ENHANCING ACADEMIC SELF-EFFICACY OF WORKERS, LURKERS AND SHIRKERS AMONG UNDERGRADUATES STUDYING ENGLISH

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Abstract

Universities offering English as first degree in the United Kingdom aim to provide students with education and learning, intellectual, professional and transferable skills expected to make them useful in the environments. Achieving these aims requires students' active participation in lectures and seminars as a space for developing meaningful learning. However, lecturers often observe that some students actively participate in pair and group work and note taking but are very reluctant to ask and answer questions during lectures. This paper presents an exploratory study that uses students' needs analysis reflecting their participatory attitudes in class as a lens to understand and design strategies for developing critical thinking among first year undergraduates studying English in a university in the United Kingdom. The methodology is mixed and as a first step, thirty free response questionnaires were administered among volunteers who are speakers of English as a first language and taking a module called Language and context. Results from the content analysis of the questionnaires suggest that attitudes may be linked to aspects of learner self-efficacy during interaction. Results from content analysis provide a lead-on for proposing a learner-centered plan of action designed to exercise critical thinking skills, encourage reflective learning, and help students to be more mindfully involved in linguistic analysis as lurkers, workers and shirkers during lectures and seminars.

Keywords: Workers, Lurkers, Shirkers, participation rates, self-efficacy, critical thinking, De Bono's six hat

Introduction and Background Information

Q31103 Language and Context (L&C) is a 20-credit unit compulsory module for all first-year students studying English Language and Literature, English with Creative Writing, however, it is optional for all first-year students on English, and all first-year students on Joint Honours English programmes during autumn and spring semesters. It is not available for exchange students.

This module considers the main forms and functions of English vocabulary, grammar and discourse specifically, exploring how and why people learn, understand and use language in real social, psychological and cultural contexts to reveal and conceal social realities. These linguistic issues are explored through a variety of spoken and written, literary and non-literary, and multimodal texts. Additional general topics involve consideration of the relationships between language and broader issues such as language acquisition and development, gender and ideology, power and social interaction. These multiple foci introduce students to core topics in linguistics covered in subsequent years of the degree such as discourse analysis and sociolinguistics, psycholinguistics, literary linguistics and corpus linguistics.

Specifically, this paper aims to provide students with:

i. An introduction to and exploration of the theory and applications of language study within a broad sociolinguistic and applied linguistic framework

ii. an opportunity to analyse linguistic patterns and functions in a wide variety of different texts, both literary and non-literary, spoken and written

iii. Knowledge and understanding of the study of vocabulary, sound symbols, grammar and discourse as language structure and as patterning in texts

iv. Knowledge and understanding of the social, cultural and ideological functions of language

v. ability to analyse language in use in real social and cultural contexts

vi. the ability to construct and communicate a sustained written analysis of texts

vii. the ability to carry out research and evaluate and make use of the material so acquired

Viii.   the opportunity to practise other transferable skills

These objectives are achievable in part when students attend classes and participate in all activities outlined by the facilitator/lecturer. However, during lectures and seminars, lecturers often have the (very common) experience of dealing with responsive/unresponsive classes. Working as L & C module facilitator in a university in the United Kingdom, it was observed that although students actively participate in pair/group work, and eagerly take notes when others speak or when the facilitator gives feedback, some are very reluctant to ask and answer questions during interaction. A similar trend was observed among students in a university in Nigeria. These suggest that, non-

participation by students is a universal phenomenon that poses a challenge to lecturers because, it may frustrate efforts made to achieve individual seminar aims and over time, also frustrate successful achievement of the over-arching objectives of the module and programme.

Participation is described in this paper as the number of times a learner takes the floor to speak, play a role, yield the floor to co-learners and interacts in a learning environment. Prammanee (2007) suggests that low participation occurs when the number and quality of perceived and actual interaction by a learner is in the lower 25% of the total required in a class. This is easily and accurately assessed in online platforms because learner-participation is automatically registered by the device or interface. However, in the physical classroom, learner participation is observable by other actors but may not with the same level of accuracy as in online platforms because, research indicates that smart devices have a higher capacity for accurate repetitive data gathering tasks than humans(Laundry, 2009).

