Combatting Introversion in the Classroom

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Abstract

I teach Military Science 100 (MS100), Intro to Warfighting to freshmen level Cadets “PLEBES” at the United States Military Academy (USMA). This review investigated whether there is adequate class participation in the learning process. It provides an insight of participative learning and its importance. The significance of this study was to learn how to foster active participation at the United States Military Academy (USMA), in our courses as well as offering remedies on how to control and manage issues of insufficient or failure of involvement. This paper discusses class participation and shares techniques of participating which encourage active learners’ engagement during class sessions.

Introduction

After teaching two semesters at the United States Military Academy, I came to the realization that Instructors and Cadets are co-creators of class participation which influence not only individual and collective learning but also the entire education performance evaluation. During class sessions, Instructors can manage participation in several dimensions which include identifying who to call on and how to interact with the cadets in the process of listening, asking questions, and responding. Instructors should strive to maintain an environment that is favorable and suitable for every Cadet.

While involving Cadets in class participation, Instructors may decide to choose a Cadet with expertise related to the lesson topic to help in clarifying a difficult conceptual point or conversely select a Cadet with minimal background concerning the subject so as to commence on a discussion process. Apart from verbal approaches, body language is another measure of participating in class (Ratto, Shapiro, Truong, & Griswold, 2003). Voice tone, facial expressions, and the teacher-student relationship has an impact on participative learning.

Many faculties in learning institutions tend to interpret student responses to class questions as evidence of an actively engaged learning (Czekanski, & Wolf, 2013). Due to this conviction, class participation whether graded or ungraded appears in several course syllabi in universities and colleges. Participative learning provides Instructors with some confidence that cadets are reading assignments and learning is taking place. Some of the Instructors similar to myself go to the extent of creating rubrics that structure Cadets’ participation and usually indicate precisely the responsibilities Cadets should carry out. These rubrics often list Instructor Points and scales showing performance level.

Members of faculty interested in involving students in teaching process tend to value classroom participation. O’Connor’s article reviews discuss class participation as well as sharing
involvement approaches which promote active student engagement during class meetings. Here the writer put much concentration on methods which bring a significant number of learners into a course discussion. These measures reflect a move away from the consolidated responding of only a few students that too often characterizes patterns of participation observed in learning institutions’ classrooms. It is evident that education is primarily dependent on both Instructors and students preparation to study in all aspects (O'Connor, 2013).

In several classroom settings, participative learning, and active engagement are both critical components for student success. This statement is true especially in military science classes whereby Cadets requires to develop and refine their ability to critically and productively engage in tactical decision exercise studied at the same time participating in conversations with their colleagues. Classroom participation expectation is a common strategy used by Instructors for honing and developing relevant skills in students (Wright, 2014). Instructors seek to refine and cultivate Cadets’ critical thinking and communication skills when they advocate for participative learning.

There is an encouragement for Cadets to participate in classroom actively. Nevertheless, many Cadets are reluctant to speak during class. Several articles discuss the reasons that make students speak up during class time. The discussion emphasizes or focuses on group interviews carried out on groups of active students and passive learners. These studies found that class size, Instructors’ and students’ personality, and the perception of peers impacts students’ speaking up in their various classes. Also, the articles inform us that there are factors which influence participative learning (Abdullah, Bakar, & Mahbob, 2012). To ensure that there is adequate and desirable class participation, we must take care of these factors allowing a conducive environment for fostering quality education.

Within the United States Military Academy, cooperative learning has a long tradition. However, it seems complicated when it comes to its application in MS100. This issue is brought about by teaching techniques which require a high level of participation from learners as well as carefully monitoring the process by education facilitators (de Arriba, 2016). Some articles offers or illustrates participative learning experience adapted to a large class size using wikis. The results show how useful wikis are in motivating active participation and teamwork learning in students. Besides, they facilitate assessment and monitoring of individual work even in large classes. Cooperation in learning process encourages participative learning even in the classroom. Moreover, it creates favorable teacher-student relationship which gives students confidence in expressing themselves thus participating in classes (de Arriba, R. (2016).

