

Role of the Teacher in Fostering Effective Classroom Management

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Abstract

The aim of this paper is to identify the characteristics of a professional teacher and outlines the various roles teachers can play in fostering effective Classroom management. The paper began with the introduction followed by the concepts of Classroom management. Theoretical framework and the principles of learning derived from Piagetian and classical conditioning approach were explained. Teachers' characteristics, factors that hindered effective Classroom management and Classroom arrangement were elucidated. Procedures in fostering and maintaining effective Classroom learning environment were also outlined. Conclusion and recommendations were provided.

Keywords: Role of teacher, Fostering, Effective, Classroom Management.

Introduction

Teachers in the teaching profession indeed occupy important position in the educational industry. The achievement of students in the teaching learning process is largely dependent on the interaction between the teacher and the student in the classroom. Teachers are indispensable in injecting of educational knowledge. They possessed the potential of providing meaning for sustainable development of a nation.

Classroom management is a term used to explain procedures of preventing disruptive behavior in the classroom and dealing with it if it arises. It is also the process by which teachers and schools create and maintained appropriate behavior of students in classroom settings. The major objective of classroom management is to bring about strategies and procedures that will enhance good behavior and increase students' academic performance. Effective classroom principles cut across almost all subjects areas and grade levels. Each class consists of a group of pupils who may be well discipline and dedicated while others may be rebellious, bored, exhibiting disruptive behaviours (Blackemone and Cooksery, 1981). A teacher is someone who directs students' behavior in the classroom. He ensures that the students conduct themselves efficiently in the classroom and punish any misbehavior exhibited by student.

The basic aim of teaching is learning. However, there are situation when teaching is conducted with all the available techniques and the learner will fail to learn. This is because

there is no readiness on the part of the learner which made him to operate in an unconscious stage which inhibits learning. Learning's receptivity to new knowledge will only occur when the learner is conscious to learn. A teacher is someone who directs students' behavior in the classroom. He ensures that the students conduct themselves efficiently in the classroom. The problem of this study is that teachers got involved in a lot of difficulties arising from their teaching process which affects students' academic performance. Some of these difficulties are in the areas of classroom management, teacher student interactions directing of students' behavior and injecting the right type of knowledge to the students. The study is aimed at identifying the characteristics of a teacher and factors responsible for effective classroom management.

Concept of Classroom Management

Ali (1997) defined classroom management as the ability of the teacher to "organize, control, monitor and co-ordinate non-academic activities for effective teaching and learning in the classroom". He opined that classroom management involves the following activities: keeping of various school records. Example: attendance, register, lesson plan, scheme of work, syllabus and so on. The physical state of the classroom includes neatness of the classroom and the environment which indicates teachers' tidiness and orderliness. In dealing with issues of indiscipline in the classroom the teacher should be very firm. Classroom should be the child second home and should be attractive for the relaxation of the pupils.

Meighan (2004) noted that the role of the teacher in the classroom should include the following: Representation of the community which implies moral values; Settle disputes among students; master his subject matter; help his pupils who are in difficulties and should be able to possess traits which pupils may imitate.

Onwuegbo (1979) submitted that good classroom management is an indicator of classroom discipline and effective learning process. In other words, where there is no good classroom management, teaching and learning will be disrupted and the classroom is bound to face problems of disobedience, fighting, inability to learn, lack of concentration and distraction of all types (inattentiveness, noise making, sleeping). When a teacher gained effective classroom control, he earned more respect from his pupils and academic activities will be well directed.

For a teacher to create and maintain a good classroom atmosphere is not an easy task since many factors come together to determine the nature of the atmosphere of a class. These factors include personality characteristics of the teacher, personality characteristics of the students, classroom climate and learning, physical facilities and arrangement and classroom atmosphere and management.

