

A study on classroom management for effective teaching

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Abstract

Teachers play a major role for effective class conduction. It is the responsibility of the teacher to make his /her class interesting so that students are keen to attend and participate in the class. Some of the teachers keep complaining about the class which they teach. The problem is normally related to student's behaviour and discipline. Such students miss out on learning. They usually bunk or are irregular to class. They don't even bother to be present for the class. So many students today just don't value their education. If we suspend such students for bunking class they don't seem to care at all. Sitting at home doesn't change their attitude. Maybe a fresh look at the approach to Classroom management is required. But why we as a teacher are losing our grip with the classes? This paper focuses on the problems, reasons and suggestions for effective class management.

Keywords: Classroom management, Discipline, With-it-ness, Ripple effect

1. Introduction

"Do not train students to learning by force and harshness, but direct them to it by what amuses their mind, so that you may be better able to discover with accuracy the peculiar bent of the genius of each."

Plato

Today, we know more about teaching than we ever have before. Research has shown us that teachers' actions in their classrooms have twice the impact on student achievement as do school policies regarding curriculum, assessment, staff collegiality, and community involvement. We also know that one of the classroom teacher's most important jobs is managing the classroom effectively. Of all the variables, classroom management has the largest effect on student achievement. This makes intuitive sense-students cannot learn in a chaotic, poorly managed classroom. It is very important that there is a balance between teacher actions that provide clear consequences for unacceptable behavior and teacher actions that recognize and reward acceptable behavior. For example, beginning the school year with a positive emphasis on management; arranging the room in a way conducive to effective management; and identifying and implementing rules and operating procedures. Research has shown that the quality of teacher-student relationships is the keystone for all other aspects of classroom management. Further, research has shown that teachers who had high-quality relationships with their students had fewer discipline problems and rule violations than those who did not have high-quality relationships. What are the characteristics of effective teacher-student relationships? Let's first consider what they are not. Effective teacher-student relationships have nothing to do with the teacher's personality or even with whether the students view the teacher as a friend. Rather, the most effective teacher-student relationships are characterized by three specific teacher behaviors:

- Exhibiting appropriate levels of dominance
- Exhibiting appropriate levels of cooperation

- Being aware of high-needs students.

1. Appropriate Levels of Dominance

Teachers can exhibit appropriate dominance by establishing these three principles:

- Clear behavior expectations
- Clear learning goals
- Exhibiting assertive behavior

A. Establish Clear Expectations and Consequences

Teachers can establish clear expectations for behavior in two ways: by establishing clear rules and procedures, and by providing consequences for student behavior. Past research has stressed the importance of establishing rules and procedures for general classroom behavior, group work, seat work, transitions and interruptions, use of materials and equipment, and beginning and ending the period or the day. Ideally, the class should establish these rules and procedures through discussion and mutual consent by teacher and students.

Along with well-designed and clearly communicated rules and procedures, the teacher must acknowledge students' behavior, reinforcing acceptable behavior and providing negative consequences for unacceptable behavior.

Teachers can build effective relationships through these strategies

- Using a wide variety of verbal and physical reactions to students' misbehavior, such as moving closer to offending students and using a physical cue, such as a finger to the lips, to point out inappropriate behavior.
- Cuing the class about expected behaviors through prearranged signals, such as raising a hand to indicate that all students should take their seats.
- Providing tangible recognition of appropriate behavior-with tokens or rewards, for example.

- Employing group contingency policies that hold the entire group responsible for behavioral expectations.
- Employing home contingency techniques that involve rewards and sanctions at home.

B. Establish Clear Learning Goals

Teachers can also exhibit appropriate levels of dominance by providing clarity about the content and expectations of an upcoming instructional unit. Important teacher actions to achieve this end include:

- Establishing and communicating learning goals at the beginning of a unit of instruction.
- Providing feedback on those goals.
- Continually and systematically re-visiting the goals.
- Providing summative feedback regarding the goals.

C. Exhibit Assertive Behavior

Teachers can also communicate appropriate levels of dominance by exhibiting assertive behavior. Assertive behavior differs significantly from both passive behavior and aggressive behavior.

Tips to using assertive body language

- Maintain an erect posture, facing the offending student but keeping enough distance so as not to appear threatening and matching the facial expression with the content of the message being presented to students.
- Use an appropriate tone of voice, speaking clearly and deliberately in a pitch that is slightly but not greatly elevated from normal classroom speech, avoiding any display of emotions in the voice.
- Persist until students respond with the appropriate behavior. Do not ignore inappropriate behavior; do not be diverted by a student denying, arguing, or blaming, but listen to legitimate explanations.

