Classroom Management: A Forgotten Dimension of Teacher Preparation

Abstract

Teacher is the backbone of any formal education system. Also, secret of quality education lies in the quality of teachers. To ensure quality of teachers, considerable effort and attention has been directed to in the preparation of teachers to discharge the instructional roles of teachers. However, less emphasis has been placed on the knowledge and skills required for the management and discipline for effective classroom transaction. A positive environment is a pre-requisite for effective classroom transaction. Effective classroom management is the key factor contributing to a positive classroom environment. The role of an effective classroom manager is to create a climate that welcomes, supports, and rewards innovative thinking and problem solving of students. When classroom-management strategies are executed effectively, teachers minimize the behaviors that impede learning for both individual students and groups of students, while maximizing the behaviors that facilitate or enhance learning. Lack of effective classroom management can mean that learning is reduced in the classroom. Traditional interpretation of effective classroom management focuses largely on compliance, viz., rules and strategies that teachers may use to make sure students are sitting in their seats, following directions and listening attentively. This framework mainly comes from an orientation that promotes direct teaching. A more encompassing view of classroom management extends to everything that teachers may do to facilitate or improve students' active learning. This will include factors such as behavior of teachers, environment of the classroom, teacher expectations, materials and activities that teachers design to engage students. The time allocation and engaged time are all important components of effective classroom management. Disciplinary interventions are also important to elicit or compel changes in the behavior of students. The actions taken to compel positive behavior are very crucial in the light of new rules and regulations such as RTE. The purpose of this paper is to synthesize what research tells about classroom management and offer a perspective on its implications for teacher education.

Key words - Classroom Management, factors affecting classroom management, Classroom management and teacher preparation program

Classroom Management: A Forgotten Dimension of Teacher Preparation

Introduction

Teacher is the backbone of any formal education system. Also, secret of quality education lies in the quality of teachers. Over the past 40 years, research has consistently shown that the quality of the classroom environment in schools is an important determinant of student learning. Procedures that structure the classroom environment, encourage appropriate behavior, and reduce the occurrence of inappropriate behavior are necessary for strong classroom management (Evertson, Emmer, Sanford, & Clements, 1983).

Traditional practices of shouting at students; sending students out of the class, getting tough (Skiba & Peterson, 1999; 2000) and office referrals are not at all useful in developing self-regulation in students. The assumption of getting tough with students is that responding to repeated problem behavior with increasingly severe consequences will teach students that their unruly behaviors are unacceptable and will not be tolerated. Eventually, it is hoped that the student will "get it" and stop the displays of irresponsible behaviors. Unfortunately, evidence indicates that students with the most severe problem behavior are the least likely to be responsive to these consequences, and the intensity and frequency of their behavior is likely to get worse instead of better (Shores et al., 1993).

Disruptive behavior is a source of concern and teachers need to be equipped to deal with this. Teachers take considerable instructional time in dealing with disruptive behavior. Effective classroom behavior focuses on preventative rather than reactive classroom procedures and establishes a positive environment in which teacher focuses on students who behaves appropriately (Lewis & Sugai, 1999). Classroom management is the key in maintaining classroom environment.

Classroom Management

Classroom management has been defined in a variety of ways depending on which of its aspects one focuses on, the philosophical preferences and the operational approaches adopted. However, classroom management can be defined as a collection of teaching strategies that will promote the self-regulation of behavior of students, in order to enable them to take maximum

advantage of the available learning time. Classroom management also refers to the wide variety of skills and techniques that teachers use to keep students organized, orderly, focused, attentive, on-task, and academically productive during a class.

Classroom Management includes adopting effective approaches to teaching and learning, assessing previous knowledge, providing age-appropriate task, pacing of lessons, and ensuring active engagement of students. It is equally important to have a universal prevention strategy for avoiding disruptions, establishing appropriate expectations and insisting on routines in classrooms. There are different aspects that contribute to effective classroom management. These include but are not limited to establishing positive relationships with students, classroom behavior (actions and reaction of classroom participants), and discipline (the act of responding to misbehaving students in an effort to restore or maintain order, authority and control). Misbehavior refers to student behavior that interferes with teaching, students failing to do assigned work, bothering or bullying others and in the worst case severe aggression towards classmates.

