



# A HANDBOOK ON TEACHING PRACTICE

FACULTY OF EDUCATION,  
UNIVERSITY OF IBADAN



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## Chapter Seven

# CLASSROOM MANAGEMENT AND PROBLEMS ASSOCIATED WITH IT

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### Introduction

Classroom management (CM) is a very crucial strategy in the teaching/learning process in schools, because it helps in the proper execution of the curriculum and hence ensures that the classroom teacher develops the best teaching practice for a successful learning environment. Classroom environment creates in the minds of the students a first impression of what to expect from the class and the teacher.

Effective teaching-learning process cannot be accomplished without a good classroom management and control. What goes on in the classroom among the teacher, students, and all other resources in the classroom, are important determinants of the success or otherwise of the teaching service delivery in schools. Parents, other tax payers, the government and the society at large expect a great deal from the teacher who is seen as one of the strongest agent of societal reform. This is especially so, when we consider the enormous resources devoted to educating the citizens in the country are considered. It therefore becomes imperative for the classroom teacher to be well-equipped with appropriate

strategies for managing the classroom in order to guarantee effective learning in schools and ultimately help to achieve the various national objectives of education.

Classroom management is usually a difficult aspect of teaching by teachers. The disruptive activities of students in classrooms could discourage teachers to the extent that some of them would want to leave the teaching profession if they find alternative employment. For instance, in 1981, the U S National Educational Association reported that 36% of teachers stated that they would probably not go into teaching if they had to decide again. A major reason being students' negative attitude and discipline (<http://en.wikipedia.org>)

### **What is classroom Management?**

Classroom management (CM) implies the effective and efficient utilisation of all resources available to the classroom environment in order to ultimately achieve the goals and objectives of the teaching and learning process in schools. Classroom Management is a way by which the teacher ensures that classroom lessons run smoothly despite disruptive behaviour by students. It also implies preventing disruption by students. It is a wide variety of skills and techniques the teacher uses to keep the students organised, orderly, focused, attentive, on task, and academically productive in the classroom. The goal of the teaching-learning process is to ensure that pupils/students assimilate the contents delivered to them by the class teacher under congenial atmosphere which will in turn influence their behaviour positively in line with the social-economic needs of the society and the achievement of the national objectives.

The classroom manager (the teacher) is effective when he or she has achieved what is purported to be achieved. On the other hand, he/she is efficient if the achievement is made at the cheapest possible cost. Cheapest cost in this case, could be in terms of time spent, resources used etc. For instance, if the teacher uses classroom management skills effectively, the teacher, in one way or the other, minimises such students' behaviours that could



impede teaching and learning for both individual student and groups while at the same time maximising or taking advantage of those behaviours that will facilitate or improve effective learning in the classroom. In an effort to ensure that the students learn well and attain the best possible knowledge in school, it is important that the classroom manager (teacher) possessed the necessary skills that will enhance the expected success of the school system.

### **The Teacher as a Classroom Manager**

Management is a process of planning, organising, leading, coordinating and controlling the efforts of organisation members to achieve set goals and objectives. A manager is therefore seen as a person who plans, organises, leads, coordinates and control efforts of subordinates towards the achievement of set goals. In addition to the above definition, the teacher, as a manager, also has the responsibility of ensuring that students and other school resources are utilised efficiently in such a way that the goal of the school system is achieved.

As a teacher, you perform the function of a manager at micro level in the school system. As a class manager you are expected to perform the following functions

- ✓ **Plan teaching activities:** This involves deliberate effort to set activities according to priorities for future action in an attempt to minimize wastage and increase productivity. Lack of or inadequate planning could be very costly. For instance, a teacher who fails to plan his lesson note to be delivered as at when due, may end up misplacing priorities and hence may be providing the wrong information at that point in time. He or she may lose focus and may waste the very limited teaching time on the non relevant activity. A well structured and planned teaching content will provide easy delivery and comprehension for the teacher and student respectively

The major interest of planning in the school centers on: (i) achieving result from the teaching and learning process, (ii) organising the learning activity, how to improve the performance, interaction and satisfaction of the clients (students) as well as how to utilize facilities in order to enjoy the utility value that the facility possessed. The benefit of effective and adequate planning among others include: minimizing wastage of time and other teaching resources.

