

# A Safe and Supportive Classroom

Swati Tyagi

Scholar, Creer Point University, Aalniya, Rajasthan, India

## ABSTRACT

This paper aims at helping teachers to manage their work with students in the classrooms in an efficient manner. To be a good classroom manager means to know how to motivate children in order to learn. An effective teacher needs to have well drafted skills to plan and prepare the lessons, know teaching methods according to the needs of the class. A good teacher needs to establish positive and safe classroom environment. Also, teacher should be able to create a good student teacher relationship which helps in learning process. A teacher should be able to evaluate the progress of the students. A good classroom environment helps to maintain discipline in the classroom and among the students as well.

This paper offers realistic information for the teachers to become well-informed, skilled and efficient in their work. Aspects of affirmative teaching and learning are explored. New and innovative teaching methods can surely change a common classroom into an effective learning classroom for positive change in students' behaviour and learning. Classroom environment, opportunity, inspiration, and methods for positive reflection on mistakes are investigated to support teachers in raising an encouraging and safe learning environment.

This paper also contains the various points like physical layout of classroom, teacher student relationship, rules and regulations etc.

**KEYWORDS:** *Effective classroom behavior management, classroom environment, effective teacher, learning process, student teacher relationship, discipline*

## 1. INTRODUCTION

A powerful Classroom Management gives students more chances to gain proficiency with everything that an educator put so as to understudies, space, time, and assets so understudies' can adapt viably. Understudies ought to have the option to draw out their most prominent potential, which permits understudies to develop right personal conduct standards. Instructors must do arrangement of certain activities and should have the ability to control understudy conduct. A viable and positive homeroom condition structure is required for all instructors. Classroom management ought to be age suitable. As indicated by the period of understudies it is essential that educators make their class rules and needful course of action in the class. Learning is a basic piece of educating. A climate of fear can put hurdles in higher learning and children will not able to give their response in a positive way at all. For a good classroom, teacher must understand the requirement of students, should know their areas of problem to deal in an effective manner. It is an important fact that teachers have depth knowledge of their subjects that they teach. But only the knowledge of subject is not sufficient in an effective learning. To be a good teacher, he/she also must know the interests and styles of learning of his or her students. The most important and critical parts related to the classroom management are discipline, students' motivation, handling students' social and emotional problems, little or no support from the parents, working with special education. The basic issue which instructors look in a class is how to develop the interest of children for learning. In this way significant encouraging practices are legitimately identified with both

administration and inspiration. "To be fruitful, educators must have the option to set up proper understudy conduct in their study halls so as to amplify the time that they and their understudies spend on learning." (Wiseman and Hunt, 2008). For a productive learning environment it is additionally essential to make great assurance, regard and joint effort. The educators experience disturbed exercises because of non compliance of students and that half of them accept that school discipline is a more prominent issue today than it was a long time previously (Merrett and Wheldall, 1990). Levin and Nolan (2007) detailed that a few instructors spend as much as 30 to 80 percent of their time tending to teach issues. Subsequently the instructors should realize how to manage these issues. Regularly the instructor invests an excessive amount of energy with discipline issues. To be a fruitful educator the person in question must be skilled to make reasonable students' behaviour in their classrooms to utilize time for learning. Wiseman and Hunt (2008) state that control and discipline are not equivalent. For a decent classroom environment, discipline is a fundamental piece of educating. Instructors' have to make a restrained learning condition in their classes for a total learning process.

Order is an activity assumed by the instructor to force rules and to make a move to control students' trouble making. "As well as it can be interpreted, efforts are done to build up conditions for realizing which are as appealing and invigorating as could be expected under the circumstances and that match learning errands to students' capacities and

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premiums. At the point when these conditions have been set up, students will be persuaded. It might be the conditions, at that point, that make the inspiration, not the educator." (Wiseman and Hunt, 2008, p. 14).

