



ISSN -PRINT-2231-3613/DLNE2455-8729
International Educational Journal

UGC APPROVAL NO. - 42652

CHETANA

Received on 20th Oct 2017, Revised on 28th Oct 2017; Accepted 30th Oct 2017

ARTICLE

Effective Classroom Management, its Strategies & Importance

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Key words: *Classroom behaviour, management, achievement, effective teaching etc.*

Introduction

We know more about teaching now than we ever knew about it earlier. Researches have shown us that teachers' actions in the classrooms have twice the impact on students' achievement as do school policies regarding curriculum, assessment, staff collegiality, and community involvement. We also know that one of the most important jobs of a teacher is managing the classroom effectively. Of all the variables, classroom management has the largest effect on students' achievement. No students can learn in a chaotic, poorly managed classrooms. It is very important that there should be a balance between teacher's actions providing clear consequences for unacceptable behavior and teachers are able to recognize acceptable behavior & reward that too. For example, beginning the school year with a positive emphasis on management; arranging the rooms in a way conducive way with effective management, identifying and implementing rules and operating procedures.

Classroom management is a term used by teachers to describe the process of ensuring that classroom lessons run smoothly despite disruptive behavior by some students. The term also implies the prevention of disruptive behavior. It is possibly the most difficult aspect of teaching for many teachers; indeed experiencing problems in this area causes some to leave teaching altogether. In 1981 the US National Educational Association reported that 36% of teachers said that they would probably not go into teaching if they had to decide again. The major reason for that was "negative student attitudes and poor discipline." Classroom management is closely linked to issues of motivation, discipline and respect. From the student's perspective, effective classroom management involves clear communication of behavioral and academic expectations as well as a cooperative learning environment. A large part of traditional classroom management involves behavior modification, although

many teachers see using behavioral approaches alone for better teaching. Many teachers establish rules and procedures at the beginning of the school year.

Common Mistakes in Classroom Behavior Management

In an effort to maintain order in the classroom, sometimes teachers can actually make problems worse. Therefore, it is important to consider some of the basic mistakes commonly made when implementing classroom behavior management strategies. For example, a common mistake made by teachers is to define the problem behavior by how it looks without considering its functioning. Interventions are more likely to be effective when they are individualized to address the specific function of the problematic behavior. Two students with similar looking misbehavior, may require entirely different intervention strategies if their behavior is serving different functions.

Teachers need to understand that they need to be able to change the ways they do things from year to year, as the children change. Not every approach works for every child. Teachers need to learn to be flexible. Another common mistake is for the teacher to become increasingly frustrated and negative when an approach is not working. The teacher may raise his or her voice or increase adverse consequences in an effort to make the approach work. This type of interaction may impair the teacher-student relationship. Instead of allowing this to happen, it is often better to simply try a new approach. Inconsistency in expectations and consequences is an additional mistake that can lead to dysfunction in the classroom. Teachers must be consistent in their expectations and consequences to help ensure that students understand that rules will be enforced. To avoid this, teachers should communicate expectations to students clearly and be sufficiently committed to the classroom management procedures to enforce them consistently. Another reason of classroom management is bullying and it is a serious issue in educational institutions, and it is helpful to understand the unique personal needs and characteristics of students who are involved in this behavior. Studies of Wood & Gross (2002) suggest that there are two types of bullies: reactive bullies, who have strong responses to what they perceive as threatening situations, and proactive bullies, whose behavior seems more calculated and planned. In both cases research indicates that social/emotional issues underlie the behavior. For example, reactive bullies are seen as students who desire but lack positive relationships with adults and may have experienced rejection from adult caregivers. Following violent behavior toward others, these students often express remorse. Teachers and caregivers often refer to them as having a "short fuse" because they tend to be intolerant of frustration, easily threatened, impulsive and over reactive in response to any source of stress or fear and unpredictable in their

tantrums and outbursts. The behavior of proactive bullies is viewed more as a component of these students' identity and these students are usually not provoked into their bullying and usually choose students who are emotionally or physically weaker and easily controlled. Proactive bullies experience little remorse and their behavior is difficult to alter because it is a fundamental aspect of their identity. These students have often lacked the supportive family relationships that help develop a sense of empathy and caring for others. What needs to occur for these students is extensive education in developing empathy for others through positive relationships with adults, while learning social skills to meet their needs for significance, competence and power.

Importance of Classroom Management

Effective Teaching: A disorganized classroom without routines and expectations makes it difficult for a teacher to do his/her job. Students don't know what to do, so they might get off task or cause disruptions. When the teacher is constantly redirecting students or handling behavior problems, he/she loses crucial teaching time. Classroom management strategies help create an organized classroom environment that's conducive to teaching. Kids know the expectations in different types of learning situations. For example, kids would know that when working in small groups, they talk in quiet voices and take turns talking. They might each have a specific job within the group.

Efficient Use of Time: Taking time before school starts to create routines and procedures that saves one's time in the long run. When children know what to do, it becomes a natural part of the routine. After a few weeks, one doesn't need to tell them what to do. Students know they get their planners out, write in homework assignments and gather all of their material at the end of the day. You can get your kids out the door faster at the end of the day. When you train them how to do each part of the school day, you don't spend as much time giving directions.

