

# ENHANCING CLASSROOM MANAGEMENT FOR THE PROMOTION OF POSITIVE SCHOOL CLIMATE IN THE NIGERIAN EDUCATION SYSTEM

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## **Abstract**

*This paper examines the place of classroom management in the promotion of positive school climate in Nigerian educational system. Attempts are made to discuss issues in classroom management and control as well as the roles of the teacher in the classroom. The paper further examines reasons for transformative classroom management, strategies for incorporating effective classroom management and control in teaching and learning process, class control and discipline and indicators for good classroom management. Mistakes usually made by teachers in classroom management are highlighted and recommendations are proffered to ensure effective classroom management by teacher.*

## **Introduction**

The classroom is a place in which the teacher takes complete responsibility for guiding the students. The key to having a successful classroom refers to the method or technique which a teacher adopts to ensure that every learner utilizes available resources and with the sole aim of achieving the goals of the school system towards learning. Classroom management is one of the most important areas or aspect of school management. The essence of bringing about effective classroom management is underscored by the need for the teacher who function as a classroom manager to ensure that effective teaching and learning take place.

The classroom is the place where human interacting of teacher and pupils take place. While the management of the school is a major responsibility of the school head (Headmaster/Headmistress/principal). The management of the classroom is the sole responsibility of the classroom teacher. The classroom teacher functions simultaneously as the classroom manager, planner, organizer, coordinator, mobilizer, director and controller of all activities of the classroom.

To a large extent the ability of the teacher to manage or organize his classroom will have effect on the performance of his pupil and promote the positive climate of the school. It should be emphasized that while a school head creates the general

climate in the school, the teacher sets the climate of the classroom and whatever is created in the classroom will definitely influence the performance of the teacher in respect to the teaching assignment and the pupils in respect of their examination.

The primary responsibility of the classroom teacher is to guide the learning activities of the children to learn both as individual and as a group. In the process of this interaction; he influences the children sometimes intentionally with planned behaviour and sometimes consciously without planning.

Essentially, the school exists to prepare students to take their places socially and vocationally in the adult world. Whether they achieve this purpose depends to a very large extent on the quality of the instruction they receive in the classroom under the effective and efficient classroom management of a teacher. When teaching take place, the teacher expects that the end result would be learnt. Succinctly put individual cannot be educated without having a process, to bring forth effective teaching-learning process.

Therefore, the need to consider classroom management and control is highly imperative since poor or lack of consideration to classroom management and control inhibit the promotion of positive school climate in Nigerian educational system. The school is a designated institution for formal teaching and learning. This could be at the primary, secondary and tertiary levels. The environment of the school is also a place where educators and

learners come together to take part in learning activities (Ahmad, Osman, Halin and Noh, 2014).

### **Concept and Characteristics of Positive School Climate**

The climate for the teaching and learning activities need to be conducive, safe and adequate for such interaction to take place.

School Climate: is a socio-psychological concept that seeks to extend the boarders of interaction within the school which include students, staff, parents and the community. School climate also refers to the physical, psychological and human factors that pervade a particular environment that determine the overall performance and relationship that exist in it. Hoy (2008) sees school climate as the atmosphere, ethos, tone ideology, community, personally or milieu of a school. School climate as opined by Davis and Peck (1992) refers to how one teachers about the school and the

people feel about their experiences. This definition included both the individuals in the school environment and the society outside the school environment but in which the school reside. In the United State of America, a policy/program memorandum No. 145, of 2012 defined school climate as "the learning environment and relationships found within a school and school community.

The National School Climate council 2007 outlined some ingredients of positive school climate to include:

- Norms, values and expectations that support social, emotional and physical safety. People are engaged and respected – with adequate facilities for learning.
- Students/pupils, families and educators work together to develop and live a shared school vision. Educators modeling and nurturing attitudes that emphasize the benefits gained from learning.
- The physical environment is safe and in good order
- Each person contributes to the operations of the school and the care of the physical environment
- Communities participate in school operations and development.

A positive school climate is said to exist where and when all members of the school community – students/pupils, teachers, school administrators, adhoc workers, adjunct staff parents and others attached to the school environment feel safe, included and accepted and deliberately and actively promotes positive behaviour and interactions within and between all and sundry. Lehr and Christenson (2002) identified the following as elements of the positive school climate and summarized as follows:

#### **Characteristics of a Positive School Climate**

1. Students, staff members and parents feel safe, included in decision making process and accepted not just as stakeholders but as integral part of the school management and administrative system.
2. All members of the school community demonstrate respect, fairness and kindness equity, justice in their interactions and decisions. These attitudes build healthy relationships that are free from discrimination and harassment.
3. Students are encouraged to demonstrate positive leadership and role models in their school community. For example, standing up against and condemning issues

such as bullying and other negatives vices.

