

## 5 The classroom environment's contribution to group dynamics

*This chapter will:*

- *describe the nature and the impact of the classroom environment;*
- *discuss possible variations of the seating arrangement;*
- *consider temperature, lighting, decoration and music;*
- *present ways to increase student ownership of the classroom.*

### *Think about it first*

How would you describe to a friend or colleague the way you arrange the environment of your classroom? What features would you highlight? What would someone see, hear and feel that was different about your classroom?

In sociolinguistics it is a well-established fact that the social situation exerts an impact on the communication that takes place in it. For instance, the same two people talking about the same topic would tend to use different language in a pub or at a royal reception. Similarly, groups do not operate in a vacuum: the setting that the group occupies (i.e. the actual classroom) profoundly influences the ways in which members behave toward one another. Levine and Moreland (1998), for example, report that groups working in dangerous, impoverished or confining environments (such as coal miners, submariners or astronauts) develop particular forms of interaction suited to the conditions they face (e.g. in order to take coordinated action and reduce conflicts among members). Thus, in these cases there is a clear interplay between the environment and the dynamics within it. Physical environments, however, do not have to be harsh or dangerous to affect group life; various more subtle aspects of the setting – such as floor space, lighting, temperature and noise – can also affect the operation in a dramatic manner. This chapter is about these effects.

## **5.1 The classroom environment**

While the physical characteristics of the environment do not completely determine how effective teaching is, they can be major inhibiting or contributing factors (as any teacher assigned to the 'room from hell' can attest to). Most classrooms were not designed after paradise, but there are ways to make them more suitable for learning, even in the worst situations. In Japan's hot May, Tim actually ended up bringing his own rotating fan into his classroom to the great pleasure of his students. He made sure to make the white board attractive with drawings and colour when possible. He had students sometimes close their eyes and take mental trips to favourite 'cool' places and then return and describe them to their partners. He played environmental-sounds cassettes to empower their imaging over the blandness of the walls. When we use our creativity and remain flexible, there are ways to make the physical environment more comfortable for learning. Moreover, students usually recognise and appreciate these small efforts. Simply bringing a small plant to the class can change things, for you and your students.

### *Tim's post-Hawaii 'environment-shock'*

I once went to a workshop at a nice hotel on the coast of the big island of Hawaii. The chairs were welcoming, the views from the windows were of 'paradise', it was quiet with sounds of the sea and sea birds, the temperature agreeable, even the island smells were pleasant. Just being so comfortable in such an environment allowed me to really focus my attention on the topic and learn a lot. When I returned to my classes at a large Japanese university, I was in 'environment shock'. They didn't turn on the heat in my classrooms until December, nor the air conditioning until June so we froze for the month of November and baked in May. There were some rooms with no windows and it was forbidden to hang things on the walls (which might distract students from another teacher's content). The old chairs and desks were too small for full-size adults and they crammed as many people as possible into the small rooms (really getting smelly in summer, sometimes). As with most new teachers, I had no choice of classrooms and had to take what they gave me. Teachers teaching in late afternoon close to the sports field also had to compete with the yelling of sports teams and cheerleaders. While at the seminar in Hawaii we had made a nice friendly circle with the 15 people; in my sardine-packed classes of 50 students we had to turn sideways to shuffle down rows to seats

in the back of the room or to distribute handouts. The physical environmental cards seemed stacked against me.

At the same time, let us beware of blaming the environment too much. Even in environmental paradise there are some groups that do not seem able to focus on learning and do not come together effectively. The ideal environment will not save a teacher with insufficient group development and teaching skills. And the inverse is also true: teachers will be able to overcome many physically debilitating characteristics with good skills and enthusiasm. One of Zoltán's best ever seminar groups actually met in a classroom that was so small and crowded that the door could not be opened (inwards) when everybody sat down . . .

