

PLANNING TECHNIQUES FOR EFFECTIVE CLASSROOM MANAGEMENT OF SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN KWARA STATE

BY

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Abstract

The purpose of this study was to identify planning techniques for effective classroom management of secondary schools in Ilorin state. The study adopted a survey research design. A structured questionnaire was developed and used for data collection. Two research questions were raised and answered using descriptive statistics of mean. A sample of 50 respondents selected for the study. Based on the data analyzed, it was found from research question one that all the fifteen different planning techniques listed in the question one was needed for effective classroom management of secondary schools. On the other hand, the findings from research questions two showed that teacher can improve on his/her classroom management skills through in-service trainings, conferences/seminars, understudying experienced teachers' and right school climate. Based on the findings, the study recommends that school administrators should try to organize workshop and seminars for teachers on effective planning techniques to improve the teaching and learning in secondary schools across the nation. In addition, it was also recommended that only qualified teachers who have skills in proper planning techniques should be recruited to teach in secondary schools across the country.

Introduction

The classroom is an operational venue in schools which holds students together and offers them the opportunity of achieving the purpose of education (Korpershoek et. al, 2014). Thus, the classroom should be well managed and maintained to bring about healthy learning environment, relatively free from behavioral problems which goal should be to maintain a positive productive learning environment and quality performance. Most formal organizations, secondary schools inclusive, are aimed at effective and efficient management of the human and material resources available for the attainment of organizational goals. Secondary school level, anywhere in the world, is the bridge between the primary and tertiary education levels. In Nigeria, for instance, one of the important of secondary education is geared towards providing all primary school leavers with the opportunity for education of a higher level irrespective of sex, social status, religious or ethnic background (FGN, 2014).

The underline principle here is that the secondary schools should be able to provide quality, secondary education to all those who can benefit from it. The realizaion of these aims and objectives hinges in many variables such as good classroom management, adequate teachers, availability and adequate utilization of teaching and learning materials, infrastructural/physical facilities and school inspection and supervision among others. A good classroom environment facilitates desirable behavior and attitude among students and thus enhancing their academic performance positively. Such an environment provides avenue for effective teacher/students and students/students interaction. Classroom management is a prerequisite for achieving instructional objectives and safeguarding the wellbeing of students for whom the teaching and learning activities are centered (Alabi, 2014).

Classroom management entails planning, supervising, controlling and coordinating the activities of pupils in teaching-learning process. According to Fazalur et. al (2010), successful classroom management enhances students questioning and exploration only if the learning environment is conducive. The quality of the physical environment, according to Asiyai (2011), affects the performance of teachers as well as that of students. However, classroom management can be defined as the teachers' ability to co-operatively manage time, space, resources, students' roles and behaviors to

provide a climate that encourages learning (Osakwe, 2014). Alabi (2014) viewed classroom management as the provisions and procedures necessary to establish and maintain an environment in which instruction and learning can occur.

The classroom teacher is charged with lots of functions to perform in the teaching and learning process. One of the most challenging functions of the classroom teacher is classroom management and control. The teacher's effectiveness in teaching is assessed by his ability to use varied classroom management techniques to control students towards effective and meaningful learning during instruction. Meaningful teaching and learning cannot be achieved in a classroom environment characterized by noise making and other distractions by students. The academic achievement of students of a particular classroom, especially at secondary school level can be attributed to the teachers' ability to manage and control the classroom during instruction.

Classroom management techniques as used in this study, refers to planning tactics for effective classroom management adopted by teachers to ensure decorum in the classroom and thus create a healthy and conducive atmosphere for learning. Learning, because a positive rapport with students is the foundation upon which classroom culture is built.

Effective classroom management is an essential ingredient that promotes and enhances good teaching-learning environment which eventually lead to quality secondary education. The teachers and other members of staff must cooperate to manage the classroom, students, non-human resources and the environment. Effective classroom management revolves around the teachers' attitudes, skills, desires, setting of expectations and positive actions. To improve classroom behavior and student social skills, teachers must conceptualize the process of teaching and understand classroom management principles for making professional decision on class management. A well-managed classroom should strike a balance between consistent disciplines and praise.

