

The Effectiveness of Pre-Service Teacher Training in Classroom Management Skills

Dr.Arif Sariçoban
arifs@hacettepe.edu.tr

Veli Barışkan
velibariskan@yahoo.co.uk

Abstract

The purpose of this study was to analyze and evaluate the effectiveness of the 3-week pre-service teacher training given at Başkent University in terms of classroom management skills. To that end, the following research questions were tried to answer:

1. How do the Preparatory School teachers apply the classroom management principles taught in BU-TP in their classrooms?
2. Are there similar positive and/or negative patterns in the teachers' behaviors in terms of classroom management?
3. How, do the teachers feel, does the training program in classroom management affect their classroom management skills?
4. What is the overall effectiveness of the BU-TTP?

The study was conducted at the Preparatory School of Başkent University. The subjects of this study were the teachers and the students of the Preparatory School. In order to obtain data, 40 teachers were given a questionnaire, containing graded and open-ended questions, which was designed by the researchers.

The results indicated that most of the teachers at Başkent University are aware of the classroom management principles taught during the teacher training program. It was concluded that the classroom management skills are implemented adequately in the classroom and that the teacher training program is generally found effective.

Key Words: teacher training, pre-service teacher training, classroom management,

Özet

Bu çalışmanın amacı, Başkent Üniversitesi'nde verilmekte olan 3 haftalık hizmet-öncesi öğretmen eğitim programının etkinliğini sınıf yönetimi becerileri açısından analiz etmek ve değerlendirmektir. Bu amaçla, aşağıdaki sorulara cevap bulunmaya çalışılmıştır.

- 1.Hazırlık Okulu öğretmenleri hizmet öncesi öğretmen eğitim programında öğretilen prensipleri nasıl uygulamaktadır?
- 2.Öğretmenlerin davranışlarında benzer olumlu ya da olumsuz kalıplar gözleniyor mu?
- 3.Öğretmenler açısından program, öğretmenlerin sınıf yönetimi becerilerini nasıl etkilemektedir?
- 4.Programın genel etkinliği nedir?

Çalışma Başkent Üniversitesi Hazırlık Okulu'nda gerçekleştirilmiştir. Denekler Başkent Üniversitesi okutman ve öğrencileridir.Verilerin elde edilmesi için 40 okutmana araştırmacılar tarafından hazırlanan ve açık uçlu sorulardan oluşan anket verilmiştir.

Sonuçlar göstermiştir ki Başkent Üniversitesi Hazırlık Okulu okutmanlarının çoğunluğu, öğretmen eğitim programında kapsanan prensiplerin bilincindedir. Sınıf yönetimi becerileri sınıf içerisinde verimli bir şekilde uygulanmaktadır ve program genel olarak etkili bulunmaktadır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: öğretmen eğitimi, hizmet öncesi öğretmen eğitimi, sınıf yönetimi

1. INTRODUCTION

All teachers at Baškent University attend a 3-week pre-service teacher training program at the beginning of their employment. This program consists of 75 hours of training, 4 hours of which is set for classroom management. Classroom management skills taught are also evaluated during micro teaching sessions of 21 hours. Moreover, evaluation continues during the education year through teacher trainer and peer observations. The workshops and swapshops organized at different times during spring and fall semesters also contribute to help teachers refresh and develop their skills.

In this presentation, the content of the teacher training on classroom management will be mentioned briefly and the results of a survey on the effects and the implementation of this program, in terms of classroom management, will be presented.

2. OUTLINE OF THE TRAINING PROGRAM ON CLASSROOM MANAGEMENT

2.1. DEFINING CLASSROOM DISCIPLINE

Classroom discipline is a state in which both teacher and learners accept and consistently observe a set of rules about behavior in the classroom, whose function is to facilitate smooth and efficient teaching and learning in a lesson (Ur, 1996).

