

## Classroom Management : Let us Adopt Proactive Strategies for Enhancing Learning in Classroom

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**ABSTRACT** : In formal system of education, classroom teaching is very important function. A congenial environment in the classroom makes the teacher's task easier to enhance learning in the classroom. When misbehaviour occurs in the classroom, order in the classroom breaks, teachers get disturbed and process of teaching faces hindrances. To solve the discipline problems, punishment is the way that teachers adopt which is reaction to the situation. 'Prevention is better than Cure' and for the prevention of misbehaviour in the classroom, teachers may rely on the proactive approach of classroom management strategies which ultimately engage students in activity and encourage in learning. This paper tries to explore the concept of discipline, classroom management, punishment, describe proactive strategies to be adopted by the teachers to manage his classroom well so that teaching- learning can occur properly.

**Keywords** : Classroom management, discipline, punishment, proactive strategies.

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### **Introduction**

In the present context of Knowledge Society's domination over all spheres of life, there is no alternative of educating the future citizens with quality education. In this connection, teachers' role is considered crucial as they are preparing the future citizen. The teachers, who are involved in the schools with students of age group 6 to 16 yrs, practically doing a great job in the society because they are making the foundation of the nation. The teachers have to provide information to the students, implement

rules to practice by the students, evaluate students to review the progress. Ultimately they have to help the learners to learn and develop. Teachers' role becomes successful when students become motivated to learn. An amiable environment in the classroom fosters learning and stimulates the learner to work together. If a teacher represents himself as threatening authority in the classroom, there may held a mental distance between the teacher and the students which disturbs the learners' construction process of knowledge. He should be friendly with the students and should know

how to manage the class and should teach his students how to manage themselves. Among 228 variables, classroom management has the largest effect on students' achievement even more significant than parental support, curriculum design, school culture and school demographics. (Wang, Haertel, Walberg, 1993). So management of classroom is indispensable for students' achievement and students can not learn well in chaotic and poorly managed classroom. If students remain disorderly and disrespectful in the classroom and no apparent procedures guide the classroom, behaviour chaos is the only resultant. In this situation both teacher and students suffer. Teachers struggle to teach and students struggle to learn. So the teachers should adopt such measures which prevent the students to be disruptive in the classroom and make them disciplined. Thus teachers couple 'order' and 'learning' in the classroom and ensure student engagement and promote learning.

### **What Is Classroom Management?**

There are different expressions about classroom management. "It can be defined as the teacher's ability to cooperatively manage time, space, resources and student roles and student behaviours to provide a climate that encourages learning" (Alberto & Troutman, 1986;404). Colville-Hall says (2000,p-1) "Classroom management is a broad set of teaching behaviours through which the teacher shapes and maintain learning conditions that facilitate effective and efficient instruction resulting in a learning community. Effective classroom management is an ongoing, maintenance oriented process. It involves motivating students to learn, providing appropriate instruction and feed back and managing student work." According to Bean

(2001), classroom management is a system for structuring physical space and delivering instruction that manages behaviour with the overall goal for promoting learning in the classroom. Therefore it can be said that effective classroom management consists of teacher behaviour that produce high level of student involvement in classroom activities, reduce student behaviour that interfere with the teacher's or other students' work and efficient use of instructional time. It is a process that determines how teachers work, how students work, how teacher and students work together and how teaching - learning happens.

### **Is Punishment Necessary?**

The classroom management or in a narrower reference discipline, has become significant to indicate teacher's quality. In a conversation about a teacher of a school, colleagues come to the point of his/ her ability to manage a classroom. In fact, in its simplistic expression, good teaching goes hand in hand with good discipline. Charles (1981) says that discipline, class control, classroom management - by whatever name we call it, keeping order in the classroom is a teacher's great concern. Discipline is so crucial, so basic to everything else in the classroom that most educators agree; it is one thing that makes or breaks teachers. Not necessary that the whole class misbehaves. Three or four students, even one can so disrupt a class that learning becomes impossible for even the best behaved students. Compliance, control, punishment, respect, authority and strict- all these words typically related to the concept of discipline in schools which are really misleading. Management policies and practices have significant influence on the learning outcome of the students. There is accumulating

evidence from Meta analyses of variables that influence school learning and classroom management has one of the greatest influences on school learning (Frieberg, 1999).

