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EDU301 — General Methods of Teaching

Assignment No. 1 — Fall 2026

The situation describes a teacher-centred classroom: students memorise textbook content, remain silent during lessons, rarely ask questions and seldom work together. Memorisation without understanding produces weak learning, and silence is usually a sign that students do not feel safe or involved, not that they have nothing to say. The answers below show how the teacher can change the classroom environment so that students take part, and which activities build their critical thinking and teamwork.

Question (a): Five Ways to Improve the Classroom Environment for Student Participation (10 Marks)

1. Replace one-way lecturing with questioning and discussion

The teacher should ask open-ended questions that have more than one acceptable answer, for example asking students why something happens instead of only asking what the book says. After asking a question, the teacher should wait a few seconds so that students have time to think before anyone answers. When students answer in their own words, the teacher should accept the attempt, add to it where needed, and invite other students to agree, disagree or extend it. This habit slowly turns the lesson from a lecture into a conversation, and students begin to see their own ideas as a normal part of learning.

2. Create a safe and respectful classroom climate

Students stay silent when they fear being laughed at or scolded for a wrong answer. The teacher must therefore set a clear rule from the first day: no answer is ever mocked, and every serious attempt is respected. Wrong answers should be handled gently, by pointing out the correct part first and then guiding the student towards the full answer. The teacher should learn students by name, speak in a calm and friendly tone, and praise effort as much as correct answers. When students feel safe, they ask questions without fear, and participation grows on its own.

3. Use pair and group work in every lesson

Many students who will not speak in front of the whole class will gladly speak to one partner. The teacher should therefore break the class into pairs or small groups for short tasks, such as discussing a question, solving a problem or summarising a paragraph together. A simple routine is think-pair-share: first each student thinks alone, then discusses with a partner, then shares with the class. Because students have already tested their idea with a partner, they speak with more confidence. Regular group work also teaches students to listen to each other instead of only listening to the teacher.

4. Connect the lesson with students' real lives and interests

Textbook content feels distant when it has nothing to do with the students' own experience. The teacher should explain new ideas with examples from daily life, local surroundings and things

students already know, and should ask students to give their own examples as well. Giving students small choices also increases interest, for example letting them choose which of two topics to discuss first or which example to work on. When students see that the lesson relates to their own world, they pay attention, ask questions and remember the content because they have understood it rather than memorised it.

5. Give students a voice and different ways to take part

Participation should not mean only raising a hand to answer the teacher. The teacher should let students help set a few classroom rules, choose class roles such as group leader or presenter, and take part in different ways, for example by writing a short answer on a slip of paper, drawing an idea, or presenting a group's work. Short written responses are especially useful for shy students, because the teacher can read and praise them in the next lesson. When students see that their voice changes what happens in the classroom, they take ownership of their learning and participate willingly.

Question (b): Five Activities to Develop Critical Thinking and Teamwork Skills (5 Marks)

1. Group problem-solving on a real situation

The teacher gives each group a short real-life problem, such as how to keep a classroom clean or how to help a slow learner, and asks the group to find causes, suggest solutions and choose the best one. Students must think carefully, compare options and defend their choice, which builds critical thinking, while the need to agree on one answer builds teamwork and respect for other opinions.

2. Classroom debate

The class is divided into two sides on a simple motion, for example whether homework should be given daily. Each side prepares arguments with reasons and evidence, presents them, and answers the other side. Debate trains students to examine an idea from both sides, judge which argument is stronger, and listen carefully, all of which are central to critical thinking, while working as a team towards a shared position.

3. Think-pair-share

The teacher asks a challenging question, gives students a minute to think alone, then lets them discuss in pairs before sharing with the class. Thinking alone builds independent judgement, discussing with a partner exposes students to a different viewpoint, and sharing teaches them to present an idea clearly. It is a short activity, but it practises both reasoning and cooperation in every lesson.

4. Group project and presentation

Groups are given a small project, such as preparing a chart, a model or a short report on a lesson topic, and must plan the work, divide the tasks, and present the result to the class. Students learn

to organise information, make decisions together and take responsibility for their own part, which develops both thinking skills and the habit of working reliably as a team.

5. Role play followed by class discussion

Students act out a short situation, for example a teacher handling a quarrel between two students, while the rest of the class observes. Afterwards the class discusses what was done well and what could be done better. Role play forces students to see a situation from another person's point of view and to judge actions, which is critical thinking, and performing and evaluating together strengthens teamwork and communication.

In short, participation and thinking grow together. When the teacher moves from being the only speaker to being a guide who asks, listens and organises activity, students stop memorising silently and start thinking, questioning and learning together.