Onwuegbo (1979) identified three (3) basic qualities of an ideal teacher:

1. Good Knowledge of the learner: The teacher must ensure that he has good knowledge of his pupils. He should bring himself close to his pupils so that he understands their problems better. He should be accessible to all. Create a way of

- making every pupil feel important and have a sense of belonging. Teacher should use his knowledge of individual difference to be able to handle student well and professionally.
2. Knowledge of the subject matter: After knowing his pupils, an ideal teacher should know his subject area. The knowledge of his subject area will strengthen his competence and personality. The teacher must ensure that he gathered all the necessary materials needed for the presentation of his lesson. Without mastering the subject matter the teacher may not give the student adequate information the pupils require. Thus, unable to satisfy the students thirst of knowledge. The teacher should try to answer all questions raised by the pupils to the best of his ability. Teacher should stop avoiding students' questions. This behavior may lead to indiscipline in the classroom.
 3. Knowledge of the methods of instructions: The teacher should know very well, various methods of teaching he employed to achieve effective classroom management.

It is usually important for teacher to take into consideration the various categories of students likely to be in every classroom namely: above average, average and below average. This knowledge should be helpful to the teacher in trying to choose the appropriate teaching methods he is going to use for his lesson. Group and individual methods of teaching should be encouraged by the teacher as it makes pupils eager to learn. The teacher should command respect; be firm and consistent; lesson should be interesting through the use of improvisation material; be punctual and regular to his class; make classroom atmosphere conducive for learning and perform his responsibilities as at when due.

Theoretical Framework

The major theory that is related to learning and teaching is Piaget's theory of Cognitive Development. Cognitivist paradigm argues that the learner is an information processor (like a computer). It essentially emphasizes that the mind should be opened and understood. It focuses on the inner mental activities opening the "black box" of the human mind which is necessary for understanding how people learn a mental process such as thinking, memory processing, and problem solving. Knowledge can be seen as a schema or symbolic mental construction. Learning is therefore defined as a change in learners' schemata. According to this theory, People are rational beings who require active participation in order to learn, and whose action is a direct consequence of their thinking. Changes and behaviors are observed, but only as an indication of what is occurring in the learner's head. Cognitive psychologists use the metaphor of the mind as computer, information coming in is being processed and lead to certain outcomes.

Piaget theory allows teacher to view student as individual learner who add new concepts to prior knowledge to construct, or build understanding for them. Teachers who use a learned - centered approach as a basis for their professional practice incorporates several

dispositions. They provide experience based educational opportunities. They nourish and support learners' curiosity. They also involve learners' emotions and create a learning environment in which students feel safe.

Piaget categorizes this mechanism for learning into three stages as follows: Assimilation, Accommodation and Equilibration. According to this theory, what is learned is organized according to schemas. Schemas are mental representation, tangible or intangible, that can be applied to an object situation or event. When new schemas are developed, assimilation begins. Assimilation refers to the stage in which new knowledge is processed and added to the previously existing schema. In assimilation what is perceived in the outside world is integrated into the internal world without changing its structure, but potentially molding the external perception to fit in –hence pigeon holing and stereotyping. Assimilation is said to occur when a child responds to a new events in a way that is consistent with an existing schema.

Accommodation is the adaptation process that occurs because the existing schema is insufficient to incorporate new information. In accommodation the internal world has to accommodate itself to the evidence with which it is confronted and thus adapt to it, which can be more difficult. If you relate it to data base analogy it is like what takes place when you try to put in information which does not fit the pre-existing fields and categories. You need to develop new ones to accommodate new information.

Accommodation occurs when the child either modifies existing schema or form an entirely new schema to deal with new objects or events. These two complementary processes (assimilation and accommodation) are the ones through which awareness of the outside world is internalized. In reality both are going at the same time, although most of the time we are assimilating familiar material in the world around us, nevertheless, our minds are also having to adjust to accommodate it.