2.2. DISTINCTIONS BETWEEN PAIRS OF CONCEPTS

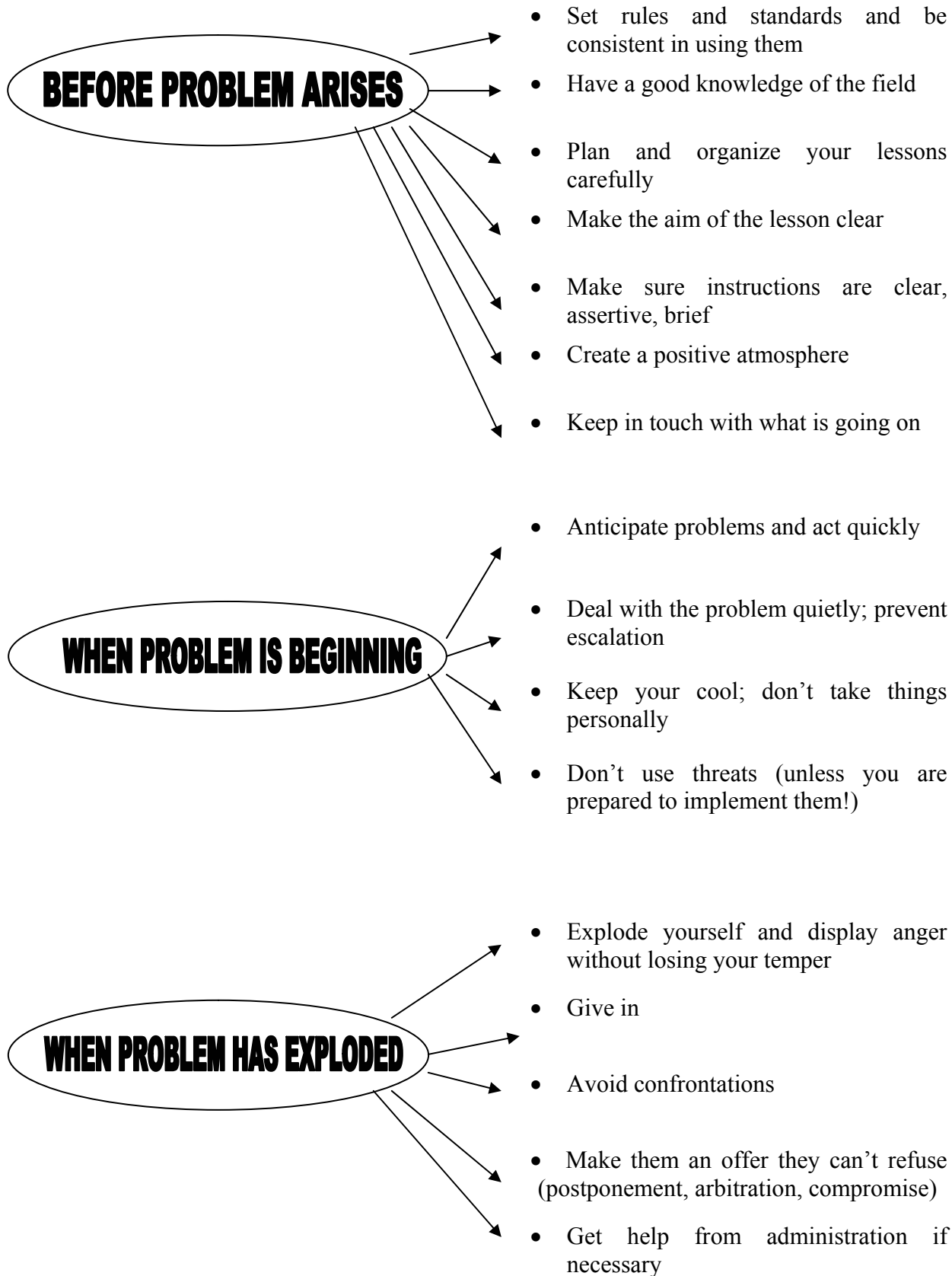
Control is imposed from above by an authority who is invested with superior influence, whereas discipline is accepted by participants in the activity of studying as an essential and integral part of that study.

Authoritarian describes a teacher whose authority derives from some exterior empowering agent, or who is bossy, whereas authoritative describes one who is obeyed because he or she is trusted to know best about the subject of study and how to learn it.

Power is the ability to impose one's will on others, through physical coercion, or other forms of pressure, whereas authority is the demand for cooperation and obedience that is accepted because it is rooted in a law, social order, or accepted value system (Ur, 1996).

2.3. GUIDELINES FOR GOOD CLASSROOM MANAGEMENT

In the light of the above mentioned concepts, the guidelines to ensure good classroom management in the classroom are as follows:



Adapted from Wragg (1981).

3. PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

Başkent University Teacher Training Program (BU-TTP), guidelines of which were mentioned above, has been applied for several years. However, a study that will show the overall effectiveness of it has not been done so far. At what proportion the principles of classroom management taught during this pre-service training are remembered and how effectively implemented is not very clear.

