

Change Disruptive Behavior by Changing Teaching: Improve Class Management by Adding a Variety of Teaching Strategies

Alma Muharremi

Faculty of Education Sciences
"Aleksandër Xhuvani" University, Elbasan, Albania

almamuharremi@gmail.com

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Abstract

An important issue in the Albanian schools is the disruptive behaviour and the impact that teaching can have on it. This empirical study explores the relationship between interactive teaching in pairs and the pupils' disruptive behaviour. It basically aims to find out if interactive teaching in pairs is accompanied by a greater or smaller number of disruptive behaviour occurrences than direct teaching. The participants are the pupils of a third grade class of the "Naim Frashëri" school in Elbasan, Albania. The school and the class where the study was conducted were chosen by randomisation. The study consisted in measuring a disruptive behaviour during direct teaching, performing an intervention, and then measuring the behaviour during interactive teaching in pairs. The data on the disruptive behaviour were collected through direct observation and were analysed using SPSS. The results of the data analysis showed that interactive teaching in pairs (mean difference 2.26, sig. .000; two-tailed) is accompanied by less occurrences of disruptive behaviour than direct teaching. To have less disruptive behaviour teachers should change the teaching - they should use a variety of teaching strategies to involve all pupils and organise the class time in intervals of different activities to help pupils stay focused on the tasks.

Key Words: disruptive behaviour, forms of disruptive behaviour, interactive teaching in pairs, direct teaching.

Introduction

Teaching is an active process during which a person shares information with others to provide them with knowledge which brings changes in behaviour (Banks, 2000). There are several teaching types: interactive teaching, direct teaching, non-direct teaching and experience based teaching. (Dimensions of Teaching and Learning Teaching and Learning Branch, 2011). Interactive teaching is a two-way process in which pupils are expected to play an active role by answering questions, participating in discussions and explaining and showing their methods to the class (The National Numeracy Strategy, 1999a). Class interaction can be of several types. Karter (2011) identifies these types: pupil-teacher interaction, pupil-pupil interaction, small group-class interaction. In the traditional model of the direct teaching (Beauchamp & Kennewell, 2008) the only valid interaction source for the pupil is the teacher. It is a detailed and well-structured teaching method which is dominated by explanation in one-way communication (coming from the teacher) and avoids the other direction of the communication, and in which the forms of transmitting information are mainly related to transmitting ready knowledge.

Interactive teaching is in the centre of today's educational developments. It follows the world trend to transform the class into a vivid environment in which the aim is not to give information but to develop skills to find the information, where problems are identified discussed and analysed from different points of view and where pupils and teacher work together to solve them. The Albanian school is known for its traditional teaching, with the teacher in centre (CETQ, 2005). The Multifactorial Assessment of the Education Quality in the secondary Albanian schools (2009) notes that the traditional teaching method dominates in Albanian schools and only in very few occasions teachers do come out of the "frame" of this method.

More than half of the Albanian teachers have complaints about the pupils' problematic behaviour (Tamo & Karaj, 2007). All the studies of Hunter-Love (2008), Sentelle (2003), Jung & Boman (2003) and others show that these behaviours cause problems not only for the teachers, but they also disrupt the pupils' focus on learning (Fernandez-Balboa, 1991). They also affect the positive atmosphere in class, the social interaction between pupils and can make pupils participate less in class (Doyle, 1986). It has been accepted that teaching methods influence the pupils' disruptive behaviour (Kounin, 1970). While

there is wide consensus that disruptive behaviours cause problems in the teaching/learning process, there has been no similar research in Albania about specific teaching methods.

The aim of this study is to analyse the relationship between interactive teaching in pairs and the pupils' disruptive behaviour in a class of the elementary education in Albania. It basically aims to find out if interactive teaching in pairs is accompanied by a greater or smaller number of disruptive behaviour occurrences than direct teaching

Questions of the study

Is interactive teaching in pairs accompanied by less disruptive behaviours than the direct teaching?