Piaget argued that infants engage in acts of assimilation when they suck on everything in their reach. According to him, infants transform all objects into objects to be sucked. By so doing, children are assimilating objects to conform to their own mental structures. This situation can be applied to our local classroom setting. Whenever one transforms the world to meet individual needs or conception, one is said to be assimilating. It is pertinent here, to mention an important observation made by Piaget regarding children assimilation. He observed that when children are assimilating objects to fits into their needs, they are at the same time modifying some of their mental structures to meet the demands of the environment. He noted that in accommodation, the infants only engage in reflex response to accommodate the external objects into reflex action. Because the two (assimilation and accommodation) are always in conflict, they provide the background for intellectual development.

Piaget considered knowledge development as an equilibration between assimilation and accommodation belonging not only to biological interaction but also to cognitive ones. In other words, equilibration is created when assimilation and accommodation reach a balance in the mental structures.

Principles of Learning Derived from Piagetian Approach

- a) Learning is a product of insight
- b) Similarity of learning experiences and situations
- c) Learning involves exploration of the environment
- d) Human experience and learning take place in whole not parts

Humanist psychologists believed that life is a process of opening ourselves to the world around us and experiencing joy in living. Humanist stress people's potential for growth and change as well as the ways that they subjectively experience their lives right now, rather than dwelling on how they felt or acted in the past. This approach holds all of us personally responsible for our lives; finally, humanists also believe that given reasonable life conditions, people will develop in desirable directions.

One of the most prominent theorists Carl Rogers (1902 – 1987) contended that men and women develop their responsibilities in the service of positive goals. According to Rogers, every organism is born with certain innate capacities, capabilities or potentialities – “a sort of genetic blueprint, to which substance is added as life progresses”. The goal of life according to Rogers, is to fulfill these genetic blueprints, to become the best of whatever each of us is inherently becoming. Rogers called this biological push towards fulfillment, actualizing tendency, the conscious sense of who we are and what we want to do with our lives is called self-actualizing tendency.

According to Rogers, people tends to become more fully functioning if they are brought up with unconditional positive regard, or the experience of being treated with warmth, respect acceptance and love regardless of their own feelings attitudes and behaviors.

But often parents and other adults offer children what Rogers called conditional positive respond: They value and accept only certain aspect of the child. The acceptance, warmth, and love that the child receives from others then depend on the child's behaving in certain ways and fulfilling certain conditions. In the process, self-concepts come to resemble the inborn capacity less and less, and the child's life deviates from the genetic blueprint.

When people lose sight of their inborn potential, they become constricted, rigid, and defensive. They feel threatened and anxious, and experience considerable discomfort and uneasiness. Because their life is directed toward what other people want and value, they are unlikely to experience much real satisfaction in life. At some point, they may realize that they don't really know who they are or what they want.

Principles of Teaching and Learning derived from Classical Conditioning**Acquisition**

Acquisition is the initial stage of learning when a response is first established and gradually strengthened. During the acquisition phase of classical conditioning, a neutral stimulus is repeatedly paired with an unconditioned stimulus.

As you may recall, an unconditioned stimulus is something that naturally and automatically triggers a response without any learning. After an association is made, the subject will begin to emit a behavior in response to the previously neutral stimulus, which is now known as

a conditioned stimulus. It is at this point that we can say that the response has been acquired.

For example, imagine that you are conditioning a dog to salivate in response to the sound of a bell. You repeatedly pair the presentation of food with the sound of the bell. You can say the response has been acquired as soon as the dog begins to salivate in response to the bell tone. Once the response has been established, you can gradually reinforce the salivation response to make sure the behavior is well learned.

Extinction

Extinction is when the occurrences of a conditioned response decrease or disappear. In classical conditioning, this happens when a conditioned stimulus is no longer paired with an unconditioned stimulus. For example, if the smell of food (the unconditioned stimulus) had been paired with the sound of a whistle (the conditioned stimulus), the sound of the whistle would eventually come to evoke the conditioned response of hunger. However, if the unconditioned stimulus (the smell of food) were no longer paired with the conditioned stimulus (the whistle), eventually the conditioned response (hunger) would disappear.

