

Chapter 16

Strategies to Enhance the Most Effective Classroom Management Techniques and Practices: Learner–Teacher Interaction

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this chapter is to explore and determine the most effective classroom management techniques and practices. This chapter includes a full review and critical analysis of research and literature associated with classroom discipline and ongoing management to promote positive learning. Owing to the diverse population of learners, changes in cultural behaviours, and the social and emotional pressure children experience, the classroom environment has become disorderly. Teachers need an effective classroom management plan that would help bring order and productive learning back into the classroom. As teachers learn more about a variety of classroom management approaches, they can sample techniques that would fit their needs. Not all classroom management programmes are geared to the same grade levels. Therefore, teachers can choose programmes that will best satisfy the needs of their own classroom's grade level. Teachers can choose between an approach for individual classrooms and a whole school approach to enhance learner behaviour.

INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

Since the inception of formal education, classroom-based instruction, which is a fundamental aspect of teaching, has been the way teachers arrange the classroom environment so that learners can interact and learn. The instructional strategies that teachers used help to shape the learning environments and the attitudes of learners to studies. There are several debates on the correct way to enhance the effec-

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tive classroom management techniques and practices. However, all teachers who have spent any time in a classroom whether it be with Grade 1's or Grade 12's will agree that, regardless of what system is deemed best for their school, the price of good classroom management is hard work, consistence, teamwork and creativity.

Alber, (2014), initially we are not only preparing the child for Primary School but for Secondary and Tertiary phase of education, for adulthood and for the time he makes his own decisions and determines the course of his own life. A child is born helpless, insecure and dependent. Education makes him independent. Education involves examples set by adults who represent the values and norms of a society. But the decision whether the child will participate in the education process lies within the child himself. Here the adage is true: *“you can take a horse to water, but you cannot force it to drink.”* Therefore, it is for the teacher to create an atmosphere in which learning can take place, an atmosphere of love and security, of understanding and acceptance.

Today's classrooms are far more complicated than classrooms in the past. Discipline, now known as classroom management, has added factors. New dimensions to classroom management were added with the advent of inclusion, bilingual classes and learners with disabilities. An analysis of the past fifty years of educational research by Oliver, Wehby and Reschly (2011) reveals that effective classroom management increases learners' engagement, decreases disruptive behaviours, and makes good use of instructional time. Learners have also shown that classroom rules have a significant effect on learner behaviour. Therefore, teachers who have effective classroom rules incorporated into their classroom management plan will have more success in maintaining positive learner behaviour (Republic of South Africa, Department of Basic Education 2012).

The demands made on teachers have increased significantly in the past few decades and make classroom management more difficult. In the early 21st century, the reality is that:

- parents do not respect teachers as they once did
- learners have more behavioural problems than ever before
- teachers are not sufficiently trained to deal with learners' behavioural problems
- the myth of the good teacher discourages teachers from asking assistance
- relevant curriculum content is not enough to motivate learners to behave as was previously thought (Adi & Ngibe 2014).

All these factors have combined to diminish a teacher's real or perceived ability to influence learners' behaviour. Their loss of influence makes it difficult for many teachers to effectively maintain discipline in the classroom (Brinkschröder 2014).

Ginott realises the importance of the teacher in the classroom. When still a very young man he wrote: *“I have come to a frightening conclusion. I am the decisive element in the Classroom. It is my personal approach that creates the climate. It is my daily mood that makes that the weather. As a teacher I possess tremendous powers to make a child's life miserable or joyous. I can be a tool to torture or an instrument of inspiration; I can humiliate or humour, hurt or heal. In all situations it is my response that decides whether a crisis will be escalated or de-escalated, and a child humanised or de-humanised.”* Although this is true of any teacher, it is especially true of the teacher handling the first graders.

This chapter explains four areas that may assist teachers in promoting a positive learning environment for all learners. These areas include: how behaviour theorists influenced classroom management,

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