

Teacher's Role in Classroom Management and Traditional Methods



Linguistics

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Abstract

This paper is written for the purpose of growing our stream of consciousness about the role of the teacher in classroom management and the traditional methods. We did not write the words of my mind, but we wrote the collected facts that are published by different important people who dealt with these areas. The role of the teacher is said to be a very important in achieving great results in teaching and learning process. Traditional methods were widely used in earlier time, but with the growth of other methods they were omitted. All what is said is going to be elaborated in details. By reading this paper it does not mean that we will be the ones who will apply these methods in teaching, but we will try to avoid the traditional ones. We wrote what is real, not what is said to be unimaginable. You can find a lot of useful information on different areas of teaching methods and methodologies. As we shall see in the following sections this paper explains briefly the above mentioned methods and classroom management. Applying these factors in everyday teaching process, it will lead us to an advantageous degree of learning and teaching methodologies.

1. Introduction to Classroom Management

Teaching is a complex enterprise. It is complex for the following reasons:

- Students vary in their social, cognitive, physical, emotional, and cultural characteristics.
- Different students learn at different rates.
- Systematic preparations have to be made to ensure that students master the objectives that teachers determine.
- Different students, or different groups of students, are often working on different tasks at any point in time.
- Students' behaviors are somewhat unpredictable.
- Students are motivated to learn (or not to learn) by different factors.

So, if the classroom is not managed properly, an endeavor as complex as teaching can easily become chaotic. When that happens, students are likely to become confused, bored, uninterested, restless, and perhaps even disruptive. "But a well-managed classroom is not what many people think: students working silently at their desks, speaking only when spoken to, and providing verbatim recitations of what the teacher and textbook said. But if some of our goals are for students to acquire a meaningful knowledge base, become proficient problem solvers, and learn how to work productively with others, then we have to accept the idea that these goals are

best met in classrooms that are characterized by a fair amount of autonomy, physical movement, and social interaction.”¹⁸

A well-managed classroom is a prerequisite to learning. By management, we mean the complex set of plans and action that teacher uses to ensure that the learning in the classroom is effective and efficient. The management involves the ability to deal with problems in different situations. Effective classroom management is an ongoing, maintenance-oriented process. It involves motivating students to learn, providing appropriate instruction and feedback, and managing student work. Effective managers organize and conduct their classrooms to prevent management problems from happening in the first place.

Each and every teacher is seeking to formulate his/her ‘ideal classroom’. In order for a teacher to create such a ‘perfect’ classroom environment, many factors have to be taken into consideration. What is the topic I am teaching? What is the level of my students? How will I manage my classroom? And we, as future teachers, should also ask ourselves questions as to how we will instruct and conduct our classrooms and how we will make the best positive learning atmosphere for our students.

1.1. Factors Affecting Class Management

In this paper we will make a division between the ‘external factors’ and ‘internal factors’ that affect class management, and class environment in general.

Even though there are many factors that should be taken into consideration while we are engaged in the teaching process, it is classroom management and the role of the teacher that we’ll be mainly dealing in this paper.

So, under external factors we’ll put the external factors, or factors ‘outside classroom’ that affect class management such as: planning, teacher’s personality, parent-teacher meetings and psychological factors.

And as under ‘the internal factors’ we’ll put the internal factors or ‘factors inside classroom’ such as: managing students behavior, organizing classroom activities, and classroom management techniques.

It can be said that we are going to elaborate classroom management in two distinct and very close approaches. These approaches are ‘the behaviorism’ and ‘the pedagogical approach’. They are distinct because the former deals with behavior problems in class management whereas the latter deals with the way how teachers teach and students learn. While dealing with pedagogical matters (learning-teaching process) teachers deal with the behavior matters too.

All these factors are just like pieces of a jigsaw that make the main figure, in this case, ‘successful class-management’ and a successful teaching and learning process in general.

¹⁸ Jack Snowman and Rick McCown Psychology applied to teaching, 2012, p.260

So, teachers' role in managing a classroom successfully is of much importance since teacher should consider different factors in order to make a successful class management. And as a result of this we'll consider some of the psychological factors that affect on class management too.