Spontaneous Recovery

Sometimes a learned response can suddenly reemerge, even after a period of extinction. Spontaneous recovery is the reappearance of the conditioned response after a rest period or period of lessened response.

For example, imagine that after training a dog to salivate to the sound of a bell, you stop reinforcing the behavior and the response eventually becomes extinct. After a rest period during which the conditioned stimulus is not presented, you suddenly ring the bell and the animal spontaneously recovers the previously learned response. If the conditioned stimulus and unconditioned stimulus are no longer associated, extinction will occur very rapidly after a spontaneous recovery.

Generalization

Stimulus generalization is the tendency for a conditioned stimulus to evoke similar responses after the response has been conditioned.⁸ For example, if a dog has been conditioned to salivate at the sound of a bell, the animal may also exhibit the same response to stimuli that are similar to the conditioned stimulus.

Discrimination

Discrimination is the ability to differentiate between a conditioned stimulus and other stimuli that have not been paired with an unconditioned stimulus. For example, if a bell tone were the conditioned stimulus, discrimination would involve being able to tell the difference between the bell tone and other similar sounds. Because the subject is able to distinguish between these stimuli, they will only respond when the conditioned stimulus is presented.

Janice (1991) examines teachers' acceptance of learning strategies for increasing students' achievement motivation. A total of 44 pre service 39 primary (grades 1 to 4) and 28 intermediate (grades 5 – 8) teachers rated the viability of 6 strategies (goal setting, cooperative learning, mastery learning, goal orientation, task related comments, task choices) and several dimensions. All but one dimension (mastery learning) were acceptable. Acceptability was related to time involved and familiarity with the strategies, as well as teaching experiences and student's achievement levels. The findings provide evidence for the social validity of the strategies, and a basis for optimism about teacher's willingness to use the strategy.

Arif and Aysel (2008) investigate the effects of the relationship between teaching and learning strategies on academic achievement. The purpose of this study is (1) to identify the strategies used by students and the teachers in school of Foreign languages at Erciyes University, (2) To find out whether there is a difference between the strategies used by the two groups, (3) to investigate the effect of the students gender, age and department in their strategy preferences, (4) to see the relationship between the language learning strategies of the learner and their academic success, (5) to investigate the effect of relationship between the language learning strategies of the students and language teaching strategies of teachers on the academic achievement of the students.

Teachers' Characteristics

In order to be able to teach, each professional teacher needs a set of certain characteristics some of which are as follows:

a. Knowledge of subject matter

A professional teacher should know the 'what' and how of teaching. It is an indisputable fact that the teacher should have a certain degree of mastery over what he teaches such knowledge enhances his self-concept and ensure that student spend their time in a worthwhile matter. The teacher should be able to inspire student to set realizable goal. He should recognize that a class is a mixed group. Each individual learner having a different background and experiences associated with it. Whenever the teacher is going to present a learning material to whichever level should appeal to both the brightest and slowest learner.

b. Method of Teaching

Organization of learning experience involves familiarity with the method by which these experiences can be delivered. Studies indicated that education has acquired the character of science part of what is involved in being a science is that it has a body of knowledge which its practitioners ought to have. There is also a way of giving out that knowledge when we also expect that anyone involved in teaching should know. Having known the structure of the subject the teacher is expected to determine the best way in which he can deliver each aspect of his subject. The teacher must also know the method of preparing his lesson. He

should put at the back of his mind that some of the children learn quite slowly while others very fast.

c. Personal Characteristics of the Teacher

The teacher is expected to remain close to those that he teaches. He should be interesting in understanding their problem in and out of the classroom. He should contribute towards solving students' problems where possible. He should be conversant with the way of life of the people where the school is situated. He must be acquainted with the custom, culture and tradition of his environment.

