Fostering Student Engagement

Tools and Strategies for inclusive classroom participation

Jacob Ørmen
Center for Tracking and Society
Department of Communication

KØBENHAVNS UNIVERSITET
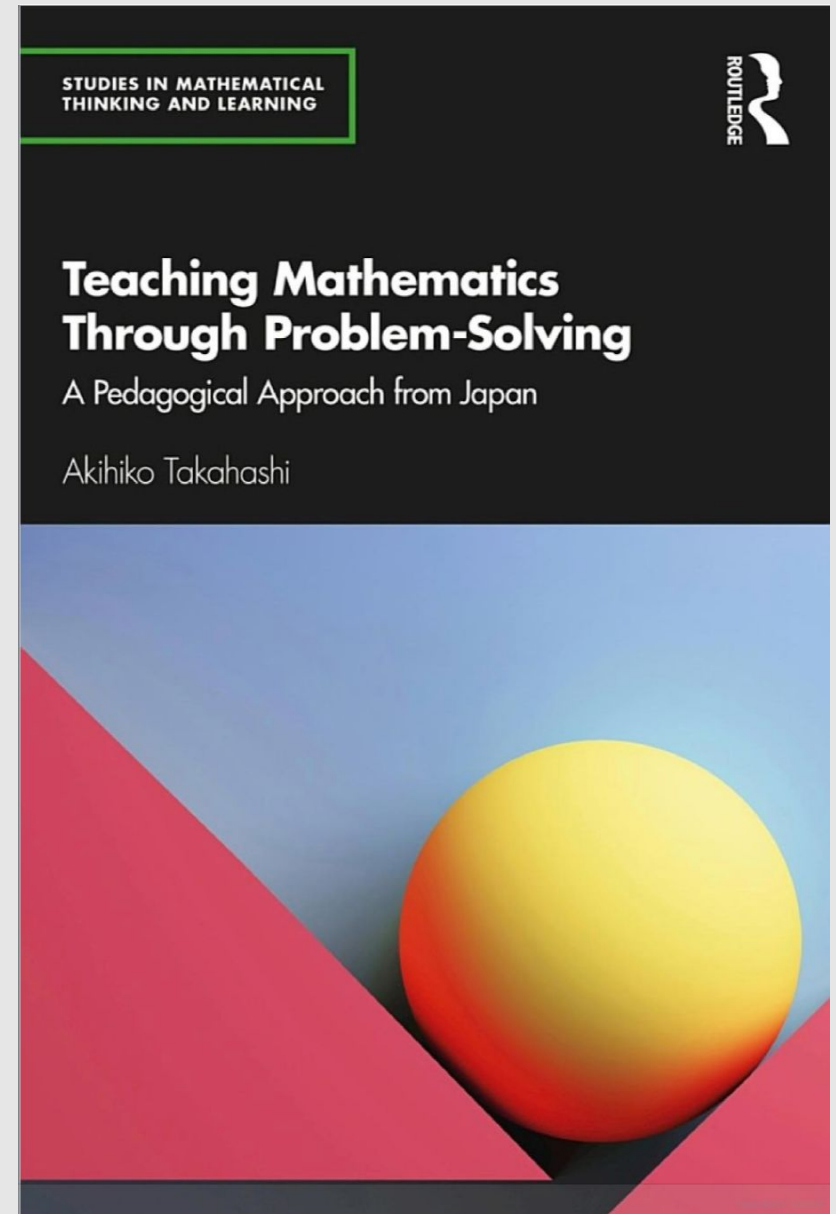
Indiana Jones and the Last Crusade (1989)

What do you experience as biggest hindrances to student engagement?

The Breakfast Club, 1985

Participation as one way to create engagement

Problem-based learning

Lectures follow questions rather than the other way around

Allow students to identify problems and solutions first

STUDIES IN MATHEMATICAL THINKING AND LEARNING

ROUTLEDGE

Teaching Mathematics Through Problem-Solving

A Pedagogical Approach from Japan

Akihiko Takahashi

The **merits** of participation

Externalizing thoughts and questions ('making prep visible')