Gender affects classroom participation whereby some individuals have challenges in conveying themselves (Tatum, Schwartz, Schimmoeller, & Perry, 2013). Also in some cultures, there tends to be a notion that one gender is superior to the other mainly male students tend to feel as superior to females students. Transmitting this belief in learning institution will eventually have an impact on the way some student will participate during class time (Au, & Mason, 1983). Schools should advocate for gender equality so as to encourage effective classroom participation for all students regardless of their gender or background.
It is necessary to prioritize measuring Cadet success to ensure that there are optimal performance results delivered by learners. The aim this activity is to investigate whether assessment techniques applied in classes such as KWLs which stand for what you know, what you want to know, and what you learned fosters student participation in classes. With this knowledge, Instructors can induce a high level of classroom involvement which in turn results in excellent students performance level and retention (Dyer, Steele, & Holbeck, 2014).

Cadets’ relationship with Instructors and their colleagues is a fundamental factor for the development of participative learning and academic achievement. One of the most pleasing experience an Instructor can have is leading a class of enthusiastically engaged Cadets. Cadet participation gives Instructors a clear picture whether they comprehend the concepts taught in the classroom either by asking questions, arguing about examples provided by their Instructor, or critically listening. Class participation offers an energetic resource for coping with challenges of schoolwork by promoting motivational resilience of learners (Furrer, Skinner, & Pitzer, 2014).

There is much progress achieved towards obtaining a greater understanding of Cadet engagement and the role this involvement plays in promoting desirable outcomes which include academic results such as better performance and a minimal number of academy dropouts. However, despite having this knowledge how participation promotes quality education, there is still disengagement in several learning institutions (Bundick, Quaglia, Corso, & Haywood, 2014). Teachers play a significant role in encouraging participation in classes through their teaching techniques.

There are various studies performed to examine how extraversion manifests itself in the classroom and its effects on individual’s adjustment to learning institution as well as determining how implicit beliefs influence extraversion. The first research observes extraversion and implicit theories influence on classroom participation while the second one examines influences in school transition. Findings show that extroverts are much comfortable in class participation and consider class activities more conducive to learning than introverts (Simmonds, 2016). It is advisable for Instructors to understand the nature of their students so as to enhance active, participative learning.

Digital classrooms exist in various educational institutes. Some studies explore working adult students’ opinions regarding the use of asynchronous online discussion (AOD). Results show that many participants are receptive to AOD usage, and they prefer Instructor to peer facilitation (Thiak, & Hew, 2013). Online participation has two areas possible for addressing it. One is the number of threads such as participation rate, the number of posts viewed and log-in frequency. The other area is the content of discussions like a demonstration of knowledge on topic taught, quality of comments and their relevance as well as their usefulness and constructiveness.

Class participation is a key feature in learning as it brings out an interesting connection between the Instructor and the cadets and can bring out a high level of energy and enthusiasm in the learning environment. Class participation is one of the most important things because it increases understanding which trickles down to increase in performance. It also builds up the relationship between the Instructor and the cadet and mutual understanding. Increasing class participation is one major thing that avoids laziness and dullness leading to a participative class.
Participation is one of those strategies that is straightforward and is often quite successful in achieving an infinite number of learning goals and objectives. Before we narrow down to ways of increasing class participation, it’s important for us to know the benefits of participation.

One is that participation fosters or increases learning interest. For Cadets, it is challenging for them to maintain focus and attention to the Instructor for the time he or she will be in class and what is happening is lecture only. When Instructors encourage class participation, this act assists or enhances an environment that allows listening to one another opinions as well as an answer or another point of view. Learners will be interested if another cadet gets to share and they will also want to do the same making the lesson as interesting as possible.

Another reason as to why it is important to increase participation is that Cadets will have fun. The class tends to be more interesting when there is learners’ engagement. There will be fun in whatever the class is discussing and at no time will the Cadets shift their focus to something else as they will enjoy whatever is happening. A dull class makes the Instructor gloomy hence making the lesson uninteresting and arduous, but the more fun the lesson is, the easier it becomes, and comprehending becomes easy.