Many teachers teach as if the physical environment were either unimportant or simply beyond their control and thus ignore the possibilities for change. The perception that major physical alteration is impossible in most school settings may actually be true, but if over-generalised it keeps teachers from at least changing what they actually *can* change. There are three other reasons why teachers so often fail to grasp the possibility of changing the physical environment:

1. The most traditional way of teaching involves the teacher facing the learners who are sitting in columns and rows, dependent on the authoritative teacher at the centre of the communication network; and through the teachers' own 'apprenticeship of observation' (i.e. years spent as students), they naturally feel that this is the right way a class should be organised with no need for any change.
2. When one teaches in this traditional way, it is so restrictive in itself that variables such as room size, the distance between rows, or décor do not appear to change the interaction pattern significantly.
3. Teachers often do not realise that they have a privileged spatial position in the classroom: they can see everybody and they may also move around to face whoever they want to talk to, and this leads them to assume similar comfort on the part of the students.

We contend that for all classes in general, and specifically for language classrooms, the principal mediational means of learning for any group is the *interaction* between the members. This flow of interaction is not only the basis upon which friendships are founded and grow, but it is also the main means of constructing learning collaboratively. This interaction can be helped or hurt by environmental factors. Naïve optimists, however, sometimes believe that they can override obviously unfavourable environmental conditions, and then are surprised if an event or class goes badly in an oversized room that they

have not adjusted to, or if a meeting accomplishes little in a noisy restaurant. Below, we discuss the impact of size, temperature, lighting, noise and furniture arrangement. We ask how they may inhibit communication or how we might lessen and alleviate some of their negative impact by transforming the environment to make it more conducive to learning and group development. More subtle effects arise from our inherent human tendency to be territorial on the ownership of the classroom.

## **5.2 Spatial organisation**

The flow of interaction and communication is greatly influenced by the spatial organisation in which we operate daily. While teachers may have little choice as to the shape of the room, the available furniture and the size and location of the windows, they do usually have more options concerning the arrangement of the desks and chairs (let us, for the moment, try and forget about all those benches bolted to the floor . . .). Taking advantage of these options can have potentially powerful effects.

The placement of chairs and desks exerts significant influences upon the status of the students occupying them, the patterns of participation, various leadership opportunities and the affective potential of group members. There does not seem to be one ideal seating arrangement; rather, seating arrangements serve particular work needs and should be purposefully matched with the type of interaction anticipated or encouraged in particular tasks (see section 5.3, for details). A creative teacher can use various arrangements to suite the activities that they are planning.

### *Tim's conference presentation in a huge room*

I was once assigned to a huge room at an international conference. It was big enough for about two full-size basketball courts. The only door in it was right behind where the speaker's podium was and there were long heavy tables with chairs facing the front covering the front half of the room. The back half was empty (ready for a basketball game I mused to myself). I was there early and since there were only a few people present at the end of a long day, I wanted it to be more friendly and informal. I grabbed a chair and took it to the far end of the empty half of the hall. As people came in, I invited them to bring their chairs to form a circle with me in the back half. By the time it was supposed to begin, we had about 20 people in a circle for the last session of the day and we felt

pretty cosy. However, suddenly another 40 people showed up who had got lost in the immense convention centre. Because we had lots of space, the circle simply expanded and within a few minutes we had a *huge* friendly circle. It felt wonderful to me to be able to see everyone in a group that size, and for everyone to be able to see each other. For the three or four interactive things we did I simply asked them to find a new partner each time to their right or left or to come to the centre and find someone. The centre was a wonderfully natural interaction space. Whenever I was talking I felt very comfortable simply sitting like everyone else. It was a magical presentation for me. The material I had was well prepared, but it was made immensely better by getting out of the constraints of the environment that keep people from seeing each other and moving around. I realised later that I also did not have to worry about latecomers interrupting the session from just behind where I was speaking. The whole thing was not planned or calculated, I simply took a risk based on my desire to be closer to a small group. It was amazing that the large group that I concluded with acted like a small group principally because they were arranged in a circle and could interact with many different partners in free movement in a short time.