Statement of The Problem

In a classroom, the students have the right to learn safely and with dignity, just as the teacher has the right to teach safely with dignity. However, classroom management should be used to meet both the students' and the teacher's needs. Teachers' good management techniques have been found to be effective against the cankerworm of problems of discipline in our educational system. An effective classroom management plan will enable the students and the teacher to respect each other. The major aim of classroom management is the improvement of students' academic outcome. This is the ultimate goal of education and it constitutes the major objective of the study. The considerations above have made it pertinent for this study to identify planning techniques for effective classroom management of secondary schools using Kwara state as a case study.

Research Questions

The study provides answers to two research questions raised to guide this study:

1. What are the planning techniques needed for effective classroom management?
2. How can the teacher improve on his/her classroom management skills?

Literature Review

Techniques for Effective Classroom Management

Effective classroom management requires proactive and reactive teachers in order to define and communicate their social and academic expectations to their students. Such involvements can motivate the students to obey and accept the school rules and regulations. Classroom management strategies are a crucial part of teacher's success in creating a safe and effective learning environment for student's quality secondary education. Therefore, teachers should know how to use and apply strategies that will allow and also help students to learn (Omomia & Omomia, 2014). For instance, teacher needs to focus attention on entire class and must not talk over student chatter. At times silence can be effective. Students should know what is going to happen in the class and monitored to check progress. Teacher should move around the room so students have to pay attention more readily and give students non-verbal cues.

Lessons should be planned to ensure that the period is filled with learning activities. Teacher should have a knack to memorize student names as quickly as possible. It enhances class control and confidence of the teacher. Few techniques were discussed below:

i. Ripple Effect

Jacob Kounin created the idea of the "ripple effect." The idea is that if one student sustains either negative or positive consequences, the rest of the class will see what is taking place and a ripple effect will occur. For instance, when one student misbehaves others will join in as well. On the other hand, a student receiving a reward will motivate others. Managing students' behavior in positive ways is the key to success. Students learn from others around them, and by believing in the ripple effect, we will be able to manage behaviors.

ii. With-It-Ness

With-it-ness refers to a teacher's awareness of what is going on in the classroom behaviors before they get out of line, keeping learners on tasks. Many problems occur during transitions. Theorist Jacob Kounin stressed the importance of "with-it-ness," which is the idea that the teacher knows what is going on in their classroom at all times. They understand the importance of having a close eye on students. Teachers who have "with-it-ness" are able to spot areas where misbehavior may arise, when students are upset, and are able correct problem behaviors before they cause major distress to the classroom. These teachers are able to manage their classrooms at all times and prevent problems from occurring or expanding. In a community of learners, it is the duty of the teacher to make sure everything runs smoothly for students by being able to spot problems.

iii. Creating the Proper Environment

Eliminating as much disruptive behavior as possible is crucial to creating the correct environment for students to succeed. Disruptive behavior is more common than teachers would like. Bondy et al. (2007) states that classroom management is continually identified by teachers of all skill levels as a major concern. They also identify schools with students of diversity as posing the challenge of creating an environment that is both safe and productive. It is crucial to set boundaries with children and give them dependency and consistency with those boundaries. Teachers truly need to set the tone at the beginning of the school year unless they want their students consistently testing them the rest of the year. By providing boundaries, dependency and consistency, teachers provide the environment needed for successful classroom management. Bondy et al. focus their findings on literature on culturally responsive classroom management (CRCM), psychologically supportive classroom environments and building resilience. Their study is based on the effective teaching practices of three novice teachers in the first two hours of the first day of school in urban elementary classrooms.

