

# Observation and Analysis of Classroom Teaching at Tertiary Level

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## Introduction

There are so many programmes that have been introduced to improve the efficiencies and competencies of Primary and Secondary level teachers and sincere efforts are being made continuously in this direction. But the situation is completely reverse in the context of the teaching at tertiary level (+3 level). There is no teacher training programme available at this level. The need is being felt for a long time to develop teacher training programme for college teachers. Education Commission (1964-66) and National Policy on Education 1986 have already recognized the need of career and professional development of College and University teachers. Keeping this pressing need in mind the U.G.C. formulated a new scheme and established Academic Staff Colleges all over the country. Opening of Academic Staff Colleges is a modest beginning in the right direction but teacher education programme at +3 level is yet in its embryonic stage. For the development of teacher education programme at +3 level, it is necessary to study the interaction patterns of effective teachers teaching at this level. Hence the study of the interaction patterns of these teachers will probably help in developing a programme of teacher education at tertiary level.

## Usefulness of the FIACS

There are various tools available to measure classroom interaction patterns. More than one hundred category and sign systems can be easily identified. Among these 'Flanders Interaction Analysis Category System' (FIACS) has been found to be the most popular tool for capturing classroom interaction patterns. According to Amidon and Hough (1967) FIACS is currently best known and the most widely used system for analyzing classroom instructional process.

The purpose of interaction analysis is to provide objective data, systematic record on the teaching behaviour of the teacher which may be helpful in giving definite interactions and guidance to the teacher for the improvement of his teaching. The second objective of studying classroom interaction is to identify the pattern of teacher behaviour. The third objective is to involve remedial strategies in reconstructing of our whole concept of teaching methodology.

The advantages of classroom interaction analysis as against the traditional training method lie in the fact that its utility has been reported as a training tool as well as a tool to measure teacher's classroom behaviour patterns in various studies. Research studies also demonstrated the utility of interaction analysis in the modification of teacher's classroom behaviour.

## The FIACS

Although, interaction analysis has proved to be a very useful and objective observation tool to measure classroom events, its potentialities as a training tool in teacher training, however, is still under exploration. The FIACS contains ten categories. The first seven of which are meant for recording teacher talk, next two categories cover pupil talk and the rest one records silence or confusion in the classroom. Thus the FIACS is concerned with verbal behaviour only; because it can be observed with higher reliability than the non verbal. The assumption is that the verbal behaviour of an individual is an adequate sample of his total behaviour (Amidon and Hough, 1967). It also assumes that classroom interaction is a series of events and that teaching behaviour consists of acts or patterns of behaviours, embedded to the chain of classroom events. The major features of this category system lie in the analysis of initiative and response which are the characteristics of interaction between two or more individuals (Flanders, 1970). Flanders interaction analysis also assumes that teacher is the influential authority in the classroom, because teacher talks and what he says determines to a large extent the reactions of the students.

## Procedure for Observation and Analysis of Data:

For capturing classroom interaction, the observer sits in a classroom in the best position to here and sees the participants. At the end of each a three seconds period, he decides which category best represents the communication events just completed (Flanders, 1970). He writes this category number down on data sheet simultaneously assessing communication in the next period and continues at a rate of 20 to 25 observations per minute. Marginal notes may be used to explain the class formation or

any unusual circumstances.

The numbers which an observer has written down are paired. The first number of a pair is represented by row and the second number of pair is represented by the column. Suppose the pair is 10-6; the tally is placed in row 10 and column 6 cell. If the second pair is 6-5; the tally is placed in row 6 and column 5. Thus the observer tabulates these observations in a 10x10 matrix. On the basis of this matrix the observer can compute different components of classroom communication such as teacher talk (TT), student talk (ST), silence or confusion, steady state ratio, direct, indirect ratio etc. and the value of these variables explains the teacher's classroom behaviour in different manners and thus helps him to modify his behaviour in the light of interaction analysis.

#### Limitations of the FIACS :

FIACS is found to be very useful to observe the classroom interaction pattern of those teachers who are teaching at primary and secondary levels. But one important drawback that is often being felt against FIACS is that it is not suitable to measure classroom interaction patterns of college level teachers. Because at +3 level teachers mostly deliver lectures. Therefore category 5 of the FIACS prevails in the classroom and rest categories become almost rare. So, the subscripting of category 5 was considered essential to make this tool more suitable for observing and analysis of college and university level teaching where teachers teach through lecture method.

