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Classroom management: An emphasis on positive discipline

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Abstract

The purpose of this paper is to explore the importance of positive classroom discipline while maintaining student behavior and problematic situation. The goal is to show the importance of classroom management and how to attain useful techniques for classroom. Objective of this paper is to provide real life examples of different student behavior and how they may be handled in a positive way. The main goal is to develop an understanding of techniques and strategies that will foster positive classroom management while maintaining teacher morale. The students were more relaxed when the positive reinforcement is adopted and when the routine plan is made keeping in mind the interest of the students. Many teachers are trained to have a few management strategies under their belt, but many do not know how to incorporate with them effectively in everyday class settings. It also may be that they just do not have the right tools to deal with particular situations. Whatever the case, teachers must gather many various positive strategies, executed them on a daily basis, and help students and themselves to be as positive as can be.

Keywords: Classroom management, classroom discipline, reinforcement

1. Introduction

Positive discipline and classroom management modals are aimed at developing mutually respectful relationships. Positive Discipline teaches adults to employ kindness and firmness at the same time, and is neither punitive nor permissive. Classroom management include parts of classroom discipline, but it focuses more on providing a calm learning atmosphere that is comfortable, structured, engaging, and respectful of both the instructor and the students. Teaching Youth Prevention Education puts us in the classroom, either as a teacher or as a facilitator (www.prevention.org, 2014) [4].

Classroom management refers to the wide variety of skills and techniques that teachers use to keep students organized, orderly, focused, attentive, on task, and academically productive during class. It is how a teacher organizes his/her students, time, space, and materials so students can learn in the proper environment. Classroom management refers to the organization of a classroom. It includes the classroom environments, the layout of the desks and chairs, the flow of your lessons, space, time and materials. Classroom management is crucial since it has a direct impact on your pupils' capacity to learn as well as your ability to teach. It has an impact on a teacher's capacity to be productive while still enjoying their job. Above all, a well-managed classroom has a significant influence on students' academic progress (www.thecorecoaches.com) [6].

In many cultures and languages, the word "discipline" has come to be equated with control and punishment - particularly physical punishment. But this is not the true meaning of "discipline". Discipline, guiding children's behavior, or setting limits are all concerned with helping children learn how to take care of themselves, other people, and the world around them. Discipline is an art that requires knowledge, skill, sensitivity, and self-confidence (www.srhd.org) [5]. Like any art, it is one that you will acquire through training and experience and it becomes easier with practice. Some people confuse discipline with classroom management. Discipline is one dimension of classroom management. Classroom management is a general term. According to Jones, to build positive classroom discipline, teachers should model appropriate behavior, and use appropriate classroom management methods.

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Positive discipline supports teaching and education. Positive discipline builds students' self-confidence and instils a love of learning that can last a lifetime.

"Positive discipline" is non-violent and respectful of the child as a learner. Positive Discipline (or PD) is a discipline model used by schools that focuses on the positive points of behaviour, based on the idea that there are no bad children, just good and bad behaviors (www.srhd.org) [5]. You can teach and reinforce the good behaviors while weaning the bad behaviors without hurting the child verbally or physically. People engaging in positive discipline are not ignoring problems. Rather, they are actively involved in helping their child learn how to handle situations more appropriately while remaining calm, friendly and respectful to the children themselves. Positive discipline includes a number of different techniques that, used in combination, can lead to a more effective way to manage groups of students. It promotes positive decision making, teaching expectations to students early, and encouraging positive behaviors.

2. Purpose of the paper

- The purpose of this paper is to explore the importance of positive classroom discipline while maintaining student behaviors and problematic situations.
- The goal is to show the importance of classroom management and how to attain useful techniques for classroom structure.

3. Concept of discipline

Positive discipline contrasts with negative discipline. Negative discipline may involve angry, destructive, or violent responses to inappropriate behavior. In the terms used by psychology research, positive discipline uses the full range of reinforcement and punishment options:

- Positive reinforcement, such as complimenting a good effort;
- Negative reinforcement, such as ignoring requests made in a whining tone of voice;
- Positive punishment, such as requiring a child to clean up a mess he made; and
- Negative punishment, such as removing a privilege in response to poor behavior.

There are 5 criteria for effective positive discipline:

- Helps children feel a sense of connection. (Belonging and significance)
- Is mutually respectful and encouraging. (Kind and firm at the same time.)
- Is effective long-term. (Considers what the children are thinking, feeling, learning, and deciding about themselves and their world – and what to do in the future to survive or to thrive.)
- Teaches important social and life skills. (Respect, concern for others, problem solving, and cooperation as well as the skills to contribute to the home, school or larger community.)
- Invites children to discover how capable they are. (Encourages the constructive use of personal power and autonomy.)

