



SeeMeTeach[®] Teacher Challenge

Flipping the Teacher Student Talk
Ratio

SMT Teacher Challenge

Flipping the Teacher Student Talk Ratio

The minimal required training to complete this challenge includes:

- Training 1: Setting up a lesson observation in SMT
- Training 2: Qualitative Comments Mode
- Training 3: Quantitative Data and Analysis Mode

The focus of data collection for this Teacher Challenge is using any T code to denote a teacher action and any S code to denote a student action, as well as pairing S codes with a specified seat on the seating chart.

Introduction

Unfortunately, in today's average classroom, most of the class time is allocated to the teacher talking, mainly through lectures, with a few questions asked to the class to initiate student engagement. The lecture is an easier delivery method and allows the teacher to have total control of the class and the classroom, making it the go-to for most educators. As a result, it is not uncommon to see the teacher talking for up to 90% of a class period, making the lesson extremely teacher-dominated. As a result, students become passive learners and often disengage with the lesson, which decreases comprehension and excitement for the material.

As teachers have to cover a lot of content in one year, at times, allowing the students to have more control or say in a lesson makes teachers nervous, as the class may seem a bit more chaotic, unstructured, and time-consuming. This "chaos," however, is mainly where the magic happens and true learning occurs. Flipping the teacher-student talk ratio and getting kids more involved in a class period is a powerful step in creating an environment that enhances student learning and engagement. When the ratio is flipped, students begin to:

- Ask questions of the teacher and other students.
- Form and voice their ideas and concepts.
- Build self-confidence and self-advocacy skills.
- Be exposed to multiple ideas and opinions.
- Engage with and comprehend the material.
- Learn that knowing and understanding are interactive processes.

When students are engaged, interacting, and contributing, they also feel more capable and connected to the lesson, other students, and the teacher. Flipping this teacher talk/student talk ratio is controlled and directly results from teacher decisions. These purposeful teacher choices and actions used during a lesson, targeting the goal of high student engagement, don't require a high level of skills but simply a change in teacher behaviors or habits. Just altering one (or more) teaching habits can significantly impact student engagement and the T/S ratio.

The Challenge

This *Teacher Challenge* focuses on implementing strategies to decrease the percentage of time that a lesson is teacher dominated and increase the percentage of time that students are actively engaged.

Challenge Steps

- 1) **Teach a Lesson:** First, capture the video and audio of the lesson. Make sure to teach the lesson as you normally would, as this lesson will be used for your baseline data.
- 2) **Complete the Required SMT Training:** If not already done, complete the required training to learn how to collect the specific data required for this challenge. The minimal required training recommended includes:
 - a. Training 1: Setting up a lesson observation in SMT
 - b. Training 2: Qualitative Comments Mode
 - c. Training 3: Quantitative Data and Analysis Mode

Note: The cheat sheets accompanying this training provide an excellent summary of the training and are excellent resources to keep on hand while you code your recorded lessons.

- 3) **Collect Data:** Use the SMT teacher observation app to collect baseline data specifically focusing on student engagement.

Note: The focus of data collection for this Teacher Challenge is using any T code to denote a teacher action and any S code to denote a student action, as well as pairing an S code with a specified seat on the seating chart.

- 4) **Document and Analyze Data:** After you have collected your baseline data, plot the pertinent data on the *Data Summary and Change Chart*.
- 5) **Revamp Your Teaching:** Implement one change to how you approach allocating teacher/student talk time in your classroom. It is recommended to:
 - a. Only implement one change or strategy at a time to determine what is making the difference in the teacher/student talk ratio.
 - b. Fill out the "[My Plan of Action](#)" google form to document your observations and progress through this teacher challenge. This can be used for your personal development or as evidence for a yearly observation or pre-service teacher certification program.

*Note: See the *Implementing Growth and Change* section in this teacher challenge for additional suggestions on implementing specific changes to your teaching.*

- 6) **Repeat Challenge Steps 1, 3, 4, and perhaps 5:** One cycle through this process might achieve the desired results, but more than likely, it might take more than one cycle. Teaching is complex, with many variables in play, but know that sometimes a very small change can have a noticeable and sometimes very large effect on the learner or the learning environment.

Data Summary and Change Chart

Overall Teacher/Student Talk Time Ratio – Go to the *Code Summary* page. Look at the table in the screen's lower right-hand corner and scroll down to the bottom of the data screen. Refer to the "Overall T Codes" and "Overall S Codes" and fill in the data table below for each observation.