Effective classroom management

Effective classroom management does not happen unless the teachers master the skills necessary for classroom management. These include skills to manage classroom effectively and to deal with misbehavior of students. The following list of eleven factors that has bearing on classroom management is culled from a review of literature and is not intended to be comprehensive or exhaustive. They are - - (1) Classroom Rules, (2) Time Allocation, (3) Task Value and Division of Task, (4) Materials and Activities, (5) Student Interaction, (6) Providing Support and Monitoring, (7) Rewards and Incentives, (8) Self-regulation, (9) Consolidation Strategies, (10) Dealing with Misbehavior, and (11) Teacher Expectations. Each of the eleven aspects is briefly described below.

1. Classroom Rules: Teachers at the start of the year should set clear rules and procedures and teacher's expectations of students' behavior. This will include ground rules such as not talking without raising one's hand, turning in the assigned work on the next day and the like.

2. Time Allocation: Teachers should allocate time so as to encourage students' on-task behavior taking into consideration the time that an average student will take to complete

the task. If time is well-allocated, then student's on-task time is more likely to be well-spent.

3. Task Value and Division of Task: Students value the task on which they have to work as well as their expectation of success and make achievement-related choices. The teacher should divide the content into several parts for different groups and thus promotes positive interdependence between students.

4. Materials and Activities: Choice of materials and activities contribute a lot to effective classroom management. Intellectually stimulating learning materials (the types of texts, equipment, and other learning resources that teachers use) and activities which compel attention and invoke curiosity are to be selected for the content to be taught.

5. Student Interaction: Students' interaction are - - collaborative, cognitive, and meta-cognitive in nature (Kaendler, Wiedmann, Rummel, & Spada, 2014). A successful collaboration requires that all students be actively engaged; build common ground, and share information and ideas. Composition of the group will also determine the quality of interaction (Wiedmann, Leach, Rummel, & Wiley, 2012).

6. Providing Support and Monitoring: When and how the teacher should provide support is an important concern in effective classroom management.   Also, the next question is whether to support students in a direct or an indirect fashion. Timing of support is also crucial as it is likely to interrupt student interaction and thus disturbing self-regulated learning. To provide optimal support teachers should monitor students' work.

7. Rewards and Incentives: Unlike punishment, rewards and incentives increase the chances of positive behavior and in some cases change students' behavior. School-wide recognition and honoring students for academic success and co-scholastic achievements will encourage other students to adapt similar norms and values (Mortimore, 1993).

8. Self-Regulation: Ideally teachers should not spend time telling students what they should be doing. Students should internalize teacher expectations so they can be independent learners. Eccles and Wigfield (2002) defined self-regulated learning as being meta-cognitively, motivationally and behaviorally active in one's own learning processes. Successful learners organize their work, set goals, seek help when needed, use effective

work strategies, and manage their time. It is important to note that self-regulation is related to classroom environment (Velayutham & Aldridge, 2013).

9. Consolidation Strategies: Consolidating the groups' work, and thus securing all students' individual learning successes, is a very challenging final part for a teacher. Consolidation becomes much easier when the teacher has planned for it and has gained a good impression (during the support and monitoring) of the goals of learning that are achieved and still need to be accomplished Moreover, the teacher should avoid tiring the entire classroom by presenting similar solutions over and over again. To make this happen the teacher will have to plan different types of questions and different modes of presenting the answers.

10. Dealing with Misbehavior: In general, students take time to settle down after one class. The time taken by students to settle down may vary based on the subject in which they were engaged in. Teachers will have to make them settle down slowly in a non-confrontational manner avoiding negative tones. Encouraging and positive remarks (a positive attitude, happy facial expressions, and encouraging statements, respectful and fair treatment of students) are to be preferred in a calm and collected manner.

11. Teacher Expectations: Teachers usually have low expectations for students coming low socio-economic status. Also, the nature of comments and praise of teachers differ based on their expectations about students. The expectations are also found to be gender biased. Teachers will have to refrain from prejudices for effective classroom management.

Classroom Management Programs

A review of literature on classroom management brings out a few classroom management programs such as Classroom Organization and Management Program (COMP), School-wide Positive Behavior Support (SWPBS), and Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports (PBIS). A few of the programs come under the category Positive Behavior Intervention (PBI) which is widely used in early childhood, elementary, and high school settings to reduce students' problematic behaviors and improve educational outcomes. A meta-analysis conducted by Wilson and Lipsey (2007) affirms overall positive effects of school-based interventions for reducing aggressive and disruptive behaviors. There are other procedures to encourage pro-social

behaviors such as Cool Tool (Shannon Langland, Teri Lewis Palmer, & Sugai, 1998), which do not take into consideration all aspects of classroom management. The three promising classroom management programs - - COMP, SWPBS and PBIS are detailed below.