Following these, it is the position of this paper that there is the need to carry out some form of intervention to increase student participation in lectures and seminars interaction. The intervention system will focus on helping students develop self-efficacy through critical thinking during lectures. Self-efficacy, simply put, refers to people's beliefs about their capabilities to produce effects. However, for the purposes of this paper, self-efficacy is defined as "… people's beliefs about their capabilities to produce designated levels of performance that exercise influence over events that affect their lives. Self-efficacy beliefs determine how people feel, think, motivate themselves and behave" (Bandura, 2010, p. 1537).   Bandura (2010, 2006) explains that these beliefs produce diverse effects through four major processes that will be briefly outlined later.

Relatedly, critical thinking is the disciplined process of meaningfully conceptualizing, applying, analyzing, synthesizing, and

evaluating information as it relates to the evidence applied to a specific discipline, belief or action (Paul & Elder, 2008; Carroll, 2007).

Furthermore, this paper explores the possibility of using de Bono's (1999, 1985) six thinking hats approach to forster critical thinking skills duringL &C seminars. De Bono's six thinking hats is a system designed to engender group discussion and individual thinking from many perspectives involving six coloured hats . It is a technique based on the brain's different thinking modes which enables the intelligence, experience and information of every interlocutor to be harnessed for reaching the right conclusions quickly (De Bono, 2009). De Bono's strategy has been applied todeveloping critical thinking and problem solving skills necessary for useful interaction in the information age. To this end, Kivunja, (2015) found that it unbundles thinking among students, enhancing their cognitive skills, making them more reflective as they learnwhich may inturn lead to an increase in their sense of self-worth. Following this, de Bono's Six

Hats system will form the crux of classroom intervention system outlined later in this paper. The structure of this paper follows the stages of Kolb's experiential learning cycle (Kolb, 2014, 1984) and will be tackling three of the four stages: reflecting, interpreting and planning for action.

Workers, Shirkers, and Lurkers in Language classrooms

Prammanee, (2007) focusing on online learners describes interaction as a reciprocal event that requires at least two actors (actors) and two or more actions such as Learner content; learner instructor; learner and learner. Maria, Zuhairi, & Riana, (2009) citing Taylor (2002) classified participants in a learning context as lurkers, workers and shirkers. Bento, et al., (2005) proposed a taxonomy of different types of participation in learning contexts using quardrants. Following these, the Maria et al's (2009), classification of participants has been placed within a modified quadrant derived from Bento et al's (2005) to produce a typology of participants and the level of the participation in class lesson (figure 1) below.

Figure 1:Typology of participants and their participation in class

Interpersonal Interaction. HIGH	QUADRANT III 'Social Participant' 'Workers'	QUADRANT IV Active Learners 'Worker'
Interpersonal interaction LOW	QUADRANT I Missing in Action 'Shirkers'	QUADRANT II Witness learners 'Lurkers'
	Interaction with content LOW	Interaction with content HIGH

(Modified from Bento et al, 2005, p.81; Maria et al., 2009)

Key: Quadrant I-Q1; Quadrant II- Q2; Quadrant III- Q 3; Quadrant IV-Q4

Maria et al's (2009) workers participate in class and fall within Q3 and Q 4because they exhibit high interpersonal interaction and visibility. However, Bento et al's Q3 is an exception because such learners are weak workers who thrivewithin groups yetdisplay low interaction with lesson content, in contrast, Q4are strong workers

who have high interpersonal interaction and high interaction with the content thus, make more meaningful and useful contributions to the lesson during class.

In the lower half of the quadrant, Bento et al'sQI learners that are Missing In Action (MIA) or 'Shirkers' and are described here as

absentee studentsthat hardly attend class and thus have low interaction with other actors and content in class. Bento et al (2005) posit that shirkers, have low

interaction with the content and are bewildered by a learner centered environment, neither learn nor understand what the course really entails thus, achieve disastrous grades and often quit the course. In the other extreme you find Bento et al's Q2 'Lurkers' who are deliberately and selectively 'Invisible' because they operate below the interaction radar and exhibit low interpersonal interaction. In addition, Q2 have high interaction with the content, they learn passively and where language is a challenge they may have low self-esteem.