This study highlights the teachers insisting on respectful behavior and creating a successful classroom environment as well as resilience for students who would generally struggle in school. This healthy environment is gained primarily by how these teachers set the tone in the first few hours of the first day of school followed by continued implementation and reinforcement. The two concepts a teacher should focus are 'Developing Relationships and Establishing Expectations'. Developing Relationships involved a personal approach to teaching with students learning about each other, as well as learning about their teacher, and discussing why relationships are important. The teachers made developing relationships a priority because they felt relationships were at the core of a productive learning community. In regard to Establishing Expectations, one teacher worked with her students to develop rules, whereas the other two had predetermined rules. The word "rules" refers to normal expected behavior, such as "be respectful" and "follow rules when given". Regardless of who makes the rules, teaching rules and procedures set the stage for success! The teachers established and communicated clear, high expectations with an attitude of 'no excuses' (Bondy 2007). Over the next few days, the teachers emphasized expectations and repeatedly returned to the rules. Although the teachers introduced rules and procedures within the first two hours of school, they clarified that over the next few weeks they would continue to go over rules and consequences to get the students into a routine.

iv. Providing Guidance

It is not a hidden fact that teachers are responsible for providing students with guidance. Teachers are responsible for handling a broader scope of behaviors. Challenges come into place, not just in managing students with disorders, but also in holding the other students accountable. Students may play the "it's not fair" card when seeing students with disorders being treated with different expectations; however teachers can't allow students without disorders the option to slack in their academic integrity. Teachers need to respond effectively and efficiently to disruptive behaviors and also be aware that their own behavior could reinforce inappropriate behavior.

v. Building Empathy

Probably the most important aspect of a positive helping relationship is empathy on the part of the helper (Garfield, 1994; Goldfried, Greenberg, & Marmar, 1990; Luborsky, Crits-Christoph, Mintz, & Auerbach, 1988; Orlinsky, Grawe, & Parks, 1994; Sexton & Whiston, 1994). In actual practice, empathy on the part of the teacher results in the student feeling understood. Empathetic relationships are especially important for difficult adolescents (Bernstein, 1996; Mordock, 1991).

Unfortunately, in education, empathy is a concept largely misunderstood and even trivialized as a form of affection or caring. To the contrary, caring and empathy are not at all the same. Adler (1956) defined empathy as "seeing with the eyes of another, hearing with the ears of another, and feeling with heart of another" (p. 135). The end result of having been shown empathy is that the person "feels understood." This is crucial to reaching and relating to young adolescents (Hanna, Hanna, & Keys, 1999). Teachers can best develop empathy for students when they are aware of their own personal and cultural biases. Photo by Alan Geho Many teachers simply assume they understand the student's problems and dilemmas, and mistakenly try to communicate their understanding in ways that only distance the student. For example, a female middle grades student once told a disappointed teacher that things were really hard at home and studying was difficult. The teacher responded by saying, "Well, you have to get past it and study anyway. I have been teaching for a long time, and there isn't any excuse I haven't heard," The student, of course, had no indication that the teacher understood at all and was actually discouraged by the teacher's unempathetic response. If this teacher had taken the time to show that she understood the student's dilemma, she would have learned that the parents of the student were verbally fighting with each other every day, threatening each other with divorce, and arguing over custody of the children. They also fought about the father's drinking.

The teacher could have easily encouraged the student with an empathetic response such as, "It must be really difficult trying to study while listening to your parents fighting and wondering what is going to happen with your family." Such a response would have communicated understanding to the student that she would have found valuable and that would have enhanced the level of respect she had for the teacher. Such a response also would have encouraged the student to communicate with the teacher so that the teacher and student could brainstorm ways to keep the student on task with her various assignments.

vi. Implementation of a Simple Philosophy for Success

Promoting learning is the goal of every teacher and achievable when successful classroom management is in place. In the article by Reese (2007), who happens to be a Music Educator, Reese shares her four Cs of classroom management: Commendation, Communication, Consistency and Content. These represent a quick, successful way to establish a safe, healthy and fun environment, especially in elementary schools. Commendation is essentially making an individual connection with each student. An example would be praising a student by commending them by name for positive behavior. Acknowledging positive behavior, even if it was something seemingly small, can lead to a positive environment for the entire classroom.

Communication skills include enforceable statements and an opportunity to refocus and be in control of their own choices. It is important to avoid humiliating students exhibiting negative behavior- be respectful to them as you want them to be to you. Rather than commanding, communicate with the student with enforceable statements such as "I can see that you are excited to share. We will listen when you are ready to raise your hand to be called on". Consistency includes continually referring back to the rules and maintaining consistency of these rules.