Classroom Organization and Management Program (COMP)

COMP is a professional development series developed by Evertson (1989) designed to create effective learning environments. The main components of COMP are: (1) organizing the classroom; (2) planning and teaching rules and procedures; (3) managing student work and improving student accountability; (4) maintaining good student behavior; (5) planning and organizing; (6) conducting instruction and maintaining momentum; and (7) getting the year off to a good start.

School-Wide Positive Behavior Support (SWPBS)

SWPBS is firmly rooted in an applied behavior analytic tradition and in a solid body of research in which the focus is on the behavior of the individual and the contexts or environments in which the individual's behaviors are observed (Sugai & Horner, 2006; Warren et al., 2006). SWPBS emphasizes the application of evidence-based behavioral technologies in the larger context of the classroom, school, and district and is guided by three main tenets: (a) prevention, (b) theoretically sound and evidence-based practice, and (c) systems implementation.

Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS)

PBIS is a multilevel approach involving three tiers of interventions targeting students' various levels of needs for behavior support (McIntosh et al., 2014). It is a proactive instructional approach to support pro-social behavior in schools. PBIS aims to develop consistent systems to discourage unproductive behavior and educate all staff in how to implement and participate in the process.

Tier I interventions are school-wide interventions applied to all students to reinforce positive behavior as the school norm. Tier I interventions may not be effective for 10–15 % of students. These students may be demonstrating academic and/or social-emotional problems that require more specific supports. Tier II interventions specifically address students' social-emotional competencies through evidence-based programs delivered to small groups of students or individual students. Tier II strategies cluster around three main foci: (1) additional social skill instruction, (2) self-management, and (3) academic supports. A smaller group of students, approximately 1–5 %, may require more individualized and intensive supports, in conjunction

with tier I and tier II supports. These students go through Tier III interventions which involve more intensive and individualized support but still follow the same basic logic of teaching and practicing appropriate replacement behaviors with high rates of feedback and putting in place environmental supports to increase the likelihood of student success. Bambara, Goh, Kern, and Caskie (2012) have pointed out professional development as a facilitator in implementing tier III support system.

Classroom Management and Teacher Preparation

Traditional classroom management focuses largely on compliance, viz., rules and strategies that teachers may use to make sure students are sitting in their seats, following directions and listening attentively. This framework mainly comes from an orientation that promotes direct teaching. However, the concept that 'learning is a generative process' has gathered momentum during the last two decades. This shift demands students to engage and generate knowledge which requires teachers to adapt a different classroom management strategy. In this context, the actions taken to compel positive behavior are very crucial in the light of new rules and regulations such as RTE.

Effective classroom management is the key factor contributing to a positive classroom environment (Ming-tak & Wai-shing, 2008). The role of an effective classroom manager is to create a climate that welcomes, supports, and rewards innovative thinking and problem solving of students (Ramsey, 1999). However, classroom management is one of the most feared parts of teaching for new teachers. New teachers typically express concerns about effective means to handle disruptive behavior (Browers & Tomic, 2000). Skills of monitoring and supporting in classrooms are to be developed through teacher preparation program (Kaendler, Wiedmann, Rummel, & Spada, 2014).

No single model or theory can address the great variety of circumstances and difficulties teachers encounter in classroom management (Ming-tak & Wai-shing, 2008). The available literature on classroom management details a few well-developed classroom management programs which are to be incorporated into teacher preparation program. This will help to develop specific skills in managing classroom in general and disruptive behavior in particular (Di Martin, Bray, & Kehle, 2000; Kehle, Bray, Theodore, Jenson, & Clark, 2000; Oliver, Wehby, & Reschly, 2011).

Conclusion

PBIS is an effective alternative to the reactive, punishment-oriented approaches historically used by many schools. Without high commitment and strong belief, staff may resist following positive behavior interventions at the classroom level even when the school has introduced it as a priority (Bambara, Nonnemacher, & Kern, 2009). Therefore, teacher preparation programs need to focus on teaching specific skills of PBIS along with the focus on instructional skills. This implies that teacher preparation programs will need to organize their curricula with focus on the skills of PBIS, a few components of which are dealt theoretically in educational psychology without adequate practical orientation.

References

Bambara, L. M., Goh, A., Kern, L., & Caskie, G. (2012). Perceived barriers and enablers to implementing individualized positive behavior interventions and supports in school settings. *Journal of Positive Behavior Interventions*, 14(4), 228–240.

Bambara, L. M., Nonnemacher, S., & Kern, L. (2009). Sustaining school-based individualized positive behavior support: perceived barriers and enablers. *Journal of Positive Behavior Interventions*, 11, 161–178.

