

EFFECTIVE CLASSROOM MANAGEMENT FOR QUALITY EDUCATION IN NIGERIA

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ABSTRACT

This paper attempts to show how a teacher can effectively manage his/her students in the classroom for qualify education. The teacher is encouraged to have an atmosphere that will enhance learning among the students. Some factors that can affect the control of students in the classroom was enumerated and strategies which can assist the classroom teacher handle misbehaviour were suggested.

INTRODUCTION

To manage means to handle or arrange a number of people, things or situation to bring about what one desires. Therefore management according to Balogun *et al* (1981) is the act or process of tactfully controlling or bring various elements to work together for some particular purpose. In a normal school setting, the headmaster, assistant headmaster, principal are not the only ones to manage the school. The teacher and other staff members must manage the pupils, resources and the environment of the school for the school's specific purpose to be achieved. In order to manage all these three, there must be a thorough understanding of their strength as well as their weaknesses. This paper intends to look at the classroom management by the teachers and how this can bring about effective learning among the pupils/students.

MANAGING PUPILS/STUDENTS

A teacher may use coercion through commands and punishment or the fear of punishment to get pupils to work together. However he must see every pupil as a unique individual. A teacher must see his pupils as having desires, interests and knowledge. This way, he will win their attention, respect and cooperation. The teacher should be able to communicate at the level of his pupils, interact with them and grant them some degree of freedom and equality. This way he will gain their attention, respect and co-operation. According to Balogun *et al* (1981), the more you take young people into your confidence and allow them to take full part in making decisions, the more you will succeed with them, the more confidence you show in their abilities, the faster they will develop both in mind and skills, their self - discipline and sensitivity to others in enhanced.

Research shows that effective classroom managers are nearly always good planners (Evertson, *et al*, 1984). They don't enter the classroom late, starting from the very first day of school, they teach standards or norms of

appropriate student behaviour actively and directly. The procedures for doing things are modelled to the children e.g. getting assistance, leaving the classroom etc. In an ideal classroom, the important classroom rules and the consequence of not following them are posted (Sadker and Sadker, 2003).

In order to develop a classroom community, three basic principles for setting expectations should be used:

- i. Rules should be few in number
- ii. The rules should be fair and reasonable to students.
- iii. The rules should fit the growth and maturation of the pupils.

A few years back perhaps when we were in primary school, rules meant obeying the teacher, being quiet, and not misbehaving. This could be viewed as autocratic teaching styles. Now we have students participating in rule formation, the question now is how do we allow teacher according to Sadker and Sadker 2003, like to develop the list of rules together with their student while some teachers like to develop the list of established practices and ask students to give specific examples or to give reasons for having such rules.

When rules are easily understood, and convey a sense of moral fairness, most students will comply. A good classroom teacher will carefully arrange the class to minimize disturbances, provide students with a sense of confidence and security and make sure that instruction can proceed efficiently. They set up their classrooms according to the following principles.

1. The teacher should be able to see all students at all times. The students desks should be arranged so that the teacher can see everybody from any instructional area. A teachers' non - verbal cues can often short-circuit off-task students behaviours. In our educational set up the students population in the classroom is so high that the teacher can hardly know who is disturbing or even arrange the student in a direct line of sight to be able to monitor them. Studies indicate that smaller classes are associated with

- increased student learning especially in the lower classes (Sadker and Sadker, 2003).
2. Teaching materials and suppliers should be readily available—materials that are to be used in the classroom should be made readily available both to teachers and students. The teachers hardly have enough teaching materials for the number of students that they have to handle. If materials can be made available the teacher can then have effective management of the classroom.
 3. Congestion in the classroom: The pupil's desks should have enough space in between for free movement of the pupils and teacher. When the classroom is not congested, there is ventilation and this will help the students to work efficiently and will not get tired easily.
 4. Instructional materials or presentations should be visible to all students. Studies have shown that students that are seated far away from the teacher or instructional activity are less likely to be involved in class discussions. The teachers therefore should place instructional materials in various parts of the room giving each student "the best seat" in the classroom. In the case where the classroom is over populated as we have in our schools today, it will be very good to have teaching aids or materials at every strategic place in the classroom.
 5. Procedures and routines should be activity taught in the same way that academic content is taught. According to Emmer *et al*, 1984, initial planning and organization reduce time wasted on discipline problems and more quickly establish classroom routines and procedures. For students that come from chaotic home environment, these routines offer a sense of stability. Once this can be established they allow teachers and students more time for academic learning.