Activating different **learning styles**

Creating a sence of **community**

Bringing a diverse range of **voices/views** in play

The **perils** of participation

Time-consuming to go around the table

Some prefer fewer **learning styles**

Easily **losing track** / direction
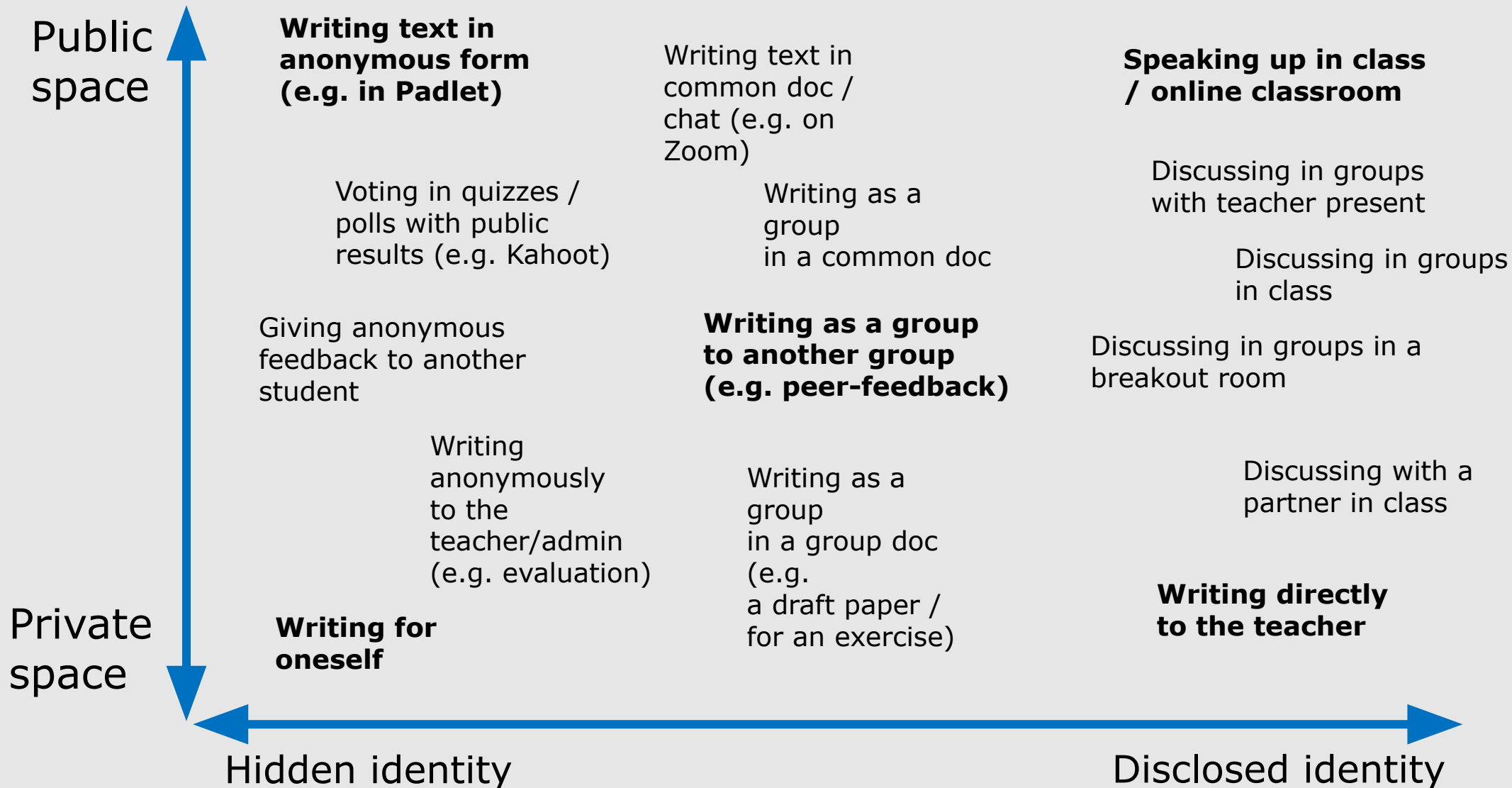
Same **voices tend to dominate** the conversations

(Andersen, 2014; Chalmers & Hunt, 2013; Dunn, 1990)

Scafolding participation: **Setting the right 'setting'**

- **Visibility**: who can see my participation?
    - Only me (private) ☐ A group (semi-public) ☐ The whole class (public)
    - Study group (members) ☐ Classmates (peers) ☐☐ The teacher (authority)
    - Momentarily (performances) vs. permanently (exhibitions)

- **Identifiability**: who can tell who is participating?
    - Anonymous (no names) ☐ pseudonymous (nicknames) ☐ onymous (real-names)

- **Interactivity:** who can participate with whom in which sequence?
    - From synchronous (simultaneous) to asynchronous (time-shifted) communication
    - From oral to written modalities

(Dunn, 1990; Hogan, 2010; Jensen, 2010; Ørmen, 2016)

A typology of **participation modes**

Public space ↑

Writing text in anonymous form (e.g. in Padlet)

Writing text in common doc / chat (e.g. on Zoom)

Speaking up in class / online classroom

Voting in quizzes / polls with public results (e.g. Kahoot)

Writing as a group in a common doc

Discussing in groups with teacher present

Discussing in groups in class

Giving anonymous feedback to another student

Writing as a group to another group (e.g. peer-feedback)

Discussing in groups in a breakout room

Writing anonymously to the teacher/admin (e.g. evaluation)

Writing as a group in a group doc (e.g. a draft paper / for an exercise)

Discussing with a partner in class

Writing for oneself

Writing directly to the teacher

Private space ↓

← Hidden identity   Disclosed identity →

Summing up: Modes of participation as a toolbox

- To include more voices in it is imperative to employ various '**settings for participation**': from private to public and hidden to disclosed.

- The digital classroom affords more **asynchronous** and **anonymous** modes of participation (such as writing alone/groups in chat/doc) that enables new voices, notably the more insecure/introverted, to emerge in the classroom.

- The physical classroom affords **synchronous** and **onymous** participation (such as group and plenary discussions), but more importantly play a **ritualistic** role: creating a sence of belonging and affirming membership.

- A **mix of digital and physical activities** help to close the participation gap.

Scaffolding participation … an empirical example

2-hour session on qualitative interviews.

Between 20-35 students in the room

Part of a course on research methods in Communication & IT.

Intro + Review: Keywords ☐ **writing on their own** ☐ **discussion with partner** ☐ **Q&A in plenum**

Teacher presenting: What is the purpose of interviews

Group work in Padlet: Different interview styles

Teacher presenting: Pros and cons of different interview styles (on the basis of Padlet)

Break 15 minutes

Exercise in the room: Students practice an interview situation (teacher circulates among groups to get input the plenary discussion)

Plenary discussion of experiences with the exercise…what worked well/less well in interviewing (teacher bring more voices in the room)

Teacher giving advise on interviewing in practice

Writing on their own: Note in relation to own project

Preview: Next time (reading goals with an emphasis on exercises)

3 key takeaways

1. Questions first. Let students **work on the problem** before digging into solutions

2. Alternate. Diversify the modes of participation you offer students

3. Read the room. Adjust participation based on cohort

Dead Poets Society, 1989

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