4. Students, staff, parents and community members engage in open and ongoing dialogue. All partners are actively engaged.
5. Principles of equity and inclusive education and strategies for students and staff related to bullying and harassment, prevention and intervention and awareness – raising are reinforced across the curriculum.
6. The learning environment, instructional materials and teaching and assessment strategies reflect the diversity of all learners.
7. Every student is inspired and given support to succeed in an environment of high expectations.

#### **Meaning of Classroom Management**

Classroom management refers to some forms of arrangement and coordination that go in the classroom. The concept of classroom management according to Arogundade (2009) is the process whereby human and material resources are organized, students are motivated and inspired and a cooperative working environment created to accomplish educational objectives. In the same vein, Adepaju (2004) cited that classroom management is the process of identifying, understanding, appreciating, maintaining, stimulating, controlling, harnessing and mobilizing both the human and material resources at the disposal of the classroom teachers to maximum teaching-learning process. It needs to be emphasized here that bringing about effective classroom management is not limited to classroom setting alone. In other words, it goes beyond classroom activities and extends to knowing the personality of the pupils and their parents as well as other variables or factors that may influence learning either positively or negatively. Research reports and evidences have shown that the teacher who knows much about the learners he teaches and their personalities tends to achieve better than the one (teacher) who knows little or nothing about his learners in respect to classroom management and learning activities.

Olowaye (1990) refers to the method or technique which a teacher adopts to ensure that every learner utilizes the available resources and with the sole aim of achieving the goals of the school system as classroom management. Classroom

management as given by Orukotan and Oladipo (1994), involves the bringing together in careful manner those elements which will help to create a good teaching and learning conditions in a class. According to Ajayi (2004), effective teaching and learning process cannot be accomplished without good classroom management. Arising from these definitions, is the fact that all activities put in place by the teacher and the school heads to ensure effective teaching-learning process in the classroom constitute what classroom management is all about such activities include mastery of the subject matter, making the classroom environment conducive to learning, using appropriate teaching methods, provision of physical facilities, and instructional materials, information services, motivation and teacher-pupil relationship and parents-teacher relationship. Also classroom management for a teacher entails the organization in any way or form for the purpose of stimulating and ensuring discipline in the classroom.

Classroom management therefore is not just limited to class control and orderliness in the classroom, it involves curriculum planning, classroom administration, which involves physical setting of the classroom recognizing individual differences and ability when teaching the pupils, making sure that punishment are retributive reformative and deterrent, providing ample opportunities for pupils to express themselves and exercises their leadership potentials while ensuring a variety of practical activities and exercises go on in the classroom.

### **The Teacher and His Role in Classroom**

A teacher is a person directly engaged to impart knowledge on a group of pupils or students. Fafunwa (1989) refers to teachers as "all those who impart knowledge and skills in formal and non-formal situations ... the foremen, auto-mechanics managers, administrators etc.

The major functions which every good teacher performs in almost every teaching day are:

- explaining, informing and showing how
- initiating, directing and administrating
- unifying the groups
- giving security
- clarifying attitudes, beliefs, problems

- diagnosing learning materials
- evaluating students and instructional activities
- enrichment of community activities
- arranging and organizing classroom
- participation in school activities and
- participation in professional and civil life (Adepoju 2010)

A teacher should also be competent to perform his expected duties. The competencies involved include among others

- (i) Mastery of the content and skills of the subject matter to be taught and their development trends and implications
- (ii) Knowledge of the goals of teaching and their implications
- (iii) Knowledge of learners' social background environment and social factors that influence teaching.

It has also been suggested that teacher should perform certain roles to facilitate teaching and learning. The roles are:

- Incorporating the discipline in the classroom
- Keeping accurate records
- selecting appropriate instructional materials
- Directing all activities and programmes in the classroom
- Learning how to motivate the learners
- Being a resources person - that is tells and explains difficult words
- Adopting his instruction and materials to the varying abilities and needs of his pupils.

Adepoju (2010) expanded the classroom management theories of classer, Krieikur and Albert lida on approaches to classroom empowerment plan and suggested reasons why the transformative classroom management should be incorporated into daily classroom management by teachers.

#### **Reasons for Transformative Classroom Management (TCM) in Primary Schools:**

Transformative classroom management is a practical resource that explains the how and why of classroom management (Adepoju 2006). It is important to recognize the importance of preserving the teacher's sanity while ensuring the students'

development of a personal sense of responsibility and a positive self-esteem. Transformative classroom management begins with the teacher, and will slowly reach all of the pupils.

Adepoju (2006) identified ten reasons for incorporating transformative classroom management techniques.

