

# How To Make English Class More Interactive

—Adding A Classroom Response System—

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—クラスルームレスポンスシステムを加えて—

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**Abstract** : An outline of methods to make teaching a class more interactive between students and lecturer using online classroom technology adding to the traditional practices.

**Keywords** : online technologies, Covid-19, interactive, classroom response system, mobile phone

### 1. Introduction

There have been various online technologies developed since Covid-19 had forced business, schools, and other entities less in-person. “Zoom” may be one of the most familiar online technologies and people may get used to Video Off and Mute modes.

Unlike online classes, in-person class students can ask their friends and teacher if they have any questions on the spot and they can support each other when learning. However, students tend to stay quiet and react none, or only a few could raise hands for questions according to the Recruit Next Generation Institute Chief, Mr. Fujiwara.

There will be only 5 excellent students and 2 outgoing students who raise their hands to answer their teacher’s question, out of 40 students. The rest 33 students are not thinking the answer. To make these 33 students think, they should be asked

to tell their feedback and to send them via mobile phone. It is important to share the answers among all the students of the class in screen.

『The reason why smartphone is necessary for class in Japan』

Therefore, it has become more important for a lecturer to prepare a class with some ideas to make students think and make them interactive with him or her in class.

In this paper, the methods which make classes more interactive are described and followed by the actual examples including an interactive classroom technology tool, practiced in the Hotel English Class, a hotel hospitality course subject in the Saitama Women's Junior College, where a classroom response system was implemented by me.

## 2. Interactive Activities for Learning and Practice in Hotel English Class

### 2. 1 Interactive Activities For Learning

There are some effective interactive activities for learning used in classrooms. The following three activities must be usually practiced in any classes, either by individuals or by groups.

#### (1) Role-Play

Role-play is defined as a brief play of a given scenario to be brought to life by players or students in class. This is the ideal activity among students in Hotel English class where they can practice situational English conversations between hotel person and guest. Class size doesn't matter when making pairs or trios for role-plays.

#### (2) Group Discussion

Group Discussion is defined as an occasion to exchange ideas and thoughts on given topics. This is also a good activity among the Hotel English class students to exchange ideas and thoughts. However, the nature of this class, there isn't many topics to discuss.

#### (3) Quizzes

Quizzes are defined as an opportunity for students to review their recent learnings. Although those who study well can respond to answer quizzes, they don't speak out in front of their classmates.

Addition to these traditional interactive activities for learning, many online technologies have become available in school studies. Especially, the technology or system, categorized as a classroom response system, is a useful tool for students with their mobile phone to be more interactive, and it will be detailed in next section.

## 2. 2 Interactive Activities Practiced in Hotel English Class

Here is the description of the Hotel English class and how this class is run.

This is one of the hotel hospitality course subjects for junior students. However, students from other courses can also register and therefore the class size could be more than 30 per class even it is a practical subject. This time, there is 41 students registered for this class where 15 chapters of the situational Hotel English conversations between hotel person and guest should be learnt effectively.

As explained in syllabus, this class needs to practice listening, reading, speaking, and writing. They are the key elements of the study. The description below is the flow of class.

- (1) Review the important points of the last week class by lecturer's questions.
- (2) Explain the important points of this day's class.
- (3) Listen to the native speaker's dialogues of the day without textbook.
- (4) Listen to the native speaker's dialogues of the day with textbook.
- (5) Read Japanese translation or appoint to individuals for translation at randomly.
- (6) Speak or repeat the lecturer's reading textbook sentence by sentence.
- (7) Write along the lecturer's reading textbook sentence by sentence and check the spelling.

This flow is a routine of this class and needs almost more than two thirds of the class hour. However, there won't be many opportunities for students to talk to or to exchange their feedback with their classmates or with lecturer.

## 2. 3 Classroom Response System Called "Slido" <sup>i</sup>

To solve this non-interaction class activities issue described in the previous section, the classroom response system called "Slido" has been recently used a few times in this Hotel English class. "Slido" is the system focused on the transactions between organizer and participants in general term where Q&A and Poll functions, in other words, they are Multiple

Choice, Word cloud, Quiz, Rating and Ranking functions, are applied in events and meetings. In this system, each slide produces QR code and link automatically to give an easy access to participants who have a mobile phone and notebook computer, tablet etc.

One of the “Slido” functions, Word cloud, worked very well, replacing the review by the lecturer’s questions, as described in section 2.2 (1). Here is the actual operation of using Word cloud with some photos presented below. There were 32 students attended that day.

The review theme on the day was “How to express different times on clock” and there were 3 questions presented by “Slido” Word cloud function.