Another major reason as to why increasing participation is important is because at times my Instructor Points are based on participation. Most Instructors will base their grading system based on how Cadets participate. A Cadet may perform well in their studies, but regarding participation, if they do not do so well making the Instructor grade their involvement low. Failure to participate can make the Cadet's scores go down even in cases of high marks on a Written Partial Review (WPR). As a result, this outcome tells the Cadet that just as he or she puts emphasis on other courses, he or she should concentrate on participation as well to make their grades increase. Grading participation will go a long way in increasing participation as earlier seen.

Boosting class involvement or participation is also advantageous since engaged Cadets acquire more help than inactive learners. The help Cadets get regarding their difficulties in learning is dependent on their level of participation in learning activities. When Cadets are active, they tend to share what they have acquired. As a result, the Instructor is in a position to assess their level of understanding and make corrections or clarify on areas that are not well comprehended. Eventually, these learners will get more assistance from their Instructors in any challenging situation. In this case, we can conclude that participation has helped them to get corrections and the appropriate help they need. It is, therefore, important to boost the act of participative learning.

Increasing participation helps in making new friends. In this case, it is at times hard to befriend everyone in a classroom environment as some of them are usually large with many Cadets. Participation, in this instance, will make Cadets know each other and make new friends. Some of the Cadets will share common goals and objectives, and they tend to bond. This bonding can bring about friendship based on learning and can increase competition between Cadets as they would love to do much better than their peers. This relationship and competing lead us to the conclusion that encouraging participation has resulted in an efficient Cadet performance by creating a way for competition.
Increasing participation also leads to an increase in better relationships with Instructors. Instructor-Cadet relationships are vital and essential in the learning environment. If these relationships are built up, the issue of fear is dealt with as Instructors are in a position to understand their Cadets and vice versa. Increasing participation goes a long way in building these relationships. These relationships will also contribute to performance. Research has shown that in scenarios where the students and teachers had a better relationship, there is adequate apprehending and performance is much higher than cases where there is insufficient or unfavorable student-teacher relationship. In similar situations, the Cadets view the Instructor as a superior being, and they treat him or her with fear and at times won’t pay attention to the Instructor, or they will fear to ask questions hence not understand.

Increasing participation also makes the Cadets aware if they are wrong in a particular area. When they are making their contributions, they will be informed of any incorrect statement and get a correction on the same. But if the Cadets remain quiet they hold back whatever they have to contribute whether it is right or not and they are not aware of the status. Hence Cadets are encouraged to speak up so that in the case of any incorrect statement or presentation they may have it may have a chance of correction.

Participation engages Cadets. It is so, especially when there would be a question and answer session. A challenging question posed by the Instructor arouse their interest and leave them to figure out why, get them to think, and encourages them to make links with the subject of discussion. Magnification of this benefit occurs when lecturers play a bit with the query, repeat it, write it on the chalkboard, and decide not to call on the first hand they see. This measures engages the Cadets and makes them think and want to outshine the others thus making the class lively and active.

Participation also provides the Instructor feedback. When the Instructors ask questions, and the learners respond or try to describe, I can evaluate the extent to which the Cadets understand the concept. They can correct or help the Cadets adjust what they have not got right or do not see quite clearly. This activity provides the Instructor with feedback on what he or she needs to pay attention to for the next lesson. Moreover, it also offers the Instructor a chance to become aware of the understanding capacity of the topic by the Cadets or how informed they are on a given subject.

Participation provides not only the Instructor feedback but also the Cadet’s feedback. It is so especially when the Instructors ask questions or otherwise seek cadet input and contribution over a subject; they are letting learners know something about the significance of certain ideas and information. This activity goes hand in hand in increasing participation.

Participation can also be utilized to promote preparation. If an Instructor frequently calls on Cadets and asks queries concerning what is in their notes or assigned reading from the previous class session, that can get cadets at least some of them if not all coming to class prepared. This practice will also make the Cadets keen on whatever it is that taught and they will participate in the classroom as the Instructor teaches since they had gone through the topic earlier. This
approach makes the lesson interesting and avoids cases of Cadets viewing the class as tedious or confusing.

Participation controls the events that are happening in the classroom. In some instances, during class hours cadets tend to shift their focus to other things apart from the class lesson. This behavior can be discouraging to the Instructor and can also cause other cadets not to be keen. In this case, therefore, if a Cadet is not attentive to what is happening, is dozing off, or is quietly chatting the Instructor can ask that cadet or the cadet next to the offender to respond. This measure will make the Cadets as attentive as possible since they will be aware that if they tend to shift their focus or pay attention to other things, then the chances are that they will be asked to respond.