Bento et al (2005) suggest that low participation is characterised by low interpersonal interaction as seen in Q1(Shirkers) and Q2 (Lurkers) and low interaction with content shown in Q1(Shirkers) and Q3 (Social workers). Bento et al (2005) and Maria et al's (2009) suggest that low participation may be attributable to learner role and task, information overload, level of motivation by facilitator, speed and accuracy of feedback, content area experience and student's assessment of their comfort level with question and answer sessions. These views on learner participation tie in with research suggesting that students who have a low sense of self-efficacy may withdraw from answering questions and discussions while those with high efficacy eagerly participate in class interaction(Bandura, 2006). Furthermore, research indicates that people with this attitude may be having issues with aspects of self-efficacy in seminar rooms. The next section outlines the rationale for focusing on self-efficacy and critical thinking skills when planning interventions.

Between Critical thinking and academic self-efficacy

As outlined in the introduction, the study focuses on ways in which the development of critical thinking skills may lead to the evolution of self-efficacy among students of English during lectures and therein lies the link between them. Paul and Elder, (2008) outline the competences required in critical thinking, stating that, a critical thinker raises vital questions and problems succinctly, gathers relevant information, assesses same using abstract ideas to interpret and reach well-reasoned conclusions by testing them against relevant criteria. In addition, critical thinkers are open-minded when faced with alternative thought systems and are able to identify and assess their assumptions and implications for a variety of interaction contexts. Furthermore, critical thinkers are able to communicate effectively with others in figuring out solutions or reaching conclusions (Paul & Elder, 2008).

In addition, Alwali's (2011) study assessed the impact of critical thinking skills on the academic development of students in higher education. The study found that students in higher education that use critical thinking skillsenhance their academic and social skills in the following ways:

i.   Improved attention span and observation skills.

ii.   Knowledge of how to get their own point across easily and clearly

iii.   Stronger analytical skills that are applicable to a variety of contexts,

iv.   Achieving higher test scores in class and standardized tests

v.   Improved understanding of their own thought processes.

vi.   Making intelligent choices in human relationships

vii.   Improved ability to transfer learned content and/or skills to new applications

viii. Stronger decision-making and problem-solving skills

Ix.   Ability to construct questions covering knowledge, comprehension and application that are suitable for different levels of users. (Alwali, 2011)

Going back to the introduction, the aims of L & C as outlined tie in with critical thinking skills outlined by Paul and Elder (2008) because students require competence in interpretation, analysis, value judgement, explanation and inference to effectively learn, develop intellect, function professionally and transfer these skills to other aspects of life. Going further, critical thinking skills have immense academic benefits for students (Alwali, 2011) which for the purposes of this study, may provide another link to the development of self-efficacy.

Following this, Self-efficacy is discussed in relation to how the development of critical thinking skills and attendant effects may engender academic self-efficacy in students. There are three categories of self-efficacy namely social, roommate, and academic self-efficacy (Barry & Finney, 2009). Although, this paper is focused on academic self-efficacy, social and roommate self-efficacy also have some impact on the intervention system proposed.

Social efficacy refers to an individual's personal relations and social adjustment within a given context (Wright, Jenkins-Guarnieri, & Murdoch, 2012). For a context such as the university classroom, social efficacy calls attention to a student's ability to develop and maintain social interactions with fellow-students and staff which is said to indicate good social adjustment (Zajacova, Lynch, & Espenshade, 2005; Barry & Finney, 2009).

Roommate self-efficacy relates to interaction with people with whom one resides, or share other interaction spaces such as classrooms, hostels, beach fronts etc (Zajacova et al., 2005). Maintaining good relations with people with whom one lives,

study, and/or engage in extra-curricular activities during the course of undergoing a degree programme indicates possession of effective interpersonal skills which in turn promotes social adjustment (Barry and Finney, 2009).

Academic self-efficacy has been severally described. Zimmerman, (1995, p. 203) focusing on learner capacity, defines it as the "personal judgements of one's capabilities to organise and execute courses of action to attain designated types of educational performances" (Zimmerman, 1995, p. 203). From the perspective of understanding how self-efficacy is used to predict learning outcomes, Gore (2006) defines academic self-efficacy as students' trust and confidence in their capabilities and skills to successfully plan, coordinate, and perform academic and allied activities to meet or even surpass the required level(Gore, 2006). However, for the purposes of this paper, academic self-efficacy is the personal judgement, belief and motivation derived from recognising one's improved ability to successfully engage with academic tasks alone and within a group of peers and superiors, build strong interpersonal relationships as well as the ability to communicate concepts easily to a variety of audiences.