## 2. Effective Classroom Behaviour Management

Instructing is a workmanship and the nature of educating students relies upon the affection, commitment, dedication, preparing and the experience of the educator towards the subject of information. It is he who plans, sorts out, structures, coordinates, propels and motivates others to get the hang of, utilizing standard instructing strategies to confer information. (Okolocha and Onyeneke, 2003). Educating includes human asset improvement for individual and financial development, done methodically by experts who have obtained a few abilities and information through preparing or by potential experience. In Akinmusire (2012) feeling, to have alluring effect, it must focus on all out improvement of the person, that is, to upgrade scholarly capacities, formative and psychological erudition, cultivate psychosocial aptitudes and draw out neuro-physical ability of the students. It is the most troublesome piece of educating for some, as educators are dealing with students' behaviour. "Positive teachers concern themselves with what children actually do rather than speculating about unconscious motives or processes which may be thought to underlie their pupils' behaviour" (Marrett & Wheldall, 1990). When teachers observe the behaviour of the students then only they come on that level to make some strategies for their behavioural problems. If children are often out of their seats it does not mean that they are hyperactive. Sometimes teachers should put some strict rules for that so the children will learn how to be in discipline. The teachers should look for a classroom organization which is helpful to teach in a good way. "When we want to teach pupils to do something new, or to encourage them to behave in a certain way more frequently than they normally do, it is important that we ensure that they are positively reinforced every time they behave as we want them so." (Merrett & Wheldall, 1990) When the students learn the new behaviour and do it frequently, then the teachers can reduce the frequency of this new disruptive behaviour of students by giving them some creative work and give some positive remarks of their work so they feel motivated. Social reinforcement should always try to make sure that it is directed towards the behaviour rather than the person. We tend to rectify the behaviour of the student which is inappropriate, instead of castigating the student. The students get motivation, if a teacher praises their work or behaviour instead of indicating that a student is good or bad.

## 3. The Teacher as a Role Model

Teaching is a noble profession. So, it needs to be seen that only those teachers are recruited who have a passion for teaching their subject and can motivate the students for learning. This advantageous part is not mentioned generally but the person who joins as a teacher by choice can do wonders in a student's life. "When teachers present a topic with enthusiasm, suggesting that it is interesting, important, or worthwhile, students are likely to adopt this same attitude. Effective teachers convey their enthusiasm with sincere statements of the value they place on a topic or activity" (Helmke, 2012). To be effective as a teacher a proper training is required. A teacher should study child's

psychology to understand his or her students in a better way. This approach will surely help teachers to recognize their thinking and would help to recognize the problems of their students. Teachers may also express their own reactions and feelings and those they observed on the part of the students.

Pre-Service training and professional development are two ways by which teacher candidates and teachers acquire skills. According to Lino (2014) pre-service refers to a form of training for teacher candidates that aim to provide curriculum, content, and pedagogical knowledge as well as technical skills. Likewise, Lino (2014) explained that professional development refers to the development of a person in his or her professional role, and is defined as a growth that occurs through the professional cycle of a teacher.

Ideally, teachers should receive some type of classroom management training prior to entering the teaching profession and additional classroom management development after they have started to teach. Each method of knowledge acquisition offers a valuable opportunity to help teachers acquire classroom management skills. Effective pre-service and professional development opportunities contain certain components and maintain a particular look or appearance. These characteristics help teachers develop the ability to organize classrooms and manage behaviors of their students in order to produce positive educational outcomes. According to Oliver (2007) comprehensive teacher preparation and professional development in classroom organization and effective behavioural management are therefore needed to improve outcomes for students in general and special education. With the potential benefits of professional developments being so high, it is important to know; what constitutes an effective professional development, what an ideal one looks like and contains, how teachers are engaged, and what teachers take away from it.

