



The More I Speak, the Less They Hear

'My teacher sometimes uses very difficult language that actually confuses me,' groaned Anila.
'How can that be? What your teacher says can't possibly confuse you!' said Anila's mother angrily.

However, more students than one claim it can happen. Research reveals that sometimes learners struggle even to get the gist of what the teacher is trying to say especially when there is information overload.

How does a teacher decide exactly how much is too much when it comes to 'teacher talk'? Does everything a teacher say in class necessary for learning the target concept she is trying to get across? Could the same be communicated using fewer and simpler words?

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WHAT'S IN IT

Accept or Question?

Students often consider lessons taught at school as a collection of unquestionable facts and information. The printed words in a book and the teacher who is a figure of authority both go hand in hand towards building a student's attitude towards prescriptive lessons. Studying involves more than merely gaining knowledge from a source of authority. It is a systematic and organised inquiry into the knowledge made available and a pursuit in gaining deeper and more useful understanding of the acquired knowledge.

How should students then be taught so that they look at all knowledge with a spirit of inquiry? The Guru-sishya tradition in India has endowed the teacher as an authoritarian figure with a certain level of reverence. A student dare not demand empirical evidence to what is given as knowledge in the classroom.

In the Hindu tradition, when teachers taught, most questions of students were answered convincingly. An answer, however convincing, is not empirical evidence of truth, as empirical evidence is verifiable by observation and experience and not merely by logic, theory or argument.

Many theories that were once considered as conclusive truth later turn into hypotheses when questioned by subsequent generations.

An interesting deviation from the norm of a teacher cum philosopher is Socrates. For Socrates, Athens was a classroom. He did not spare the elite or the common man when it came to questioning. All he wanted was to arrive at political and ethical truths through questioning and discussions. 'Socrates never lectured', we are told by his disciples. He claimed that he was ignorant because he was seeking answers but wise because he recognised his ignorance.

Learning enjoys central importance in Islam too as God, according to Islam, commanded man to learn. 'Read in the name of thy Lord who creates,' were the first words of God's first revelation to the Prophet Muhammad. What God commanded man to study was His word. The Quran was the first subject the young Muslim encountered in school and his first task was to learn it by heart. Now, you don't question what you are expected to learn by heart. The same tenet applies to all religious scriptures be it the Upanishads or the Bible, as you do not demand empirical evidence for affirming faith in scriptures.

The Constitution of India lays down developing a spirit of inquiry in students as a fundamental right. How do teachers balance the traditional, unquestioning disposition, which society plants in the young people with that of developing a spirit of inquiry in them? We are very keen to listen to your views on this issue. Please do write to: school.marketing@macmillan.co.in



SCHOOL COUNSELLING SERVICES IN INDIA

Counselling is a **learning-oriented process**, which occurs usually in an interactive relationship, with the aim of helping a person learn more about the self, and to use such understanding to enable the person to become an effective member of society. Counselling is a process by means of which the helper expresses care and concern towards the person with a problem, and facilitates that person's personal growth to bring about change through self-knowledge. The aim of the counselling process is to primarily facilitate behaviour change; improve the individual's ability to establish and maintain relationship; enhance coping skills; promote decision making, and facilitate individual goals. The counselling process, for example, in a school setting, can be divided into three progressive stages, namely, **initial disclosure**, **in-depth exploration**, and **undertaking action**.

At the beginning the counsellor and the counsellee do not know one another well. Therefore, **establishing rapport** becomes the first task; without honest self-disclosure by the client counselling in an empty enterprise. **Attending** (paying careful attention to the client's words and actions) is very important. The counsellor must promote trust in the client by **showing empathy** (understanding others' experience as if it were your own), genuineness (or dependability), **unconditional regard** (total acceptance of the client as he or she is) and **openness** (using clear language to describe the counsellee's life situation).

During in-depth exploration, the counsellor brings into the discussion his/her impressions of the counsellee's dynamics and coping behaviours. The counsellor tries to obtain the counsellee's response about whether the counselling process is progressing satisfactorily and also expresses his/her opinion about the progress achieved in a few counselling sessions. This stage frequently becomes emotionally stressful because the client repeatedly faces the inadequacy of habitual behaviours and must learn to give up the old behaviours for the new learnt during the counselling process. Also, the counsellor and counsellee come to a mutually acceptable assessment and diagnosis of the problems.

Lastly, **decision-making** takes place and action is undertaken. The counsellee considers possible actions and then chooses some of them to try out. The counsellor gives support for trying new behaviors and helps the client evaluate the effectiveness of new behaviours.

