

Some Basic Principles of Classroom Management in Teaching English as a Second Language

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Abstract-

The term Classroom management refers to the various skills and techniques that the teachers usually adopt to keep their students organized, orderly, focused, attentive, on task, and academically productive during a classroom interaction. It is a term used by teachers to describe the process of making certain that classroom lessons run smoothly even with disruptive manners by students. If a teacher controls his/her classroom, there is less possibility of anarchy. An effective classroom management caters to positive learning environment, sets up discipline, fosters teacher to more teaching time, establishes relationship and provide ample workforce among the learners. Classroom management aims at setting up student self- control through a course of endorsing positive student achievement and behavior. It yields in academic achievement, teacher efficacy, and teacher-student behavior in its proper sense. To achieve such results the teacher has to adopt the authoritative approach, which is the best form of classroom management style as it is directly associated with appropriate behavior of the students.

Keywords- management, skills, interaction, environment, behavior, style, situation etc.

The main goal of effective classroom management is to see how teachers influence the behavior of student for establishing an environment that is favorable to learning. The primary goal is to maximize right conduct and minimize student misconduct. To achieve these goals the role of the teacher is important. S/he has to plan, organize procedures and resources, create environment for effective learning, monitor the progress of the student, and anticipate possible problems and their solutions. A disciplined classroom is a productive classroom. On the other hand, disorder and hectic classroom is strenuous, unproductive and poor. It is poor in the sense that it no longer focuses on teaching, as there is no learning environment. To achieve the desired teaching-learning goals, here is some basic principles classroom management to follow-

1. Physical environment of the classroom-

Classroom is the field of operation wherein both the teacher and students spend much of their time. Classroom is the stage where teachers and students are the actors to perform actions actively. The actions might be reasonable or awkward, planned or unplanned take place lively. The classroom is the first component of a teaching-learning process; the basic structure of the curriculum system. It is a formal learning situation where, the teachers offer courses in an organized way. As far as face-to-face education is concerned, we just cannot envisage education without a classroom and a classroom with any teacher and students. The size of the classrooms under study is large classes and the students are of heterogeneous groups. There is a cross-section of students coming from different occupations.

There is a great variety of learning styles together with inconsistent variables in the classrooms under study. These variables are students with different language backgrounds, dissimilar worldviews, disparate experience, thinking styles and age levels. A teacher has to change his/her teaching methods according to the needs of the situation.

Sight, sound, and comfort are the basic amenities among others of a language classroom. The three things that profoundly affect the students are what they see, hear, and feel when they enter into the classroom. An attractive physical environment draws interest among students. A good classroom is an eye-catching. The qualities of a good classroom are as below-

- Should be neat, clean, and orderly organized
- Chalkboard is erase, visible
- Appropriate seating arrangement

- Equipped with audio-visual aids (if possible)
- Should free from external noise as possible
- Tolerable acoustic (shape and design) of the room
- Well ventilated/ hygienic etc

Depending upon situations, the qualities of classrooms vary. The basic amenities of a classroom are rooms with immovable furniture like desks and chairs for students, teachers, and a blackboard with proper ventilation. However, in most colleges the physical environments are not as good as they ought to be. In some colleges, the classroom security is an issue. In almost all colleges, there is no provision of any audio-visual aids. Seating arrangements are not satisfactory. No classrooms are air-conditioned, although there are some electrical ceiling fans to fan the students. The rooms are not sound proofs. In many colleges, the walls are brick-walls with tile/asbestos roofing. In many cases, the concrete walls of the classrooms echo so badly that one cannot hear anyone. The rapping noise issuing from outside vehicles, workshops etc blotch the silence and distract attention. In many colleges, there are cemented blackboards plastered to walls. White boards are rarely used. During cloudy days, the classrooms are foggy. The door panels are not strong and the windowpanes are naked to insecure.

2. Seating arrangements-

In almost all classrooms, there are movable benches and desks all lined up in two columns that are perpendicular to the front wall of the room. They are neither exactly neat nor arranged orderly. There are no chairs for the students to sit on. The arrangement patterns are neither semi-circle, U-shapes nor concentric circles rather the benches and desks are in columns where four-five students seat on each. Due to column type of configuration the interaction among students are less feasible. It is not the teacher rather the students who select their own seats, where to sit. It is not wise for the teacher to interfere with students seating option, unless s/he feels the need to force a different 'mix' of students. Students of the colleges under study usually come from varied native language backgrounds and as English needs rapid practice students of the same native language should sit next to each other. If the teacher feels that, some adjacent students are disruptive, s/he may decide to move a few students, selectively.

3. Use of Chalkboard-

The use of chalkboard is one of the associates for a teacher. Along with auditory it provides students an instant added visual input. A chalkboard is one of the important allies of a teacher to illustrate the words, pictures, graphs, and charts, more visually. A messy, confusing chalkboard drives students crazy, so the teacher needs to keep it always clean and erase as often as possible. Sometimes the use of colored chalks is more satisfying. In every college, the classrooms are equipped with chalkboards made of cement.