Although we often may have difficulty saying why, we tend to agree about what room feels ‘good’ or ‘bad’. Teachers know from experience that the space available for the group affects relationships. That, for example, a small group sitting in the back of a room while we teach in the front is uncomfortable. Experienced teachers will either ask students to come sit up front or walk toward the back to teach, taking control somewhat of the environment by bringing people closer together. And if just a few students are scattered in a large room, we ask them to sit together.

*Tip 1*

One way to get a scattered group of people together in a large room is to number them off with partners and then ask them to sit together near the front and tell each other something, for example about themselves.

Distance between the participants determines the feeling of intimacy. Too much space will usually be perceived as impersonal and can cause

psychological distance and the feeling of insignificance, emptiness, isolation and anxiety (MacLennan and Dies 1992). Teachers who wish to create a friendly, positive environment in classes will arrange things so that people are close enough to interact and make friends. Research studies suggest that highly cohesive groups occupy smaller spaces than non-cohesive groups (see Forsyth 1999). On the other hand, if there is too little space, members may feel crowded and confined and avoid interaction. They might even become violent as they compete for more space.

### *Spatial organisation and member status*

There is a relationship between *status* and *spatial position* in groups. Occupants of certain positions are accorded higher status than occupants of less favoured positions. There is, for example, a well-established 'head of the table effect': the person sitting at the head of the table, or in the middle of the side with the fewest seats, is attributed high status, probably because it is associated with the leader's position – leaders prefer this place because it has the greatest visual centrality, so they can maintain a greater amount of eye contact with the other members and can comment more frequently. Thus, simply by being in the centre of the communication network, the person at the head of the table can exercise a greater amount of interpersonal influence. On the other hand, as Oyster (2000) reports, the person seated at the leader's direct right may have the lowest positional power at the table as this is where the secretary is traditionally located in some cultures. Oyster's point, however, also shows how culture-dependent such spatial stereotypes can be because in some other cultural contexts sitting at the right hand of a powerful person is a highly privileged position (e.g. we learn from the Bible that Jesus Christ sits at the right hand of God in heaven).

Students sitting in more conspicuous places in the classroom are on the receiving end of more attention and interaction, and thus are likely to get more involved in the learning process. In contrast, as Schmuck and Schmuck (2001) argue, a marginal seating position can give rise to feelings of being peripheral and unimportant, leading to a reduction of communication with others. In a sensitive account of various locational zones in large Pakistani classes, Shamim (1996) confirms this observation. She found in L2 classrooms that the majority of students experienced sitting in the back of the classroom as very demoralising. Furthermore, Lambert (1994) cites research evidence that seating position also has the potential for affecting teacher judgements about students, independent of their individual characteristics.

### **5.3 The arrangement of the furniture**

The above discussion indicated that spatial issues affect the dynamics of the class group. While architecturally, teachers are limited as to how much they can change and adjust their classrooms, they are usually free to change the environment significantly through arranging the furniture. Whether it be setting up workspaces for small groups, corridors of access between chairs and desks, or innovating arrangements in novel ways, teachers need to realise how much they can really change and take control of more of their environments. We discuss some of the more common classroom seating patterns below as well as the issue of how to still be interactive when the furniture cannot be changed.

#### *Traditional teacher-fronted seating structure*

The most traditional spatial arrangement involves columns and rows of desks and chairs with the students facing the teacher. It is appropriate if communication is planned only between the leader and the group members (e.g. at formal presentations). It has been found to be very effective if the goal is to make sure that students pay attention to the presenter or perform independent seat-work without disruptions – after all, this arrangement does not offer any environmental support for peer interaction.