As outlined in the introduction, Bandura (2010, 2006) explains that self-efficacy produces a variety of effects through processes that are cognitive, affective, motivational and self-regulatory. Affective processes regulate emotional states and elicitation of emotional reactions during interaction. Bandura suggests that affective processes influence how people deal threatening and difficult situations. For example, people who believe that they can exercise control over threats and difficulties experience a significantly lower anxiety than those who believe they cannot. This is supported by research in linguistics suggesting that an interlocutor's self-confidence about their linguistic proficiency affects how they deal with various forms of face threats during interaction(Béal & Mullan, 2017) thus, emotional states and

reactions are critical to the success or failure of classroom interaction

Cognitive processes refer to thinking processes involved in the acquisition, organisation and use of information. Bandura (2010) argues that thought enables people to predict events and devise ways to control those that directly affect them. For the undergraduate, effective and efficient cognitive processing of information engenders development of linguistic knowledge and interactional capabilities required to function effectively in academic contexts such as critical thinking skills outlined earlier.

Motivation refers to what gingers people to action. Bandura (2006, 1986) holds that motivation is cognitively generated and the level of motivation is reflected in one's choice of courses of action and in the intensity and persistence of their efforts. Relatedly, academic self-efficacy is linked to academic success because according to Zajacova et al. (2005), academic self-efficacy may be operationalised as passing examinations, assignments and other academic activities. These activities although difficult may in turn motivate students to pursue specific academic goals because of the belief that success is inevitable. Zajacova et al's (2005) views tie in with research suggesting that, students who measure high in academic self-efficacy perceive academic difficulties as worthy challenges that are exciting and worth pursuing because of the satisfaction they bring once they are accomplished (Pajares & Schunk, 2001).

Selection processes as self-regulation refers to the exercise of influence over one's own motivation, thought processes, emotional states and patterns of behaviour in interaction contexts (Bandura, 2010, 2006). For example, self-regulation is seen in a student's deciding when to ask or answer questions during lectures. Academic self-efficacy as presented in this paper presupposes shirking and lurking as self-regulatory choices students make that

may have negative impact such as isolating them from the larger group during academic interaction. Isolation may in turn, reduce a student's ability to fully partake and benefit from socially oriented cooperative learning envisioned separately by Bandura (2006) and Unesco, (1996) in areas such as building networks, ability to effectively take learning outside the classroom and promoting the democratisation of learning among a community of learners.

The tutor's challenge when faced with workers, lurkers and shirkers in the classroom is how to reawaken intellect in all learners within the quadrant (Figure 1). One step is to identify learner types and their participative attitudes without negative profiling using the methodology outlined in the next section. The next challenge is how to devise class and interactional strategies that may increase participation rates, develop in students core critical thinking skills such as observation, interpretation, analysis, inference, evaluation, explanation, and metacognition as the lynchpins for triggering self-confidence in learning.

Method

Participants

Participants were selected by asking for volunteers who are speakers of English as a first language, studying English at undergraduate level and taking language and context module. Speakers of English as a first language were targeted because research indicates that such people respond naturally to contextual and custom-based use of the language such as vague expressions (Green, 2011; Channell, 1994). Speakers of English as a second language were not used because there was none in the seminar group studied and bringing them from other groups or courses may introduce other dynamics that are outside the scope of this study. There were five (5) male and twenty (20) female volunteers representing 20% and 80% of the population respectively and they were aged between 18 to 23 years old.

