

STT vs. TTT

Teacher talking time (TTT) is the time that teachers spend talking in class, while student-talking time (STT) is the time the students spend talking in the class. STT vs. TTT is extremely problematic and complex area of English teaching. Many modern approaches recommend reducing the amount of TTT as much as possible as to allow learners variety of opportunities to speak, and thus learn from speaking. According to one theory this should be approximately divided 20 % TTT and 80 % STT. This approach is given into connection with teacher-centred and students centred classrooms.

However practical teaching bares to light some specific problems:

1. beginners and young students
2. introverts, quiet, non-talkative and shy students
3. mixed ability class
4. topic

Ad 1.

Main problem is the inability of students at this level to communicate meaningfully. They lack vocabulary; haven't mastered the necessary grammatical rules and consequently may in fact teach their peers bad habits and incorrect expressions.

At this level it's strongly recommended limiting STT in favour of listening. Susan Halliwell in her publication *Teaching English in the Primary Classroom* leaves longer STT periods for later lessons. The same tendency applies to adult beginners and pre-intermediate students.

Ad 2.

Natural tendencies and characteristics of students plays crucial role. When student usually speaks very little in his mother tongue it would be unnatural to force him to increase his speaking by more than 10 %. Also speech pattern plays important part – student whose speech pattern in mother tongue is very staid (mulls and thinks over everything) is not going to become the biggest speaker of

the class. This type of students needs longer periods of time to answer even simple questions – time that is not, especially in big classes, available.

Ad 3.

Mixed abilities class, which is the most probable scenario, is very difficult to balance. Talkative students tend to get impatient and bored while waiting for the others to express themselves. Many times the impatience gets the better of them and they finish or interrupt non-talkative students. On the other side when quiet unassuming student is encouraged enough to talk but chooses lengthy and boring topic it can disturb the whole class because he may not understand why he is not allowed to finish his speech.

Ad 4.

Meaningfulness of speech is crucial. It prevents possible boredom. Lots of STT (or TTT) would be valueless if there was no meaning to it. It is necessary to judge carefully

Conclusion

The balance between STT and TTT mainly depends on the type of students and their mixed abilities. Every attempt should be made to encourage them to speak as much as possible but student's characteristics and natural tendencies have to be considered with utmost importance. Nevertheless any talking done in the class has to be meaningful to increase its value. Main goal of the teacher should be students complete language independence.

References:

<http://bogglesworldesl.com/glossary/TTT.htm>

<http://www.teachingenglish.org.uk/think/knowledge-wiki/teacher-talking-time>

<http://www.tefl.net/teacher-training/ttt.htm>

The number of resources is endless – the contents are basically similar to each other. There is a work being currently published by Masaryk University written by M. Adam and P. Najvar also dealing with this topic.