

AÇILIŞ BİLDİRİSİ

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Classroom Management: Key to Teacher Success

It is my pleasure to speak to you today and to participate in the first International Symposium of Teacher Training and Development. My topic is classroom management. I want to preface this speech with the assumption that teaching is both an art and a science. As teacher educators, the best preparation we can give for our pre-service and new in-service teachers is the knowledge, skills, and dispositions that research has proven is the science to good classroom management. I also want to preface this presentation that I am speaking from an American teacher educator perspective, but I am confident that classroom management issues are similar globally. Finally, I want to preface that I am not going to discuss extreme behavior issues. Certainly, they do occur, but for the majority of pre-service and in-service teachers, the management issues are minor, which, left unresolved, can lead to very difficult behavior issues and distract from student learning.

Research shows that the number one issue that teachers have when they enter the profession is classroom management. As a matter of fact, 50 percent of new teachers leave in the first five years of teaching, citing classroom management issues as the most frustrating, debilitating part of their job. As teacher educators, we know that classroom management is difficult to teach outside the actual classroom setting. Thus, it is imperative that our pre-service teachers see the classroom dynamic in action in order to experience the best ways to manage a classroom.

With this background I'd like to focus on the following areas:

1. Managing the classroom in terms of good instruction and procedures.
2. Promoting participatory governance in the classroom.
3. Understanding cultural issues.
4. Including fieldwork and reflection in all course work.

Many new teachers struggle with behavioral issues that are not monumental to disrupting the classroom. These are students who are mischievous, trying out the new teacher to ascertain what they can "get away

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with.” Since new teachers are dealing with the multiple dimensions of teaching, it is difficult for them to control the dynamics that comprise a class of students. Thus, getting through the lesson plan, which took them hours to prepare, becomes the teacher’s main focus, disregarding small distractions that can eventually lead to larger issues as the school year progresses. The first way to deal with beginning teachers’ management, then, is to devise a list of procedures that fit every aspect of the class period. For example, teachers need sound procedures for the following: students who are returning after absence, students who need to leave the class, distributing papers, working in groups, making transitions, and dismissing the class, to name a few. These kinds of procedures can be taught, and generating ideas with pre-service teachers is a start. At first, pre-service teachers will revert to the ways their teachers or cooperating teachers handled these procedures. However, it becomes clear in discussions that many of them never really thought about how their teachers maintained procedures when they were students. Usually, as these discussions grow over time, pre-service teachers begin to understand why some of their classes went smoothly and others were more chaotic and disruptive.

Jacob Kounin is an educational theorist who focused on a teacher’s ability to affect student behavior through instructional management. His best-known work was completed in the 1970s, where he conducted two major case studies. From educational psychologist to a well-known theorist today, Kounin brought a novel idea that incorporated both the instructional and disciplinary aspects of the classroom together. Before this happened, most educators viewed their role as simply passing on skills and knowledge to passive listeners. After publishing his book, *Discipline and Group Management in Classrooms* (1977), Kounin attempted to influence the original viewpoint of educators and to integrate teaching and discipline in the classroom. Kounin developed theories about classroom management that were based around the teacher’s ability to organize and plan in their classrooms while using proactive behavior and high student involvement. He believed that in order for a teacher to have an effective connection between management and teaching, there needed to be good Lesson Movement. This Lesson Movement is achieved through the following techniques: withitness, overlapping, momentum, smoothness, and group focus.

“Withitness” refers to a teacher’s ability to maintain good classroom behavior by using effective lesson management, especially on pacing, transitions, alerting, and individual accountability. Withitness is a term coined

by Kounin to describe teachers' knowing what is going on in all areas of the classroom at all times (having eyes behind their head!). Kounin determined that this trait is communicated more effectively by teachers' behaviors than by their words, and that it is effective only if students are convinced that the teacher really knows what is going on. Kounin found that if students perceive that teachers are with it (in that they immediately choose the right offender and correct misbehavior), students are less likely to misbehave, especially in teacher-directed lessons. Handling the correct offender on time is most important for classroom control. The teacher can maintain this strategy by using techniques such as eye contact and proximity control. The teacher should know each student on a personal basis (i.e. names, interests, strengths, and weaknesses). The teacher can use other non-verbal techniques to show students that they are alert and care about the well being of all students. The teacher may also want to make a respectable suggestion to inform the student that the behavior is unacceptable. The teacher should have communicated to all students the expectations and can have these displayed so everyone can be "with-it."