- ✓ **Organise students and materials:** This involves the arrangement of work in an orderly manner. The good classroom manager i.e. the teacher should be able to arrange the class in such a way that orderliness and fairness will be maintained in the classroom. Both students and materials for teaching should be organised in such a way that no student or pupil is at a disadvantage. For instance, it may be needful for the class teacher to consider or take note of the height or sight status of certain students in class and place such students where they may not be unduly excluded from the teaching activities going on in class.
- ✓ **Coordinating students and activities.** As the teacher and classroom manager, the responsibility of synchronising or harmonising both the students, resources and activities in the classroom rests on your shoulders. This is important in order to ensure that teaching and learning take place in a congenial atmosphere devoid of rancor and pandemonium. This managerial function of the teacher prevents disconnect among the various interactive activities within the classroom and thus bring about successful teaching-learning process in the classroom.



- ✓ **Leading (Commanding) activity of the teacher.** The term commanding was common in the classical era. However, a more-friendly word used today is leading. This involves providing a guide or direction for others to emulate or follow. It is the responsibility of the teacher to provide guidance or direction to students so that they (students) can comprehend the learning programme provided. Teachers are supposed to ensure that students are given the right direction. This must be done with the interest of the students in mind 'as a father leads a child'. It is intended to show the way to the students so that they may not fall into costly mistakes. This helps to promote cordiality and mutual respect
  
- ✓ **Control function of the Teacher.** Control involves regulating an activity in order to ensure that the expected result is obtained through the laid down procedures and methods. This is to avoid deviation from expected result. Control is a security mechanism, policy or procedure that can counter system attack, reduce risks and resolve vulnerabilities. It helps to safeguard the system. The teacher must exercise effective control of the classroom situation and should monitor outcomes and make necessary corrections wherever there is deviation from the norm by means of a feedback mechanism.

### **Rationale for effective classroom management**

Classroom management creates a set of expectations which are used in organised classroom environment. Classroom Management (CM) is important because it helps in ensuring that students learn what they are expected to learn in the most appropriate environment. The underlisted are some of the reasons why the classroom teacher should ensure effective classroom management and control.

- To utilise available resources in the best possible way: Resources are usually limited in supply. Therefore, it is important for the classroom manager to ensure the prudent use of these scarce resources when they are available.
- To enable learners to achieve the right level of potential abilities. Effective classroom management enables students to discover their abilities and what they are capable of achieving in a given congenial environment.
- To encourage good relationship with the class members. High level of social interaction and healthy competition is made possible through effective classroom management and control.
- To encourage hard work. It creates an atmosphere of competition among the students thereby inculcating the culture of hard work.
- To ensure the attainment of objectives for which the topic was taught
- To avoid wasting of time. Time resource is the most fragile of all resources available to man. So its misuse could spell grave consequence for the entire system.

### **Challenges Facing Classroom Management**

Human behaviour is the most complex experience, while teaching is one of the most difficult jobs when we consider the different intricacies that are involved in the process. Teaching concepts such as students' backgrounds, interests, abilities, and most suitable teaching methods are some of the problem or challenges the classroom manager (teacher) has to contend with from time to time. The way teachers conduct the classroom matters has a deep influence upon their own teaching and learning of the students. This is because the classroom is an operation theatre where the closest interaction between students and teachers takes place (see Muhammad and Ismail, 2001). Effective classroom management, therefore, decides the effectiveness of teachers' teaching quality and students' learning.

