

# أهمية ترتيب جلوس التلاميذ في قاعة الفصل الدراسي

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## ملخص البحث :

الفصل الدراسي هو المكان الذي يتلقى فيه التلاميذ بالمعلم وتتم فيه عملية التعليم والتعلم وفق الطرق المتبعة والسائدة منذ القدم. وحيث ان الفصل الدراسي مكان يتقابل فيه المعلم والتلميذ وجها لوجه فانه بأهمية بمكان ان يزيد ترتيبه بعدا ايجابيا في اجراءات العملية التعليمية من أجل زيادة الفائدة والتحصيل. لذلك من الواجب والمهم على الطرفين المعلم والمتعلم ان يدركوا اهمية ترتيب جلوس التلاميذ داخل الفصل ومدى تأثيره على مشاركتهم وتحصيلهم العلمي. وعلى الرغم من اهمية ترتيب وتنوع مكان جلوس التلاميذ داخل القصلان العديد من المعلمين والمعلمات وخاصة الاخير منهم لا يدركن ذلك بشكل شامل وواضح. لقد اوضح العديد من الباحثين عملية التعلم لها صلة كبيرة بعملية ترتيب التلاميذ داخل الفصل واجراء التطبيقات والانشطة المصاحبة للدرس. ولقد اضاف البعض من الباحثين بأن عملية تدريس أي لغة بشكل فاعل لا يقصر على اتباع طرق التدريس فقط بل بمساهمة فن ترتيب جلوس التلاميذ مع معلمهم داخل فصلهم. وان أي تجاهل لطرق ترتيب القاعة الدراسية لا يعطى للعملية التعليمية شموليتها واكتمال صورتها المطلوبة.

هذه الورقة تصليت الضوء على اهمية ترتيب الفصل الدراسي وخاصة كيفية جلوس التلاميذ والطرق والوسائل التي تساعد على انجاح ذلك ومحاولة تفادي الاحراجات التي تواجه المعلمين والمعلمات من قبل اولياء الامور وخاصة الامهات في المبادرة بحجز الاماكن والمقاعد الامامية لأبنائهم دون ترك هذه العملية للصحاب الاختصاص. كما تستعرض الورقة الجانب التربوي المتبع والمستفاد من تقنيات الجلوس والتي يشعر فيها جميع التلاميذ بالمساواة وتقضى على عزلت بعض التلاميذ المنعزلين خلف نظائرهم في جلوسهم بالخلف وتزيد من ثقفتهم بأنفسهم.

## The Importance of Classroom Seating Management

### Introduction

Classroom is the locate where most traditional teaching and learning operations take place. And well managing gives another positive dimension in the process of both teaching and learning. AsGör et al. (2014) state that “Classroom management, training management are the first and fundamental step in the directory. The classroom is the place where teachers come face to face with students. The formation of student behavior which is the goal of education begins here”. However, both teachers and students should be familiar with the impact of classroom management in the why of improving students’ achievement. Although many experienced teachers who spend a long time in the field of education, they still blind and unaware of the importance of classroom management (see Evertson and Weinstein 2006). By the same token, Art-in (2013: 940) adds that “In learning management process emphasis is placed on the arrangement of subject content and learning activities”. Moreover, Zerin (2009) pointed out that “No language can be taught effectively by focusing only on the methodology and ignoring the issues pertaining to classroom management”. Therefore, my focus in this paper is on the seating arrangements in ESL classrooms which is one of the most important aspects of classroom management in order to solve many problems face various teachers at the third world with special reference to Libyan context.

### Background

Well-managed classroom gives opportunity to the students and teacher to be able to respond to what happens in classroom. Teachers, while performing teaching activities, need to acquire skills in classroom management issues, such as rulemaking, establishing healthy communication with students, changing unwanted behaviors, effective time management and class order. Kizlik, (2015) pointed out that classroom management and management of student conduct are skills that teachers acquire and hone over time. These skills are achieved through years of teaching experience. Effective teaching requires considerable skill in managing the myriad of tasks and situations that occur in the classroom day by day. Skills such as effective classroom management are central to teaching and require "common sense," consistency, an often undervalued teacher behavior, a sense of fairness, and courage. Therefore, these skills also

require that teachers understand in more than one way the psychological and developmental levels of their students. The skills associated with effective classroom management are only acquired with practice, feedback, and a willingness to learn.

So, the role of the teacher in the classroom to create a positive atmosphere is based on a well-organized management. As Scrivener (2005: 79) points out that “Your most important job is perhaps to ‘create the conditions in which learning can take place’. The skills of creating and managing a successful class may be the key to the whole success of a course”. So, teachers' effective classroom management has influence on the student achievement and development of positive attitudes toward school. In a case study, it has been found out that teacher's encouragement, use of positive strategies, such as drawing attention to positive behavior causes to increase desired behaviors and decrease undesired behaviors (Ellis and Blake 1986; Sadik, 2002).

Another aspect of effective classroom management of teachers is to be able to successfully manage unwanted behavior. Understanding the underlying causes and the behavior of undesirable behavior by the teachers is important to anticipate the unwanted behavior and to solve it in an accurate approach when it occurs. All teachers at different levels are in need of strategies and techniques related to the class management while intervening the undesirable behavior. Strategy adopted by the teacher becomes effective on the extinction or the repetition of undesirable behavior.