2. Internal Factors Affecting Class Management

2.1. Defining Classroom Rules

By convincing students that the classroom rules are necessary, teachers may talk to children and discuss the way how to make their classroom a nice and safe place for all. Teacher should ask from them to discuss and find out of what rules are necessary to achieve such a goal. Then children often make long lists where, in most of the times, the rules appear to be negative. But after it teacher should explain to them that what he is asking for, is a short list defining what children can or can't do in a class. An example could be: 'In class you should walk'. But an example such as: 'Don't run' would not be appropriate. After children finish their list, teacher should work together with the children on editing and interpreting the common rules in a positive way. Teacher should keep in mind the priority rules list that makes the classroom, a comprehensive classroom and an environment for an effective teaching and learning process.

As rules with priority could be considered:

- The ways how to gain adults' attention;
- Waiting until one finishes his/her speech;
- Waiting until being called out;
- Safety (rules on lining up and walking along the class);
- Respect for all (say positive things for the others and behave well with them);
- Care for classroom and the inventory.

2.2. Understanding the Problem

Children who have poor self-esteem are more likely to be discipline problems. Before making any judgment, it would be better for a teacher to have a clear idea of what is and what isn't a classroom problem. By understanding the problems well, then it comes the stage of preventing problems and 'punishing'.

To make it clear of what are discipline problems, we are going to use some tips that Howard Seeman 1999, 54 presented in his book 'A Classroom Management Handbook'.

“A discipline problem is a behavior that disrupts the learning of the rest of the class or the role responsibilities of the teacher”¹⁹. The following, according to Seeman, are not discipline problems:

- Guidance problems, which require individual psychological intervention;
- Educational problems, which should be handled through grading or better motivational techniques;
- Personal disruptions that annoy the teacher but are not disruptive to teaching

Howard Seeman 1999, 70 calls situations that become discipline problems because of the way they're handled "miscalls."²⁰ Teachers must be able to identify discipline problems, deal with them, and avoid miscalls.

After a discipline problem is proved to be ‘a real discipline problem’ then there should be taken steps of preventing those discipline problems from happening. It is very important to know, what will be the punishment of misbehavior? This and other related topics will be treated in the coming sections.

3. Classroom Management Strategies

3.1. Teacher’s Flexibility

A teacher's ability to be flexible is a crucial component needed for conducting a classroom. An educator must have flexibility, which is an individual's capability of responding to change and adapting oneself to a situation, in order to meet their students' needs. For example, teacher should always prepare at least three daily lesson plans; in case the first one doesn't work s/he being flexible should be able to use the next one that is more appropriate for students.

As teachers, we are listeners, mentors, friends, authoritarians, parents and role models. Whether we are sitting in our offices during office hours, having a parent-teacher meeting, teaching a class, or working one-on-one with a student, teachers are constantly striving for self-improvement. Teachers should also regularly reflect on each of their lessons and ask themselves, did the students enjoy the lesson? How can I teach that topic better next time? Did I handle that situation well? Self-reflection helps teacher to see the improvements and adjusts that need to be made in managing his/her classroom. Teachers should continue this process of self-analysis and reflect on their teaching abilities so that they can prosper within their career.

¹⁹ Howard Seeman, A classroom management handbook, 1999, p.54

²⁰ Howard Seeman, A classroom management handbook, 1999, p.70

4. External Factors Affecting Class Management

4.1. Planning

Planning is necessary for supporting children and teachers at each and every particular moment in class and outside it. A well-designed and careful planning makes a successful teacher. There exist two main points of planning: long-termed planning and short-termed planning.

Planning should be flexible, for example, If the weekly planning goes well teacher can proceed; if the children do not react in that way that is expected, the planning can be modified in such a way that accommodate their reactions; if there happens anything unexpectedly the planning can be delayed until that problem passes. The realization of the planning successfully depends on the time that the staff has in its disposition to think, to meet and to discuss their aims.

Planning without any regard on their format have to be dated and after the implementation and their evaluation should be put in a portfolio in order to create a documentation of what is achieved.

4.2 Effective Teacher

Effective teacher possesses a cheerful disposition, friendliness, emotional security, good mental health, and a high degree of personal adjustment. As teachers, we are listeners, mentors, friends, authoritarians, parents and role models. Effective teachers are those who are able to: remain calm in crises, listen actively without becoming defensive or authoritarian, avoid win-lose conflicts, respect each child as an individual, emphasize positive rather than negative expectation, explain the rationale behind rules, able to earn students' respect.