Overlapping refers to teachers' procedures that will allow them to be effective when two situations occur at the same time. For example, students who have completed an assessment or an assignment early should have something else to do, such as moving on to another assignment, reading a book, or completing a quiet enrichment exercise. While the early-finishers are staying busy, the teacher can move around the room to answer questions or assist struggling students. Another example, if the teacher is in the middle of a lecture and a student enters the room, the teacher should make eye contact with the student, have an area for the student to turn in work, and continue with the lesson. Once the students are doing their work, the teacher can go to the tardy student and tell him or her what was missed or answer any questions from the homework assigned the night before.

Momentum refers to keeping lectures short to allow students to group together and move around to gain more knowledge of the content. The teacher should make sure that these exercises remain short so that students do not become bored. A teacher can keep a timer and assign roles to students to keep the students moving and on a timed deadline. If students are struggling, the teacher can reflect on what they can do to make the lesson more meaningful and easier to understand for their students. In a world of social media and short

attention spans, teachers must recognize students' conditioned learning through socializing.

Smoothness is the technique of teaching students hand gestures that will let the teacher know whether the student has a comment or question concerning the lesson. This technique allows the teacher to have an idea of which students may cause an unwanted distraction and which students may have a good question that could pertain to utilizing the time effectively. When placing students in group-work, the teacher can walk around the room, facilitating and listening to discussions of other students. The teacher can then intervene or take the group to a different track if the teacher feels it is necessary.

Group Focus is an especially important technique since many students can get off task during group work. The teacher can implement this strategy with several techniques:

(1) Encourage Accountability: Make students aware that they will be graded for their participation and contributions to the group.

(2) The teacher can have a canister of popsicle sticks that have each student's name on them. The teacher can pick the popsicle stick at random to keep students on track and out of their seats with anticipation for question/answer time, board problems, etc.

(3) The students can facilitate a discussion. Once they have finished a task, they can turn to each other or they could pair up with those who are already done and compare answers.

Another important theorist for pre-service and in-service teachers to study is William Glasser, a psychiatrist whose Choice Theory has become popular among educators.

The 1998 book, *Choice Theory: A New Psychology of Personal Freedom*, Choice theory states that:

- all we do is behave,
- almost all behavior is chosen, and
- we are driven to satisfy five basic needs: survival, love and belonging, power, freedom, and fun.

In practice, the most important need is love and belonging, as closeness and connectedness with the people we care about is a requirement for satisfying all

of the needs. Choice theory, with the Seven Caring Habits, replaces external control psychology and the Seven Deadly Habits. External control is destructive to relationships, and an error many new teachers commit. External control destroys the ability to find satisfaction in a relationship and will result in a disconnection from each other. Being disconnected is the source of most human problems, such as student failure and disruptive behavior.

Although there are Ten Axioms of Choice Theory, the one that is most difficult for teachers is this one: The only person whose behavior we can control is our own. Glasser (1978) firmly believes that teachers hold the key to good discipline. He concludes that both teachers and students have important roles to play in maintaining effective discipline, but today he puts much greater responsibility on the shoulders of teachers than he formerly did. He has always maintained that the following actions are the teacher's responsibility:

1. Stress student responsibility. Since good behavior comes from good choices and since students ultimately must live with the choices they make, their responsibility for their own behavior must always be kept in the forefront. Discussions in which this responsibility is explored and clarified occur in classroom meetings. These meetings occur as regular parts of the curriculum. Students and teacher discuss matters that concern the class.
2. Establish rules that lead to success. Glasser considers class rules to be essential. He has given many examples of programs and classes that have attempted to operate without rules, in the mistaken belief that rules stifle initiative, responsibility, and self-direction. He stresses that rules are essential, especially for students who have done poorly in school. Permissiveness for those students tends to be destructive. It fosters antagonism, ridicule, and lack of respect for teachers and others. Teachers and students should establish rules together, and should facilitate personal and group achievement. Rules should be adapted to the age, ability, and other realities of the students. One thing is essential: Rules must reinforce the basic idea that students are in school to study and learn. Furthermore, rules should constantly be evaluated to see whether they are useful. When no longer useful, they should be discarded or changed. So long as they are retained, however, they must be enforced.
3. Accept no excuses. For discipline to be successful, teachers must accept no excuses. Glasser uses this "no excuse" rule in two areas. The first has to do