Participation can also be used to balance on responses and contributions as in who is responding and contributing in class and how much. In many cases, it’s the Instructor who picks on and decides on the participant to answer a question. This method at times can lead to some Cadets blocking and switching off their minds as they tend to assume that their responses will not count. As a result, this practice leaves the class participation to a particular few Cadets only leaving out the rest. This issue can be solved by Instructors waiting patiently and not always choose a similar cadet over and over. Looking hopefully to others and confirming either verbally or nonverbally the value of listening from distinct cadets can impact who speaks and how much.

Participation even helps Instructors control how much they talk because Instructors at times tend to own the lesson and talk much without involving the cadets. Participation also allows a dialogue among and between cadets. Dialogue is an effective feature in participation. It clears away differences and makes the class as involving as possible. Cadets here are requested to comment on what their colleagues has said or shared. Instructors can pose a query and invite cadets to debate possible solutions with each other before the public discussion. This dialogue here will make the Cadets that shy off participate and get involved.

Participation can be used to develop essential speaking skills. Speaking skills are one of the most important skills in many professions, in a group, people needs to be able to speak up and present themselves professionally. They may need to, ask questions, offer information, or argue for a different answer. Cadets do not learn to communicate within a group by studying how to do it. It is one of those skills best formed with practice. And it is one of those skills that require feedback to develop well. If participation is being used to teach Cadets this public communication skill, they will need feedback. In this case, as they participate, they are boosting or improving their communication skills. Instructors should help them build up on these and as they improve they also increase on their participation in class.

Participation offers learners with a chance to practice using the language of the discipline they are studying. Participation offers learners with an opportunity to practice using distinct vocabulary. Cadets that regularly participate in class are frequently involved in the material and subject and are more likely to remember a greater part of the concept learned. Besides, an active classroom involvement advances critical and higher level thinking skills. Learners who participate in the class usually turns out to have researched the topic well enough to introduce new concepts to their colleagues. This level of thinking goes beyond the mere understanding of
the text, and can also boost memory. Participation can also encourage cadets to learn from each other thus optimizing knowledge acquired through cooperation. This practice, in turn, improve relationships between cadets and between the cadet and the Instructors.

Participation also leads to transformation. Transformation here comes in the sense that after participation, Cadets will tend to build up their relationships with the rest and learn to respect others views and decision. Moreover, transformation occurs in a manner that there is a connection between them and the topic. The shy Cadets and the non-performers get transformed in a way that they work on their self-esteem making them participate more.

Participation helps and enables cadets to prepare for the outside world. By participating in class, Cadets are unconsciously learning how to conduct themselves and speak in front of other individuals and lifelong interpersonal skills that will be a huge help for them in life beyond school. By participating in class, Cadets are practicing their speaking skills, learning to think on their toes and developing ideas quickly. When they are done with college and enter Active Duty, they will have to be able to present themselves professionally. They will attend briefings and meetings, and they may have to give presentations in front of their superiors. All of these requirements will be significantly less frightening if they have experience speaking in public — and an excellent way to begin is to raise their hands and participate in class. Participation in class helps them for life after school.

Participation also helps Cadets learn the processes and habits of democracy. As they participate and listen to others ideas, they learn on democracy and freedoms of speech. They will apply this during their future endeavors as they will learn to listen and respect others opinions even if they are different from theirs.

Participation also helps Cadets remember whatever they gained in the future. When Cadets participate in class, they pay attention to the lesson carefully and think analytically about the topic at hand. This technique is an excellent way to remember the information they learn over the course of the semester and it sure beats having to cram at the last minute. This behavior will help them during their quizzes or WPR as they won’t have to cram.

Cadets catch the attention of the Instructors through the involvement in classes. When Cadets make themselves in class heard, it shows a good way to get noticed by the faculty and other Cadets. The Instructor will be more likely to take an interest in the Cadet and remember their names, which will help build a relationship. This bond will come in handy later, especially when the Cadet needs services from the Instructor. The Instructor will tend to write a good letter of recommendation to the cadet if he or she remembers him or her from the classroom. Activeness in lecture rooms is also a good way to get to know one's fellow Cadets. Instructors take note of the individuals who speak up in class. It shows that one is open and sociable, and it will make one's classmates more willing to approach you.