The first slide shows the first question: “How do you express 10:15 in English?” (Figure 1) The second slide shows the 2nd question: “How do you express 10:30 in English?” (Figure 2) and the third slide shows the 3rd question: “How do you express 10:45 in English?” (Figure 3) Every time showing each slide to students, they read the QR code on the top left corner on screen by their mobile phone. The slide shows ongoing number of students - how many students are entering or voting their answers, and how many have completed voting the answers. Then the answers from students appear on screen with different sized alphabetical letters. The bigger letters mean that many students voted the same answers. The smaller letters mean that only one or few students voted the same answers. Thus, students and lecturer can share the answers at the same screen at the same time. Lecturer can easily spot the right answers and wrong ones and explain each different answer (Figure 4), looking at screen and showing another slide which confirming the set of the best and right answers. (Figure 5)

The participant rate of Q1 goes as 84% (27 students out of 32), Q2 as 89% (28 students out of 32) and Q3 as 89% (28 students out of 32). In the term of student interaction, it showed a quite satisfactory result comparing to the traditional appointing one student who may be reluctant to give the answer even she knows the right one, stopping all the rest of the class student’s thinking.

Prior to this practice, the speed of student’s spelling English words was concerned since they may not be used to entering alphabets. It turned out not to be a problem. It took only several minutes to spell English phrases and sentences. It also should be counted as a merit, unlike the chat function of the “WebClass”<sup>ii</sup> of Saijo system, no student names appeared in screen. That may make students encouraged more to enter their answers to “Slido” since no one apart from

themselves knows that who got a right answer and wrong answer from the screen. Some students even commented that it was good to ensure spelling of the words in question by entering the alphabets on their mobile phones.

Figure 1

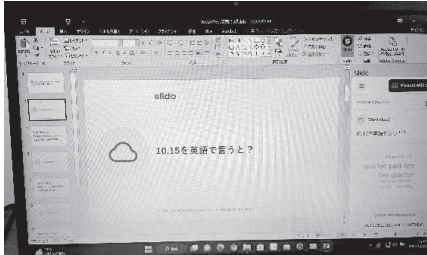


Figure 2

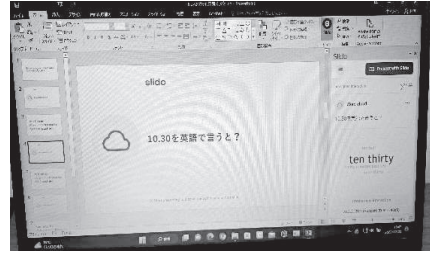


Figure 3

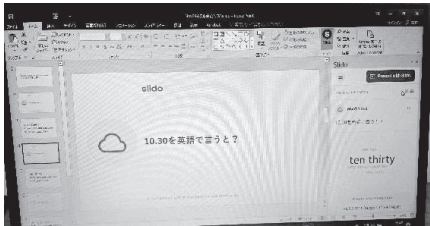


Figure 4

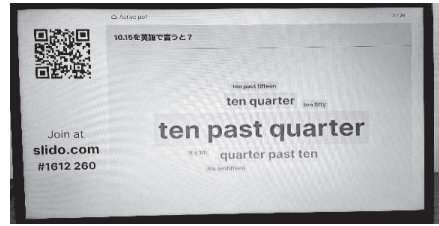
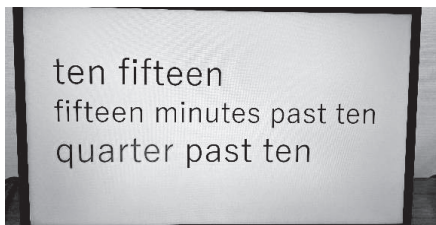


Figure 5



## 2. 4 Non-Classroom Response System Ideas To Make Students More Interactive

There are some other ideas practiced to make students more interactive in this class. That is, name card or tent-like card and comment sheet. They are very basic and simple but they help students to communicate with classmates easily and to study more with lecturer.

The name card shows each student's full name of this card holder. This is quite useful once students form a group with unfamiliar classmates. They can easily call their names, by looking

at this card.

The comment sheet can work as a communication tool between student and lecturer. Normally, student writes a question in the comment sheet which she cannot ask in the class. Then, lecturer gives some feedback to this student and often the set of this question and the answer is shared among the whole class later.

### 3. Conclusion

#### 3. 1 Perspectives

Since Covid-19 has advanced online technologies, many devices and systems are now in use at business and schools. Some of these tools can be taken into in-person classes where students tend to stay quiet and react little so that they can be more interactive with their classmates and with their lecturer. In the term of the future Hotel English class, meta-verse and avatar are quite attractive. Students could be an avatar hotelier and go into a hotel in the meta-verse where she could serve avatar guest. This would be another type of role-play.

#### 3. 2 Challenges

Although new and attractive devices and systems are available, students will have to get strongly motivated to learn. Lecturer will have to find out why the rest 4-5 students out of 32 students in the class, have not responded to Slido questions - do they have any internet troubles? Or do they know the answer? Or they know the answer, but they just don't want to participate? Lecturer should keep making efforts to communicate to these students and see the reason to improve the situation, knowing that some students are easy to use online technologies including mobile phone and some are reluctant to use them.

### Footnotes

i Slido <https://www.slido.com/jp>

ii WebClass <https://datapacific.co.jp/webclass/>

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