4. Techniques of classroom management discipline: To minimize disruptive behaviors, proactive classroom management tactics emphasize on strategies stressing how students should behave in the classroom, classroom

expectations, and how to make the classroom as organized and predictable as feasible (www.prevention.org, 2014) [4]. If you are struggling with discipline, here are techniques:

• Preventative techniques

Preventative approaches to classroom management involve creating a positive classroom community with mutual respect between teacher and student. Teachers using the preventative approach offer warmth, acceptance, and support unconditionally - not based on a student's behavior. Fair rules and consequences are established and students are given frequent and consistent feedback regarding their behavior. One way to establish this kind of classroom environment is through the development and use of a classroom contract. The contract should be created by both students and the teacher. In the contract, students and teachers decide and agree on how to treat one another in the classroom. Preventative techniques also involve the strategic use of praise and rewards to inform students about their behavior rather than as a means of controlling student behavior. In order to use rewards to inform students about their behavior, teachers must emphasize the value of the behavior that is rewarded and also explain to students the specific skills they demonstrated to earn the reward. Teachers should also encourage student collaboration in selecting rewards and defining appropriate behaviors that will earn rewards.

• Good Teacher-Student Relationships

Some characteristics of having good teacher-student relationships in the classroom involves the appropriate levels of dominance, cooperation, and awareness of high-needs students. Dominance is defined as the teacher's ability to give clear purpose and guidance concerning student behavior and their academics. By creating and giving clear expectations and consequences for student behavior, this builds effective relationships. Such expectations may cover classroom etiquette and behavior, group work, seating arrangements, the use of equipment and materials, and also classroom disruptions (www.prevention.org, 2014) [4].

• Use a normal, natural voice

Raising our voice to get students' attention is not the best approach, and the stress it causes and the vibe it puts in the room just isn't worth it. The students will mirror your voice level, so avoid using that semi-shouting voice. If we want kids to talk at a normal, pleasant volume, we must do the same.

• Speak only when students are quiet and read

Teacher should just wait and then wait some more until all students are quiet. So I tried it; I fought the temptation to talk. Sometimes I'd wait much longer than I thought I could hold out for. Slowly but surely, the students would cue each other: "sshh, she's trying to tell us something," "come on, stop talking," and "hey guys, be quiet."

• Use hand signals and other non-verbal communication

Holding one hand in the air, and making eye contact with students is a great way to quiet the class and get their attention on you. It takes awhile for students to get used to this as a routine, but it works wonderfully.

- **Address behavior issues quickly and wisely**

Be sure to address an issue between you and a student or between two students as quickly as possible. Bad feelings -- on your part or the students -- can so quickly grow from molehills into mountains. Act as if you do care, even if you have the opposite feeling at that moment. The student will usually become disarmed because she might be expecting you to be angry and confrontational.

- **Always have a well-designed, engaging lesson**

This tip is most important of all. Perhaps you've heard the saying, if you don't have a plan for them, they'll have one for you. *Always* overplan. It's better to run out of time than to run short on a lesson. From my own first-hand experience and after many classrooms observations, something that I know for sure: Bored students equal trouble! If the lesson is poorly planned, there is often way too much talking and telling from the teacher and not enough hands-on learning and discovery by the students. We all know engaging lessons take both serious mind and time to plan. And they are certainly worth it -- for many reasons.

- **Fairness is the Key**

Students have a distinct sense of what is and what is not fair. You must act fairly for all students if you expect to be respected. If you do not treat all students equitably, you will be labelled as unfair students will not be keen to follow your rules. Make sure that if your best student does something wrong, they too get punished for it.

- **Deal with Disruptions with as Little Interruption as Possible**

When you have classroom disruptions, it is imperative that you deal with them immediately and with as little interruption of your class momentum as possible. If students are talking amongst themselves and you are having a classroom discussion, ask one of them a question to try to get them back on track. If you have to stop the flow of your lesson to deal with disruptions, then you are robbing students who want to learn of their precious in-class time (Lovejoy) [2].

- **Avoid Confrontations in Front of Students**

Whenever there is a confrontation in class there is a winner and a loser. Obviously as the teacher, you need to keep order and discipline in your class. However, it is much better to deal with discipline issues privately than cause a student to 'lose face' in front of their friends. It is not a good idea to make an example out of a disciplinary issue. Even though other students might get the point, you might have lost any chance of actually teaching that student anything in your class (effective classroom management) [1].

- **Keep High Expectations in Your Class**

Expect that your students will behave, not that they will disrupt. Reinforce this with the way you speak to your students. When you begin the day, tell your students your expectations. For example, you might say, "During this whole group session, I expect you to raise your hands and be recognized before you start speaking. I also expect you to respect each other's opinions and listen to what each person has to say."

- **Be Consistent**

One of the worst things you can do as a teacher is to not enforce your rules consistently. If one day you ignore

misbehaviors and the next day you jump on someone for the smallest infraction, your students will quickly lose respect for you. Your students have the right to expect you to basically be the same everyday. Moodiness is not allowed. Once you lose your student's respect, you also lose their attention and their desire to please you (Lovejoy) [2].

- **Make Rules Understandable**

You need to be selective in your class rules (no one can follow 180 rules consistently). You also need to make them clear. Students should understand what is and what is not acceptable. Further, you should make sure that the consequences for breaking your rules are also clear and known beforehand (Reschly, 2007) [3].

- **Start Fresh Everyday**

This tip does not mean that you discount all previous infractions, i.e. if they have three tardies then today means four. However, it does mean that you should start teaching your class each day with the expectation that students will behave.

5. Conclusion

Positive discipline can help you maintain effective classroom management. Positive disciplinary approaches in the classroom can help teachers manage student conduct and troublesome circumstances. If a teacher could learn to include the approaches into his or her classes, it would greatly improve his or her teaching experiences.

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