From the perspective of group dynamics, there are two main disadvantages of this spatial structure:

- It creates inequality among students: as we have seen above, differences in classroom locations are associated with different status, and this is projected to the students occupying these positions.
- The teacher-fronted arrangement is extremely controlling, emphasising only teacher–student visual contact and thus helping the teacher completely occupy the centre of the communication network. This enforced teacher-dependency is an obstacle to group processes.

#### *Douglas Brown's recommendation to language teachers:*

‘You may have had the experience of walking into a classroom and finding the movable desks all lined up in columns (not rows) that are perpendicular to the front wall of the room. Neat and orderly, right? Wrong. If you won't get fired from your teaching post by doing so, change the pattern immediately! Students are members of a team and should be able to see one another, to talk to one another

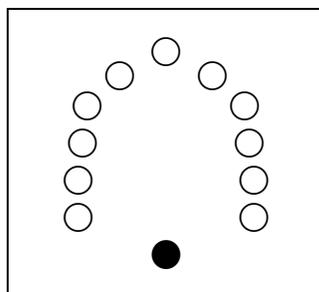
... and not made to feel like they just walked into a military formation.'  
(Brown 1994:412)

### *To have or not to have desks*

Some teachers prefer doing away with desks altogether. Not having desks that separate people from one another can sometimes create a feeling of closeness and enhance interpersonal communication. At the same time, desks can also be seen as the students' 'private territories', where they keep everything they consider necessary for their studies. Thus, at first they may feel vulnerable without the safety of their desks and resist letting them go. It is also not easy to write on knees, and a modern communicative classroom will be concerned with process writing, interactive writing, poster-making and project-work. In accordance with our suggestion that seating arrangements may depend flexibly on the activity, it is nice to have the option to have desks or not, depending on the tasks you want to do.

### *Semi-circular seating structure*

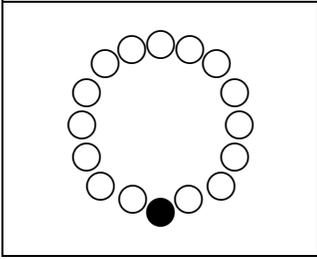
Probably the most common arrangement for small groups is a *semi-circular seating arrangement*, with the teacher sitting in the middle of the open end of the U-shape. This arrangement allows students to have direct visual contact with each other to increase communication, but still reinforces the leader's status because of his or her being in the centre of the communicative network. Whenever there is no particular need to draw special attention to the teacher, you may want to close the circle to increase the self-organising ability of the group.



### *Circular seating structure*

This arrangement has no predetermined leadership position as it physically *includes* the teacher in the group, equalising influences. A further advantage of sitting in a circle is that it fosters interpersonal attraction and involvement: Ehrman and Dörnyei (1998) report on studies that have found that people sitting in circle groups rated each other as more friendly than in other arrangements, and that the circular arrangement resulted in shorter pauses in conversation. However, just

## *Group Dynamics in the Language Classroom*

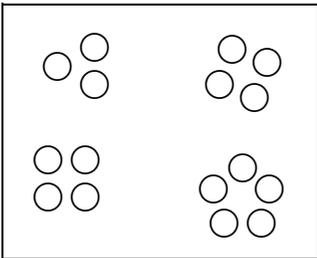


as suddenly not having your desk can present one with anxiety, sitting in a circle when you are not used to it can be intimidating as well. Some investigations have found that imposed intimacy can also be associated with negative feelings of confinement.

It is easy to believe that the circle is the ultimate solution to 'spatial equality'.

However, several studies have shown that people seated opposite each other interact with each other more than people who are seated side-by-side. This means, that usually students in directly facing seats to the teacher will participate more than members sitting on either side. That is, positions in a circle are not always equal in their communicative 'status' and, therefore, it may be worth moving students and yourself around from time to time even if they sit in a circle.