Procedure

The study is exploratory and used a sequential mixed methodology where qualitative analysis is followed by quantitative analysis from one database (Cameron, 2014/2009) because, this enables researchers to connect the data between the two research phases while focusing on one phenomena. Although, thirty (30) free response questionnaires were circulated among volunteers, only twenty-five (25) responded representing about 83% which is a good number. After volunteers provided informed, written consent, the researcher distributed the questionnaires. The researcher then asked volunteers to read the instructions, ask questions where instructions were unclear, and the researcher provided clarifications where necessary before volunteers completed the questionnaires. Thereafter, the researcher left the volunteers alone to fill in questionnaires in order to avoid observer paradox where the presence of a researcher may influence the behaviour of a participant during test administration. Volunteers were given the choice of dropping out when they wish while administering the questionnaire and their responses were anonymised using numbers. Anonymity encouraged the volunteers to give honest and objective description of their needs which in turn ensured that the proposed solution is inclusive and prepares the ground for student support during implementation because, students were involved in the process. The study obtained ethics approval prior to commencement.

Content analysis

Data obtained from questionnaires were analysed using the content analysis matrix adapted from Bartram and Gibson, (1997, p.32-33) to identify emerging themes and categories. Content analysis occurs in two stages the first being the open coding stage and the second being final coding (Burnard, et al., 2008). In the first stage the researchers offer a summary statement or word for each element that is written in the

questionnaire except for where the participant is going off topic and such off-topic material is known as dross. From these themes, the students' experiences are summarized to identify, determine and address gaps between current seminar conditions and wants in seminars. In the second stage, duplicated themes are crossed out and this trims down the emerging categories. Erlingsson and Brysiewicz (2017) suggest that this process involves modifying a code toclosely match the meaning of a condensed meaning unit and tweaking a category name accurately describe the relevant codes (Erlingsson & Brysiewicz, 2017, pp. 94-96).

Results and Discussion

The themes emerging from the responses are summarised (Table 1) below.Table 1: Themes emerging from Students' experiences in seminars

Focus	Emerging Themes
Working for me	Content delivery and coverage; use of videos, group work; handouts, engaging activities; tutor's personality; challenging tasks; breaking content into manageable chunks; explanations; use of extra materials; Remaining on topic and thus consolidating on lectures;
Not Working for me	Long & thorough explanations; inadequate explanations; vague instructions; Time management; time consuming tasks; no room for learners with special needs; not specifying content important for assessment; not saying much and letting us do the talking;
What I Need	Make discussions open-ended; more group discussions & debates; give specific instructions; become intentionally provocative; define content registers; recap to clarify content; send materials after seminars as feedback; stop printing materials to save trees; give individual tasks; use more multimedia; improve on time management (finish 10 mins before time); Increase Tutor-Talking Time

From the analysis of responses, emerging themes indicate that respondents were able to identify what did not work for them

during seminars as long explanations, vague instructions, time consuming tasks, low tutor talking time, high student talking time, not specifying what was important for assessment (areas of concentration) and not catering for learners with special needs.

They also identified things that enhanced their learning during seminars as content delivery and coverage; breaking content into manageable chunks, using videos, group work; handouts, challenging and engaging tasks or activities; tutor's personality as approachable; explanations; use of extra materials; remaining on topic thus, consolidating on lectures taken in the larger group.

However, respondents' future learning needs include making discussions open-ended; more group discussions; giving specific instructions that are intentionally provocative; defining content registers; recapping to clarify content; sending materials after seminars as feedback; stop printing materials to save trees; giving individual tasks; using more multimedia; improve on time management(finish 10 mins before time) and increasing tutor-talking time

The trends may seem contradictory because some issues that were identified as having negative effects were also identified as positives and learning needs for example, while some frowned on being allowed to do much of the talking, others requested for

more group discussions. In addition, while some commended the facilitator's ability to explain concepts, some said it was not necessary yet, others requested for more explanations (table 1). These views simply reflect the diversity in opinions, attitudes and perceptions within the seminar groupsupport Kolb's (2014) position that students have different learning preferences. In addition, future learning

needs suggest that some students have not developed critical thinking skills such as the ability to identify important information from discussions because as McGuire & McGuire, (2015) point out, it was not necessary while in college.

Furthermore, students are probably in the memorization-regurgitation mode (McGuire & McGuire, 2015) where they only listen and take notes in class, memorise them and write them down verbatim during assessment hence, the need for tutor to talk more while they talk less so that they take notes in preparation for examinations.

The results also suggest that some students may need a paradigm shift in their classroom expectations from that which projects the lecturer as sole repository of knowledge (what they are used to in secondary and post-secondary schools) to the reality in Higher Education (HE) which positions tutors as facilitators of learning whose principal responsibility is to guide, support and may be assess their learning process.