Consistency: A teacher with strong classroom management skills creates consistency for his students. The kids know what to expect every day when it comes to the routine activities. Your students may fare better when you're gone if you have set expectations for everyday tasks. They know how the classroom runs so they are able to help the substitute run the classroom. For example, if the kids know they're supposed to enter the room and start working on a math problem on the board, a substitute doesn't have to spend his time trying to keep the kids occupied while everyone arrives. You can also create consistency throughout the school by aligning your management strategies with the school wide standards. If your school focuses on respect and responsibility, incorporate them into your

classroom management techniques, things go better. Students will hear those words throughout the school and know that the expectations are the same anywhere in the building.

Fewer Behavior Problems: The main goal of classroom management is to reduce misbehavior in the classroom. Effective classroom management gives the students little time to misbehave. Because the expectations are clearly explained, the students know what they need to do. Transitions in particular, are easier to control when a teacher has strong classroom management skills. The expectations for behaviors that are part of a classroom management plan, give students boundaries, as well as consequences.

Classroom Arrangement Strategies

We must focus on issues that may be addressed in the classroom i. e., physical arrangement and management strategies. These are discussed here under:

Classroom Arrangement

As Fred Jones, a noted classroom management expert explains: "A good classroom seating arrangement is the cheapest form of classroom management. It's discipline -free." Many experienced teachers recommend assigned seating for students to facilitate discipline and instruction. They argue students who are left to their own devices, will always choose a seat that places the teacher at the greatest disadvantage. The following practices are suggested for effective classroom arrangements:-

1. Students should be seated where their attention is directed toward the teacher.
2. High traffic areas should be free from congestion.
3. Students should be able to clearly see chalk board, screens and teacher.
4. Students should be seated facing the front of the room and away from the windows.
5. Classroom arrangements should be flexible to accommodate a variety of teaching activities.

Establishing Rules of Conduct

Much research on classroom management has focused on student participation in establishing codes of conduct. It suggests that students should actively participate in the creation of guidelines governing classroom behavior. This belief suggests that students will support rules they establish. Children have a tendency to recommend a laundry list of rules. Teachers, however, should provide limited structural input so that rules are direct, clear, and consistent, and encourage positive behavior. In addition, teachers must make sure that rules are designed to support a concept of consequences for inappropriate behavior rather than punishment. Best practices recommend minimizing the number of rules. The minimum

number of rules develop more positive environment and it leads to effective classroom management.

Preventing Disruptions

Effectively managed classrooms are orderly (relatively speaking), with a minimum of student misbehavior and reasonable levels of time on task. Effective classroom managers are more skilled at preventing disruptions from occurring in the first place. Kounin identified specific approaches to keep students focused on learning and reduce the likelihood of classroom disruption. These include:

Overlapping: Attending to different events simultaneously, without being totally diverted by a disruption or other activity.

Smoothness and momentum in lessons: Maintaining a brisk pace and giving continuous activity signals or cues (such as standing near inattentive students or directing questions to potentially disruptive students).

Group alerting: Involving all the students in recitation tasks and keeping them “alerted” to the task at hand.

Stimulating seatwork: Providing seatwork activities that offer variety and challenge.

Consequences versus Punishment

Emerging research suggests that inappropriate behavior should be followed by consequences rather than punishment. Consequences are viewed as an end result of a child’s inappropriate act. That is, they should not be viewed as something imposed, such as sanctioning, but rather as an appropriate outcome for an inappropriate act. A consequence should make sense, be a logical ending for an action. It should be the effect of behaving inappropriately. Punishment, on the other hand, is punitive and/ penal in nature. It does not necessarily serve a learning purpose, but rather “gets even.” It sends the wrong message. Imagine punishing a student for misspelling a word. It sounds absurd. Effective teachers discover appropriate ways to help the student learn the correct way to spell the word. A like approach should be taken to address inappropriate behavior. The approach should have as its major tenet ways in which the student might learn from the mistake. This approach takes the perceived personal affront toward the teacher from the student and replaces it with an objective approach that will allow students to learn from the mistake. Educational institutions must have environments where mistakes are made and students are provided caring opportunities to learn from them.

Classroom Management Strategies

The following strategies can be used for good and effective classroom management:-

Hold and communicate high behavioral expectations.

Establish clear rules and procedures, and instruct students how to follow them; give primary-level children and those with low socioeconomic status, in particular, a great deal of instructions, practice, and reminding.

Make clear to students the consequences of misbehavior.

Enforce classroom rules promptly, consistently, and equitably from the very first day of institution.

Work to instill a sense of self-discipline in students; devote time to teaching self monitoring skills.

Maintain a brisk instructional pace and make smooth transitions between activities.

Monitor classroom activities; give students feedback and reinforcement regarding their behaviour.

Create opportunities for students (particularly those with behavioural problems) to experience success in their learning and social behaviour.

Identify students who seem to lack a sense of personal efficacy and work to help them achieve an internal locus of control.

Make use of cooperative learning groups, as appropriate.

Make use of humour, when suitable, to stimulate student interest or reduce classroom tensions.

Remove distracting materials (athletic equipment, art materials, etc.) from view when instruction is in progress.

Conclusion

Our goal is to provide the best educational opportunity for all children who come to our classrooms. Teaching profession provides some days that are much more complicated than others – for example, days when we all get collapsed when we reach back home because we have given all what we had to give. We have undertaken a huge responsibility. We have someone else's children for whom we are responsible for a good portion of the day. Perhaps it would be less complicated if all the children were well nourished and emotionally, physically, and spiritually healthy. It would probably be much easier if we were sure that all the children returned home to their families happily. But the reality is different. Teachers need to take every kind of children to the classrooms. Inevitably, there are some children for whom school is a far greater challenge than it is for others.

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