### *Ad hoc clusters of chairs/desks*



For building student autonomy and responsibility, tasks that call for a seemingly ad hoc positioning of the furniture in small groups of chairs/desks, such as games and small-group activities, are particularly useful. The big advantage of this spatial arrangement is that the teacher is not present in the students' primary communication networks. Such small-

group activities, role-play performances, drama techniques, etc. require space and movable furniture – something which is unfortunately too often not available in the L2 classroom.

### *Tim observes Aiko's classroom*

One of my responsibilities in Japan for a decade was going to see student-teachers from my university do practice teaching in local high schools. As would happen practically anywhere in the world, the student-teachers would inevitably teach just like the teachers they had been observing at the high school – in fact, they would feel obliged to. Desks were always in columns and students mostly silent, with perhaps a bit of choral repetition and a few students called on to answer questions. When I went to observe, there would usually be the regular teacher and perhaps an administrator or two

in the back observing as well. Almost without fail, the teachers in the back and I would begin to nod off somewhere during the 50-minute lesson. We teachers in the back, more than the students, were not used to sitting without doing much and found it intolerably boring to just listen to a teacher talking. (Why this experience never changed the practices of the teachers in the back is a mystery . . .)

One time, this did not happen. There were five teachers sitting in the back observing and a few minutes into the class the student-teacher dared to ask students to move their desks together in pairs for an activity and then in fours. It was amazingly simple actually. Because the student-teacher was walking around monitoring their activities, the other teachers and I got up and began doing the same and we listened in on probably the most lively high school class we had ever seen. Everyone, students and teachers, agreed it had been a wonderful class, although the conservatives were concerned about the noise level and whether students were actually on task and if they were learning each other's bad pronunciation. I was ecstatic for the student-teacher and the potential for change in the system.

#### **5.4 Temperature, light and decoration**

Extreme temperatures can cause irritability, and reduced productivity, especially if the room is overheated. Forsyth (1999) notes that extremes in temperature can keep people from being friendly and seeking affiliation and thus works against groups uniting. We have heard that some prisons are kept overheated on purpose to keep the prisoners lethargic and with less energy to be violent.

In addition, dark and dull colours and poor lighting can depress the mood of the group (MacLennan and Dies 1992). While teachers cannot usually change the colours of the walls, they can open windows and turn on lights when this helps. At the other extreme, hyper bright neon lights can also be a nuisance. If natural light is available, we prefer using it.

Finally, the aesthetic conditions of the classroom are not to be ignored either. Pleasant decoration is not merely the icing on the cake but has been found to play an important role in facilitating learning. Wilson (2002) reports a study by Maslow and Mints from the 1960s, in which the researchers asked people to conduct the same task in three different settings: an ugly room (like a janitor's closet), an average room (a

professor's office) and a beautiful room (a living room with nice furniture). The task involved rating various photos and – no surprise there – subjects gave more positive ratings of the photos, enjoyed the task more and wanted to stay with the task longer in the beautiful room. This recognition has been utilised, for example, in the language teaching method 'suggestopedia', where a pleasant classroom atmosphere is a central component of the method (cf. Larsen-Freeman 2000).

## **5.5 The ownership of the classroom**

We humans, like many animals, are territorial by nature. Students who sit in the same seat in two consecutive classes are already apt to think of that place as theirs. As any new student who comes to a class can attest, you must be careful not to 'take' someone's usual seat as other students might say, 'You can't sit there. That's Mary's seat'. Having students move around in class, changing seats and partners from the very first day, not only keeps them from claiming a permanent position in the classroom and even feeling stuck there, but it can also allow them to get comfortable being anywhere in the classroom and thus claiming the whole room as theirs to a certain extent.

Students (just like other people) like to personalise their 'living spaces' by leaving their mark on the surroundings or furniture. Studies (see Forsyth 1999) suggest that people feel more comfortable, 'at home' and more satisfied with their work and interpersonal relations if they are allowed to mark their environment in their own way, much like office workers who put up pictures and plants around their cubicles. Teachers can also do this by the objects and music they might bring to class. Flowers, soft drinks and snacks can also help create a more humane, relaxed atmosphere.