## 4. Classroom Expectations

Most of the teachers have high expectations from pupils regarding their level of achievement. Some teachers want to do this anyway, but some are very clear in their approach to motivate their students for learning and using strategies according to the level of a student instead of the level of whole class. These teachers see challenging work as important, decisive and worthwhile in spite of the difficulties. With some experience of teaching and training, high expectations can be transmitted to the students in all sorts even when done in small ways though regularly. These can comprise skillful classroom language, body language, pauses and considerable emphasis on the basis of what is important in a particular class. These aspects should be used in daily teaching so they are steady part of a teacher's style. There are some other skills and methods that can be used to keep students involved in learning. Pupils should be taught about life skills, values and several realistic expectations about life along with the school curriculum. These are some topics which should be added in the syllabus which will make students prepare for their future. Every inspiring teacher has his own plans and strategies for every lesson. Some lessons will unavoidably deal with less interesting but still important material.

### 5. Handling Troubles of the students:

The main aim of a teacher should be to deal with disturbances in the class so that the instructional flow is not interrupted and the learning process is not compromised. Teacher should establish clear expectations of behaviour and rules in the beginning of a class so that the students must be aware what their teachers want from them. The following actions would be useful:

1. Walk around at regular intervals in the class to observe the children's behaviour.
2. Communicate with the children in a positive way and watching the students' learning behaviour and progress.
3. Time spent on activities e.g. change of classroom activities, organization of learning material.
4. Spend circle time with the students.

### 6. Handling Mistakes

Punishment in schools is considered as a disciplinary measure and therefore used as a means to maintain good discipline, referring to conformity and order in schools. Punishment as a social institution is intended to control, correct or bring into desired line, the individual or group of individuals behavior. In line with this opinion, Okumbe (1998), said punishment in school is meant to instill discipline and is given to students who violate the school rules and regulations and that it is administered to bring about the desired change in behavior and improve school discipline if commensurate with the offence committed.

Errors are the natural part of the learning process. The teacher should not scold or blame the students when they make errors. Hattie (2012) says "An optimal classroom climate for learning is one that generates a climate in which it is understood that it is okay to make mistakes, because mistakes are the essence of learning. Expert teachers create a classroom climate that welcome admission of errors; they achieve this by developing a climate of trust between teacher and student, and between student and student. The climate is one in which 'learning is cool', worth engaging in, and everyone – teachers and student – is involved in the process of learning."

### 7. Promoting positive peer relationship in the class

Good teaching need not only motivate the students to learn, but the teacher should teach them how to make a healthy learning environment in the class. Teachers should promote team work in the class so that students will have a good relation with their classmates. Teachers realize that they are playing a role of a catalyst in the life of their students. Teachers should be able to create cooperative learning strategies. They need to spend circle time with students.

### 8. Classroom Environment

Classroom environment depends on the following measures:

1. social climate
2. the emotional aspect
3. the physical aspect of the classroom

The classroom environment influences students' growth and behaviour. In positive classroom environment students feel safe, respectful, welcome and encouraging. For an excellent classroom environment it is also important to promote positive relationships between teacher and student.

A good classroom manager knows how to make his or her classroom a comfort zone for their students.

### 9. Involvement of the students

Students can be helpful in managing the discipline of the class. By giving responsibilities like creating bulletin boards, line monitor, seating arrangement etc. there will be less indiscipline in the class. Maximum participation of the students in every aspect of a class will make a good learning environment. Students should be made to recognize that they work together with the teacher in a team.

### 10. Teacher's Attitude

Teachers' attitude is very important for their daily teaching. A positive attitude is an essential part of teaching because it is must for all other techniques in the class. Teachers pay no attention to the internal obstacles. They only look at the external ones. But when we have more control over the internal obstacles, we can often find better ways to deal with the external ones. It is important to look for positives, develop empathy and revise your goals. Teachers can try to change their negative thoughts into positive ones. Negative attitudes are learned and therefore they can be changed. "Thoughts help control feelings. For teachers it is a good solution to understand the parents' position. Often parents have trouble with their child or in their parenting role. They don't need criticism, they need help with their children. "If you can put yourself in the parent's shoes and try to be as helpful as possible, everyone will benefit - the parents, the students, and you" (Ciaccio, 2002). The teacher who helps parents establishes a positive and helpful relation which will definitely helps in student's learning. In fact, parents might even be more willing to get involved and to give moral support for whatever the teacher is trying to accomplish. Meditation can be a good way to make our lives more positive. To make a good environment in the class, it is important that teachers stand in front of their classes as a means of positive interaction between teachers and students. Negative interaction contaminates the relationship, positive one improves the relationship.

