannot attend to individuals.
- You may not know all their names.
- You cannot activate or hear contributions from all of them in a lesson; many are neglected.
- It is difficult or impossible to find time to check all their written work / tests.

WHAT IS A HETEROGENEOUS CLASS?

It is a class which is varied in:

- Ability •
- Knowledge of English •
- •
- •
- •
- •
- •

SOME PROBLEMS

- Providing for learning for all
- Finding suitable materials
- Discipline
- Boredom / interest
- Pace
- Level of difficulty
- Reaching individuals
- Assessment

SOME ADVANTAGES

- More learners get to learn English!
- Educational aspects: learning tolerance, mutual help, cooperation, preparation for life
- Challenge, teacher development
- Peer-teaching
- Richer human resources

SOME THINGS THAT CAN HELP

A. Keeping them motivated

1. Variation
2. Interest

B. Reaching the individual

3. Collaboration
4. Individualization
5. Personalization

C. Providing for learning at different levels

6. Open-ending
7. Compulsory + Optional

VARIATION

- Topic
- Skill (reading / writing / listening / speaking)
- Active / reflective
- Organization (teacher-led, individual, group/pair)
- Level of difficulty
- Speed
- Material (board, improvised, coursebook, visual materials)

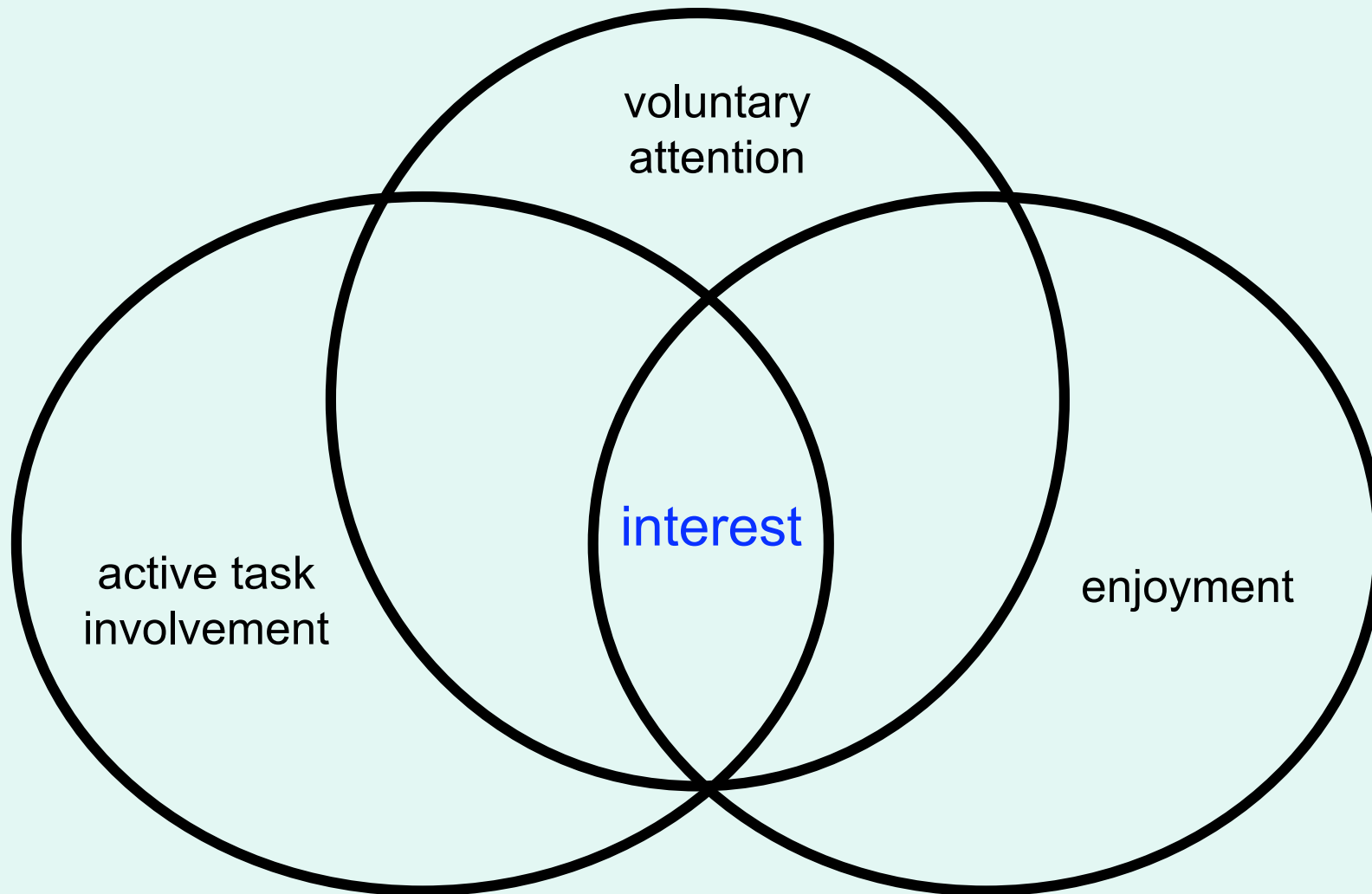
What IS 'interest'?