2. Appropriate Levels of Cooperation

Cooperation is characterized by a concern for the needs and opinions of others. Although not the antithesis of dominance, cooperation certainly occupies a different realm. Whereas dominance focuses on the teacher as the driving force in the classroom, cooperation focuses on the students and teacher functioning as a team. The interaction of these two dynamics—dominance and cooperation—is a central force in effective teacher-student relationships. Several strategies can foster appropriate levels of cooperation:

- Provide flexible learning goals
- Take a personal interest in students
- Use Equitable and Positive Classroom Behaviors

A. Provide Flexible Learning Goals

Just as teachers can communicate appropriate levels of dominance by providing clear learning goals, they can also convey appropriate levels of cooperation by providing flexible learning goals. Giving students the opportunity to set their own objectives at the beginning of a unit or asking students what they would like to learn conveys a sense of cooperation. Giving students this kind of choice, in addition to increasing their understanding of the topic, conveys the message that the teacher cares about and tries to accommodate students' interests.

B. Take a Personal Interest in Students

Probably the most obvious way to communicate appropriate levels of cooperation is to take a personal interest in each student in the class. All students appreciate personal attention from the teacher. Although busy teachers—particularly those at the secondary level—do not have the time for extensive interaction with all students, some teacher actions can communicate personal interest and concern without taking up much time.

Teachers can practices these steps to show interest

- Talk informally with students before, during, and after class about their interests.
- Greet students outside of school—for instance, at extracurricular events or at the store.
- Single out a few students each day in the lunchroom and talk with them.
- Be aware of and comment on important events in students' lives, such as participation in sports, drama, or other extracurricular activities.
- Compliment students on important achievements in and outside of school.
- Meet students at the door as they come into class; greet each one by name.

C. Use Equitable and Positive Classroom Behaviors

Programs like Teacher Expectations and Student Achievement emphasize the importance of the subtle ways in which teachers can communicate their interest in students. This program recommends many practical strategies that emphasize equitable and positive classroom interactions with all students. Teachers should, for example,

- Make eye contact with each student. Teachers can make eye contact by scanning the entire room as they speak and by freely moving about all sections of the room.
- Deliberately move toward and stand close to each student during the class period. Make sure that the seating arrangement allows the teacher and students clear and easy ways to move around the room.
- Attribute the ownership of ideas to the students who initiated them. For instance, in a discussion a teacher might say, "Cecilia just added to Aida's idea by saying that . . ."
- Allow and encourage all students to participate in class discussions and interactions. Make sure to call on students who do not commonly participate, not just those who respond most frequently.
- Provide appropriate wait time for all students to respond to questions, regardless of their past performance or your perception of their abilities.

3. Awareness of High-Needs Students

Classroom teachers meet daily with a broad cross-section of students. In general, 12-22% of all students in school suffer from mental, emotional, or behavioral disorders, and relatively few receive mental health services. The Association of School Counselors notes that 18 percent of students have special needs and require extraordinary interventions and treatments that go beyond the typical resources available to the classroom. Although the classroom teacher is certainly not in a position to directly address such severe problems, teachers with effective classroom management skills are aware of high-needs students

and have a repertoire of specific techniques for meeting some of their needs. Marzano summarizes the five categories of high-needs students and suggests classroom strategies for each category and subcategory.

- *Passive* students fall into two subcategories: those who fear *relationships* and those who fear *failure*. Teachers can build strong relationships with these students by refraining from criticism, rewarding small successes, and creating a classroom climate in which students feel safe from aggressive people.
- The category of *aggressive* students comprises three subcategories: *hostile*, *oppositional*, and *covert*. Hostile students often have poor anger control, low capacity for empathy, and an inability to see the consequences of their actions. Oppositional students exhibit milder forms of behavior problems, but they consistently resist following rules, argue with adults, use harsh language, and tend to annoy others. Students in the covert subcategory may be quite pleasant at times, but they are often nearby when trouble starts and they never quite do what authority figures ask of them. Strategies for helping aggressive students include creating behavior contracts and providing immediate rewards and consequences. Most of all, teachers must keep in mind that aggressive students, although they may appear highly resistant to behavior change, are still children who are experiencing a significant amount of fear and pain.
- Students with *attention* problems fall into two categories: *hyperactive* and *inattentive*. These students may respond well when teachers contract with them to manage behaviors; teach them basic concentration, study, and thinking skills; help them divide tasks into manageable parts; reward their successes; and assign them a peer tutor.
- Students in the *perfectionist* category are driven to succeed at unattainable levels. They are self-critical, have low self-esteem, and feel inferior. Teachers can often help these students by encouraging them to develop more realistic standards, helping them to accept mistakes, and giving them opportunities to tutor other students.
- *Socially inept* students have difficulty making and keeping friends. They may stand too close and touch others in annoying ways, talk too much, and misread others' comments. Teachers can help these students by counseling them about social behaviors.