The objective of encouraging participation is not to have each learner contribute to the same magnitude or same rate. Instead, it is to form a conducive environment whereby all contributors have a chance to learn and in which the class evaluates course and ideas in depth, from various points of view. Some learners tend to raise their tone more than peers. This difference is as a
result of variances in learning preferences as well as dissimilarities in personalities. For instance, some learners who do not often speak in class are reflective learners, who ideally in their mind develop ideas and questions before speaking; while others are shy Cadets who feel uncomfortable speaking in front of groups. Several Cadets who frequently volunteer to contribute are active learners, who typically think while they talk. The Instructor’s aim is to create an environment which enables cadets of various personalities and learning preferences to contribute. To obtain this goal, you will need to take extra steps to encourage introvert Cadets to speak up and, occasionally, ask the more active Cadets to hold back from commenting to give others a chance. Instructors should be in a position to moderate the class to avoid cadets shouting or humiliating others as they contribute even if their contribution is not correct. He or she should not take sides. While the Instructor is encouraging participation, he or she must be as engaging as possible to make sure that all learners are participating as well as involving them. Having looked at the benefits of participation and seen that participation is an effective method of engaging Cadets and learning, we will pay attention to the different ways in which this involvement can be increased and maintained.

In closing, feelings of alienation can adversely impact learners’ ability to speak leading to social inequities. Findings show that this isolation feeling often affects quite some first-year students who might not have had chances to express themselves as well as students from diverse cultures where talking in class are not part of their practice (Gardiner, 2012). Embracing diversified teaching approaches which encourage student and inform them that their class participation is vital while learning is crucial.
Bibliography:


The authors of this article explain how faculties interpret class participation. Also, this journal gives themes used to foster and grade classroom participation. These rubrics outlines responsibilities required in encouraging participation in classes.


Wright claims that class participation expectation is a common approach utilized by teachers to develop and hone relevant skills in learners. Wright says that when Instructors advocate for participative learning they seek to refine and cultivate students’ communication skills and critical thinking. This journal provides recommendations for boosting classroom involvement which benefits both students and teachers.


The authors of this article state that there are some factors which motivate students to talk while in the lecture room. These factors include class size, students’ and teachers’ personality, as well as peers’ perception. The writers goes a step further to explain that it is important to take care of this factors so as to allow a conducive environment for classroom engagement.


The author of this journal talks about cooperation in the process of learning. Also, the writer mentions the use of wikis in huge classes and how they motivate active participation and teamwork. de Arriba advocate for favorable student-teacher relationship to encourage participating in classes.

The aim of this article’s authors is to examine the impact of gender in classroom involvement. They carry out an observational study concerning how students, teachers, and faculties interact. These writers state that gender affects participation in classes and that there should be equality between the sexes so as to encourage effective classroom participation.


Writers of this journal advocate for prioritizing measuring students success to make sure that they deliver optimal outcomes. These authors investigate the use of assessment methods such as KWLs. Results from this article indicate that there is a substantial relationship between classes and usage of evaluation techniques in classroom participation.


The main issues outlined in this article is a relationship between teachers, students, and their peers. The authors offer Instructors and researchers a motivational framework and strategies for improving the conducive and favorable relationship. According to this article, class participation provides an energetic resource for managing schoolwork challenges and fostering motivational resilience for students.


The aim of this journal is to summarize and synthesize the literature on students’ involvement in classes. Besides, it also seeks to provide both context understanding and appreciation of participation relevance at the classroom level. The authors also offer several research-based practical regarding how to implement proposed conceptual model that encourages participative learning.


Simmonds’ article encompasses two studies performed to determine manifestation of extraversion in a class environment and its effects on individual’s adjustment to a learning institution. Findings in this research state that introverts are more comfortable in class participation compared to introverts.


Gardiner talks about alienation feeling and how it affect learners’ ability to speak leading to social inequalities. As a result, the author suggests adopting diversified teaching methods that can encourage to embrace class participation.

Additional References
