

**EFFECTIVENESS
OF CLASSROOM MANAGEMENT**

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Abstract

An effective classroom is a place where teaching and learning is taking place. No meaningful learning can take place in a chaotic environment. This paper highlighted the roles of teachers in classroom management, discipline and how to reduce disruption and foster good learning attributes. The problems associated with classroom management include inadequate preparation and inappropriate assignment. Strategies for improvement are addressed. The paper concluded that good management is paramount if the set goals of teaching in education are to be achieved.

Keywords: *Classroom management, effectiveness and environment.*

Introduction

No meaningful learning can take place in a chaotic environment. Therefore, there is need for the teacher to consider the students' behaviour such as students' background, interest and most suitable teaching methods so that everyone can meet his/her emotional needs and academic goals. Teachers should provide better learning environment that is co-operative, relaxed atmosphere, cordial and suitable teaching aids/materials for students so they can easily acquire the knowledge. Dodge, Rudick and Colker (2009) viewed that learning environment, the use and organization of the space in the classroom, the daily schedule and routines as well as social and emotional atmosphere should meet students' developmental needs. This makes the students to feel safe and comfortable where they belong. This in return makes the students to become independent and confident learners.

Classroom management over the past decade has shown consistently that new teachers feel unprepared when it comes to classroom skills (Duck, 2007; Freiberg, 2002, Meister & Melnick 2003; Merrett & Wheldall 1993, Stoughton 2007). They are often unprepared to function successfully in the classrooms with regards to managing administrative tasks, curriculum and behaviour problems (Allen & Blackstone 2003; Bauman & DelRio, 2006; Kirk Patrick, Lincoln & Marrow, 2006; Public Agenda, 2004). Students' misbehavior is a factor in teachers' burnout and the decision of novice teachers to leave the profession.

Classroom management is the most important part in educational process. It contains all the steps through which interaction between the teachers and learners (students) takes place.

Concept of Classroom Management

Classroom is a place where the closest interaction between students and teachers take place (Muhammad & Ismail, 2001). In another View, Saad (1999) acknowledged that classroom environment is not a place where only transfer of information takes place, rather it encompasses other essential aspects of learning such as physical space materials, attitudes of teacher and the taught,

feelings and emotions and other social dynamics of life. All these form a crucial part in the teaching and learning experiences. Hence, Krause, Bochner and Duchesne (2003) see a classroom where a teacher creates the students to make effective use of the available time and its resources and also cooperative with their class fellows is called real community of learning. Classroom can be seen as enclosed organized setting where meaningful discussion, teaching and learning takes place between the teacher and the learner in order to achieve a desired goal. Classroom that is well organized can yield a good output, in terms of teacher's objective, practical demonstration and task accomplishment (teacher assessing the students), the interaction between students and teachers (Teachers asking students questions). The way a teacher manages his/her classroom depends on the objectives or task he/she wants to accomplish.

Management according to Gibson Ivancevish, John, Donnelly and James (1976) refers to a set of activities which has come to be classified as planning, organizing, leading (that is coordinating and directing) and controlling in order to use available resources to achieve a desired outcome in the most efficient way. In other words management is concerned with the formulation of strategies, plans, policies and programmes in order to achieve a set organizational goal. In this regards management is involved in classroom activities because it involves planning (procedure for teaching and learning, formulation of strategies (teaching methods, from abstract to concrete, feedback and evaluation). This is expected to enhance effective teaching and learning.

Classroom management refers to all those essential activities which are highly necessary not only to create, but also to maintain a supportive and orderly atmosphere. It includes planning and preparation of teaching and learning materials, organization of the materials, decoration of the classroom, creation of expectations and establishment and enforcement of rules and routines in the classroom (Tan, Parsons, Hinson & Sando-Brown, 2003). Classroom management refers to all those decisions that a teacher takes to facilitate the learning process and to

provide the students maximum opportunity for learning (Krause, Bochner & Duchesne, 2003). To Berliner (1988), classroom management includes all those essential activities which are important to maintain an environment which generates necessary and positive condition for learning. To achieve this, the teacher must plan his/her lessons very well; prepare teaching and learning materials (instructional materials).

Organize the content (aims and objectives of the lesson and use of various teaching methods) strategies to maintain a conducive atmosphere that will yield good results. Feldman (1997) sees classroom management of students' behaviour but also to lesson planning of teachers organizing of the materials, controlling process, supportive atmosphere and maintaining of highly effective teaching and learning experiences within the classrooms. Ogunu (2000) views classroom management as the planning, management and execution of the school's programme as it affects teaching and learning in the classroom.

The teacher manages the physical as well as the psychological environment to create an atmosphere that is conducive for learning. Hence, classroom management can be described as an organized setting where meaningful planning of lesson content is delivered, supervision and directing of students activities and controlling the student behaviour (the expected and the unexpected behaviour) in order to achieve a desired objective at the end of teaching. Teachers can create cordial atmosphere where students feel safe to learn to work co-operatively and with individuals.