Effective teachers create a sound, supportive and friendly environment in classrooms where students feel safe, respected, cared for and secured. For this purpose, effective teachers create conditions of cooperation, discipline and responsibility both for themselves and for their students (Riaz, 2009). Teachers are the ultimate decider of the classroom atmosphere with a crucial role in influencing the behaviours of students. Teachers who plan practically are able to overcome many classroom problems such as disruptions, deviant behaviour or misbehaviours of students, as a result, helping them to become independent and confident learners.

Zubair (2013) citing different researchers such as Duck, 2007; Freiberg, 2002; Meister & Melnick, 2003; Merrett & Wheldall, 1993; Stoughton, 2007, posited that most new teachers feel unprepared when it comes to classroom management skills and hence they are often unprepared to function successfully in today's classrooms with regard to managing administrative tasks, curriculum, and behaviour problems. Additionally, student misbehaviour is a factor in teacher burnout and could compare some teachers to decide to leave the profession.

Therefore, classroom management is a cardinal feature of the total education process. It contains all the steps through which interaction between the educator and the students take place, the process of ensuring that classroom lessons run smoothly despite disruptive behaviour by students and a term for the prevention of disruptive behavior of students (Berliner, 1988). It also refers to all those essential activities which are highly necessary not only to create but also to maintain a supportive and orderly atmosphere which includes planning and preparation of teaching and learning materials, organization of the materials, decoration of the classroom (*classroom arrangement*), creation of expectation and establishment and enforcement of rules and routines in the classroom (Tan, Parsons, Hinson and Sardo-Brown, 2003). In this regard the nature of the teacher plays a vital role, for example,

different teachers have different ways of instinctively managing the classroom environment and patterns of setting up classroom that best fits their purpose (Aly, 2007).

Managing a classroom is the ultimate responsibility of a teacher. The way a teacher manages the classroom will change the thinking of the students towards learning, defines the role of the students, their behaviours, choices, and the overall targets and tone of the school. Strong and consistent management and organizational skills have been identified as leading to fewer classroom discipline problems (Froyen and Iverson (1999).

Children subjected to inappropriate and dysfunctional living conditions have a greater propensity to engage in inappropriate behaviour in the classroom. Problems relating to behaviours occur when a child is unable to communicate his/her needs or desires effectively. Inappropriate behavior significantly disrupts individual learning, social acceptance, and opportunities for inclusion into the society at large. Extreme challenging behavior can be dangerous and even life threatening.

### **Strategies for Effective Classroom Management**

- ❖ **Devote quality time to plan your lesson:** Planning is one the very important activity leading to effective and successful delivery of the teaching contents. It makes it easy for the teacher to sequentially present the subject content in such way that students will be able to assimilate the subject matter without unduly missing out.
- ❖ **Good classroom structure:** A well and orderly arranged classroom could be a driver for effective teaching and learning in school. The way the classroom is arranged is important because it helps the teacher to appreciate the individual student's characteristics in the classroom. For instance, a well structure classroom would consider some particular students features such as height, sight etc.



- ❖ **Awareness and respect of students' rights:** It should be noted that students have the right to be respected by the teacher. For instance, students have the right to ask questions, even the right to disagree with based on his/her conviction. Students' freedom of expression is not to be stifled by the teacher.
- ❖ **Use of appropriate of instructional method:** The teacher must ensure the use of appropriate and relevant instructional method so that learners will have be able to assimilate the teaching delivery.
- ❖ **Use of appropriate instructional materials.** Instructional materials are tools used by the classroom teacher to help foster learning among students. Examples of instructional materials include: graphic organizers, textbooks, workbooks etc. It is important for the teacher to use relevant materials that will impact on the students
- ❖ **Establish classroom rules and procedures.** Classroom rules and regulations are important in controlling students and even teacher responses and behaviours to classroom activities. For instance, there should be guiding rules in terms of lateness to class, use of mobile phones while the teaching learning is ongoing and other distracting actions. Such rules are also to attract adequate punishment when they are broken. All of these rules are to ensure orderliness in the classroom environment.
- ❖ **Good mastery of subject matter.** The classroom teacher is expected to have a very good knowledge of the subject being taught to students. This can be achieved through the teacher's adequate preparation. A good mastery of the subject would

stimulate the student's interest in both the subject and the teacher.