Very difficult to define

By results? But even then, a combination

Interest in a task implies the following:

- attention is voluntary
- the learner is involved in doing the task
- there is enjoyment



voluntary
attention

active task
involvement

interest

enjoyment

INTEREST

- Game-like activities (clear goal + 'rules')
- Visual focus
- Cooperation, teamwork
- Humor, drama, entertainment
- Maximum participation

COLLABORATION

Learners work together in order to get better joint results than they could on their own.

ADVANTAGES:

Peer-teaching

Educational implications

Feeling of teamwork

BUT:

What about those who prefer working on their own?

Does it hold up the faster ones?

Not all tasks work as collaborative activities.

Some tips:

1. Pair work usually works better than group work.
2. Make sure the task is such that it is likely to be better done by the group / pair than by an individual (e.g. peer editing)
3. Allow individuals to work on their own if they prefer.

bicycle

because

people

independent

embarrassed

friend

encourage

privilege

building

enough

INDIVIDUALIZATION

Allowing for individual variation in speed and level, even within a teacher-led or set exercise

1. Learners choose **where** to start
2. Giving a time limit rather than a quantity-of-work limit.

Allowing for self-checking

1. Learners check their own work

PERSONALIZATION

Allowing for contributions that reflect personal taste, experience, opinion etc.

| | | | |
|-------------------|--------|-------|------|
| Do you want a...? | big | black | cat |
| I want a...? | small | white | dog |
| | medium | brown | pony |

Metaphors

What is the best metaphor for an English lesson?

A variety show

A menu

Eating a meal

A football game

A wedding

A conversation

Consulting the doctor

Doing the shopping

A symphony

Climbing a mountain

OPEN-ENDING

Cues allow for many possible right answers:

So that:

1. More learners can get to respond.
2. Learners can respond at different levels
3. Develops creative HOTS

Making a closed-ended into an open-ended exercise

Put in the correct past form.

1. She _____ early. (leave)
2. He _____ the cake. (make)
3. I _____ there for six hours. (sit)
4. The man _____ the book. (read)

Possibility 1: Do it once conventionally,
then invite variations on the end of the
sentence

Complete the sentence

1. She left _____
2. He made _____
3. I sat _____
4. The man read _____

Possibility 2: Delete the verb in parenthesis, invite them to suggest their own.

Put in a correct past form.

She _____ early.

He _____ the cake.

I _____ there for six hours.

The man _____ the book.

Other possibilities for open-ending

1. Brainstorming:

- *How many ways can you think of to use an empty tin can? (A pen? A piece of plasticine?)*
(oral fluency/can/could)
- *How many adjectives can you think of to describe the noun road? (movie? song?)*
(grammar: adjective-before-noun, vocabulary)
- *How many nouns can you think of that could be described by the adjective hard? (black? clear?)*
(adjective-before-noun, vocabulary)
- *How many things can you think of to say about this picture?*
(oral fluency)
- *How many ways can you think of to solve this dilemma?*
(oral fluency)
- *How many ways can you think of to compare a train with a car*
(comparatives)
- *How many endings can you think of for the sentence: If I had a million dollars...?*
(conditionals)

2. Originality, 'lateral' thinking

- *Think of ten ways to compare a tree with a piece of spaghetti.*
(comparatives)
- *Think of as many ways as you can in which a lesson is like a wedding.*
(both...and)
- *Find six questions to which the answer is ... twelve...(tomorrow ...of course!
...I don't know ... I hope so ...)*
(interrogatives)
- *Suggest at least three advantages of being an only child. (of not having a
cellphone / of having no car?)*
(writing)
- *Name ten things you have never done.*
- *Name six things that you can't touch, and why.*
- *Say six negative things about ...a pen (a cat / English)*
- *Say four NICE things about your friend, using negative sentences.*
(grammar: negatives)

COMPULSORY PLUS OPTIONAL

1. Syllabus

2. Activities

3. Tests

Syllabus

A compulsory syllabus that everyone has to learn and know.

'Extras' that they learn if they can, are not tested on.

Activities: 'Do at least'

The class is given a task, which is easy enough to be done successfully by (nearly) everyone.

They are also given an optional task which may be done if they have time.

Find at least three things to put in each column

a clock, a dog, a dress, a mother, black, a pen, bread, pants,
a bag, a husband, red, boots, a cat, rice, a frog, a baby, pink,
a teenager, a hat, a banana, a book, a sheep, meat, kids,
a desk, green, an elephant, salt, a t-shirt, white

animals

colours

things

food

clothes

people

Grammar: relative clauses

Do at least the first five sentences, more if you can

1. A teacher is a person who...
2. A car is a thing which ...
3. A book is a thing...
4. A monkey is an animal ...
5. A dishwasher is a machine ...
6. A student ...
7. A sandwich ...
8. A stone ...

If you finish, choose more items and define them: as many as you can!

Complete using past tenses:

A. Her mother _____ to Little Red Riding Hood: 'Take this cake to your grandmother, but don't talk to strangers!'

Little Red Riding Hood _____ through the wood, and on the way she _____ the wolf. 'Hello, Little Red Riding Hood!' _____ the wolf. 'Where are you going?'

Little Red Riding Hood _____ what her mother _____.

'I'm going to visit my grandmother,' she _____. 'She lives in the forest, over there.'

The wolf _____ off through the forest, and _____ to the grandmother's house.

B. Optional. Finish the story as you like, but not the same way as usual!

TO SUMMARIZE

NO EASY ANSWERS!

But there are some things that can help.

Variation

Interest

Collaboration

Individualization

Personalization

Open-ending

Compulsory + Optional