- (1) Long-term results – using Transformative classroom management (TCM) leads to students who are more self-directed, self responsible and rely on more sustainable and intrinsic sources of motivation. As a result it leads to long-term positive growth on the part of the students, while getting results in the short-term.
- (2) No need for gimmicks, bribes or coloured cards- TCM relies on strategies that create a need satisfying experiences so pupils grow in self-motivation and enjoyment. There is no need to bribe, coerce or trick pupils into doing their class work. TCM shows you how to find intrinsic source of motivation in your pupils and rid your school of dependence on system of public shaming.
- (3) You can lose the negativity – TCM shows you how to get results without the use of negative strategies such as punishment disappointment, chronicling failure, shaming or names on the board. Moreover you do not have that negative energy in your class or in your body.
- (4) Builds students self-responsibility and empowerment- TCM leads to more self-directed behaviour because it promotes pupils self-responsibility. It supports your efforts to promote proper ownership of their behaviour. In contrast to management models that lead to obedience and domestication, TCM leads to empowering pupils to be leaders and reach their potentials.
- (5) Tools for getting 100% attention from all pupils all the time. A system for getting 100% attention, getting pupils to follow to follow directions and having smooth procedures and transitions should be designed.
- (6) No need to fear problem pupils or potential power struggles. TCM shows you how to resolve conflict without fight. It gives you tools for how to succeed with pupils with “negative identify patterns” and how to give pupils the ownership over their own behaviour and how to resolve problems in a win-win manner that leads to solutions not resentment.

- (7) Promotes students achievement – TCM outlines the instructional strategies that lead to pupil's motivations, engagement and empowerment. It illustrates how every aspect of teaching is connected and how each teaching act is contributing to another successes or our problem.
- (8) Step in step system for promoting a classroom community – TCM. Outlines a step-by-step for creating pupil-centred classroom community. Get your pupils working as a team and watch the power effects on every area of your classroom.
- (9) Promotes a "psychology of failure" – Most classroom practices actually promote a future orientative in pupils. TCM outlines those practices that promote a healthy learner and things that underline this effort.
- (10) Peace of mind –Along with better pupil's behaviour, practicing TCM leads a harmonious environment and higher levels of awareness. TCM examines the kind of thinking that lead to effectiveness and to the experience of teaching as being joyful, not which lead to dysfunction and the experience of teaching as a perpetual struggle.

#### **Classroom Control and Discipline**

Without order, there is gainsaying the fact that effective and meaningful learning cannot be realized. Indeed, teacher's ability to ensure and bring about class control and discipline is believed to be one characteristic that distinguishes effective classroom from ineffective ones.

Control is an essential element of management. Management process is incomplete without control. Control according to Adepoju (1999) is concerned with juxtaposition of events and plans and making necessary corrections where events deviate from original plan. He further emphasized that to ensure that the actual educational programmes conforms to what was originally planned for, classroom manager (teacher) must ensure that

- i. standard are established
- ii. performance is compared with standards
- iii. deviation is corrected (if any), and
- iv. provision is made for feedback
- v. correction are embedded into new plans.



Aragundade (2008) refers to discipline as the readiness to respect authority and observed conventional or established laws of the society or of any other organizations, it means self restraint, self respect and respect for others and it involves a lot of sacrifice, ability to tolerate and preserve. Discipline as a means of giving the opportunities to develop individual qualities, to restrain from evil tendencies and to live as a member of society, conscious of a life beyond the boundaries of one's own existence.

Adepoju (1999) in his book, "Essay on School Discipline" gives the concept on elaborate definition thus: Discipline is the readiness or ability to respect constituted authority and observe conventional or established rules, regulations and laws of the society. In school system or of an established institution, it means that one should not only be self controlled in all his dealings but also be self-restraint, self-mobilized, self-respected in all his approaches.

Discipline in all respects call for sacrifice, perseverance, tolerance and recognition of human dignity and value. It is an act of believing in accordance and conformity with the general laid down rules, regulation and codes of conduct in any society or institution. In reference to the school system, a disciplined student/pupil is the one that maintains the established standard of behaviour in such school.

In the classroom situation, discipline may be described as the extent to which the children are self-controlled and willingness in applying themselves to the task assigned to them. A disciplined pupil therefore is one who has learnt and internalized the acceptable behaviours in the classroom and who exhibit those behaviours at the appropriate time without being forced to do so. By implication, an effective and efficient teacher must ensure that he controls his classroom to bring forth discipline which will ultimately result in result oriented teaching learning process as lack of discipline or an act of indiscipline can be seen as misbehavior in any of these areas whether in the classroom, inside or outside the school will be adverse to the promoting of positive school climate in Nigerian educational system.