- ❖ **Avoid mannerism.** This involves avoiding unwholesome behaviours both in words and actions in the classroom. For examples, the use of nasty and abusive words, toying either with the hairs, or toes boeing in the classroom etc, must be avoided by the teacher and students alike.
- ❖ **Good knowledge of learners.** The classroom teacher should develop personal intimacy with the students on individual bases. The teacher should be able to identify the individual differences in the students. This will enable him/her to avoid the temptation of relating with all the students in the same way. He should be able to identify the strength and weakness of each student so as to know what best approach or method to apply in solving their individual problems. It is equally encouraged that the teacher should be able to know the names of their students.
- ❖ **Provide safe and comfortable classroom climate-avoid the use of threat.** The use of threat on student could create fear on the student. This could lower his or her self-confidence which could also affect his/her learning in school.
- ❖ **Maintain healthy student-teacher interaction:** This is very important because it builds confidence on the students concerned. Teacher should be able to create an atmosphere that enables the learner to interact freely with his/her teacher. This must however be done with caution to avoid being abused.



- ❖ **Be friend of all learners.** The classroom teacher as a good manager must not show any discrimination or special preference to any pupil/student. He must treat all students equally irrespective of their backgrounds
- ❖ **Cultivate Voice by being audible enough.** The teacher as a good manager should be audible or loud enough in the class in order to ensure that every student in the class hears very clearly what is being conveyed. For instance, there could be some students with hearing challenges in the classroom. The tone or voice of the teacher should be pleasant enough to attract the students' attention. However, being audible does not imply shouting to cause distractions in the classroom. This should be done with utmost decency
- ❖ **Be observant and sensitive to every activity during teaching.** The teacher as a good manager has the obligation to carry along every student in the classroom and to be observant in dealing with the individual differences of the class. The teacher should be familiar with the different students and their peculiarities among others within the class setting. For instance, there could be certain students with a particular challenge such as health, trauma, sight problem or even low/high IQ as the case may be etc. A good teacher should be able to identify and be sensitive to these differences while dealing with students in the class.
- ❖ **Be flexible.** This is allowing changes in some rules or regulations in certain circumstances depending on the situation. This is because there is no permanent or fixed instance especially when concerned human behaviour.

- ❖ **Questioning Strategy.** The classroom teacher could use the questioning method to stimulate students' learning interest in the subject being taught. For instance, the teacher can ask question from previous lecture or from subject that the students are already familiar with.

### **Conclusion**

Classroom management is one of the critical aspects of the overall drive towards achieving a successful teaching and learning in schools. School teachers are assumed to be effective if a very high percentage (if not all) of the students irrespective of their level of differences achieve greater learning outcome in schools. Effective classroom management directly influences the learning environment and provides the necessary impetus for students to learn and assimilate what is being taught in the class.

The classroom is the center of the school activities. What goes on the classroom between the teacher and the students will go a long way in determining the success or failure of the school system. Moreover, parents, educational investors, taxpayers, governments and the society at large are not only concern about the prudent use of scarce resources available to the school, they also expect that the use of these resources produce the expected results at the cheapest possible cost. This is where the role of the classroom manager (teacher) is highly appreciated.

Classroom management and control is an important aspect of the teaching profession. Although CM is a challenging task that all teachers face, effective implementations of the various strategies such as maintaining quality relationship with the students and creating the attractive atmosphere for learning will help to overcome the challenges. Without an effective classroom management, the heavy investment in the school system could produce loss rather than gain. The ultimate objective of the teaching-learning process in schools is to ensure that the student

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