The teacher should be cheerful, have a sense of humour and be able to manage his own crisis. The teacher should have some knowledge of classroom management. He should not express frustration; he should not abandon approaches to classroom management which he has learnt and resort to the use of the cane as a means of checking the bad behavior of this student. He should be well dressed, healthy in appearance and inwardly and discharge his duties diligently.

d. Retaining an Interest in Learning

The primary function of a teacher is to deliver instruction. He should not be contented with his present level of attainment. The teacher should not be ignorant of new teaching methods which gradually emerge on the education scene. All these will make us see the need to be constantly in search for knowledge.

e) Leadership Style

The teacher needs to have an effective leadership style when interacting with his pupils. This leadership style will give a sense of belonging to all the students. No students will feel isolated and will always be willing to approach the teacher.

For a teacher to create and maintain a good classroom atmosphere is not an easy task since many factors come together to determine the nature of the atmosphere of a class. These factors include personality characteristics of the teacher, personality characteristics of the students, classroom climate and learning, physical facilities and arrangement and classroom atmosphere and management.

The teacher should have power to command respect and obedience from the pupils. If he is loose, he may not command any respect from the pupils. This will lead to the breakdown of law and order. Teacher should be seen as a dignified individual. He should be humble and honest with his pupils. He should avoid unnecessary arguments with the pupils. Know his limitation. The teacher should be able to know his strength and weaknesses. He should not involve himself/herself in any wrongdoings or bad behavior. Other factors are: flexibility, understanding the pupils/students, good organization and presentation of classroom activities and wise use of reward and punishment, efficiency, be firm, fair and consistent and prioritize safety.

Factors that Hinder Effective Classroom Management

Lack of good lesson plan, with clear specific objectives; lateness to class; inconsistency in marking; failure of school authority to cater for students' problem especially, food, water hostel and accommodation. Others include emotional stress on the part of students; embezzlement of funds meant for school use; poor and obsolete curricular; occurrence of conflict in the classroom and strike action embark upon by teachers.

Points to Note while Arranging Pupils in the Classroom

This refers to the seating arrangement of the pupils in the classroom setting. The pupils are to be arranged in such a way that the blackboard is visible to all irrespective of the pattern of their sitting arrangement. Classroom arrangement is the sole responsibility of the teacher as he is the only one who knows the individual differences among his pupils. The teacher should, therefore, use his knowledge of individual difference to arrange his classroom. Pupils should be arranged in an attractive manner. The teacher should take into consideration the height, intelligence, sight and hearing impairments of the pupils. The height of the pupils; their abilities, sights and hearing as well as their behavior and discipline should be considered; intelligent pupils should be evenly distributed in the class and not to be concentrated in one place and adequate ventilation and free movement must be ensured.

Procedures in Fostering and Maintaining Effective Classroom Management

1. Teacher to adopt democratic and firm system of class control
2. Use the socio-metric technique to identify leaders and cliques
3. Use the following methods to handle pupils with behavior problems:
 - a) Make pupil see the logical consequence of his/her actions
 - b) Reinforcement of desired behavior
 - c) Screening off for pupil with disruptive behavior
 - d) Guidance and Counseling
4. Classroom to be adequately equipped and well arranged
5. Behavior Modifications
6. Catering for slow learner

Conclusion

In conclusion, teachers played a vital role in fostering effective classroom management through prevention of disruptive behavior and create an atmosphere where discipline and students' academic performance prevails.

Recommendations

- a) Teacher to ensure that the students conduct themselves efficiently in the classroom and punish any misbehavior exhibited by student.

- b) Teacher to organize, control, monitor and co-ordinate non-academic activities for effective teaching and learning in the classroom.
- c) Teacher should have adequate power to command respect and obedience from the pupils.
- d) The teacher should use his knowledge of individual difference to arrange his classroom as he/she is the only one who knows the individual difference of his/her pupils.

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