Do pupils display the same types of disruptive behaviours during interactive teaching in pairs and direct teaching?

Does the ranking of the disruptive behaviours change during these two types of teaching?

Methodology

Participants and data

The participants are 38 pupils – 20 girls and 18 boys aged 9-10 years old – of a third grade of the “Naim Frashëri” school in Elbasan, Albania. The school and the class were chosen by randomisation. The number of pupils (38) in this class is much higher than the average per class of third grades in: the city of Elbasan (24 pupils per class), the county of Elbasan (25.92 pupils per class), and in Albania (25.49 pupils per class).

Designing the study and the procedures

This group-class was chosen randomly. The study consists in measuring a disruptive behaviour in the group, performing an intervention and measuring the behaviour again, and comparing the results. The first measuring will be conducted during direct teaching, and the second during interactive teaching in pairs.

Preparation and the intervention procedure

The intervention by interactive teaching in pairs was archived through training the teacher in interactive teaching. The training consisted in knowing the basis and the characteristics of the interactive teaching in pairs, and the techniques to offer it. The focus was not only on the theoretical knowledge, but also on acquiring the skills to offer interactive teaching. The teacher was presented with techniques like “Review in pairs” etc. The teacher was graduated as “Teacher for grades 1-4”, has been working for 12 years, and been awarded the second degree of qualification with the “Very well” result.

The observation procedure

The observation took place during eight weeks in March-April, twice a week – Tuesdays and Thursdays, two classes a day – the second and the third class, – a total of 32 classes. On the observation days the teacher was asked to conduct interactive teaching in pairs in one class, and direct teaching in the other class. Disruptive behaviours were recorded in all 16 classes of each method. The means of behaviours in both classes were measured, with the measuring during the direct teaching labelled the first measurement, and the measuring during interactive teaching in pairs labelled the second measurement.

The research team was consisted of the researcher and ten assistants who were present in class during lessons. The pupils' disruptive behaviours were recorded by direct observation. Each assistant observed four students (always the same ones) and recorded their disruptive behaviours (if any). Assistants were coded 1-10 during each class and kept the code until the end of the study. They had disruptive behaviours recording cards, which contained the codes of the behaviours and the codes of the students. The observation intervals were five minutes long.

Definition and measurement of the variables

The variables in this study are: disruptive behaviour, interactive teaching in pairs and direct teaching.

Disruptive behaviour is a dependent variable. For the purpose of this study disruptive behaviour in class was considered the behaviour that prevents or obstructs the teaching/learning process (De Martini-Scully et al, 2000). Six categories of disruptive behaviours were observed in this study: 1) Failure to immediately follow instructions; 2) Answering out of turn; 3) Making noise; 4) Looking around; 5) Touching the others; 6) Leaving one's seat without permission. This categorisation has been used by Sentelle (2003) and Yang & George (1995).

Interacting teaching is an independent variable. The interacting teaching in this study is a two-way process, in which every pupil plays an active role by answering questions, participating in discussions, and by explaining and showing their way of acting to the others. (Adapted from The National Numeracy Strategy, 1999a).

The Direct Teaching is an independent variable. It is a detailed and well-structured teaching method which is dominated by explanation in one-way communication (coming from the teacher) and avoids the other direction of the communication, and in which the forms of transmitting information are mainly related to transmitting ready knowledge.

The Instrument of the Study

The measuring instrument used in this study - a recording table to enter the disruptive behaviours during direct observation - was built by adapting instruments of Gable et al (1998). The table contained the codes of the observer (1-10), the codes of the pupils (1-4), the type of the teaching during which the disruptive behaviour was displayed (direct or interactive in pairs), and the six types of the disruptive behaviours that pupils might display. Each observer had a card to record the disruptive behaviours of their four students, and they used a new card in every observing session. Data from all cards were entered into a summary table.