with conditions outside the school. What goes on there does not excuse bad behavior in school. Those conditions may, indeed, cause bad behavior, but that does not make it acceptable. The teacher must never say "We can excuse Bill's behavior today because he has trouble at home. It is okay if he yells and hits." The second area in which Glasser says teachers should accept no excuses concerns student commitment. Once a student has decided on a course of good behavior and has made a commitment to it, the teacher must never accept excuses for the student's failing to live up to that commitment. A teacher who accepts an excuse says, in effect, that it is acceptable to break a commitment, that it is acceptable for students to harm themselves.

4. Call for value judgment. When students exhibit inappropriate behavior, teachers should have them make value judgments about it. Glasser (1977) suggests the following procedure when a student is misbehaving. Let the student explain the behavior, the rationale for the behavior, and the consequences to oneself and others. Glasser stresses that reasonable consequences must follow whatever behavior the student chooses. These consequences will be desirable if good behavior is chosen and undesirable if poor behavior is chosen. The knowledge that behavior always brings consequences, and that individuals can largely choose behavior that brings pleasant as opposed to unpleasant consequences, builds the sense that people are in charge of their own lives and in control of their own behavior.
5. Be persistent. Caring teachers work toward one goal - getting students to commit themselves to desirable courses of behavior. Commitment means constancy, doing something repeatedly, intentionally, while making sure that it is right. To convey this idea and help implant it in students, teachers themselves must be constant. They must always help students make choices and have them make value judgments about their bad choices.
6. Carry out continual review. For Glasser, the classroom meeting is central to implementation of a good system of discipline. Discussions in classroom meetings focus on two issues: (i) identifying the problem, and (ii) seeking solutions to the problem. Students are never allowed to find fault with others, place blame on them, or seek to punish them. The teacher remains in the background during the discussion, giving opinions sparingly and participating in a way that reflects student attitudes back to the group for examination. Glasser stresses that the meetings require practice before they

are successful, and that unless they are focused on finding solutions, they will not produce the desired effect.

Richard Curwin and Allen Mendler developed the Discipline with Dignity approach. Dignity refers to respect for life and for oneself and it has been at the center of Curwin and Mendler's approach to discipline. These theorists point out that students with chronic behavior problems see themselves as outsiders and have stopped trying to gain acceptance in normal ways. In order to maintain a sense of dignity, those students tell themselves it is better to stop trying than to continue failing, and that it is better to be recognized as a troublemaker than be seen as stupid. Discipline with dignity equips teachers and administrators with classroom skills and techniques that enable them to spend less time dealing with behavioral problems and more time on positive interactions with students and on instruction. This model is a responsibility and empowerment-based versus obedience-based discipline model, which creates an atmosphere of democracy, encouragement, hope and warmth where clearly defined limits and skills in resolving conflicts are taught and applied. The consistent application of discipline with dignity can and does lead to increased mutual respect between student and teachers where power struggles can become a thing of the past.

Specifically, the model contains three hierarchical dimensions including, Prevention, Action, and Resolution. Prevention describes what teachers can do to prevent discipline problems from happening in the first place. This dimension has seven stages: increasing teacher self-awareness, increasing student awareness, expressing true feelings, discovering and recognizing alternatives or other models of discipline, motivating students to learn, establishing social contracts with the class, and implementing social contracts.

The class meeting to establish a social contract is basic to the prevention dimension.

A social contract is a mutually developed set of specific and clear rules and consequences that define acceptable and unacceptable behaviors in the classroom. During the class meeting, consequences are also established for both the teacher and the students if they break rules. The social contract is shared with the principal, parents and other teachers. If the rules and consequences are not working, the teacher will have another meeting to change them.