### 11. Effective Learning and Motivation

Motivation is the power that gives the students an edge to set their goals. A motivated student may give better result rather than the others in the school. There is a relationship between motivation and learning. Motivation gives direction and helps the student choose a particular behaviour and goal. Motivation gives an inner drive that focuses behaviour on a particular goal or task and causes the individual to be determined in trying to accomplish the goal or complete the task successfully. Therefore it is important that the teachers motivate children to learn.

Intrinsic motivation is important to the development of life-long learners, but is often hard to see in many classrooms. Many teachers, in both general and special education have come to rely on rewards and incentive programs in order to manage behavior and learning. For example, a teacher may give a boy a treat for entering the room quietly with the hope that the reward will increase the chance that the boy will enter the room quietly the next time. The teacher may think that she is promoting a productive classroom environment, but the boy only learns what behaviors earn a treat. He does not learn about the value of a productive classroom environment. The field of behaviorism has contributed to the common use of rewards in the classroom. The field of behaviorism produced a theory in the 1950's that heavily influenced the use of rewards in schools. The theory of

operant conditioning, developed by B.F. Skinner, works on the premise that if a reinforcement is delivered after a certain behavior is performed, then the strength of the behavior is increased (Cosgrove, 1982). A reinforcement is any stimulus given after a behavior that increases the chance of the behavior recurring. Past and present teachers are using the principles of operant conditioning when they give out stickers, treats, and praise. The powerful idea of operant conditioning is subject to cautionary statements. MacMillan (1973) states that many reinforcement techniques are targeted for use in populations with mild handicaps, and that care should be used when choosing reinforcement with a particular group. Even with the cautions, the principles of operant conditioning have seen a widespread implementation in education.

### 12. Feedback and Praise

I think that increasing feedback during lessons could help in keeping pupils on track, minimize mistakes and misunderstanding and signal areas in need of further explanation. Feedback gives a firm basis and can correct pupils' misunderstandings. The feedback could be in form of verbal exchanges, written responses, tests or assessments.

### 13. Memorable Teaching and Learning

Further Reis (2005) writes that one of the most basic and direct ways to attract and keep students' interest is instructor expressiveness - the use of vocal variation, facial expression, movement, and gesture. Once we have students' attention, we need to consider how quickly students can process information. Short-term memory requires time to process the sensory input we receive; students are not sponges and cannot immediately "absorb" new information. Give students short breaks throughout a lecture to review their notes and ask questions. A short break that includes students' questions can also give the lecturer an opportunity to assess student understanding and adjust the remaining part of the lecture if needed.

### 14. Anxiety

Anxiety has cognitive and affective components. The cognitive side is when one worries and has negative thoughts, such as thinking about how bad it would be to fail and worrying that this is going to happen. The affective side is when one can experience physiological and emotional reactions such as sweaty palms, upset stomach, racing heartbeat or fear. Anxiety can also interfere with learning and test performance in different levels. "Anxiety can be a reason for a student to lose focus, become irritable or act out, withdraw and not try, be physically ill, or perform poorly in school with the resulting poor performance only serving to increase the student's anxiety" (Wiseman & Hunt, 2008, p. 78). Mild or even moderate out-of-balance situations, or situations of disequilibrium, can represent situations that motivate students to do things in an effort to get back into balance. Some students are not able to discover the balance that they need. But anxiety in a small amount can help to improve performance by motivating students to positive action. But too much anxiety, however, can have the opposite effect of not being motivational and interfering with student performance in a way that diminishes performance. This is when anxiety is referred to as debilitating anxiety or anxiety so extreme that it gets in the way of successful performance. Therefore it is very important that teachers understand their students and their various learning and personal needs and

characteristics. An anxious moment for one student is not the same for another. Wiseman and Hunt mentioned (2008) that high anxiety brought about by intense motivational situations can have a significant negative effect on student performance. Moderate motivation is a more desirable condition for increasing student success on learning complex tasks. Ideal motivation decreases in intensity with increasing task difficulty. So it is important to understand the individual level of student confidence to complete a given task.