The common and ultimate strategy that is used to solve discipline problems in schools is punishment. Punishment is defined as the presentation of an aversive stimulus that weakens the behavior it follows (Skinner; 1953). Teachers in schools favour the use of punishment through the years. Punishment or warning of punishment is meant for the intimidation of students and it leads the absence of belongingness among the students. Punishment leads the students to dislike school and teachers, make them inactive in the school activities and inattentive to study. To make a student disciplined in school or in a classroom, use of punishment is momentary solution; it doesn't bring an end to the disturbances made by the students' misbehaviors. Teachers including the head of the institution sometimes prefer to use corporal punishment to control the misbehaviour of the students. Regarding the attribute of corporal punishment, Henson & Eller (1999) mentioned that-

- i) Corporal punishment attacks the person, not the behavior
- ii) Corporal punishment addresses only undesirable behavior; it doesn't address desirable alternatives
- iii) Corporal punishment does not attempt to seek out the underlying cause(s) of inappropriate behavior
- iv) Corporal punishment lowers students' self-esteem, which promotes further misbehavior.
- v) Corporal punishment may bring permanent physical damage
- vi) Corporal punishment carries the subtle message that the best way to deal with life's problems is by using force.
- vii) Corporal punishment is often used as a substitute for good planning.
- viii) Corporal punishment establishes a barrier between teachers and students.
- ix) Corporal punishment lowers other students' respect for the teacher and causes students to be fearful of teachers and school.

So, use of punishment or corporal punishment as strategy to control misbehaviour in the classroom makes no wise sense in terms of discipline or order.

The poor performance in examination by the students implies that they have poor academic achievement. A common notion is remain within the people that discipline problem in the school is one of the causes of poor academic performance. The discipline problems within a school bring its standard at lower level in terms of academic atmosphere. The emergence of these discipline problems in schools start from the classroom. To avoid punishment or corporal punishment, prevention of misbehaviour is essential. Adoption of some strategies will help the teachers to prevent misbehaviour before it occurs. Some classroom management strategies have such smoothness that every teacher can be successful in maintaining order in the classroom, thus student discipline, learning in the classroom and academic achievement can be ensured.

## **Proactive Strategies of Classroom Management**

The strategies of classroom management come under two broad categories-1) Reactive Classroom management 2) Proactive Classroom management.

### **1) Reactive classroom management:-**

This approach is responsive in nature. It focuses on the consequences of behaviour. Reactive strategies involve interference procedures based on the principles of applied behaviour analysis which include variation of reinforcement (positive and negative) and punishment (positive and negative) (Kazdin, 1984). Teachers try to intervene the students' misbehaviour after its occurrence and try to correct it, shape it and direct it towards desired behaviour. Responsive approach requires much of time to correct misbehaviour and adoption of this approach disrupts the classroom teaching and subsequently the learning.

### **2) Proactive Classroom management: -**

Research evidence gathered over the past few decades suggest that successful teaching depends on not responding to the misbehaviour after they occur, but proactive planning for appropriate behaviour –preventing problem before they occur (Gettinger, 1988). Gettinger declares that there has been an emphasis on structuring the classroom environment and using teaching strategies that prevent misbehaviour and promote academic performance. He further described that proactive classroom management has three characteristics. First, it emphasizes planning, prevention and anticipation of potential behaviour problems rather than to the behaviours already occurred. Second, it integrates methods that promote appropriate student behaviour and achievement. Third, proactive classroom

management emphasizes group behaviour rather than individual behaviour. Proactive approach is preventive in nature. The teachers consider students' context and try to manage the classroom by establishing a self-disciplining environment. The focus of maintaining discipline is positive student behaviour. This approach helps the teacher to engage himself on teaching only and not to indulge him to control the student behaviours at the same time while he is teaching. Proactive strategies simultaneously promote high level of academic engagement and prevent disruptive behaviour.

There are some strategies which include several techniques to maintain classroom order and help the teacher undisturbed teaching in the classroom.

#### **A) *Developing Motivational Climate***

An important part of classroom management is motivation in learning in the classroom which requires a favourable climate. To develop such climate, teachers encourage students to do their best and to be aware about what they are learning. Evertson (?) believes that motivational climate of a classroom involves two factors i) value and ii) effort. To be motivated, students must know the worth of the work that they are doing. A teacher's task is to demonstrate the values to the students that how their work is worthwhile and the things those are important for them. Effort requires time, energy, and creativity a student uses to accomplish a work. Specific praise by the teacher, telling students that how much their work is worthwhile and good can insist the effort of the students. Understanding of the value of academic tasks and the effort necessary to complete these tasks motivate students to learn. If a teacher creates a learning environment in which students feel

the excitement of learning and success, then he can be able to manage his classroom well. At the beginning of the year, teachers must set expectations and create a motivational climate for learning in order to create and implement a successful classroom management system.