Thus, the central purpose of this study was to observe and compare the classroom implementations of the BU-TTP. The importance and the overall effectiveness of the teacher training in classroom management at Başkent University was examined. To that end, the following research questions were tried to answer:

- How do the Preparatory School teachers apply the classroom management principles taught in BU-TTP in their classrooms?
- Are there similar positive and/or negative patterns in the teachers' behaviors in terms of classroom management?
- How, do the teachers feel, does the training program in classroom management affect their classroom management skills?
- What is the overall effectiveness of the BU-TTP?

4. METHOD

The study was conducted at the Preparatory School of Başkent University. The Preparatory School syllabus is intensive general English supplemented with reading and writing skills lessons. The students at the Preparatory School have to pass the English proficiency exam at the end of the education year.

The students have 8 exams throughout the year, 4 of which are multiple-choice tests and the others being "classical" performance tests including writing an essay. If the average of these 8 exams as well as the teacher's assessment grade is 60 per cent and over, the students are allowed to sit the proficiency exam. Otherwise, they repeat the preparation. The contribution of the teacher's assessment is 10 per cent.

4.1. SUBJECTS

The subjects of this study were the teachers and the students of the Preparatory School. The teachers recruited as English teachers at Başkent University are mostly from ELT departments of ODTU, Hacettepe, and other universities. Nevertheless, a small proportion of the teachers are graduates of various departments such as English Language and Literature, American Culture and Literature, and Translation. There are both very experienced and recently graduated teachers. The teachers chosen reflects this variety, that is, most teachers were ODTU and Hacettepe ELT graduates.

Off course, the students have an important part in this study, too. The majority of the students come from state high schools and private colleges. As a result of the university examination system, our students mostly consist of those who were not able to get very good results. Again, as it is a private university where the students have to pay a considerable amount of fee, the students come from the high-income family group. The motivation is usually observed to be less than desired.

4.2. MATERIALS

In order to observe the classroom management skills and applications of the teachers and the behavior of the students, a questionnaire was prepared. The items in the questionnaire cover the subject areas which are taught during the BU-TTP as well as personal experience of the researcher as to what behaviors are emphasized and expected by teacher trainers.

4.3. PROCEDURE

The questionnaire forms were distributed to 30 randomly chosen teachers, who volunteered to participate in the study. They were told to read and answer the questions carefully. They were given a few days to complete the questionnaire, thus, it can be claimed that there was no time pressure. Most teachers were observed to have taken the questionnaire seriously answered the questions in detail.

4.4. DATA ANALYSIS

In the analysis of the data obtained from the questionnaire, Microsoft Excel was used. The results were put on a worksheet, and the percentages of the answers below were calculated.

YES
NO
USUALLY (GENERALLY / MOST OF THE TIME)
SOMETIMES
PARTIALLY (TO SOME EXTENT)
RARELY (NOT MUCH)
NOT SURE
NO ANSWER

The answers for the open-ended questions were compiled, sorted according to their frequency and then grouped according to their content.

Thus, patterns and similarities, as well as differences, in general classroom management behaviors of the teachers were tried to be observed.

5. RESULTS

At the end of the study the following findings were obtained. These findings have been given below with regard to the questions on the questionnaire. Under each question are the suggestions made for teachers.

Q-8) How do you involve passive students?

- ask them questions
- ask them questions and praising the correct answers
- give them extra time to answer
- encourage them to speak
- give them an opportunity to express/share their own interests/feelings/opinions
- guide them to use materials that attract their personal interests

- talk about the subjects they might like
- involve them in pair and/or group works
- assign them specific tasks
- give them responsibilities in various tasks
- make them read the instructions aloud
- use their names in examples
- use different exercises and NLP techniques.

Q-16) How would you react to loss of interest during the lesson?

- try different techniques
- it depends on the students, subject matter, the time of the lesson and the level of the students
- change the activity
- change the topic/subject
- try to catch their attention by raising voice
- try to catch their attention by addressing to them
- try to catch their attention by using an attention pointer
- use humor / making a joke / telling funny jokes
- stop the lesson for a short while letting them free-talk on any subject they would like (then trying to connect it to the lesson)
- employ some multiple intelligences techniques such as puzzles, etc.
- play a game related to the purposes of the lesson
- replace/relocate the students

Q-21) What would your first reaction to disruptive behavior be?

- warn the student(s)
 - with eye contact
 - by moving or walking towards them
 - orally
 - seriously
 - by reminding that they are no different than the rest of the class
 - first, in the classroom, and then outside.
- talk to the student personally / individually
- try to understand / asking the reason for that behavior
- tell / explaining to them how that behavior effects their peers and the teacher/me
- remind them that it is disturbing me and the other students
- tell why it is important to participate in the lesson
- remind them the classroom rules
- name the students and warn orally
- immediately give a task to the disruptive student.