### 15. Learning Goals

Learning goals are very important because the type of goals that teachers set influences the amount of motivation that students have to reach them. Goals should be moderately difficult, specific, and likely to be reached in the near future to enhance motivation and persistence. Specific goals provide a clear standard for judging performance and moderate difficulty provides a challenge, but not an unreasonable one. When goals are too complex, vague and/or confusing, too challenging, or seem to have no importance, students are more likely not to pursue them. Likewise, when goals are perceived as being too simplistic, they are not seen as being interesting or important either. While they may be achieved, the achievement has little meaning (Wiseman & Hunt, 2008, p. 73).

A teachers' body language is another important aspect of classroom management. When teachers use eye contact, close physical proximity, facial expressions, and gestures properly, they can be effective in dealing with management matters (Jones, Jones, & Jones 2000; Kounin 1970). Kounin thought that teachers who had a solid system in place for gaining student attention and clarifying expectations exhibited group alerting. Group alerting consists of teachers designing their behaviors in a way that helps students to stay on task and reduce misbehaviour. This means that teachers should learn how to correct a student's behaviour in such a way that it encourages other students to change their behaviour. His theory followed the idea that an effective teacher keeps students actively involved and attentive. It is important for teachers to consider what has been discovered in the past in an effort to guide their practice in their own classroom. Chances are there isn't going to be one approach that meets the needs of all students in a classroom. This is when teachers need to adapt their strategies in order to match their own style and work toward particular goals while meeting the needs of their students. There is certainly not a need to continually reinvent the wheel but what worked for students years ago may not be suited best for the students of today's classrooms. All of the things that a teacher does in an effort to organize time, materials, students, and space, make up classroom management. The effectiveness of a teacher's classroom management strategies can determine the overall success of the school year. Therefore it is important to consider not only what is being done in classrooms today, but what has been done in the past. Although many theorists have offered their findings and ideas on classroom management, ultimately it is up to the classroom teacher to decide what works best for a particular group of children in order to meet their needs both socially and academically.

### 16. Active Learning

Students learn by doing. Teachers should create a dynamic educational environment that affords students the

opportunity to practice every concept that they are learning. Effective teachers utilize instructional strategies that engage students repeatedly throughout the entire lesson. This engagement should start early in the lesson and continue throughout the lesson introduction, body, and closure. Some important questions from Bulger et al. (2002, p. 4): "In your last class, how much time your students got engaged in learning activities other than note taking? On how many occasions during your last class did students have the opportunity to be actively engaged in the learning process? How many of your students are asleep or off-task at any point in a given lesson?" As one of the most important elements of effective instruction Muijs and Reynolds (2011) mentioned, that questioning should take up a large part of the lesson. Research has shown that effective teachers use more high-level questions than less effective teachers, although the majority of questions used are still lower level. A topic requiring factual recall such as multiplication facts in mathematics would require lower-level questions than one which probes for higher-level content, such as asking pupils to design an experiment in science. "It is, however necessary to ask higher-level questions whenever possible to help develop pupils' thinking skills" (Muijs & Reynolds, 2011, p. 55). Another form of interaction that may be effective in certain lessons is classroom discussion. In order for discussion to be effective, it needs to be carefully prepared. The teacher needs to give pupils clear guidelines on what the discussion is about. Also it is very important to summarize and review during and towards the end of lesson. The observed areas appear to me to be particularly important. I know it is not always easy to do a good job as a teacher. All the teachers do really a good job. But some points they must make more effective. Some teachers present a topic without much enthusiasm. Students do not see that the subject is interesting and important. Teachers don't show the students the value of the subject. Also many teachers do not praise enough. The praise is most effective when it is sincere and natural. They should use appropriate gestures and actions to accompany them. Teachers should try to motivate the students so that the students are more likely to pay attention. To be respected with the children is also very important. To react positively to wrong answers is a way to teach positively. The relationship between students and their parents is necessary. Students like when the teachers use their names. I have seen that effective teachers have their work mostly ready. They are prepared for the many things which are coming through the school day. Also clear rules are necessary. Students should know what they have to do. Young teachers have more problems clearly structuring lessons than older teachers. Young teachers have to look as though they can hold the discipline in the class and lessons are more frequently interrupted. The classroom climate is so important. To create a positive classroom climate is a main point that the children like to go into the school. And then children also like to learn. The above listed points are so important for an effective and positive teacher. It is now my mission to bring this important information to my teachers. In conferences I'm going to bring important information to these points. During this project and my time as a school director I have observed many teachers with a variety of teaching styles. I see and I have seen poor teachers, good teachers and masters of the craft. There are clear differences between teachers who are extremely effective and the rest of the teachers. Good teachers care deeply about children and have the ability to build positive relationships with each