'Territorialising' the classroom means that students are exercising increased control over their environment, which in turn can lead to more autonomous learning. To enhance group development, a teacher can encourage students to 'take over' control of the board, walls, furniture arrangement, etc., potentially adding to their maturity and autonomy.

## **5.6 Movement in the classroom**

We have seen that a student's position relative to the teacher affects their feelings of involvement and participation. That is why we feel it is

## *The classroom environment's contribution to group dynamics*

important when possible for the teacher to equalise things. This can be done in two ways: by the teacher changing positions in the classroom or by having the students change seats and positions regularly.

### *The teacher on the move*

Teachers who walk around the classroom while talking to the class and teaching provoke a noticeable effect on students. When the teacher is near, heads go up and the students' attention increases. This can be caused by fear when students are unfamiliar with the teacher, or the teacher is considered threatening in the minds of students. However, increased proximity can also simply be a stimulation of difference and can cause a comfortable increase in intimacy and familiarity. Stimulating those in the back with a few minutes of your time is not a difficult thing to do. Try it. Just walk to the back of your room for part of your presentation of a new chapter or exercise. Or even try sitting down in the back next to a student. As John Fanselow says, 'Try the opposite!' And see what happens! We believe that a teacher's moving around the room provides more equal access to more students, more equal 'proximity time' – time to be close to students so that they become inspired to learn, rather than being distant and unaffected.

### *Students on the move*

Another important variable in the furniture arrangement is the students themselves. Not only can we arrange the chairs and desks in different places, but we can also ask students to change seats and to be seated in a variety of group formations (see also section 1.7). Fixed position preferences, which often set in during the first few classes, can lead to the emergence of rigid, fossilised patterns of 'private spaces' that can negatively affect contact and interaction among students (see Chapter 1). The fixed seating also leads to subgroups and cliques forming and to potential conflicts among students and groups who are not familiar with each other.

#### ***Tip 2***

An effective communicative activity that is centred around changing partners involves students working in pairs, discussing something. They then move around and summarise the information they have gathered or the conclusion they have come to, to another person assigned to them. Finally they return to their first partner and give feedback on the second discussion. If they do this as a

routine in several classes, students can learn that they must understand the messages they are receiving in order to communicate them to another, and more negotiation and meaningful communication takes place.

From a Vygotskian constructivist point of view, learning happens *intermentally* first, between minds in interaction, and only later becomes one's own learning, *intramentally*. With this point in mind we would want students to create intermental communications with as many other students as possible so that they could learn as much as possible. Working alone or always with the same partners can be boring. When students know they will be working with different partners every day, there is a certain facilitative anxiety that is created, a newness, and a stimulation that can bring the class together more as a group. Thus, we suggest to teachers that they consider having students change partners often for pair and group work in order to allow the participants to get to know everyone better and to learn from more perspectives, and also in order to keep the class lively and moving.

#### *Loud and distant partners*

Assigning students partners who are several seats away and instructing them that they have to talk to each other from their present positions has several advantages. Firstly, students have to talk louder and enunciate to be heard and understood over all the voices. Secondly, students overhear each other easily and thus they stay in the target language collectively, and they can also borrow language from their neighbours. Thirdly, it is a lot of fun.

## **5.7 Songs and music in the environment**

Dull environments can be greatly stimulated with some appropriate music. 'Appropriate' music depends on the students' and teacher's tastes. Obviously, soft background music will soothe and comfort while louder popular music might energise students – thus, the choice depends on your need. When the environment is populated by musical anchors that students respond to positively, they are much more likely to buy into the activities with willingness and motivation.