Browers A., & Tomic, W. (2000). A longitudinal study of teacher burnout and perceived self-efficacy in classroom management. *Teaching and Teacher Education*, 16, 239-253.

Di Martini-Scully, D., Bray, M. A., Kehle, T. J. (2000). A packaged intervention to reduce disruptive behaviors in general education students. *Psychology in the Schools, 37*, 149-156. DOI 10.1007/s11165-011-9273-y

Eccles, J. S., & Wigfield, A. (2002). Motivational Beliefs, Values, and Goals. *Annual Review of Psychology*, 53, 109-132. DOI: 10.1146/annurev.psych.53.100901.135153

Evertson, C. M. (1989). Improving elementary classroom management: A School-based training program for beginning the year. *Journal of Educational Research*, 83(2), 82-90.

Evertson, C. M., Emmer, E. T., Sanford, J. P., & Clements, B. S. (1983). Improving classroom management: An experiment in elementary classrooms. *The Elementary School Journal*, *84*, 172-188.

Kaendler, C., Wiedmann, M., Rummel, N., & Spada, H. (2014). Teacher Competencies for the Implementation of Collaborative Learning in the Classroom: a Framework and Research Review. *Educational Psychology Review*. DOI 10.1007/s10648-014-9288-9

Kehle, T. J., Bray, M. A., Theodore, L. A., Jenson, W. R., Clark, E. (2000). A multi-component intervention designed to reduce disruptive classroom behavior. *Psychology in the Schools, 37*, 475-481.

Lewis, T. J., & Sugai, G. (1999). Effective behavior support: A systems approach to proactive schoolwide management. *Focus on Exceptional Children*, 31(6), 1-24.

McIntosh, K., Predy, L. K., Upreti, G., Hume, A. E., Turri, M. G., & Mathews, S. (2014). Perceptions of contextual features related to implementation and sustainability of school-wide positive behavior support. *Journal of Positive Behavior Interventions*, 16(1), 31–43.

Ming-tak, Hue., & Wai-shing, L. (2008.) *Classroom Management: Creating a Positive Learning Environment*. Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press.

Mortimore, P. (1993). School effectiveness and management of effective teaching and learning. *School Effectiveness and School Improvement* 4(4), 290-310.

Oliver, R. M., Wehby, J. H., & Reschly, D. J. (2011). Teacher classroom management practices: Effects on disruptive or aggressive student behavior. *Campbell Systematic Reviews*. DOI: 10.4073/csr.2011.4

Ramsey R. D. (1999). *Lead, Follow or Get out of the way*. Thousand Oaks, California: Crowing Press.

Shannon Langland, M. S., Teri Lewis Palmer, M. S., & Sugai, G (1998). Teaching respect in the classroom: An instructional approach. *Journal of Behavioral Education*, 8(2), 245-262.

Shores, R. E., Jack, S. L., Gunter, P. L., Ellis, D. N., DeBriere, T. J., & Wehby, J. H. (1993). Classroom interactions of children with behavior disorders. *Journal of Emotional and Behavioral Disorders, 1,* 27–39.

Skiba, R. J., & Peterson, R. L. (1999). The dark side of zero tolerance: Can punishment lead to safe schools? *Phi Delta Kappan, 80,* 372–382.

Skiba, R. J., & Peterson, R. L. (2000). School discipline at a crossroads: From zero tolerance to early response. *Exceptional Children, 66,* 335–347.

Sugai. G., & Horner, R. R. (2006). A Promising Approach for Expanding and Sustaining School-Wide Positive Behavior Support. *School Psychology Review*, 35(2), 245-259.

Velayutham, S., & Aldridge, J. M. (2013). Influence of Psychosocial Classroom Environment on Students' Motivation and Self-Regulation in Science Learning: A Structural Equation Modeling Approach. *Research in Science Education*, 43,507–527.

Warren, J. S., Bohanon-Edomonson, H. M., Turnbull, A. P., Sailor, W., Wickham, D., Griggs, P., & Beech, S. E. (2006). School-wide Positive Behavior Support: Addressing behavior

problems that impede student learning. *Educational Psychology Review*, 18:187–198. DOI 10.1007/s10648-006-9008-1

Wiedmann, M., Leach, R. C., Rummel, N., & Wiley, J. (2012). Does group composition affect learning by invention? *Instructional Science*, 40, 711-730.

Wilson, S. J., & Lipsey, M.W. (2007). School-based interventions for aggressive and disruptive behavior: update of a meta-analysis. *American Journal of Preventive Medicine*, 33(2), S130–S143.