The Roles of Teacher in Classroom Management

The role of the teacher in promoting classroom discipline is very important in a teaching and learning environment. It is the role of the teacher to reduce disruptions to the barest minimum and foster good learning, attributes, trust among the learners/students. In this regards, Canter and Canter (2001) viewed that there are two goals of classroom management, first to create and maintain a highly supportive learning environment and second to promote a safe classroom community so that students' interest, motivation and involvement in the learning

process are maintained. It also allows students to establish relationship openly and to set target for themselves. This would enable them to discuss their needs with the teachers and feel comfortable with no intellectual risks. Teachers can establish laid-down rules and regulations/routines. The class rules and routine provide students with structures to work in an organization and interact with each other fairly. In other words, class rules should be spelt out (documented and verbally). The purpose of classroom management is for students to socialize with each other if the environment is cordial it helps direct student behaviour in a positive manner, but if it is harsh or coercive, it directs the student's behaviour in a negative undesirable manner. Whenever a teacher notices any disturbance in the classroom he/she should adopt a strategy that will avert the situation. For successful teaching and learning to take place, the teacher needs to plan his lessons effectively to achieve successful classroom teaching plan. Ingersoll and Smith (2003) suggest six strategies which are (a) reflecting on students' development needs, creating a supportive physical environment, creating a co-operative learning environment, teaching and maintaining rules and procedures, managing classroom activities effectively, promoting sense of co-operation among students and using appropriate classroom management style. These purposes can be achieved by stimulating the environment, good ventilation and should be kept neat often.

The role of classroom management can never be over-emphasized. Froyen and Inverson (1999) aimed to encourage students towards learning and to promote their positive behaviour. He also acknowledged that positive classroom management contributes to enhanced academic achievement of students, increased teacher efficacy and improved students behaviour. Effective classroom management depends on the teachers' effectiveness in teaching students and teachers' quality.

Teachers create supportive and friendly environment in the classroom where students feel safe, respected, cared and secured. Teachers are the key point of whether the classroom environment is going to be favourable or not and this is crucial because it influences the behaviour of

students. Teachers who plan their classroom well are able to overcome many classroom problems such as disruptions, deviants' behaviour or misbehavior of students. In this regards, the nature of teachers' plays a vital role in monitoring, organizing and supervising the classroom activities to achieve a desired objective. Good classroom management can help to ensure that students are protected from physical attacks, from unhealthy environmental conditions and from psychological abuse. When students participate in a loving caring atmosphere, it is safe to assume that they will learn very well.

Problems of Classroom Management

One of the major problems that hinder the quality of education in Nigeria schools is that of indiscipline. What is responsible for indiscipline in the classroom and how can a teacher solve a problem in his classroom to achieve his goal of creating an atmosphere favourable for effective learning? For teachers to succeed in achieving good classroom management, a teacher has to identify the situation in the classroom, and he should realize that classroom is an organized atmosphere that is somehow artificial for pupils to learn. The teacher should take into cognizance individual differences because these pupils come from different backgrounds and they are meant to learn under one roof (classroom) which makes it a bit difficult (disorder in behaviour). The teacher should find out the causes of pupils' behaviour and should be able to deal with it.

The attributes of classroom management problems are inappropriate assignment; when the classroom is rowdy, the teacher should not give pupils assignment because it will not solve the problem rather it will increase the noise in the environment. Communication in a clear, concise language enhances students understanding of concepts. It is clear communication between teachers and students minimize the chances of misunderstanding. This will lead to less discipline problems in the classroom. To maintain good discipline in the classroom and the teacher should be firm and gentle to deal with students' misbehavior.

Another classroom management problem is inadequate preparation. When a

teacher is not well prepared to teach in the classroom, the lesson will not be effective to achieve its objective.

Accordingly, Feldman (1997) considers lesson planning of teacher organizing of the materials, controlling of behaviour, goals based learning process, supportive atmosphere and maintaining an effective teaching and learning experiences within the classrooms. In addition to that, Saad (1999) informed that classroom environment is not only a place where transfer of information takes place rather it encompasses other essential aspect of learning such as physical space, materials, attitudes of the teacher and the taught, feelings and emotions, and other social dynamics of life, all these form important characteristics of teaching and learning experiences. Therefore, there is need for the teacher to prepare his/her lesson plan and prepare him/herself to teach the learners to avoid disruption in the classroom.

Causes of indiscipline, Anti-social Behaviour and Disorder in the Classroom

The teacher should know that there are underlying causes of indiscipline, anti social behaviour and disorderly behaviour of students in the classroom.