**General musical recommendations are:**

1. No music when the teacher is talking.
2. Soft music at the beginning of pair or group work, stopped when the teacher wants to call back the attention to the front of the room.
3. Louder and faster music later in the class to energise students and sustain them.
4. A good rocker for goodbye when they are leaving the class, and also perhaps when they come in.
5. Very soft classical music for reading or solitary seat-work.
6. Do experiment and see what your students want and enjoy. Ask them to loan you presently popular songs and listen to them and see if there are songs you can use.

## **5.8 The ideal classroom?**

When Tim was an MA student studying language teaching methodology, some of his fellow students were ex-peace corps people who had just returned from abroad. One named Rick had just come back from Africa. He kept asking professors who were lecturing how he could have done the things they recommended in his previous contexts where there were no pencils and paper, no blackboards, and rarely even any desks and chairs. Later when he started teaching at the university's English Language Institute as a teaching assistant, he stopped complaining and said something that really surprised everyone:

*I used to think I was in the worst possible classroom situation in Africa. Most of the time we had no classrooms to speak of really. But now after teaching back here in these university classrooms I find it even more difficult. Here we usually only have pictures of animals and trees. Back there, I taught under a big tree most of the time and we would walk around for our lessons and talk about what real people were doing, what we were seeing. Life was our classroom. We were not restricted by four walls, a textbook, and grades. And it was so easy to teach. The community was our classroom.*

Rick made many of us question our conventional thinking. Have we unnecessarily restricted ourselves by confining ourselves to the 'academic' idea of a classroom and learning? Many of us explored and

found ways to expand our concept of the classroom by bringing the real world to the classroom and taking our classes out into the world. We took our students on short field trips around the campus for different language-learning activities, we held classes sitting under trees in the campus gardens, we invited a variety of guests to join our classes, some teachers even brought their children to the class.

*Getting out of the box*

TIM: In Japan and Taiwan, I have regularly taken my classes outside because it is simply more comfortable there, or I need more room (for juggling, a blind walk or ‘walk-talks’ – see below), and students seem more stimulated and alert when they are outside. It is also nice to show them that they can speak their target languages outside the classroom. Escaping from your classroom also allows you and your students to understand that you can learn anywhere and any time.

Going outside does require a certain discipline among the students and good places that are reasonably quiet need to be found. Outside will also be putting your class before the public eye and you may even have passers-by asking to join your class.

Probably the most common structure for outside classes is sitting in a circle in the grass. However, sitting on the grass is not always possible if it is wet or full of insects. I often do ‘walk-talks’ in which students in pairs arrange themselves in a circle around me. I give them a topic to discuss in a timed conversation and they walk around in the circle and talk. I stop them after a few minutes and ask the inside people to move one (or two or three) people forward to a new partner and tell their new partner what their last partner said and then re-ask the questions. I have also asked students to take a walk anywhere and be back in five minutes, walking and talking as they get on with a certain task.

The point is that we are not restricted by our classrooms. We have the world to teach in. Now that is a big physical environment to contend with.

## **5.9 Summary**

In this chapter we have covered the following main points:

- There is a strong interplay between the physical environment and the dynamics in it.

*The classroom environment's contribution to group dynamics*

- Components of the environment (what we see, hear and feel) are always to a certain extent adaptable by the participants. This offers a potentially powerful tool for teachers to use according to the group's needs.
- Some of the features that are often available for change to enhance learning are:
  - where students are located;
  - the variety of partners they interact with;
  - how often they change partners;
  - the placement of the chairs (U-shape, circle, etc.);
  - the classroom temperature and lighting;
  - the décor;
  - the feeling of ownership of the classroom;
  - the movement of the teacher and students;
  - the use of songs and music;
  - leaving the classroom and going outside.

*Important questions about the impact of the environment on the group*

- What are the most important environmental concerns for you?
- What kind of environmental problems do you feel you can change and how?
- What components of the environment can you do nothing about (and are you sure you can't)?
- What kind of music or songs might you choose to use?
- Have you ever taken a class outside? If so, how did it work?