Data Codes		Events	Event %	Duration	Duration %
Observation 1	Overall T Codes				
	Overall S Codes				
Observation 2	Overall T Codes				
	Overall S Codes				
Observation 3	Overall T Codes				
	Overall S Codes				
Observation 4	Overall T Codes				
	Overall S Codes				

Student Contributions – Note general observations, trends, and patterns about student contributions. Who and where in the classroom are they coming from? Are the same students being asked to engage? Are only students closest to the teacher engaged? (Data can be pulled from *Seating Chart Heat Map* and *Demographics*)

Observation 1	
Observation 2	
Observation 3	
Observation 4	

Lesson (Type) Distribution of Student Actions - Note general observations, trends, and patterns of where in the lesson and during what type of lesson (specific L code) student events occurred. Are student contributions distributed evenly throughout the lesson? In which lesson type (L code) do they mainly occur? (Data can be pulled from *Teacher Actions Plus* or *Student Engagement Summary*)

Observation 1	
Observation 2	
Observation 3	
Observation 4	

Implementing Change and Growth

Guiding Thoughts: Lessons vary, and so do the possibilities for optimizing student engagement. However, many things can be done to modify the learning environment to decrease teacher talk time and increase student talk time.

1. Employ the 1-2-3 method at various points throughout your lesson or lecture. After every 5 minutes or 4 PowerPoint slides of a lecture (or another allotted time or number of slides), employ the 1-2-3 method to get more students engaged. First, ask ONE question to the class. Wait at least TWO whole seconds (or more) before calling on any student. Then, choose THREE students to contribute their answers or comments, making sure to acknowledge each student's contribution but not affirm or deny their answer before all three students have contributed.
2. Try adjusting the questions you ask your students to make them more substantial by rephrasing them to include words like "why" and "justify." You could also follow up on a student's response by asking them to elaborate. Some examples could include the following:
 - a. Why do you think...?
 - b. Tell me what you think might happen if ... and tell me why you think that might happen?

- c. Tell me more.
3. Like the first strategy, try to get students to respond and react to one another rather than just interacting with the teacher. For example, if one student answers a question, get another student to respond to the first student's answer by asking them a question like "What do you think about so and so's (the first student) response?" Or "How could you add something else to their response?" Trying to get a conversation to occur within the class leads to cooperation and collaboration among students and turns the attention to and promotes student involvement. In this sense, the teacher becomes the facilitator of learning rather than the director.
 4. Use strategies like Think-Pair-Share to get the whole class involved. In Think-Pair-Share, the teacher asks a question to the class, and each student thinks about or writes down their answer, then they turn to a partner to share and discuss their answers. Pairs can then share their combined answer with the class as well.
 5. Don't be afraid to call on students randomly. The surprise element will help keep students on their toes and more apt to pay attention if they know they may be called on consistently and randomly instead of the teacher talking for the entire period. Some strategies that can help with this include:
 - a. Writing all of the students' names on popsicle sticks and drawing a stick randomly to have a student answer the question.
 - b. Numbering each desk in your room. The student sitting at the desk with the number the teacher calls out has to answer the question.
 6. Don't take "I don't know" as an answer. If students know they can say "I don't know" and be done with it, most of them will try to take the easy way out. Create an expectation in the classroom where students must attempt to answer the question. If a student says, "I don't know," you could respond with:
 - a. "Well, give me your best guess."
 - b. "Saying I don't know is not an option here, so why don't you try again."
 - c. Have them rephrase what they have learned already and then ask them to pull bits of information out of the summary that pertains to the question being asked.
 - d. Incorporate manipulatives and have students summarize what they are experiencing.
 7. Use a "parking lot" for student responses. A parking lot consists of a large piece of paper or whiteboard section dedicated to the "parking lot." There can be one or many "parking lots" for any given class, as each one is dedicated to a specific question. The teacher poses one or a few questions about the material. Each student or pair or group writes their answer(s) down on multiple sticky note(s) and puts it up on the correlating "parking lot." The teacher can read all the answers to get a discussion happening or ask specific groups/students to elaborate on their particular answers. This gets students to discuss content with one another and up and out of their seats for a bit.

Modules That May Help Modify Instruction and Specific Interventions to Increase Checks for Understanding

See the following modules on the SMT website for teaching tips and strategies that may engage more learners during the lesson.

- Module 1: The Teacher Decision-making Framework - Understanding the teacher-student synergistic relationship and how the critical decisions work together for the targeted outcomes of instruction.
- Module 3: [Maximizing Student Engagement in the Classroom](#) - Using whole-group response tools and strategies to learn about students' understanding and provide maximum feedback to the teacher.