Indiscipline is any action that does not conform to set standards, rules and regulations governing learning surroundings. According to Advanced Learners' Dictionary (2004), indiscipline is lack of control in the behaviour of a group of people. In a classroom environment, it is a situation where a student fails to obey school rules and regulations, behaves in an uncivilized way; or shows signs of indecorum. Tuluhi and Bello (1985) see it as the violation of school rules and regulations capable of obstructing the smooth and orderly functioning of the school system. With regards to the various definitions of indiscipline, teachers should be able to guide pupils using the laid down rules and regulations, identify when a student is restless; understand the psychology of a child and be able to guide against the indiscipline in the classroom such as stealing other students' books, biro, food items, disobedience to the teacher and institution's rules and regulations, eating and drinking in

the classroom, failure to carry out teachers' instruction making noise in the class and discussing during teaching and learning process.

The teacher knows that there are underlying causes for anti-social behaviour and should be conversant with it. The primary causes of anti-social behaviour of a given child may stem from an environment which a child is raised from, physical peculiarities, mental deficiency, or continued association with an unhappy teacher.

Among the maladjustments that may result from these conditions are over protection, over rejection, fatigues, fear, over anxiety and psychological problems. A child suffering from these maladjustments acts in a manner which offers him a sigh of relief, thereby affecting the psychology of the child (emotionally, physically and spiritually).

Disorder in the classroom manifests in children in diverse ways. Inattentiveness and restlessness are among the common ones which manifest often. Children possess much energy and they never like to be kept passive for long. Inattentiveness in classroom could be as a result of physical or mental tiredness. This could be as a result of poor preparation or poor delivery of a lesson. Lesson that are boring often result to pupils not paying attention. The most common form of disorder in the classroom is noise making, which can result from argument when the teacher is not in the classroom, or noise that come from the question asked by the teacher. This upsets classroom management. Naughtiness is another form of behaviour disorder. It can manifest in form of rudeness, disobedience, lying and stealing. It is an act of rebellion in a child. The actual cause of this may be buried inside the child and the outward form becomes assertiveness from the child. The teacher should always try to find out the cause and remedy it as soon as possible for teaching and learning to take place.

It is important for teachers to understand the causes of indiscipline, anti-social behaviour and disorder in the classroom. It must be admitted that mere knowledge of the causes does not merely

provide teachers with techniques they could employ in dealing with problem of indiscipline in the classroom to ensure effective learning. There is need for behaviour modification to enable students to drop that maladjusted behaviour.

Strategies for Improvement

Educational theories and research from various schools of thought have provided teachers with multitude of principles and practices that can be used in establishing good classroom management discipline. They include the following:

- i. The teacher should keep the lesson moving and avoid unnecessary showdowns involving either over dwelling or fragmentation.
- ii. Keep your students alert by using suspense, random recitation, mass unison responses and presentation of unusual materials (Application of this principle depends on the age of the students and the subject being taught).
- iii. The teacher should make students laugh when there is tension in the classroom and not to lose the track of the lesson
- iv. The teacher should make sure that the control measures, techniques used clearly identify the deviants, and an acceptable alternative behaviour.
- v. Observe your classroom leaders (prefects) carefully if you are to achieve the goal of controlling their misbehavior.
- vi. To make punishment work better, form a warm positive relationship with students, punish students when they begin to misbehave rather than later. Be consistent. Student should be meant to understand the reason for punishment and the right thing to do afterwards. Alternate the punishment used for students in order to achieve stated objective because monotony kills interest.
- vii. Develop visual and non-verbal cues to restore order in the classroom; ask

- questions to remind students of their goals and help them understand the likely effect of their actions (misbehavior).
- viii. When observed that students are not following, apply different teaching methods. This will help prevent distractions in the classroom.
 - ix. Teacher should treat students with respect and politeness; praise desirable behaviour by using the verbal and non-verbal responses. This will motivate students' behaviour and improve the classroom environment.
 - x. The teacher should be firm about reprimands and follow up with the appropriate consequences, avoid over emotional reaction to students' misbehavior.

Conclusion

Good classroom management is paramount if the set goals of teaching in education are to be achieved. Teachers need to pay attention to the causes of indiscipline and strategies to deal with such problems that may hamper effective teaching and learning process in the classroom. It is important for classroom managers to organize classroom space plan lessons well, establish rules and regulations and learn to apply principles; and always place the interest and welfare of students above their own selfish desire.

Suggestions

The following suggestions are made:

1. Teachers should administer punishment appropriately when the misbehavior is severe. Punishment can serve as a deterrent but when it is otherwise (less severe), warning should first be issued.
2. The teacher should engage actively in supervising students' engagement and implement classroom rules and regulations promptly.
3. Create a physical arrangement that eases, traffic flow, minimizes distractions and provides teachers with good access to students in order to respond to their questions and better control behaviour.
4. The teacher should be efficient in the use of time, including transitions between classroom activities and lessons.

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