Statistical analysis

Data were analysed using SPSS. The t-test was used to answer the questions of this study.

Results

Regarding the question: Is interactive teaching in pairs accompanied by less disruptive behaviours than direct teaching:

Each observed subject displayed disruptive behaviours at a mean of 3.84 (standard deviation = 3.79; standard error mean .61) during direct teaching; and a mean of 1.57 (standard deviation = 1.38; standard error mean .22) during interactive teaching in pairs (see Table 1).

Table 1: Mean and standard deviation of disruptive behaviours

Types of teaching	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference		Minimum	Maximum
					Lower	Upper		
Direct teaching	38	3.8421	3.79563	.61573	2.5945	5.0897	.00	5.00
Interactive teaching in pairs	38	1.5789	1.38782	.22513	1.1228	2.0351	.00	3.00

The Paired Differences (see Table 2) show that the difference between means for the total is 2.26 (sig .000; 2-tailed), meaning that less disruptive behaviours occur during interactive teaching in pairs.

Regarding the types of the disruptive behaviours, subjects of the first group display less of the following types of behaviours during interactive teaching in pairs: "non-immediate obedience to instructions" (mean difference .78; sig .000, 2-tailed), "Answering out of turn" (mean difference .84; sig .003, 2-tailed) and "Making noise" (mean difference .34; sig .051, 2-tailed). For the behaviours "Touching others" (mean difference .10; sig .291, 2-tailed) and "Leaving one's seat without permission" (mean difference .23; sig .107, 2-tailed) the differences in means are not valid statistically because in both cases the sig. is greater than .05. The only behaviour encountered more often during interaction teaching in pairs is "Looking around" (mean difference -.05; sig .750; 2-tailed), but it is not valid statistically because the sig. is greater than .05.

Table 2: t-test for Equality of Means (Direct teaching - Interactive teaching in pairs)

Measurement (1 - 2)	t-test for Equality of Means							
	T	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
							Lower	Upper
Failure to immediately follow instructions	4.017	37	.000	.78947	1.21161	.19655	.39123	1.18772
Answering out of turn	3.141	37	.003	.84211	1.65262	.26809	.29890	1.38531
Making noise	2.014	37	.051	.34211	1.04691	.16983	-.00200	.68622
Looking around	-.321	37	.750	-.05263	1.01202	.16417	-.38527	.28001
Touching others	1.071	37	.291	.10526	.60580	.09827	-.09386	.30439
Leaving one's seat without permission	1.653	37	.107	.23684	.88330	.14329	-.05349	.52718
The total of disruptive behaviours displayed by each observed subject	3.959	37	.000	2.26316	3.52354	.57159	1.10500	3.42132

Measurement 1- During direct teaching

Measurement 2- During interactive teaching in pairs

Regarding the questions: Do pupils display the same types of disruptive behaviours during interactive teaching in pairs and direct teaching? Does the ranking of the disruptive behaviours change during these two types of teaching?

Pupils tend to display the same disruptive behaviours during both types of teaching. The ranking of the means of the disruptive behaviours during direct teaching (see Table 3) shows that the behaviour that is ranked first during this type of teaching is "Answering out of turn" (mean = 1.4474). The last ranked behaviour is "Touching others" (mean = 0.1579).

"Answering out of turn" (mean = .6053) also ranks first during interactive teaching in pairs. The behaviour that ranks last is "Touching others" (mean = 0.526). The ranking for the third, fifth and sixth behaviours are the same during both types of teaching.

To sum up the answer, the ranking of the means of the disruptive behaviours during the two types of teaching is not the same.