A very important feature of an effective teacher is self-reflection. Being self reflective means finding the self asking the following questions frequently: How can I teach that topic better next time? Did I handle that situation well? Self-reflection helps teachers to see the improvements and adjusts that need to be made in managing their classrooms. By being a self-reflector, teacher sees himself just as a drawing and then makes any particular change.

Another important feature of an effective teacher is 'flexibility'. A teacher's ability to be flexible is a crucial component needed for conducting a classroom. An educator must have flexibility, which is an individual's capability of responding to change and adapting oneself to a situation, in order to meet their students' needs.

Teachers have to be ready in an instance, ready to change their lesson plans if necessary. For example, If teacher will teach a lesson to an English class about the food. He will create an activity in which the students are placed into groups of two and told to come up with names of food in English, using no outside resources for help. But when teacher implements the lesson and walks around the room to observe how the groups are working, he comes to see that the students do not know the necessary vocabulary words. The flexible teacher he is, he would adjust his lesson and allow students to look up words in the dictionary. This example shows that even though in his

lesson plan he was set on not allowing students to use dictionaries, he had to slightly change his activity based on the responses and feedback he received from the students.

5. Psychological Factors Affecting Class Management

5.1. Students' Motivation

Unfortunately, as children grow, their passion for learning frequently seems to shrink. Learning often becomes associated with drudgery instead of delight. A large number of students--more than one in four--leave school before graduating. Many more are physically present in the classroom but largely mentally absent; they fail to invest themselves fully in the experience of learning. Student motivation naturally has to do with students' desire to participate in the learning process. But it also concerns the reasons or goals that underlie their involvement or noninvolvement in academic activities. Although students may be equally motivated to perform a task, the sources of their motivation may differ. So, there are students who are INTRINSICALLY and others who are EXTRINSICALLY MOTIVATED.

A student who is intrinsically motivated undertakes an activity "for its own sake, for the enjoyment it provides, the learning it permits, or the feelings of accomplishment it evokes"²¹. An extrinsically motivated student performs "in order to obtain some reward or avoid some punishment external to the activity itself," such as grades, stickers, or teacher approval (Lepper, 1988). So, teachers can do enough with students extrinsically motivated in order to make a successful management and a successful classroom in general. 8.4 Are there advantages to intrinsic motivation?

Does it really matter whether students are primarily intrinsically or extrinsically oriented toward learning? A growing body of evidence suggests that it does.

When intrinsically motivated, students tend to employ strategies that demand more effort and that enable them to process information more deeply (Lepper 1988).

J. Condry and J. Chambers (1978) found that "when students were confronted with complex intellectual tasks, those with an intrinsic orientation used more logical information-gathering and decision-making strategies than did students who were extrinsically oriented".

Students with an intrinsic orientation also tend to prefer tasks that are moderately challenging, whereas extrinsically oriented students gravitate toward tasks that are low in degree of difficulty.

Extrinsically oriented students are inclined to put forth the minimal amount of effort necessary to get the maximal reward (Lepper 1988).

Although every educational activity cannot, and perhaps should not, be intrinsically motivating, these findings suggest that when teachers can capitalize on existing intrinsic motivation, there are several potential benefits.

²¹ Lepper, M, *Motivating students for a lifelong learning*, 1988

5.2. What Can be done to Help Unmotivated Students?

A first step for educators is to recognize the problem that causes the student to be unmotivated, and then to interrupt it by assigning him with homework he likes accomplishing. Next step is to give him/her a choice of assignment, we have to determine three assignments and then let them choose one of them. This choice makes them feel happier. There is also a process called 'attribution retraining', which involves modeling, socialization, and practice exercises, is sometimes used with discouraged students. The goals of attribution retraining are to help students to (1) concentrate on the tasks rather than becoming distracted by fear of failure; (2) respond to frustration by retracing their steps to find mistakes or figuring out alternative ways of approaching a problem instead of giving up; and (3) attribute their failures to insufficient effort, lack of information, or reliance on ineffective strategies rather than to lack of ability (V. C Pandey 2005 88). Because the potential payoff--having students who value learning for its own sake--is priceless, it is crucial for parents, teachers, and school leaders to devote themselves fully to engendering, maintaining, and rekindling students' motivation to learn.