Q-22) How would you react if the problem continues?

- talk again privately in my room
- talk to the students again privately and try to understand what the problem is (then, I would take the necessary actions)
- warn again politely

- ask him/her to leave the classroom / kick them out
- inform the administration / report to the managers
- send the student to the student services unit
- I would apply the rules in the students handbook
- show my anger and disapproval
- remind them the rules
- replace the students
- inform the students of the possible results of their behavior
- try to keep my attitude positive and insist on my efforts.

Q-31) How did the administration handle the problem?

- They talked to the student and warned him not to repeat the disruptive behavior again
- They talked to the student and warned him about the possible results / outcomes of his disruptive behavior
- They found a middle way between what I demanded and what students could perform.

Q-33) How much has the teacher training program at Başkent University improved your classroom management skills?

OPTIONS	<i>TEACHERS</i>	<i>PERCENTAGE</i>
1. not at all	1	3 %
2. not much	6	22 %
3. only to a certain	7	25 %
4. quite a lot	10	37 %
5. a great deal	3	11 %

Q-35) What is the most important source of discipline problems?

- students have no or very little motivation
- students have negative attitude towards learning English
- some students think English is not necessary
- students aren't aware why they are here (at Başkent University) / learning English
- students belittle Prep. School and Prep. School teachers
- students lack maturity and responsibility
- students have behavioral problems
- students come from well-off families
- family related problems of the students
- students are spoilt
- students are unmannerly and disrespectful
- students aren't capable of dealing with academic study / being university students
- students should be of higher standards
- students aren't punctual
- students don't bring necessary lesson materials
- students don't do homework

- students don't study regularly
- use of slang in the classroom
- students have a strong impression that the administration is willing to accept and cover their behavioral problems in spite of instructors' opposition
- I don't think there are important discipline problems
- there aren't too many discipline problems
- teachers
- teachers are inconsistent
- teachers don't have enough power on students' grades

Q-36) Recommendations to eliminate the sources of discipline problems

administration-related

- teacher evaluation grade can be increased
- commercial school policies shouldn't limit the authority and responsibility of the teachers. The problem is in the attitude of the administration
- teachers could make some quizzes or give some notes that will effect the students' average (more than 10 %)
- a more challenging and livelier "academic" atmosphere can be put forward by the administration and this could be reinforced by the teachers. However, to achieve this, the qualifications of the students accepted to the school should be higher
- the university should keep its criteria of student admission higher
- the students who are reported to the administration can be punished more severely
- pacing and examination system may be changed
- a more realistic curriculum can be developed
- physical conditions of the school can be improved

teacher-related

- teachers should stick with the code of conduct set at the beginning of the term
- teachers should draw a line between themselves and the students
- we should make them realize the necessity of the foreign language in their future careers.
- stricter rules can be set
- teachers should make the students feel important
- teachers should be consistent with the rules and classroom code of conduct
- students can be given some motivating tasks
- there should be effective communication between the teachers and the students
- I help them develop their own learning goals
- I try to talk to the students. However, there's not much one can do

student-related

- students should get psychological help
- students should get guidance / help to solve their problems
- students should have higher qualifications.
- training should start in their families

- “most problems are family related. So, if YOU know a way to eliminate these problems, please inform me, too!”

6. CONCLUSION

From the analysis of the results, the answers we found for our research questions are as follows:

- How do the Preparatory School teachers apply the classroom management principles taught in BU-TTP in their classrooms?

The details can be seen in the chart showing the percentages of the teacher answers. In general, we can conclude that most of the teachers at Başkent University are aware of the classroom management principles taught during the teacher training program and usually have good classroom management skills.

- Are there similar positive and/or negative patterns in the teachers’ behaviors in terms of classroom management?

It was observed that most teachers are aware that preventing from the disruptive behavior is more important in maintaining classroom discipline. Almost all teachers go to their classrooms well prepared, that is, they prepare lesson plans and have contingency activities. Also, most teachers put an effort to involve passive students in various ways. Another point is that, majority of the teachers try warning their students without confronting in the class, thus not letting them get defensive and affect the other students negatively.

When a problem persists, teachers similarly choose to warn them again, usually outside the class, and remind the possible outcomes of their behavior. Most problems seems to be kept under control at this point. Nevertheless, some cases had to be reported to the administration. According to the answers of the teachers, the administration generally helps the teachers solve the problem. Yet, a group of teachers seems to demand more severe action and punishment from the administration.

