

Student Anxiety in The Classroom

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Abstract

A persistent problem occurring in language classrooms is student anxiety (SA) which is evident at all levels of proficiency. The concern is that it will exert a negative effect on communication in the target language and the process of learning. This article discusses SA and the sources of SA. Using the strategies and techniques by Tsui (1996), Millroad (2004), Walsh (2006) and Classroom Participation Mark (CPM) which I proposed, the results are positive. It encourages learners to be active and trigger student initiation.

Keywords: student anxiety, language, process of learning

What is student anxiety? Student anxiety is feelings of anxiety, apprehension and nervousness which commonly exist in language learners in learning to speak a second or foreign language. These feelings can cause a negative effect on communication in the target language. Language learning is not only a process of acquiring linguistic rules or participating in communication activities, but as a process in which individual learners are constantly putting themselves in a vulnerable position of having their own self-concept undermined and subjecting themselves to negative evaluations (Tsui, 1996:155). This process is stressful and likely to generate much anxiety in the learners. Language classroom anxiety is a widespread phenomenon which Horwitz, Horwitz, and cope (quoted in Tsui, 1966:157), describe as

beliefs, feelings, and behaviors related to classroom language learning arising from the uniqueness of the language learning process." The uniqueness of language learning lies in the fact that learners are required to perform in a language that they are still trying to master. This requirement has effects on the learner's self-concept. As Tsui (1996:156) points out:

When communicating in a language in which they are not fluent, learners cannot help but feel that they are not fully representing their personality and their intelligence. The uniqueness of language learning also lies in the fact that learners are much more vulnerable to criticism and negative evaluation than in other subjects because the chances of making mistakes in the language class are much greater.