Content involves mapping successful lesson plans, providing focused minimal down time and keeping students engaged with the lesson. When a child displays regular unwanted behavior, communicate with parents to collaborate toward a more successful learning experience for the child. When successful implementation of the four Cs is achieved, fewer disruptions will occur and more learning will be accomplished (2007).

Methodology

The study utilized primary data. A structured questionnaire was design for the study. The study adopted purposive sampling technique because the subject being investigated requires not only moderate level of education, but also moderate understanding of classroom management. Data were collected from selected public secondary school teachers. The respondents were randomly selected from five public secondary schools in Education District VI, Ilorin State which contain Asa, Ilorin west, and Ilorin south Local Government Areas. The sample of the study was made up of five teachers each from the ten randomly selected secondary schools (making a total of fifty teachers). This study used structured questionnaire of 4-point likert type rating scale of Strongly Agree (SA) = 4-points, Agree (A), = 3-points, Strongly Disagree (SD), = 2-points and Disagree (D). = 1-point. Mean statistic and standard deviation were used to answer the research question. Any item with a mean of 3.50 and above was considered as a planning technique needed for effective classroom management. Any item below the mean of 3.50 was regarded as not needed.

Presentation and Analysis Of Data

Research Question 1

What are the planning techniques needed for effective classroom management?

Table 1: Mean Responses of the Respondents on the Planning Techniques Needed for Effective Classroom Management (N = 50)

S/N	Item statement	Male	Female	SD	Remark
1.	Ensuring the availability of equipment to be used for instruction	4.10	4.13	4.12	Needed
2.	Ensuring the availability of materials to be used for instruction	3.87	3.91	1.00	Needed
3.	Identification of lesson objectives	3.86	3.95	1.05	Needed
4.	Listing clearly the roles expected to be performed by the teacher/students	4.04	4.06	0.97	Needed
5.	Ensuring appropriate storage of students belongings	4.14	4.17	3.92	Needed
6.	Deliberate decisions should be taken on the suitable time for lessons	4.11	4.13	0.98	Needed
7.	Ensuring furniture suitable and ease of movement with sufficient space in the classroom	4.18	4.15	0.87	Needed
8.	Preparation of learning sequence to be adopted	4.21	4.19	0.82	Needed
9.	Listing in order, the learning activities to be done	3.91	3.93	0.87	Needed
10.	Arrangement of facilities based on current students enrollment	4.07	4.04	0.88	Needed

11.	Arrange to put up facilities based on projected students' enrollment	3.72	3.75	0.94	Needed
12.	Provision for adequate number of staff offices	3.42	3.46	0.81	Needed
13.	Provision for adequate number of toilets with clean water	3.50	3.56	0.88	Needed
14.	Provisions for adequate ventilation and illumination in the classroom.	3.86	3.81	0.71	Needed
15.	Provisions for students to have easy access to materials, tools and equipment	4.14	4.09	0.87	Needed

Table 1 shows the responses of female and male teachers on planning techniques needed for effective classroom management in answer to research question one. The data revealed that all planning techniques listed had their mean values ranged from 3.54 to 4.20. This showed that the mean value of each item was above the cut-off point of 3.50, indicating that all planning techniques are needed for effective classroom management. The table also showed that the standard deviations (SD) of the items are within the range of 0.71 to 1.05; this indicated that the opinions of the respondents were not far from one another in their responses.

Research Question 2

How can the teacher improve on his/her classroom management skills?

Table 2: Mean Responses of the Respondents on how can the teacher improve on his/her classroom management skills (N=50)

S/N	Item Statements	X	SD	Remarks
1.	The teacher should be exposed to both internal and external educational conferences / seminars	3.68	0.93	Remarks
2.	The less experienced teachers should understudy their peers who are effective teachers	3.86	1.00	Accepted
3.	The teacher should have opportunity to attend in-service trainings	4.28	0.92	Accepted
4.	The teacher should receive regular feedback on his / her duties / performance	3.54	0.83	Accepted
5.	There is the need for the right climate in the school for effective teaching to take place	3.69	0.84	Accepted

All the five itemized statement in table 2 were above the mean of 3.5, hence, they are accepted. The mean of the items relates to the teacher improving on his/her classroom management skills. It is commonly argued that the teacher is the biggest influence on how well students behave in a classroom.