4. Use of Teaching Equipments-

To make the teaching-learning process more interesting and motivating the teachers can better use audio-visual aids like electrical teaching equipments such as overhead projectors, video players, recorders etc in the classroom. However, as colleges do not have such equipments they never use them in classrooms. Besides, there are even no electric connections to the classrooms.

5. Teacher's Voice and Body Language-

Teaching is sending message. This is another fundamental aspect of classroom management. The teachers send messages through their voice and body language. Good voice projection is the primary requirements of an effective teaching. In many cases, teachers used to deliver their lectures in loud and booming voices. It is, however, needless to deliver one's lecture in a loud and booming voice but s/he should deliver his/her lecture in a voice that is audible to all students in the classroom. When the teacher delivers a lecture, s/he should project his/her voice in such a volume that the students sitting farthest away from the teacher can hear clearly. While passing a comment to a student sitting in the first row in front of the teacher, the teacher should remember that all the rest of the students could hear that comment.

Students learn to speak only by listening to their teachers. Hence, when a teacher speaks s/he should articulate clearly. The teachers are their models. Therefore, teachers should speak accordingly, in a natural flow of language so that students can get every advantage they need. In other words, clear articulation is a key to comprehension rather than fast/slowed speech.

The teacher's verbal speech is not the only available production mode for the students in the classroom. Nonverbal messages are also very powerful to communicate a message. When students fail to decipher the verbal language, they rely on nonverbal communications of the teachers. These nonverbal communications are the teacher's body language. Here are some features of effective body language-

- Body posture should exhibit an air of confidence
- Facial expression should reflect optimism, brightness and warmth
- Facial and hand gestures should lock stepped to verbal speech
- There should be frequent eye contact with students
- Teachers should not bury themselves in their notes and plans
- Teachers should walk around the class instead of standing still in one place
- Should follow the conversational rules like proxemics (distance) and kinesthetic (touching)
- Teachers should dress appropriately according to the expectations of students and teaching culture.

6. **Unplanned teaching: Midstream Lesson Changes-**

Planned teachings are always worthwhile. Planning a lesson is another principle of classroom management. When the lesson progresses as per plan, there is no problem. When all the students are alert, interested, participating and using complex English in the teaching-learning process, the teacher realizes the theme is within the plan. Alternatively, when the discussion is not what the teacher had in his/her mind s/he has to change the lesson in some way. Teachers used to call upon to deal with some unanticipated state of affairs such as-

1. Some students are disruptive in class
2. The teacher unable to satisfy a student (do not know the answer e.g. grammatical point)
3. Unable to finish an activity/ topic under discussion before the period ends
4. Students even the teachers are disgracing and throw off the plan for the day
5. An unexpected but relevant question comes up and the teacher is undone and so on

Under such unexpected circumstances, the teacher has to engage them in dealing with gracefully. It is advisable for the teachers to maintain his/her deportment at the same time keeping the self-respect of the students by staying calm, assessing the situation quickly, making midstream changes in his/her plan and letting the lesson to progress.

7. **How to teach under adverse circumstances-**

Classroom management has a number of concerns, which are divergent in nature. Adverse Circumstances' is one among the apprehensions. Large class and final examination pattern of teaching is one of the adverse circumstances that the teachers has to face. For more than 90% of the students, classroom is the only place for exposure to English. Most of these students are low achievers in English, who come from vernacular language backgrounds. Therefore, it is impossible to say a particular, method that is the best teaching method there is also no teaching-learning context, which is perfect. It needs the teacher's positive attitude to teaching to dwell on the problem. There are always imperfect institutions, imperfect students, and imperfect circumstances to which a teacher is to deal with. Dealing with these imperfect circumstances is one of the major concerns of an effective classroom management and professional success. Teaching large classes is one of these imperfect circumstances.

What is a large class and how large should be a large class is an important issue in classroom management. As per canon, an ideal language class should have no more than a dozen students or so. It should be large enough to-

- i. provide diversity and effective student interaction
- ii. provide students plenty of opportunity to partake
- iii. provide teachers opportunity to draw individual attention

However, due to paltry educational budgetary provision of our State Government al the language classes in our colleges are significantly larger. We have classes of ninety to one hundred twenty eight students in our colleges; nevertheless, teachers have to cope with the reality of a large class. Therefore,

teachers have to face many problems while dealing with a large class. Here is a list of some problems associated with large classes-

- i. There exists a variation with proficiency and ability across students
- ii. Individual teacher-student attention is minimized
- iii. Students get less opportunity to speak
- iv. Teacher's feedback on students' written work is restricted and so like