As outlined in the introduction, peer-to-peer discussions with co-tutors, module convener, teaching reviewers in the UK and colleagues in Nigeria indicate that non-participation occurs in their classes too. In addition, the variety of responses obtained from the questionnaires administered resound within their contexts too. These reinforce the need to design an intervention scheme to remedy the situation and provide guidance for others.

Intervention Strategy

This section will focus upon the intervention strategy that will integrate critical thinking skills into seminars, using questions as a means of generating discussions and giving useful feedback.The first part interprets the results as pedagogic insights while the second stage outlines the plan of action and approach to teaching critical thinking which, aims to empower students to learn for themselves through pair, small group and whole class discussions.

Furthermore, when students develop the

ability to think and act in a purposeful way, learning becomes more meaningful and seminars become more participatory with student taking ownership of the knowledge developed.This is inspired by the critical pedagogy designed by educators such as Paul and Elder, (2010, 2008) Carroll, (2007), De Bono, (1999) and McGuire and McGuire, (2015).

As outlined in results and discussion, students need a paradigm shift to develop critical skills, research suggests that, there are two essential dimensions of thinking that students need to master in order to successfully do this within a process (Paul & Elder, 2010). Going further, Paul and Elder, (2010)point out that students need to be able to identify the "parts" of their thinking and assess their use of these parts of thinking which tie in with Bandura's (2006) cognitive, affective, motivational and selection processes used in developing academic self-efficacy.

These dimensions tie in with Carroll's (2007) distinction between critical thinker (strong sense) and critical thinking (weak sense). Carroll's (2007) strong thinker employs elements of reasoning (Paul & Elder,1997) to take charge of the thinking process, recognise affective, cognitive and perceptual biases and their effects on any discussion.

Carroll's (2007) weak sense refers to thinking that enables one to identify abuses of language, assumptions, implications, common fallacies, evaluate sources of information, claims arguments, simple sampling, explanations, causal factors, concepts and theories; and to apply the best explanations to concepts.

Researchers agree that the critical thinker applies intellectual standards (Paul & Elder, 2010, 1997; Carroll, 2007) such as accuracy, precision, clarity, depth, relevance, significance, logic, fairness, sufficiency of evidence, and breadth to determine the quality of reasoning.

This process leads to the development of habitual intellectual traits in well-cultivated thinkers that:

1. raise vital questions and problems, formulating them clearly and precisely;

2. gather and assesses relevant information, using abstract ideas to interpret it

3. effectively comes to well-reasoned conclusions and solutions, testing them against relevant criteria and standards;

4. think open-mindedly within alternative systems of thought, recognizing and assessing, as need be, their assumptions, implications, and practical consequences; and

5. communicate effectively with others in figuring out solutions to complex problems (Paul & Elder, 2010, 1997; Carroll, 2007)

These intellectual traits or insights become the objective of the next phase of teaching development. They are strategies that tie in neatly into the module objectives, link critical thinking with self-efficacy and act as assessable guidelines used in reflective problem-solving during seminars.Each seminar will be a problem-solving opportunity towards which the tutor outlinesplans with objectives, learning activities, and evaluation.

Planning for Action

Planning focuses on the learner-centered process designed to exercise critical thinking skills, present module content and encourage self-reflection. As outlined in the introduction, De Bono's Six Thinking Hats,(1999) system that involves six coloured hats is being adapted and integrated into seminars. It is a tool for group and individual thinking which provides a means of helping students to be more productive and mindfully involved as critical thinkers.

The tutor identifies six distinct directions and assigns each a colour. By so doing, students

will learn how to separate thinking into six clear functions and roles as they are able to direct their thoughts and discussion (de Bono, 1999; McGuire & McGuire, 2015). The six directions include:

1. **White Facts:** considering neutral objective information available and needed

2. **Emotions Red**: intuitive or instinctive gut reactions or statements of emotional feeling without any justification

3. **Discernment Black:** the critic, conservative, practical, and realistic applies logic to identifying reasons for caution.

4. **Optimistic response - Yellow**: optimist applies logic to identifying benefits, seeking harmony. Sees the brighter, sunny side of situations.

5. **Creativity Green:** statements of provocation and investigation, seeing where a thought goes and thinks creatively, outside the box.