Emerging Objectives

- Identifying the overall needs of counselling services of children attending the regular schooling system.
- Sensitizing schools for the growing need of comprehensive counselling services and well-being.
- Streamlining the structure, protocol and guidelines for the school counselling services across the country thereby strengthening the existing infrastructure and human resource for the same.
- Setting up uniform guidelines / centres of excellence of health research in partnership with the education system, to enhance the psychosocial well-being of children attending schools.
- Linking the education system with the local / regional mental health services and professionals for a qualitative monitoring of the programme.

It is proposed that the initiatives should involve collaborative workshops at the national level and a longitudinal multi-centric pilot study to evaluate the implementation of the aims and objectives of the said project.



Once a teacher trainer asked her teachers, 'Have you ever listened to yourself speak?' Much as it surprised the teachers, listening to oneself is a useful exercise in understanding how your students receive your communication. The best way to do this is to record one of your classroom proceedings, play it when you are alone and check if all that you have said is necessary.

Let's analyse this example. Imagine you are all set to demonstrate the concept of 'Displacement of water'. How much teacher talk is necessary for helping students understand the concept? Once the students have caught the concept, if you have the time, you can add a few interesting anecdotes about Archimedes. As anything you convey after the concept is understood is only going to deepen their understanding.



Test yourself

Tick the better warm up options of the two:

- ☐ a. Have you heard this word 'displacement'? When you place something, you keep it in a place. You know when we want to say the opposite of a word, we use 'dis' before it. So, what do you think 'displacement' means?
- ☐ b. Teacher: Today, we are going to do an interesting experiment. Before that, who wants to answer a question? Have you noticed what happens to a plastic ball when you put it in a tub of water?

The first option takes the focus away from the concept as the child starts thinking about prefixes, which is not important here.

Let's study how you can take it forward.

If your question draws the following answer:

Ans: float/stay on top you can explore using probe questions to ensure comprehension.

Teacher: Float? What does 'float' mean?

Ans: It won't go inside the water.

Teacher: Why won't it go inside water?

Answer: No answer. But the students have begun to think.

Now, my second question.

If I remove the air plug, release the air from the plastic ball and squeeze it tight into a small tight ball, will it float or sink?

The class is divided. Some feel it might float and some think it might sink.

You move to the demonstration.

Teacher: Now please observe.

What have I got here? I have a tub of water.

And, what is this? This is a plastic ball.

Is it heavy or light?

Did you notice water rising? Look carefully and decide.

Teacher: Now, let's try one more experiment. I have a tin foil here.

I'm going to shape it like a boat. There... here's our boat.

Guess if the tin foil boat will sink or sail. One of you come here and feel how heavy the tin foil is.

What do you think? Is it heavy?

Does anyone else want to try?

Now you have made your guesses. Now, I'm going to place the boat in water.

Let's see what happens.

Yes, it floats.

I guess we can conclude that tin foil that weighs this much is still light enough to float, agreed?

The class is sure to fall for this. They have jumped to the conclusion that light objects always float.

Now let's see. I am going to crumple the tin foil and throw it in water.

What is happening? Down it goes. It sinks. Take a good look.

The students may look confused but it is positive confusion—the kind of confusion that would make them think and question.

Continue: Why does the crumpled boat sink when it floated before it was crumpled? The crumpled boat weighs exactly as much as the boat did before it was crumpled. Why doesn't it float? Now, explain the concept of displacement.

The answer is in the concept of displacement. An object that displaces its own weight in water will float, however heavy it might be. We often wonder how heavy battleships don't sink, don't we? They push aside their own weight in water with the help of the engine in the ship. And, they stay on top of water.

Wait for introducing the concept of density of molecules till the next class. Do not crowd their heads with too much information at one go.

We'd love to read about any experience you might have had as a student on how you were distracted by an unnecessary detail not relevant to the topic dealt with.

Being There...

Macmillan firmly believes that the future of today's student will be technology driven. All the more reason why educators need to equip themselves with new skill sets and adapt swiftly to the exciting new ways of teaching and learning. Macmillan has been a strong and committed partner providing support to school leaders, teachers and students in many ways



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Our Partner school...

Indo Public School, Amravati, has been working towards excellence in education.

The students of Class 10, 2013 batch of the school set a benchmark in the CBSE examination with 100% results. The topper, Anshul Vijayvergiya, scored 99.6% and with a CGPA of 10.0, his remarkable performance has made him the Amravati division topper too.

