

Musical Chairs: An Innovative Teaching and Learning Method

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September 12, 2010

How teaching and learning takes place in classrooms can be easily seen by the way classrooms are set up: Students' desks and chairs are arranged in rolls while teachers' desks are up front. Yet, why must teachers be the ones who lecture, why can't it be students? Would it be better or worse when teachers are the receivers and the students are the givers? In this article, the researcher shares the innovative teaching and learning method: The Musical Chairs teaching and learning method (MC) that could be utilized in classrooms.

The Musical Chairs Teaching and Learning Method

The Musical Chairs teaching and learning method (MC) is the innovative teaching and learning method created by an Educational Psychologist, Ya-Hui Kuo, in 2005. This method was developed to better assist students' learning. MC can be applied to all different subjects. However, it is not necessarily applicable to all different age levels. Basically, in an MC teaching and learning setting, students will be learning how to present new information to their peers after obtaining the new knowledge beforehand.

The role of instructors in MC is different from traditional teaching. Teachers are the dominant people in charge of students' learning in traditional classrooms. Conversely, in an MC classroom, teachers are facilitators who will work closely with students on preparing what they will be learning in the class and what they will be presenting to the class. On the other hand, students will be the givers and teachers will be the receivers. MC places great emphasis on training students to be self-regulated learners. Unlike other teaching methods, MC primarily focuses on exploring students' potentials instead of spoon feeding.

The MC theoretical framework is based on the magical three Ps; Prepare, Practice, and Perform, which determine the success or failure of the “Musical Chairs” teaching and learning method. First, students prepare the materials to be learned and taught in the class on their own. Then, they will submit their work to teachers for evaluation. Meanwhile, teachers prepare feedback before meeting with students for further discussion. When meeting with students for the first time, teachers ought to share their constructive feedback with students. At this stage, teachers might act as givers to clarify any concept students do not understand. One very essential thing to keep in mind in this stage is teachers and students must make time for this discussion.

The following step is for students to make any necessary changes in their presentation. Practice will take place when meeting with teachers the second time. On the day of practicing, teachers may ask other students from different groups in the same or different class to observe. This rehearsal is to help students get their feet wet for the real presentation in their own class. At this stage, teachers may provide any possible feedback that would perfect or strengthen students’ presentations. It is necessary to find or have a room that will serve this purpose.

Performing takes place in the classroom. Presenting in the class could cause anxiety among students. Encouragement is necessary throughout the entire MC process. Whether students do well or poorly in the presentation, teachers should never give negative feedback in public. After the presentation, teachers may share any feedback with the class based on the student’s presentation. Teachers might also add any supplementary information, if necessary. However, it is recommended that teachers share the

supplementary information when meeting with students prior the presentation unless those are the first time. Remember, the students are the stars in MC classrooms.

In short, through this practice, students and teachers will have the opportunity to learn from each other and grow together intellectually. Maybe “The Musical Chairs teaching and learning method (MC)” will result in teachers having greatest workload. However, nothing is more rewarding to witness the power of MC on students’ learning and teachers’ teaching for a better way now or later. “Is it always better to give than to receive?” is the question the present researcher would like to leave for readers to answer!