Curwin and Mendler believe that punishment destroys the student's dignity. For them, consequences must be clear and specific, must have a range of alternatives, must not be punishment, and must be related to the rule that was broken. An important contribution by Curwin and Mendler is the concept of "fair and not equal." There is a range of consequences and this model permits the teacher flexibility to teach. Therefore, the teacher may select one consequence when a student breaks a rule and may select another consequence when another student breaks the same rule. Curwin and Mendler criticize using praise as an adult-imposed value judgment. Instead they suggest using "I-statements," which is different from I-message as a form of praise. The I-statement has 3 components: the behavior (what the student did), the feeling (how the teacher felt about the behavior) and the reason (why you felt this way):

The model establishes nine principles of consequence implementation:

- Be consistent by always implementing a consequence.
- When the rule is broken, simply state the rule and consequence.
- Use the power of proximity by being close to the student when implementing a consequence.
- Make direct eye contact when delivering a consequence.
- Use a soft voice.
- Don't embarrass the student in front of peers.
- Be firm and anger free while delivering the consequence.
- Do not accept excuses, bargaining, or whining.

If a student refuses to accept the consequence, some strategies are suggested, such as actively listening, ignoring attempts by a student to argue, speaking with the student later and giving student time out. The teacher gives the student time to think about whether or not to accept the consequence and if the student fails to comply, the administration intervenes with the insubordination rule. The insubordination rule is the principal manner of supporting the teacher with a defiant student. The student may not return to class until willing to accept the consequence. The resolution dimension is used to reach students who are out of control. Students who cannot comply with the social contract require individual contracts. Individual contracts are needed when students do not accept the consequences established in the social contract;

chronically violate rules and disrupt the class and repeatedly refuse to follow specific rules of the rules of the social contract. In these situations teachers should discuss preventive procedures with the student, develop a mutually agreeable plan, monitor the plan and revise it if necessary, and use creative approaches.

Finally, pre-service and new teachers' lack of multicultural competence can affect classroom management negatively. Definitions and expectations of appropriate behavior are culturally influenced, and conflicts are likely to occur when teachers and students come from different cultural backgrounds. Concepts such as culturally responsive pedagogy or culturally responsive literacy have been explored in academic literature since the 1990s, primarily in the context of primary and secondary education, and the need for teacher training in cultural awareness is now broadly recognized.

Culture is an additional and integral part of student identity. Culture is learned from the family, effortlessly and unconsciously, and is well established by age five. How does culture affect behavior? It is important to understand cultural assumptions from both the part of the teacher and the student. Children from certain cultures expect an explanation for why they are required to do certain things. Knowing that some students may express themselves in different ways may help teachers plan for these differences and understand the most positive response. Studying and understanding different cultures allow the teacher to understand why some children react and interact in a school structure the way they do. Becoming culturally competent begins with honestly looking at one's own biases and prejudices and is an important goal for all teachers.

Weinstein, Tomlinson-Clarke and Curran (2004) note that the literature on classroom management has paid little attention to issues of cultural diversity, and the literature on multiculturalism is rarely interested in management issues. They suggest that the goal of classroom management is to create an environment in which students behave appropriately, not out of fear of punishment or desire for reward, but out of a sense of personal responsibility. Toward that goal they outline the following five expectations from teachers. Teachers should:

1. recognize their own ethnocentrism and biases.
2. know their students' cultural backgrounds.
3. understand the broader social, economic, and political context in which the class is situated.

4. be able and willing to use culturally appropriate management strategies.
5. commit to building a caring classroom.

Why does culture matter? Good teachers are not good by accident. Good teachers are deliberate and intentional and choose what they want students to do based partly on their understanding of the family and culture of their students and their own personal beliefs and experiences. When teachers have a basic understanding of cultural differences and similarities, they are more successful in maintaining self-control and identifying alternate strategies when problems arise in the classroom (Kaiser, 2007).