#### Improvement over the FIACS :

At +3 level teachers while teaching do not only lecture but also put questions to their students. Sometimes, the teacher expects responses from students, while at many occasions they reply the question themselves. In situations where a teacher asks a question with the intent that a student will reply there seem to be two settings, first when a teacher bases his questions on some material aids like charts, figures, tables etc. the student reply on the basis of these materials too. The other situation is distinctly observed when the teacher asks his questions that are of reflective type based upon abstract thinking. Thus the two types of questioning have been identified during observation of classes and accordingly there was also a need to subscript the category 4 of the FIACS.

Thus it was decided to identify the sub categories in the main categories 4 and 5 of the FIACS. Before proceeding to identify sub categories of 4 and 5 of the FIACS on exploratory phase of subscripting these categories observation of the various classroom behaviours was done. On the basis of the observations of the various classes and discussions with experienced experts, two sub categories of questioning behaviours were identified. These were further discussed and streamlined and refined on the basis of comments from the experts.

Then the necessary arrangements were made to observe live classrooms with new categories in order to authenticate and validate various sub categories against their incidence. Several field trials employing a variety of classroom lecturing by social science teachers and a variety of classroom lecturing by social science teachers were made in order to discriminate and identify various subcategories. The procedure suggested by Flanders (1970s, p. 127) was utilized to subscript these categories 4 & 5.

In the end two sub categories of four and five main categories were finalized, which have been given below:

#### Category

- 4.1 Teacher asks questions on material shown.
- 4.2 Teacher asks questions involving thinking/ reasoning.

#### Category

- 5.1 Teacher lectures coherently.
- 5.2 Teacher lectures using examples, graphs and tables etc.
- 5.3 Teacher lectures incoherently.
- 5.4 Teacher lectures employing self questioning.
- 5.5 Teacher lectures involving dictation from notes.

#### Modified FIACS:

Hence by subscripting categories 4 and 5, the FIACS, has been made more adequate and widely applicable at +3 level. The final form of the modified FIACS has been presented as follow :

## Modified Flanders Interaction Analysis Category System (MFIACS)

Teacher Talk	Response	<p><b>1. Accepts Feeling:</b> Accepts and clarifies an attitude or the feeling tone of a pupil in a non threatening manner. Feelings may be positive or negative. Predicting and recalling feelings are included.</p> <p><b>2. Praises or encourages:</b> Praises or encourages pupil action or behaviour. Jokes that release tension, but not at the expense of another individual; nodding head, or saying "Um hm?" or "go on" are included.</p> <p><b>3. Accepts or uses ideas of pupils :</b> Clarifying, building or developing ideas suggested by a pupil. Teacher extensions of pupil ideas are included but as the teacher brings more of his own ideas into play, shift to category five.</p>
	Initiation	<p><b>4.1 Asks questions on material shown:</b> Maps, models, graphics, and charts etc.</p> <p><b>4.2 Asks questions involving thinking/ reasoning:</b> open and closed questions are included.</p> <p><b>5.1 Lectures coherently :</b> Continuity and relevance of subject matter</p> <p><b>5.2 Lectures supported by examples, tables, graphs etc.,</b> Clarifies facts, concepts, principles etc, using these devices.</p> <p><b>5.3 Lectures incoherently :</b> Presents irrelevant contents.</p> <p><b>5.4 Lectures embedded with self questioning :</b> Occasionally uses questions and responds himself and continues lecturing.</p> <p><b>5.5 Lecture involving dictation from notes :</b> reading from a book or dictating the matter from the notes.</p> <p><b>6. Giving directions:</b> Directions, commands or orders with which a pupil is expected to comply.</p> <p><b>7. Criticizing or Justifying authority :</b> Statements intended to change pupil behaviour from non acceptable to acceptable pattern; bawling someone out; stating why the teacher is doing what he is doing; extreme self-reference.</p>
Pupil Talk	Response	<p><b>Pupil Talk Response 8. Pupil Talk Response :</b> Talk by pupils in response to teacher. Teacher initiates the contact or solicits pupil statement or structures the situation. Freedom to express own ideas is limited.</p>
	Initiation	<p><b>9. Pupil-talk-initiation :</b> Talk by pupils which they initiate. Expressing own ideas; initiating a new topic; freedom to develop opinions and line of thought, like asking thoughtful questions; going beyond the existing structure.</p>
Silence/ confusion		<p><b>10. Silence or confusion :</b> Pauses, short periods of silence and periods of confusion in which communication cannot be understood by the observer.</p>

### Its Utility :

By using modified FIACS, the classroom interaction patterns of college and University teachers can be observed and analyzed objectively. On the basis of the objective observation and analysis of classroom interaction patterns of effective college and university teachers, a teacher education programme can be planned. This tool, thus can pave the way of progress towards observing, analyzing and understanding particular patterns of effective lecturing behaviours in almost all subjects at the graduation and postgraduation level. This humble attempt will surely contribute towards framing of the basic training programme of teacher education for +3 level teachers.

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