CLASSROOM DISCIPLINE AND CONTROL

The words discipline and control are frequently misused and misunderstood. Discipline is the highest order of control and is self-imposed by the pupils rather than imposed from outside by the teacher while classroom control contributes to the building up of discipline in a school and in a pupil (Biskerstaffe, 1982). Control is at a much lower level and is what the class teacher is basically concerned about since there must be control before effective teaching can begin. There are some factors that can affect the control of students in the classroom, they are:

1. **Personality:** It is quite obvious that some teachers are born disciplinarians and so they usually have little problem having control over their students. A teacher who cares for his student's welfare in and out of school will gain his students respect and control problem will diminish.
2. **Co-operation.** Co-operation between teacher and student is very essential. In the primary school, co-operation could be in routine work like distributing books, giving the list for absentees, cleaning the blackboard, keeping the cupboard tidy, together arriving at class rules and how to handle offenders in the classroom. By doing this, the teacher has been able to help the pupils to exercise self-control.
3. **Good Preparation:** For a teacher to enter the classroom with confidence he must prepare what he has to give to the pupils. The attention of the students will be captured and the lesson will be worth listening to.

One would want to ask what way/technique can one use to have good control of the children in the classroom:

- 1: Instructions should be simple and clear.

2. Be aware that there are periods of disturbance in the class for example periods just after break or changing period. This according to Kounin (1970) is called fragmentation.
3. Don't be a noising teacher that is trying to get the attention of the students by either suddenly keeping quiet or lowering your voice in order to get their attention.
4. Don't expect trouble always look surprise when there is one.
5. Children that make trouble should be ignored if possible until after the class or else he will disrupt the lesson.
6. The teacher should be sensible about the level of noise in the class. If they are working in groups, there is no way you can have absolute silence.
7. Know the names of your pupils as soon as possible because this can create a friendly atmosphere.
8. Don't issue threats that you don't mean to carry out, the pupils will soon know that you don't carry out such threat even when mentioned.

Sometimes teachers face some misbehaviours especially with older pupils, when pupils don't obey simple rules, the teacher should repeat warning, clearly stating the appropriate behaviour and consequences that follow inappropriate behaviour. Whenever teachers have to apply such consequences, it should follow the inappropriate behaviour immediately and it should be mild, brief and not severely unpleasant (Brophy, 1983). As teachers we know that a child's rage could be as a result from abuse, powerlessness, trauma, event beyond the teacher's power to alter. Notwithstanding, the teacher has to understand and manage anger and aggression; the following strategies can be help.

Choice: Constant taking away of privileges and treating punishment can cause students to feel intimidated and victimized. Teachers can provide appropriate options to give a student a sense of some control and freedom.

Encourage students to have friends, discussion groups and bring up situation for decision making; this can enhance socialization and reduce aggression and rage.

Listening: Listening to young people is one of the most respectful skills a teacher can model. When a student feels he is not been listened to, he may feel disrespected. Hearing and honouring student's words and feelings reduce the likelihood of misbehaviour.

Responsibility: Re-channeling student energy and interest into constructive activities and responsibilities can reduce misbehaviour. When instruction is meaningful and worthwhile, boredom and fooling around, are less likely to occur (Good and Brophy, 2000). Empowering students makes it less likely for them to vent rage (Goodman, 1997).

CONCLUSION

For a teacher to effectively manage a classroom, he/she must be able to effectively manage the pupils/students. In managing the pupils/students the desire, interest and knowledge of the pupils/students is what makes them unique, students/pupils misbehaviour can pose challenges to teachers especially when the teacher is a new one. You can have pupils/students who can try your patience but that doest mean that you have not been effective. As much as possible, the teacher should be very observant at the signal of a problem in the classroom. The teacher should think of management strategies to handle small distractions in the classroom.

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