A corrodng to Evertson and Weinstein (2006:909) argue that “A number of studies have found that classroom management is a primary area in which beginning teachers feel under prepared”. Classroom management is not wide studied at university or at teachers training colleges as Evertson and Weinstein (2006: 888) point out that “Beginning teachers frequently place the blame for their lack of preparation squarely on the inadequacies of the classroom managements”. Therefore, researchers affirm that teachers must have trained on how to manage their classes (see Bryson 1998, Evertson and Weinstein 2006), in order to know how to implement methods for responding to student behavior that disrupts the learning environment or create unsafe learning setting. However, all techniques and methods of teaching are affected by the teachers' beliefs and thoughts as Johnson (1999:30) states that “our beliefs

shape our representation of reality and guide both our thoughts and our behaviors”.

### **The Arrangement of Seating**

Seating arrangement is one of the most important parts of floor space. There are some common seating arrangements which include horizontal rows, vertical rows, circles and long tables which serve different purposes. As Ming-Tak and Li Wai-Shing (2008:48) believe that “a good seating arrangement is one which facilitates specific learning tasks and activities and communicates a teacher’s beliefs about learning and teaching”. Moreover, changing seating arrangement plays a vital role to make the learners more involved in the class and can help them interact with different people. For example, seating in circles, squares and horseshoes rather than parallel rows increases student interaction. This can make eye contact with everyone else in the group and encourages students to communicate and interact much more naturally.

According to this Harmer (2007:40-2) proposed and classified students seating inside the classroom into three types of seating arrangements. They are as the following:

**1.Orderly rows:** In orderly rows seating arrangement, both teacher and students can see each other and they can have eye contacts. Maintaining discipline is easier in this seating arrangement. Teacher can also walk up and down if there is an aisle and can have personal interaction with the students and watching what they are doing. This type of arrangement is suitable for watching a video, using the board, explaining a grammar point, demonstrating text organization, showing student work on an overhead transparency etc where the teacher can work with the whole class in the same time by focusing on the same message. Teacher needs to engage the whole class while working with them in this arrangement and for this teacher must move round especially when s/he wants to see every individual student. Orderly row is best suited for medium to large classrooms over forty.

**2 • Circles and horseshoes:** This type of seating is preferable in smaller classrooms and both teacher and students prefer these seating arrangements. However, there is a slight difference between circles and horseshoes, that is, in horseshoe; teachers’ position is at the open end of the arrangement where the blackboard is situated, whereas in circle, teachers’ position is between the

circle. In circle seating arrangement, there is a feeling of equality among the students since the teacher's position is among them. In horseshoe seating, it may not be true since the teacher position is at the centre of the classroom although there is a greater chance to get close to the students. The most important advantage of this type of seating arrangement is that, all the students can see each other which are not possible comparing with orderly row arrangement.

**3 • Separate tables:** Separate table is more informal than other seating arrangements where students are seated in small groups in separate tables. In this arrangement, teacher work as a facilitator who moves around and checking the students' work helping out if they are having difficulties. The atmosphere of the class is less hierarchical in this arrangement compared to the others.

When the teacher works with the students of one table, the other students get on with their own works. The negative sides of this arrangement are that the students may not want to work with the same peers all the time. Another problem of this arrangement is that it is difficult to teach the whole class since the students are more scattered and separated.

Besides, teachers need to consider the nature of the students while arranging the seats. They should arrange the seating in such a manner so that the teaching and learning can occur in the class as effectively as possible. They also need to ensure the participation of all the students in the class. It should not happen that students who are seated in the front or at the centre of the classroom are interacting and participating in the activities more than the students seated in the corner or back of the classroom.

Students seating is a crucial and important step in the classroom management because if a teacher does not well managed this students will squeeze and tray to isolate themselves by seating within private groups or individual which may affect learning and participation as Bryson (1998:20) points out that "Left to their own device pupils will normally choose to sit with their best friends, their friends of moment, in peer groups or in isolation-none of which is the best arrangement for learning". Therefore, changing students places of setting melt the gape among them to ovoid keep sticking on one friend or one group. Scrivener (2011:61) points out that

Changing seating arrangements can help students interact with different people, change the focus from you when appropriate and allow a range of different situations to be recreated within the classroom, as well as simply adding variety to the predictability of sitting in the same place every time.

This is also useful to keep students in the same distance from their teacher when they change their seating position. Moreover, this technique of rearrangement student seating positions helps students to achieve better and gain the purpose of the activity as Bennett & Dunne (1992: 109) state that “teachers should set up different groups for different tasks and purposes”. This indicates that the teachers treat students equally and avoid allocating roles according to race, gender, and sexuality (see *ibid*). However, Harmer (2012: 180) states that “it is also important to bear in mind that the students may not want to be stuck with the same three or four students forever”.