Schools also have growing numbers of students who live in significant poverty, and these students need special understanding and adjustments by the teacher. Students who live in poverty need a strong and trusting relationship with the teacher and an environment that is safe and secure. The teacher is usually the primary motivator and the one who stresses the importance of school and the benefits for students who attend school regularly and work hard. The teacher is the one who helps the students navigate the hidden rules and expectations of the school. Young children from poverty may come to school unprepared to begin the learning experience. They may talk louder than other children and physically defend themselves against perceived threats. These students are more sensitive to nonverbal communication and less able to interpret verbal directions and explanations. They need more basic explanations demonstrated before they understand what the teacher expects. Children in poverty need to know that school expectations may be different from the neighborhood expectations. They may need specific directions for what to do when they enter the classroom or how to walk down the hall. Children in poverty need to be taught what to do if someone calls them an inappropriate name, what they may bring to school, how they talk to others, and other procedural activities. They will need support and encouragement as teachers redirect and re-engage the students in learning the school's expectations and procedures. When the children are disciplined, they often try to save face and try to imitate adults with whom they associate by grinning or laughing off the discipline. The teacher should take care not to humiliate or overreact. Protecting their dignity prevents their need for defiance and shows that the teacher is sensitive to the needs of the student.

Finally, giving pre-service teachers the knowledge and skills for successful classroom management must be supported by field experiences in partner schools. It is only in these venues that pre-service teachers witness the daily routines and management techniques they have learned. They are then able to go from “reflection on action” to “reflection in action.” Donald Schon explained that pre-service teachers—and all teachers—need the ability to reflect on classroom practice and analyze which techniques were successful and which were not. As teachers reflect repeatedly on an action after it occurred, they will gain the ability to use that post-reflection to make an immediate response to a classroom issue that needs to be addressed. This kind of reflection takes multiple opportunities to participate in classrooms and hone reflective, analytical thought.

Another effective way to help teachers reflect on a specific classroom management issue is to use protocols. One that I found most effective is Descriptive Consultancy, taken from McDonald, J.P. Mohr, N., Dicher, A., & McDonald, E.C. (2003). *The power of protocols: An educator's guide to better practice*. New York, NY: Teachers College Press pp.52-55. This protocol is not just about getting and giving advice. The word *descriptive* in its title is important. Before participants get advice on problems they have brought to the group, they enjoy the opportunity of learning how others frame and understand these problems. The result is that they gain insights they never otherwise could.

Purpose

To help someone think through a problem by framing it himself or herself, then hearing others frame it. That is why participants are encouraged to be more descriptive than judgmental. An assumption behind the use of the protocol is that framing and reframing a complex problem is an especially valuable step in moving toward creative, focused problem-solving. The protocol also includes an advice- giving step.

Details

It requires an hour for the exploration of the problem though overall times vary depending on the number of participants. Group size is usually 3-5 per group or 10-12. I like to use the entire class format.

Steps

1. Problem presentation. The presenting group member describes the problem, laying out its different dimensions as he or she sees them and including previous attempts to address it. (10 minutes)
2. Clarifying questions. Other members of the group (acting in the role of consultants) ask questions of the presenting member. These are meant to elicit information that the consultants need in order to consult. (5 minutes)
3. Reflecting back. The presenter is silent while each of the consultants describes what he or she heard in the presentation of the problem, beginning with the question, "What did you hear?" The purpose of this step is for the group to develop a shared understanding of the problem and of its complexity. Participants are asked to pass if someone else has already offered their reflection. (10 minutes total for all consultants)
4. Response. The presenter briefly responds to the consultants' expressed understanding of the problem and provides further clarification of the problem as appropriate. (5 minutes)
5. Brainstorming. The presenter is again silent while the consultants brainstorm possible solutions or next steps: "What if ...?" "Have you thought about...?" (10-15 minutes)
6. Response. The presenter responds again, this time talking about how he or she might be thinking now as a result of that has been said. Here the presenter does not so much answer the group's questions as present his or her new insights gained through listening. (5 minutes)
7. Debriefing. The facilitator asks participant about their roles: "How did it feel to be the presenter?" "How did it feel to be the consultant?" And "Sometimes people other than the presenter have observed that they learned something from the consultation that will be useful to them in their own context. Does anyone have something to share on those lines?" (5 minutes)

To conclude, solid classroom management strategies are imperative for a teacher's success. Specifically, these four areas addressed today remain paramount to successful classroom management: managing the classroom in terms of good instruction and procedures, promoting participatory governance in the classroom, understanding cultural issues, and including fieldwork and

reflection in all course work. It is incumbent upon teacher educators to prepare their pre-service teachers for the classroom and a career that may span 35 years. Being confident in managing the classroom is the first step to that success.