6. **Managing Blue** the CPU what is the subject   what are we thinking about what is the goal Can look at the big picture.

The next step is to form the groups and the proposal is to use the system in two ways. The first follows De Bono's (1999) original design that is meant for the whole group. Here every student takes a number from 1 to 6 then all students with same number for example 1, will belong to the white hats until six groups are formed according to the hats. Each group will be given tasks requiring the skills of their hats and each group will appoint its leader and secretary as they deem fit.

The tutor leads the whole class to set ground rules or etiquette for group discussions such as letting current speakers finish, being polite, constructive in criticism, avoiding personal attacks, taking permission before speaking or leaving the class and others as the case may be. This may make discussions enjoyable, devoid of acrimony and build into students the attitude of respecting other views as have been the experience in chat rooms online. The tutor will also specify the time limit for group discussion because the seminar is only for one hour

To illustrate, I will use a seminar topic "Exploring how cohesion affects interpretation of literary texts".

1. White Hats will be asked to identify cohesive devices in the passages

2. Red hats will be asked to express their feelings regarding the passages read without giving reasons

3. Black hats will compare the passages, identify the disadvantages of the author's use of cohesive devices and give reasons for their answers

4. Yellow hats will compare the passages and point out the advantages of the author's use of cohesive devices and give reasons for their answers

5. Creative green hats will focus on other ways that authors could have used cohesive devices as well as other devices they could have used if they were the authors with illustrations

6. Blue hats will manage the interaction, summarise the discussions and pass valued judgment on each group's presentation.

When groups are meeting and discussing, the tutor goes around asking questions and explaining unclear issues to students. Thereafter, Groups 1 to 5 will present their answers to the class as managed by group 6. Here the tutor will specify presentation and question timings for each group. In some cases, the number of questions may also be specified.

As outlined in the results section, students expressed the need for focused feedback,

questions that provoke discussion, and unambiguous instructions. Thus, essential and supporting questions are incorporated into the process. Essential questions focus on major ideas while supporting questions focus on details and may be follow-up essential questions during interaction. Questions should make students think deeply for example, identify five abnormal characteristics of verbs. McGuire & McGuire (2015) suggest that, tutors should provide a safe environment for students, make them understand that their answers will not be shut down, reward students for thinking critically and make it comfortable for them to ask questions by allowing them to vet questions with their neighbours.

Furthermore, the tutor should incorporate the practice of guided student generated questioning into the seminar through pair, group and whole class discussions as well as peer reviews. Students should practice writing down questions, vetting them with their neighbours before asking. With time they will begin self-evaluation of questions as their reflective skills improve.

Task instructions will have quantity goals instead of having no focus as this has been found to be more beneficial and generate better and more ideas among learners (Paulus, Kohn, & Aditti, 2011). For example, students may be instructed to 'generate as many ideas as possible' regarding a topic however, instructions should be clear.

The second approach is the intensive six thinking hats system. This is useful in seminar groups that require intensive work, provides variety and enables students to possibly wear different hats over a semester. Students will take numbers as done in the whole group approach and each group will have all the hats. Individuals will now function within groups as individual hats during tasks. However, I recognise that this approach might put students under pressure but, it will also cater for those asking for individual tasks In addition, tutor will give feedback by restating what

students have said then linking it with either a general principle or concept they never mentioned. This will enable students see the academic impact of their contributions and enhance their confidence in their own abilities.

Conclusion

This paper focuses on the issue of students' reluctance to ask and answer questions in seminars and has treated it as symptomatic of the different levels of academic self-efficacy among students. The paper proposed two adaptations of De Bono's (1997) Six Thinking Hats system as tools of encouraging students to ask and answer questions in the bid to develop critical thinking skills. These skills may enable the students to own their learning, gain self-confidence, and transfer these skills to other aspects of their academic and professional lives.

It must be stressed that involving students who prefer some needs assessment the class common in hopefully the involvement their own learning process, cross pollination of ideas, self-regulation, reflection, leadership skills, team productivity, organisational abilities and decision-making.

This study took place in the UK using speakers of English as a first language, future researchers may focus on other aspects of English language usage because, this will

enable them to understand the dynamics that this study did not cover.

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