But Packard & Race (2000: 90) state that “A disorganized classroom or constantly changing routines make for chaotic lesson”. Because only with well-organized classes, teachers have the opportunity to move, circulate during the activity and listen, observe, and take notes. Arrange the classroom furniture helps both teachers and students to maximise learning opportunities and minimize disruption (see Bryson 1998, Harmer 2015).

In order to engage your students, you need to manage them well. Setting rules and routines from the first day of school will help you create a positive environment where students and teachers will feel comfortable learning and teaching. Although establishing a productive routine takes time, it is necessary to create it from beginning. Gain knowledge on effective strategies, routines and seating arrangement can implement inside the classroom which experience plays crucial principle in the whole operation.

However, in some cultures teachers do not give any attention to the classroom rearrangements during the whole course or year. According to my experience as a teacher and an inspector, the majority if not all teachers especially at primary and preparatory schools do not keep this technique in their agenda and never try to change the classroom routine. Thus, Libyan teachers face various problems at each beginning course or year from the students' parents who want to have a

grantee to sit their children at the first row without taking any other consideration in the account. Therefore, any student who may not come with his/her mother to the teacher from the first school day equipping the first seating row may sit at any place (most of the time at the back) until the end of the course or year. If we ask why this has happened, simply the answer is that; teachers in Libya may not have learnt the importance of seating arrangement techniques and have not applied them at their classes.

Based on these, teachers should be familiar with classroom management which is most important job of them to create the conditions in which learning can take place to the whole students as Scrivener (2011:54) states that “the skills of creating and managing a successful class may be the key to the whole success of a course”. Students are indeed profoundly affected by what they see, hear, and feel when they inside their classroom. Hughes et al. (2007:52) state that “The classroom environment itself plays an important role in students’ language learning. A positive classroom environment offers opportunities for students to use English and encourages them in their learning”. Therefore, the teacher is the one who decides the way of seating in order to come up with configurations that make interaction among students most feasible and does not allow some students to avoid facing other students or their teacher due to their weak performance or shyness. Teachers should give students plenty of opportunities to participate with each other based on the students way of seating.

The teacher should decide who sits next to the other student and s/he asks his/her students when to arrange due to the need of doing so (see Brown 2007: 242) He (ibid) also states that “In some ESL contexts, or where students come from varied native language backgrounds, English will be more readily practiced if students of the same native language are not sitting next to each other. And if some adjacent students are being disruptive, you may decide to selectively move a few people”. It is also important in organizing class seating that the teacher should know well what s/he wants to do and what students need to learn. According to this respect Harmer (2013: 136) points out that “One aspect of organization that is especially appropriate for large-class teaching in telling the students what is going to happen in a lesson and summarizing what has happened when it has ended”.

There are many ways of arranging students’ ways of seating inside the classroom in order to avoid student’s fossilization in one particular place and

with one or two colleagues only. As Johnson (2008: 343) points out that “Different ways of grouping students naturally suggest different ‘desk patterns’”. In traditional classrooms teachers sit in the front, centre while the students are in serried ranks in front of them. This way is accepted but it is not in the whole course or year. As Pasteur (2015) stated that “There are different ways to organize the students in your classroom. Types of seating charts include student choice, alphabetical, and teacher placed”. He also emphasized that “Seating charts are one of the best preventative measures a teacher can use” (ibid).

Rearranging students seating gives the teacher a chance to rid of the parents by asking for the first rows. These ways of arrange students’ seating may take the following techniques: the teacher may ask students to sit according their date of birthday, by their height, by their names i.e names start with the same letter, by color of their clothes, shirts, trousers, skirts, shoes.... The teacher may play this games with his/her students to start arranging their ways of seating at the beginning of the lesson. So, the teacher does not have to limit himself to one particular set-up if a variety of arrangements will work best for him and his students.

## Conclusion and Recommendation

Seating arrangement is one of the most important aspects of classroom management which is connected to the other aspects of it. In a language classroom, seating arrangement is important to create a positive learning environment. There are different types of seating arrangement for different type of classroom. All type of seating arrangement has some positive and negative sides. All of them are not suitable for all classes. Some are good for some classroom contexts whereas some are not. So, our teachers should be familiar with the importance of seating students inside the class and why they should change students seating.

Teachers should try to make their students feel comfortable in the class by changing the classroom setting from time to time and according to the necessity of the lesson. So, teachers instead of fixed seating arrangement as traditional way of seating, they can try different types of seating arrangement and remove the concept of fixed seating all the year or course. I believe, one type of fixed seating arrangement cannot benefit the students all the time and it also does not fulfill the purpose of teaching and learning



Naturally, there are different types of students in each class; some students are weak and some strong. This indicates that some need teachers help so frequently whereas some do not need any help. Therefore, if the teachers place those types of students together, it will be easy for the teacher to work with them. Otherwise teachers have to move from one place to another very frequently.

Students can participate in arranging their seating and instead of getting stuck in an unsuitable seating arrangement, ask students to rearrange the seating arrangements when it is preferable and possible.

Rearrangement students seating can encourage shy students who hide themselves at the back of the class to participate with their colleagues in any class activity. Finally, teachers need to be aware enough to the importance of seating arrangements and how they can create suitable atmosphere inside their classes to encourage learning EFL.

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