### **B) Setting Rules:**

Effective classroom managers establish guidelines for setting class rules. They have an awareness of total classroom scenario and keep lessons active. Teachers, who manage their classroom well, convey expectations from their students. The teachers communicate social and academic expectations at the beginning of the school year. They establish a list of rules that declares their expectations from the student's behaviours. There are some properties of a list of rules (Henson & Eller, 1999; 410-11):

- a) Establish the list during the first few class meeting.
- b) Keep the list short.
- c) Include only those rules which are necessary to be prepared and to explain why each rule is needed.
- d) State each rule simply.
- e) Involve students in setting rules.
- f) Focus on student behaviour need to achieve lesson goals.
- g) State consequences for breaking rules.
- h) State rewards for the following rules.

The list of rules is prepared by the teachers but in framing the rules they should involve the students. Student participation in framing such rules motivates them to accept and obey these rules. Practice of setting rules and involvement of the students establish self-discipline .

### **C) With-it-ness:**

A teacher's ability to be aware of events occurring simultaneously in the classroom called withitness. Kounin (1970) found that if students believe that a teacher is with-it then they are less likely to misbehave. With-it-ness depends on students being convinced that the teacher knows what is occurring in the classroom everywhere (Charles, 1999). Teachers, who consistently take action to suppress misbehavior is a successful communicator of with-it-ness . The teacher, who has the withitness ability addresses the most serious problem first when faces simultaneously occurring a series of problems. If the students demonstrate unexpected behaviors, these teachers calmly intervene and stop the unwanted behaviors by getting students back on task.

### **D) Overlapping:**

The teacher's ability to manage more than one classroom activity at a time is called overlapping. Effective teachers can manage this. While the teacher is working with one group, he/she has the ability to attend to other students. Also these teachers use management tactics while conducting the activities. Teacher can effectively overlap by pausing for a moment to comment on each student's work and by periodically looking up and controlling the class. Another way to overlap is to casually direct a question or comment to a student who appears to be disengaged in the lesson, especially who is disturbing the class. (Ince, 2000)

### **E) Set Induction:**

If students do not realize the focus of a lesson, they become inattentive and tend to disturb their classes. The introduction of a lesson is vital because the beginning time is the basis for

understanding the whole lesson. Effective proactive teachers get the attention of students before starting the lesson. According to Henson (Ince, 2000), drawing of all the students' attention, which should be the normal function of effective teachers, is called set induction. Teacher can start the lesson by telling interesting stories about the lesson or asking probing questions or stating the instructional objectives of the lesson.

***F) Lesson Momentum:***

Lesson momentum refers to a teacher's ability to maintain a sense of steady progress throughout a lesson. Kounin(1970), found that the best classroom managers were careful to keep the lesson moving at a right pace. Inappropriate student behaviours increase when the lesson becomes boring. Effective teachers set a time limit for the task so that they motivate students. A lesson with momentum proceeds at a brisk pace and maintains a consistent flow of activities with minimum delays and interruptions. Time not utilized properly causes students to lose interest and breeds misbehavior. So one of teacher's important tasks as a proactive classroom manager is to keep the flow of instruction moving at the right pace - not too fast and not too slow. If a teacher has to keep proper momentum in his class, the teacher must move the lesson briskly, not to over dwell on a minor or already understood concept. He should correct students without nagging and return quickly to the lesson.

***G) Transition Smoothness :***

The teacher's ability of transition from one activity to another activity smoothly is transition smoothness. Student behavior is influenced by the smoothness of transitions between tasks in

a lesson. Failure to gain the students attention, unclear and confusing directions, using lengthy explanations, dwelling too much on a particular point, and allowing students to take too much time to move from one task to the next may provoke student misbehavior. Well-established routines, sustaining class attention, clear directions, preparing students to shift their attention from one task to another task help to reduce student misbehavior. Kounin (1970) believes that smooth and effective transitions are one of the most important techniques in maintaining student involvement and class control. A teacher, without being diverted by irrelevant question or comment by the students can keep himself on track and it is important for smoothness. A teacher may be distracted and may leave a topic open and not come back to the desired point, this can cause confusion to students. Another thing that can ruin smoothness is when a teacher does not have a plan or course of action for teaching a lesson in the classroom and that lead the lecture jumps from one topic to the next.

