

Speech chain

#classroom-management #exchanging-opinions #independent-learning #social-learning

Speech chains allow students to lead the conversation in class independently.

Arrangement: plenum

Phase: introduction, elaboration, conclusion

Description:

First, the teacher comes up with a question or task before he/she steps back and gives room to the students, with the latter (students) then leading the discussion. Meanwhile, the teacher takes notes of what happens. One student contributes something to the topic, and then somebody else is picked by the said student to go on. This procedure continues until the discussion is finished. At this point, the teacher summarises the debate based on his/her notes.

A speech chain can be beneficial in the introductory phase of a unit to determine both the students' individual experiences with and prior knowledge of the topic. The method can also be used to conclude a working phase when the results of said phase become the topic of the discussion. Additionally, speech chains are also suitable for reflection, with students expressing their opinions in a 'relaxed' atmosphere. Also, the method is suited to be used in order to plan projects for which ideas could be collected during a speech chain.

Hints:

An open question or task allows for a more individual approach to the topic. An open question or task allows the whole class to participate more efficiently so that the discussion is not finished after only a few contributions.

Ideally, the seating arrangement should be adjusted so that all students can see each other, which, in turn, may help improve the conversation.

Rules of communication should be established. In particular, rules regarding the allocation of speaking rights (that is, who picks who) may be beneficial to prevent certain students from being chosen more often. In contrast, others don't get to contribute anything at all.

Material:

Objects representing the right to speak could be used and given to whoever currently speaks. This object is then passed on from one student to another. For example, a ball could be used and thrown from one student to another, which brings some variety and excitement to the lesson.

Sources (German):

Mattes, Wolfgang. (2006): Methoden für den Unterricht. Kompakte Übersichten für Lehrende und Lernende. Schöningh: Paderborn.