6. Traditional Teaching Methods

A traditional method is said to be that method which was used to teach students in earlier times. This learning process has to do with the teacher's guidance all the time. In this case students listen while teacher give instructions. Students do not have the chance of expressing their thoughts when using this kind of method. There are three main methods that were used in teaching in the past and they are as follows:

-Lectures and Direct Instructions- is that method that most of the students have experienced it. It is classroom based method where direct instructions are conducted by the lecturer/teacher. This method is also known with another name used as a synonym: TTT (teacher talking time) where the teachers talk all the time during the conveyance of information. Students play the role of chess icons where the chess player moves them when necessary.

-Seatwork- tests are significant indicators which are used to check student's performance. In traditional methods the test session was done only one time, so nowadays teachers use them often, for more than one session as to check their performance in a proper manner.

-Listening and Observations- this method includes student's learning process through the teacher, students listen to the teacher and the teacher expects them to say everything they explain in the classroom.

6.1. Are Traditional Methods Still Effective?

These days the technology has changed recently and for education has become easier and easier to facilitate these technologies and omitting the use of traditional methods. Traditional teaching methods are not still effective and useful for teachers.\

7. Pros and Cons of Traditional Teaching Methods

²²Traditional teaching has been around for thousands of years, shaping the minds of so many scholars, workers and ordinary men and women. At a young age, a person is expected to attend a formal education, which involves a teacher and a set of students convening in a classroom. Through formal education using traditional teaching methods, students learn what they needed to succeed in the real world. The advantage of obtaining an education in a classroom setting is that a student receives formal education and learns to focus on the subject at hand. While traditional teaching has been a tried-and-tested method, it also has some disadvantages; particularly today that technology has made learning better, more fun and interactive

7.1. Method

Orderliness of thought or behavior; systematic planning or action: "combination of knowledge and method. The traditional view of learning includes situations where the material is given to students using a based format. Otherwise, a more modern method of learning is constructivism, where students are expected to be active in the learning process by participating in different activities held during the class. There is another form of effective teaching which is called discussion based methods which have to do with the cooperative learning.

7.2. Student's Preference for Teaching Methods

Students do not favor active learning methods because of the time taken by activities, and being confused of not covering all of the material in the course, and the continuous changing of methods. Hunt et al (2003) said that students most prefer the lecture discussion method. Laboratory work, oral presentation, and applied projects were also favorably regarded.

Conclusion

An endeavor as complex as teaching can easily become stressful and boring when not managed appropriately. It can also become more and more uninteresting when applying traditional methods in classroom management.

²² <http://arzelonline.wordpress.com/2012/06/25/are-traditional-teaching-methods-still-effective>

Managing a classroom means managing students activities and behavior in a classroom setting in the same time, bringing something into light. Different things should be done at the same time. This calls for continuous and frequent analysis. For an effective teaching-learning process to take place all teachers strive for gaining more knowledge and experiencing more in the fields of classroom management. If the teacher use modern methods the students are more likely to gain knowledge than using the traditional ones.

After the necessary knowledge on classroom management is gained then its implementation is what is required for them to do. Implementing the techniques and methods that are gained is an alert that the goal is being achieved. Teacher's personality is what affects the most the classroom management. Teacher should also possess some skills on psychology. Teacher's features like; flexibility and self reflection help him/her in providing a better classroom management and a successful classroom in general.

Being a teacher means also being able to understand students' problems, and help them solve the problems. Finally I got that teachers must have knowledge in different areas in order to be able to manage a classroom properly. Applying modern methods makes the teacher's responsibilities easily. Based on different sayings about methods I understood that teachers find it easy to continue using traditional methods rather than modern ones. The awareness of teachers and students keep the traditional methods.

Teacher should also possess abilities to understand natural phenomena that affect classroom management and teaching in general, such phenomena that students possess such as: Students variability (psychological, cognitive and cultural), students' internal world (ego-states), etc. By being able to identify such varieties one will then be able to deal with them appropriately.

So, in order to be successful teachers there are numerous teaching-related matters to be considered. These kinds of matters are all related to the teaching methods or strategies.

Being a successful manager of students' behavior and of the organization of the classroom activities in a classroom setting means having considered all of the above-mentioned tips, methods and strategies of classroom management.

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