***H) Group Alerting –***

It is the teacher's ability to keep all students actively participating and to create suspense or interest focusing the attention of the group (Kounin, 1970). Group alerting is two things: (1) getting the students' attention and (2) quickly letting them know what they are supposed to do Charles (1999). Directing students attention to the demonstration, using questions to check for students understanding, and changing the students who is asked to give an answer are some ways to focus the class attention. Student involvement is increased and misbehavior reduced when teachers hold the attention of the class. Techniques such as building suspense or

asking community questions can maintain an efficient classroom and reduce student misbehavior. This can also be done by asking random questions, or asking a student a question and then looking around at other students to see if they are thinking or ready to respond.

### ***I) Group Accountability:***

Accountability is the degree to which a teacher holds the students accountable for their work (Kounin, 1970). It emphasizes students involvement in their own work which is crucial to maintain group focus and to the ultimate success of the learning process. Accountability keeps students on-task. Accountability measures can include record-keeping — both teacher - and student-maintained (checklists, task cards, etc.), public recognition, skill testing, and written work. When students know that they will be held accountable for their learning and behavior and teachers know how each student is progressing, student misbehavior decreases. The focus of a group depends upon students understanding and accepting that they themselves are responsible for their own academic and social behavior. Students must remain academically involved to achieve the maximum benefits of the learning process. This involvement is maintained through group focus, which itself is promoted by the teacher through group alerting and accountability.

### ***J) Reducing Satiation:***

Kounin (1970) suggested that when students experience satiation which means being satisfied or having enough or boredom, other behaviors emerge. Satiation can be reduced by providing students with a feeling of progress, offering challenges to the students throughout the lesson. Variation in the task also reduces satiation and

alleviates boredom. Changing of the difficulty level of challenges, restructuring groups, extending the task, and using different teaching styles add variety to the lesson can reduce satiation.

### ***K) Proximity Control:***

While the teacher is talking, if he/she moves closer to the students, this will have different meaning. According to Henson & Eller (1999), moving closure to the students gives a message that the teacher is standing close to the students, he /she likes their company and both the teacher and the students have something common. With this approach, teachers can control the students easier than other approach because the distance with the teacher and the students are very nearby. It minimizes the emotional distance and leads the decrease of overall tension in the classroom. According to Bean (2001), proximity is an effective behavior management technique because the teacher can tell disruptive students that he/she wants them to change their behaviour without making the disruptive behaviour public even interrupting the lesson. Students are more likely to comply because minimizing the confrontation allows them to back down without losing face in front of their peers. Teachers have to keep in mind that their movement towards the students should have powerful body language that sets a hidden instruction. Jumpy motion, constant pacing or nervousness in movement can undermine the benefits of proximity control.

### ***L) Contingency Contracting:***

A classroom contingency contract is basically an agreement, preferably written, between the teacher and students, as to how the classroom

will be managed (Sulzer-Azaroff & Mayer, 1991).

The primary objective in developing a contract is to encourage students to monitor their own behaviours and secondary objective is to identify consequences of behaviour that would have a facilitative effect on students' academic performance and social behaviours. In classroom contingency contract, teacher and students decide on a behavioural goal and what the student will receive after attaining the goal. For example, the goal may be successfully completing thirty division problems; the positive reinforcement may be an extra game period if this is the students' favorite school activity. Contracts involve an exchange; both teacher and student agree on what each will do.

### Conclusion

Discipline deals with pupil's behaviour in the classroom. However, classroom management deals how maintenance of discipline is being done; it has to do with procedures, routines, and structure and it is the teacher's responsibility. If a teacher loses control over classes, it causes great disturbances to the students and causes great difficulty to the teacher to regain the previous position of the class. In this case teacher has to spend much of time to correct misbehaviour rather than to instruction. Good classroom management is essential for efficient teaching and learning. Implementations of techniques of classroom management under proactive strategies direct the behaviour of students in a desired way and prevent the misbehaviour; thus it reduces the occurrence of misbehaviour and contributes to positive learning environment. If teacher spends more time for adoption of techniques under proactive strategies

at the beginning of the year, he may get more time for instruction and engage students in their academic activities throughout the rest of the year. Properly implementing and acquiring competency on such techniques is not an easy task. The teachers have to plan before hand and practice with fullest endeavour so that they can be proactive to adopt classroom management techniques for the prevention of misbehaviour and carry on teaching to promote learning without any interruption from the part of the students.

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*Received : 10th February, 2009*

*Accepted : 18th February, 2009*