Discussion of Findings

The findings of this study revealed that the respondents agreed that there are planning techniques needed for effective classroom management. These techniques include; ensuring the availability of equipment and materials to be used for instruction, identification of lesson objectives, listing clearly the roles expected to be performed by the teacher/students, ensuring appropriate storage of students' belongings, preparation of learning sequence to be adopted, arrangement of facilities based on current students' enrollment, provision for adequate number of staff offices, provision for adequate number of toilets with clean water, and provisions for adequate ventilation and illumination in the classroom among others. Some of these findings agreed with Amadi and Allagoa (2017); Alabi (2014); Nicholas (2014); Osakwe (2014) and Asiyai (2011) that planning skills were required by the teachers at all level of education for effectiveness in their classroom management.

On the other hand, the findings from research question two showed that teacher can improve on his/her classroom management skills through in-service trainings, conferences/seminars, understudying experienced teachers' and right school climate. This was supported by Nicholas (2014) who opined that it is not simply to teach curriculum content, but it is also to guide, direct and empower students to govern their own behavior so that their life within a social setting can be an enjoyable and productive one".

Conclusion

Efforts to improve education must focus on the single most important component: the classroom teacher (Ingwalson & Thompson, 2007). Teachers in middle level schools must be well prepared to face the challenges of working with young adolescents; and critical components of teacher preparation are the knowledge and skills from education and related fields that will enable them to develop effective, and often unconventional, management systems in their classrooms. This effort must begin with a new paradigm in which teachers view classroom management as an ongoing exercise in building relationships.

For dealing with the most challenging of students, teachers can learn and apply strategies used in the field of counseling and psychotherapy, such as building empathy, admiring negative attitudes and behaviors, and leaving one's ego at the door. It seems particularly important to provide specific strategies for dealing with what can often be the problems that prevent us from persevering in the important work of helping students learn. In the area of classroom management, it is critical that teachers find ways of building relationships with all students, from the most motivated to the most difficult. To borrow the words of Rogers and Renard (1999), when we enter into understanding human needs and relationship-driven teaching, "amazing things can happen" p. 34).

From the results of this study, it should be noted that, the ability of teachers to adopt planning techniques needed for effective classroom management would likely influence the academic performance of the students, consequently guaranty the right students' outcomes desired by the school. The conclusion drawn is that teachers' classroom management effectiveness is a significant predictor of students learning and academic performance.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study, the following recommendations were made:

1. Administrators should try to organize workshop and seminars for teachers on effective planning techniques to improve the teaching and learning in secondary schools across the nation.
2. Only qualified teachers who have skills in proper planning techniques should be recruited to teach in secondary schools across the country.
3. Institutions of higher learning which should include planning techniques as a core course of study to be passed for any of their student to graduate.

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Appendix

1. What are the planning techniques needed for effective classroom management?

S/N	Item Statements	SA	A	D	SD
1.	Ensuring the availability of equipment to be used for instruction				
2.	Ensuring the availability of materials to be used for instruction				
3.	Identification of lesson objectives				
4.	Listing clearly the roles expected to be performed by the teacher/students				
5.	Ensuring appropriate storage of students' belongings				
6.	Deliberate decisions should be taken on the suitable time for lessons				
7.	Ensuring furniture suitable and ease of movement with sufficient space in the classroom				
8.	Preparation of learning sequence to be adopted				
9.	Listing in order, the learning activities to be done				
10.	Provision for adequate number of toilets with clean water				
11.	Arrangement of facilities based on current students' enrollment				
12.	Arrange to put up facilities based on projected students' enrollment				
13.	Provision for adequate number of staff offices				
14.	Provisions for adequate ventilation and illumination in the classroom.				
15.	Provisions for students to have easy access to materials, tools and equipment				

2. How can the teacher improve on his/her classroom management skills?

S/N	Item Statements	SA	A	D	SD
1.	The teacher should be exposed to both internal and external educational conferences / seminars				
2.	The teacher should have opportunity to attend in-service trainings				
3.	The less experienced teachers should understudy their peers who are effective teachers				
4.	The teacher should receive regular feedback on his / her duties / performance				
5.	There is the need for the right climate in the school for effective teaching to take place				