As the cause of the disruptive behavior, most teachers put the blame on the students and their family backgrounds.

- How do the teachers feel about the training program? Does the training program affect their classroom management skills? What is the overall effectiveness of the BU-TTP?

The answers to this question ranges as follows:

OPTIONS	TEACHERS	PERCENTAGE
1. not at all	1	3 %
2. not much	6	22 %
3. only to a certain	7	25 %
4. quite a lot	10	37 %
5. a great deal	3	11 %

From this chart, we can conclude that the teacher training program is generally found effective.

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Dr.Sarıçoban started his professional life as a research assistant at the Department of English Language Literature at Yüzüncü Yıl University in 1987. He worked as an assistant and an assistant professor of ELT at Gaziantep University for about seven years. He acted as the vice head of the ELL department there. He has been working as an assistant professor of ELT at Hacettepe University since 1997.

He has been acting as a member of the examining committee for the journal of education published by the faculty of education at Hacettepe University and Primary Education on Line. He has recently become a member of the editorial board of Eurasian Journal of Educational Research and the editor of the recently established journal of Language and Linguistics Studies in Turkey. He has several national and international articles and also presented several papers at both national and international conferences. His main focus of interest is EFL, ESL, TEFL, ELT and recently the Teaching of Turkish as a Native Language (TNL) and the teaching of Turkish as a Foreign and/or Second Language (TFL/TSL). He authored an ELT course book (The Teaching of Language Skills) in his field and a KPDS book (Book for Foreign Language Proficiency Exam for State Personnel). In his book he developed a new approach (The Sarıçoban Approach). He has completed his third book on “Instructional Technologies and Materials Development in ELT”, which has been considered to be published by Anı Kitapçılık in Ankara. He has recently been appointed as an advisor to the director of the Hacettepe Education Center.

APPENDIX

CLASSROOM MANAGEMENT QUESTIONNAIRE

Please read the questions and tick **YES** or **NO**. If you have a different answer such as “sometimes, I used to, no idea, etc.”, please specify in **OTHER** column.

		YES	NO	OTHER
1	Do you always set the rules together with the students at the beginning of the courses?	YES	NO	
2	Do you feel you have a good knowledge of the field?	YES	NO	
3	Do you always have a plan when you go to the classroom?	YES	NO	
4	Do you always have extra material along with your plan for slower or faster learners?	YES	NO	
5	Are your students aware of the aims of the lessons?	YES	NO	
6	Do your students understand your instructions easily?	YES	NO	
7	Are all your students involved in the lessons?	YES	NO	
8	How do you involve passive students?(If there are any) Please specify_____			
10	Do you use L1 in the classroom when you feel necessary?	YES	NO	
11	Do you use humor?	YES	NO	
12	Do you respect your students?	YES	NO	
13	Do you believe that you can easily create a positive atmosphere in the classroom?	YES	NO	
14	Do you believe you use your body language effectively?	YES	NO	
15	Do you easily notice if (some of) your students lose interest?	YES	NO	
16	If yes, how would you react? Please specify_____			
18	Do you usually walk around the classroom?	YES	NO	
19	Do you have eye contact with the students?	YES	NO	
20	Do you know and use the names of all your students?	YES	NO	
21	If you notice a disruptive behavior, (e.g. peer company, constant giggling, not bringing lesson material, etc.), what would your first reaction be? Please specify_____			

22	If the problem continues, how would you react? Please specify _____ _____		
24	Do you use threats in the classroom? (e.g. "Stop it, or I will throw you out!")	YES	NO
25	If you use threats, do you always implement them?	YES	NO
26	Do you try to confront the disruptive student(s) in the classroom?	YES	NO
27	When your students strongly refuse to do a task, do you ever give in?	YES	NO
28	Do you ever make your students another offer (such as postponement, arbitration, or compromise)?	YES	NO
29	Have you ever informed the administration of any problem that occurred in your classroom?	YES	NO
30	If yes, did the administration help solve the problem?	YES	NO
31	If yes, how? Please specify _____ _____ _____		
33	How much has the teacher training program at Başkent University improved your classroom management skills? 1. not at all <input type="checkbox"/> 2. not much <input type="checkbox"/> 3. only to a certain <input type="checkbox"/> 4. quite a lot <input type="checkbox"/> 5. a great deal <input type="checkbox"/>		
35	What do you think is the most important source of discipline problems at Başkent University? Please specify _____ _____ _____		
	_____ _____ _____		
	_____ _____ _____		