The school was started in the year 2003 with just 32 students and today boasts of a strength of 1300 students. The students receive holistic education and excel in both scholastic and co scholastic areas. Mrs Ayushree Deshmukh, the Director of the school, has taken forward her vision of nurturing the school from a nascent stage to a flourishing tree of achievements.

The School Management, Principal, Vice-Principal and staff congratulate Anshul on his achievement and wish him every success in his future endeavours.



Anshul
Vijayvergiya



Ms Archita Singla and Master Tanay Sah

The Macmillan Family and **Mr Kulbhushan Jad**, Principal congratulates **Ms Archita Singla** and **Master Tanay Sah** from PARVATI RADHAKISHEN FOMRA SCHOOL Mathura, for winning the IAIS State toppers medal.

Place your text here
Place your text here
Congratulations.....

Overheard



Disclaimer:

This is just about the funny side of teaching—means no offence to anyone nor does it draw on any one known teacher.

Eavesdropped

Ms Pyare Mohan looked like Scooby Doo that December morning. She believed in protecting herself sufficiently as she dare not miss even a single class before the model exams.

"Where does she shop for her woollies? And, how does she get in to them?" said FM in hushed tones to her neighbour, Ms Mamgain, in the staff room.

Ms Mamgain did not appreciate this. She was as correct as you can get. Never said a word that was not politically correct, so she smirked and turned to the papers she was marking.

Finding no audience in those present in the staff room, FM decided to peel off to take a class at last. She had no idea where she had to go. Quickly, she referred to the timetable on the wall and muttered in anxiety, "My goodness! It's that horrible 10 C! The brats will ask me unheard of questions!"

10 C had some precocious students—very bright and well-informed but naughty. They were quick to know that Ms FM came unprepared for her classes and they could use that for some fun on the side.

FM wished the students and asked them if they remembered what she had taught them on Industrial Revolution. She pointed to Ashok, the brightest student for she

was sure he'd answer correctly. Ashok was in a wicked mood. He said, "When industries orbit the sun it is called the industrial revolution, Ma'am."

FM nodded appreciatively when she heard the students burst out in loud laughter. She realised that she had assumed that Ashok would give the right answer and wasn't paying any attention to what he had said. Now she looked confused. "What's so funny?" she said in a stern voice.

"The industrial revolution, Ma'am," said Kapil.

"Only idiots like you find serious topics like Industrial Revolution funny." Then she resorted to her usual punishment tactics. "All of you now write a paragraph on Industrial Revolution using the information Ashok has given you." One of the naughty students of 10 C presented this to FM:

The Industrial Revolution was the transition to new processes that occurred in the period from about 1760 to some time between 1820 and 1840. This transition included the earth orbiting the sun twice in twenty-four hours as now machines were used to speed up the revolution. New chemical manufacturing and iron production processes, improved efficiency of planet earth and it started orbiting at twice its speed. The Industrial Revolution began in Great Britain as the prime meridian is located in Britain. But within a few decades, it had spread to Western Europe and the United States.

The Industrial Revolution marks a major turning point in history; almost every aspect of daily life was influenced in some way. Most astrologers had to rewrite their predictions. Most notably, average income and population began to exhibit unprecedented sustained growth as people had to work twice as much in half the time. In the words of Nobel Prize winner Robert E. Lucas, Jr., "For the first time in history, the living standards of the masses of ordinary people have begun to undergo sustained growth."

While the class had a blast after the papers were returned as always, FM hadn't read the books and had simply ticked the answers. All she had remarked was: You were asked to write one paragraph and you have written two. Do you know to count till ten?

Warm Up

What Do They Learn?



Labelling pictures to test learning outcomes



Activity to develop observational and inferential skills

Visual mind maps to connect key concepts

Snapshot

of activity-based learning from *Footprints--Our Past, Planet and Society, Coursebook 1*



Any entry that we publish will receive a **prize.**

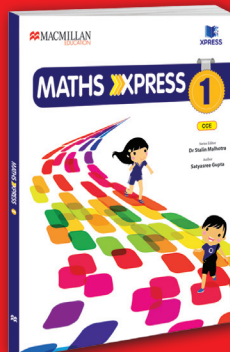
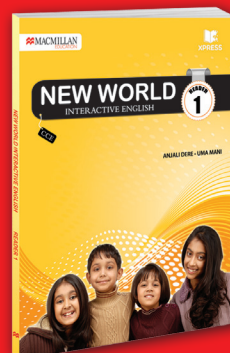
We'd like to hear your teaching anecdotes

We're looking for funny stories, horror stories, disaster stories, happy stories, sad stories - share your memorable classroom moments with the teaching community here. To send your anecdote, email us at school.marketing@macmillan.co.in



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