School may be the only place where many students who face extreme challenges can get their needs addressed. The reality of today's schools often demands that classroom teachers address these severe issues, even though this task is not always considered a part of their regular job.

Studies have found that the most effective classroom managers did not treat all students the same; they tended to employ different strategies with different types of students. An awareness of the five general categories of high-needs students and appropriate actions for each can help teachers build strong relationships with diverse students.

Problems of Classroom

Indiscipline is a problem normally faced by teachers which creates a hindrance in teaching process. Due to indiscipline situation students arrive late for class, are not punctual for the

classes or simply bunk classes as the class is not very interesting or rather as a teacher we are unable to create interest in the class. This may be a result of lack of lesson planning. At times effective management of time is also overlooked. Nonverbal cues like body language and communication skills also play a major role in making the class effective.

Problems of Classroom Management can be overcome by being prepared for class, motivating the students, providing a comfortable learning environment, building students' self-esteem, being creative and imaginative in daily lessons. A teacher should not carry personal problems to the class by being impulsive. There must be Willingness of the teacher to accept responsibility for classroom control and Long-term, solution-oriented approaches to problems.

Techniques for Better Classroom Control

Teacher needs to Focus attention on entire class and must not talk over student chatter. At times Silence can be effective. Students should know what is going to happen in the class and monitored to check progress. Teacher should move around the room so students have to pay attention more readily and give students non-verbal cues. Lessons should be planned to ensure that the period is filled with learning activities. Teacher should have a knack to memorize student names as quickly as possible. It enhances class control and confidence of the teacher. Few techniques are mentioned below;

With-It-Ness

With-it-ness refers to a teacher's awareness of what is going on in the classroom behaviors before they get out of line, keeping learners on tasks. Many problems occur during transitions. Theorist Jacob Kounin stressed the importance of "with-it-ness," which is the idea that the teacher knows what is going on in their classroom at all times. They understand the importance of having a close eye on students. Teachers who have "with-it-ness" are able to spot areas where misbehavior may arise, when students are upset, and are able correct problem behaviors before they cause major distress to the classroom. These teachers are able to manage their classrooms at all times and prevent problems from occurring or expanding. In a community of learners, it is the duty of the teacher to make sure everything runs smoothly for students by being able to spot problems.

Ripple Effect

Jacob Kounin created the idea of the "ripple effect." The idea is that if one student sustains positive or negative consequences, the rest of the class will see what is taking place and a ripple effect will occur. From experience, when one student misbehaves others will join in as well. On the other hand, a student receiving a reward will motivate others. Managing students' behavior in positive ways is the key to success. Students learn from others around them, and by believing in the ripple effect, we will be able to manage behaviors.

Model Classroom

The Canters believed that teachers should teach and model classroom behaviors. By doing so, students are able to visually see what is expected and what is not allowed in the classroom. This is important so that students fully understand what it looks like to participate in positive behavior management. Students will learn to be responsible managers of their behavior by seeing others do what is expected.

When students misbehave, it is important to sit down with the student and counsel. By having close student-teacher relationships, we will be able to get to the cause of the behavior and help the student come up with alternatives to prevent the unwanted behavior from occurring in the future.

Conclusion

The Role of a Teacher is not to grade a student and to control but the main role of the teacher is to help every student reach the highest possible level of achievement. The long-term goal of any classroom management program is self-management. The procedures typically involve the use of positive reinforcement, negative reinforcement and time to time interventions. Effective classroom management must be aligned with instructional goals and activities. Brophy (2006) noted that when teachers identify what good student behavior looks like; they can work backwards from desired outcomes to determine which management systems will be most effective. Arriving in class and being in one's seat on time, being prepared for a lesson, paying attention, volunteering information and responding to questions lead to effective class control. Accepted behaviors may vary for different classroom and unique strategies may be adopted for different contexts and environments that emerge in classrooms.

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