child. Good teachers care about the students. They are interested in the students as individuals. They are supportive and don't give up on them. Master teachers are positive and constantly work at their craft to improve their professional practice. They seek to deepen their knowledge of their practice. Good teachers develop a knowledge and understanding of the community in which they work. In order to be effective, good teachers go out of their way to understand the culture, climate, and mores of the community that makes up the school. It is important that teachers clearly know what they want students to learn and be able to do. Teachers have to understand that learning takes place in three different domains (cognitive, affective and psychomotor), the level to which they want the students to develop within these domains, and the indicators of success that communicate when students have achieved learning goals or targets. Good teachers work to help students connect key concepts and ideas learned across disciplines and see their relevance in the students' lives. They strive to make learning holistic and useful. Deep learning takes place when students can make use of knowledge and skills as they negotiate life's challenges. Teachers with less skill tend to keep learning isolated across disciplines with little attempt to connect ideas or make learning useful. I think it is important to know about not only motivating student to learn, but also teaching them how to learn, and doing so in a manner that is relevant, meaningful and memorable. Every teacher should listen, question, be responsive and remember that each student and class is different. To respect others and be human is essential. We teachers should not take ourselves too seriously. I see also that the clarity of instruction is important. More effective teachers typically provide students with highly explicit directions and explanations concerning the content. Enthusiasm is also essential for effective teaching. When a teacher hates to teach, the students will hate to learn.

So when a teacher loves to teach, the students may very well love to learn. Effective teachers display a high level of enthusiasm that reflects their professional competence and confidence. Teachers can begin to establish a positive learning environment by showing their passion for the subject matter, using student names, reinforcing student participation during class and being active in moving among the students.

## 17. Summary

This study has evidently illuminated the relationships between classroom management and students' academic performance in Port Harcourt and Obio/Akpor Local Government Areas in Rivers State. Indications from this study are robust that the classroom management strategies used in this study shows significant relationships. Classroom rules, enhanced classroom environment, reinforcement strategies and reductive procedure are classroom management practices that strengthen effective classroom management (Little & Akinlittle, 2008). The investigation revealed classroom management models, the interventionist, noninterventionist and interactionist models, that have immensely improve the way classrooms are managed. This study has proved that effective classroom management lead to higher academic achievement among the students, it is found that secondary school students outcome were better when students perceive the teacher's classroom management; approach as being well prepared and well organised.

Teachers do need knowledge to teach successfully in different areas, for example: feedback and praise, handling mistakes, questions from students, and clearly structured lessons. Also to areas reducing anxiety, motivation, humor and active time to learn are topics which are very important for teachers. The praise is most effective when it is sincere and natural. They should use appropriate gestures and actions to accompany them. Teachers should try to motivate the students so that the students are more likely to pay attention. To be respected with the children is also very important. To react positively to wrong answers is a way to teach positively. The relationship between students and their parents is necessary. Students like when the teacher uses their names. The classroom climate is so important. To create a positive classroom climate is a main reason that the children like to go into the school, and then children also like to learn.

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