Table 3: Ranking of disruptive behaviours during direct teaching and interactive teaching in pairs

No	Direct teaching	Interactive teaching in pairs
1	Answering out of turn	Answering out of turn
2	Failure to immediately follow instructions	Looking around
3	Making noise	Failure to immediately follow instructions
4	Looking around	Making noise
5	Leaving one's seat without permission	Leaving one's seat without permission
6	Touching others	Touching others

Discussion

This empirical study conducted in an elementary class in Albania explores the relationship between interactive teaching in pairs and the pupils' disruptive behaviours. The dominant teaching in the Albanian elementary education is the traditional teaching, in which pupils do not have the main role in choosing the teaching materials, organising the class and the activities. The interactive teaching is still a new tendency under development. By using this teaching pupils have a greater role in the teaching/learning process: they can learn from each-other by working together and by being active all the time. The two types of teaching allow different levels of disruptive behaviours.

Interactive teaching in pairs is accompanied by less disruptive behaviours than the direct teaching. The difference in means is 2.26 (sig .000, 2-tailed).

Interactive teaching in pairs in the elementary education makes possible for the pupils to understand what it is like to work with a friend. The theories on this type of interaction suggest that this teaching prepares pupils for one to one relationships they will have with their friends and others working with them. Pupils must learn to rely on another person and be able to assess their own strong and weak points when trying to finish a task. Interactive teaching in pairs is made possible by using a group of methods. The "Review in pairs" methods strengthen the expressing and paraphrasing skills and create regular models of short interruptions, which allow pupils to process what they are learning (Musaj, 2005).

For example, during the "Three minutes pause" method (McTighe, in Marzano, 1992) pupils engage in three ways of thinking: summarise what they've learnt, identify the interesting aspects or what they already know, and raise questions about what they do not understand. They choose the "close friends in learning" to work with (Musaj, 2005). "The Oral Fluency of the Pair" (Costa, 1997) is a fast tracking method for pupils to summarise their learning. Pupils are urged to use their class friends to get help to obtain personal understandings from important contents, and clarify and memorise the new information.

The decline of disruptive behaviours during interactive teaching in pairs happens because pupils are more efficient in learning if they take an active role when information is given to them. Taking an active role is not considered new in the relationship teaching-learning but it is not frequently applied in daily teaching, and teachers still use the old one-way methods of passing the information – always from the teacher to the pupil. The choice of direct teaching is due to two essential factors: it requires little efforts by the teachers, and it is suitable to them. Direct teaching is suitable for teachers but not for the pupils.

The study was limited because the small sample does not allow for the results to be generalised. The generalisation of the results would require at least a sample that involved more groups and classes. Another obstacle was the large number of the pupils in the class, plus the assistants of the researcher.

Conclusions and recommendations

Disruptive behaviours interrupt and divert teachers and pupils from the teaching/learning process in which they are involved. When disruptive behaviours obstructs the process in the elementary education, teachers need to reflect in order to make changes in their methods and practices.

Recommendations for the teachers:

Making use of a variety of teaching strategies

The elementary education teachers must use a variety of teaching strategies to keep pupils working and away from disruptive behaviours. Many types of these strategies can be found in didactic publications, and in The Plasma Link Web Service.

Split the time in small intervals

If pupils in the elementary education display disruptive behaviour and the teacher is explaining during the whole class, then the teacher must change they introduce the subject. In the elementary education where the classes last 45 minutes the teacher should be explaining only 20 minutes. Elementary schools pupils are characterised by concentration that lasts very little. If there are ways to organise the class time in intervals of different activities, this will help pupils stay focused on the tasks they've been given.

Focusing on the learning types

If pupils are not able to learn the material, not only they are not thinking, but they are thinking of something else. This "something else" is sometimes the way to cause disruptive behaviour in class, because they are bored or tired. Using the same strategy the whole time will only focus on one type of pupil and the rest will feel ignored. There are three ways of learning: visual, auditory and kinaesthetic learning. Some pupils can learn through all these three ways, but there those who have their own main way of learning. The key is to use as many teaching strategies as possible that include the three types of learners.

Teachers should be careful with the teaching practices they use in order to improve the learning. They should be carefully in dealing with disruptive behaviours, but should also examine their teaching strategies.

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