Notwithstanding these problems, a teacher has to solve these problems and tackle the challenges. Here are some inventories for the teachers to solve the problems-

- i. Teachers should try to give equal importance to all students
- ii. Teachers should try to remember the names of the students and use them
- iii. Teachers should involve students with as much interactive activities as possible
- iv. Teachers should make each student feel a part of the community and not just lost in the crowd
- v. Teachers should optimize the use of pair work and small group works as possible
- vi. Teachers should ensure to give students chances to perform in English
- vii. Teachers should do more than the usual number of listening comprehension activities through which they can learn a good deal of reading, speaking and writing skills
- viii. Teachers should use peer-editing, feedback and evaluate their written works aptly
- ix. Teachers should assign extra class-works to develop their higher proficiency
- x. Teachers should not collect written works from all students to evaluate rather spread them out in some systematic way among them for the benefit of speedy return of their work and to lighten their own load
- xi. Teachers should set up small 'learning centers' in their classes wherein students can do their individualized works
- xii. Teachers should organize informal conversation groups and study groups etc..

8. How to teach multiple proficiency levels in the same class-

Generally, the proficiency levels of the students belonging to the same class of the colleges under study are wide-ranging. No matter whether the class is large or small there are always students of multiple proficiencies. However, the phenomenon is a byproduct of our institutional placement procedures and the scanty budgetary limits of the State Govt. On the other hand, as per norms students are supposed to be placed in a class basing on their levels of proficiency. Hence, it is a challenge for the teachers to deal with a class of mixed abilities students of higher-level, lower level and middle group in leading them towards their goals. The teacher has no option but to accept the challenge. The teacher, however, can deal with these issues successfully if s/he follows the propositions-

- i. Teachers should not over generalize their assessment on students' proficiency levels. It is not advisable for the teachers to classify their students into 'good' and 'bad' categories nor should they talk about smart and dumb students in their classes.
- ii. Students differ in their skills. Their performance differs based on aptitude, ability, of time and effort.
- iii. Competencies among students vary depending upon their skills and contexts viz. reading, lexical knowledge, meaning-seeking strategies, speed, efficiency etc. therefore, it is the responsibility of the teacher to identify the specific skills and abilities of each student and tries to tailor their individual needs.
- iv. Teachers should offer choices in individual techniques (written and extra-class) that may vary according to their needs and challenges. Every student has his/her challenges and goals to pursue. Their achievement varies based on individual ability and proficiency. However, teachers can develop their multiple proficiencies by giving them opportunities to work in groups. They can place students of varying ranges in the same group.

The teacher and the institution-

Teaching under the institutional conditions is another adverse circumstance that most of the teachers have to deal with. Teachers have to work in conciliation with the institutions for which they could not meet their ideal standards or philosophy of education. Teachers are supposed to work under the administrative constraints of an individual in charge, a director or principal of the institution. There are some conditions, which are beyond the scope and power of an individual teacher such as-

- i. Classes are so large that did not allow the teacher to attain the expected result
 - ii. The physical conditions in the classroom are burdensome
 - iii. Administration imposes constraints on teachers ‘what and how to teach’ in the class
 - iv. The prescribed courses satisfies only the institutional requirements just by making the students secure a passing grade
 - v. The prescribed courses are only test-focused rather than language-focused
- Teachers have to compromise to handle such situations, however, as a professional technician; a teacher has to maintain his/her professional diplomacy and efficiency, despite adversity.

What should a teacher do for effective teaching?

English in India is a second language. Students cannot learn English without the help of a teacher. Hence, it is the role and responsibility of the teacher to show students the right ways to learn English. Students, not only in the colleges under study but also in general have very little exposure to English outside the classroom. The teacher is the only model for them. Therefore, it is the duty of the teacher to provide them right models of good English to reproduce. The teacher must encourage the students to involve in the learning process so that they can be self-sufficient in developing the language skills. It is the responsibility of the teachers to understand the needs of their students and satisfy them by any means. Although students know why are they learning, but they do not know how best to earn it. It is the job of the teacher to help students to identify themselves what they need to learn and how best to learn it. One knows best what s/he should eat. Similarly, students know best why they should study. There is the teacher just to direct them the appropriate tips to achieve.

Teacher’s Attitude to Teaching-

Dealing with a critical situation is an important attitude of teacher. Experience, to some extent, helps one to deal with such situations. Generally, in most of the classrooms, the teachers used to tell the students everything and explain all the time. Seldom have they asked questions to taste their comprehensions, as normally students abhor the teachers who ask questions. Whenever, if a teacher asks a question, they interrupt students before they finish what they want to say. The weak students remain untouched, hence, neglected. Most of the teachers attend their classes without any plan or in a structured manner.

Hence, for the effective management of an English classroom a teacher should follow these principles and have sound knowledge of the principles, problems and their solutions as discussed above.

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