### **The Indicators of Effective Classroom Management and Control in the School**

There are some indicators which will point to or show evidence of effective classroom management in schools. These include:

- (a) There will be effective learning taking place. Definitely learning will only take place in a positive school climate. Learning must precede effective teaching in a conducive school environment.
- (b) There will be display of orderliness and discipline by pupils in the classroom during the teaching-learning process.
- (c) The recipient (pupils) must have developed positive attitude towards their learning in the classroom.
- (d) Pupils will be motivated and encouraged to learn by the teacher by rewarding them positively.
- (e) For classroom management to be regarded as good and effective, an environment in which the pupils learn should be conducive and favorable to encourage possible assimilation of what is being taught by the teacher.
- (f) The physical environment of the classroom should be pleasant such that learning could be aided.

It is when all these are present in a place that we can talk about effective classroom management and control for promoting positive school climate in Nigerian educational system.

### **Strategies for incorporating effective classroom management and control in the teaching-learning process for promoting positive school climate**

Adepoju (2006) identified the following strategies or methods through which effective classroom management can be incorporated into the teaching-learning process to ensure positive school climate.

- i. Consideration of the physical environment since the physical environment of the classroom is an important classroom management, the teacher should ensure that a pleasant environment that will aid learning is considerate. The cleanliness of the classroom and that students themselves illumination, temperature and ventilation of the classroom are parts of what a teacher should has to consider effectively. The classroom

has to be orderly and the teacher should be able to walk freely to the side of each pupil. The seating arrangement should be in order.

- ii. Variety of instructional methods      The teacher should put in place or create some routines particularly in administrative matters while he always has to vary his instructional methods in order to make his lesson more interesting.
- iii. Ensuring classroom discipline  
The issue of attendance and discipline deserve serious attention by the teacher. They are parts of classroom management. When a pupil is absent from the class or is late to the class, a good teacher should demand for reason when the pupils come back, instill discipline.
- iv. Recognition of pupils with indisciplinary behaviour  
The teacher can also bring forth effective classroom management and control by recognizing the pupils who usually exhibits indisciplinary behaviour in the classroom. Having recognized them, he should place them in strategic position where they can be supervised, monitored and encouraged to learn rather than disturbing the class.
- v. The teacher must be a good planner.  
The teacher should embark on planning the various activities before the commencement of the lesson. Preparation of lesson is an indication of promoting positive school climate.
- vi. Good organization and arrangement of materials. Another strategy for bringing about effective classroom management is for a teacher to organize and arrange what he intends to teach and the materials to be used in some logical and streamlined patterns. Apart from this, he should organized himself and be well composed before putting up appearance in the classroom.
- vii. Good coordination of the classroom activities  
in performing the role as coordinator in the classroom, the teacher should make attempts to relate the tasks at hand in such a manner as to accomplish the goals of the class. The various activities in the classroom need to be coordinated by the teacher in order to ensure efficiency.
- viii. Effective leadership role.

Since all the pupils in the classroom are under the control of a teacher, the type of leadership style he adopts is bound to have effect on the behaviour patterns of the pupils. He as a good leader must therefore ensure that he curbs total disregard for class assignment, sleeping in class, chewing or eating during lesson and such other indisciplinary behaviour in the classroom should be guided against by the teacher as the teacher controls his pupils, he is supposed to lead them towards achieving the objectives of the school. Punctuality could be one of the areas in which a teacher could show good example of leadership.

### **Classroom Management Mistakes of Teachers**

In the course of managing the pupils in classroom situation, there are common management mistakes which teacher make to undermine efficiency in classroom management.

1. Inconsistency – teacher appears to act from a subjective-reactive set of criteria and lacks a transparent and consistent set of principles from which to make decision.
2. Chronicling Pupils Failure – Teacher focuses on what is not going well, the misbehavior and the problematic aspects of the pupils' action, rather than giving a clear set of expectation for successful behaviour and clear feedback related to progress towards academic and behavioural goals.
3. Use of Punishments – Teacher responds to unwanted behaviour with penalties intended to give short-term discomfort and send the message that they are unhappy with a particular behavior, rather than providing consequences that are non-personal, related to the problem behaviour and are intended to teach a long-term lessons.
4. Use of deficit models- Teachers uses a feedback system that assumes pupil begin with an adequate behavioural level with each act of misbehavior leading to a lowering of the level on a chart (names on the board act essentially the same way).
5. Consistent and perpetual use of extrinsic rewards – Teacher gives students tangible or quantitative rewards for desired behaviour. This has the long-term effect of addicting pupils to these rewards, and shifting their locus of control externally. The result is a lower level of intrinsic motivation and the promotion

of a view of workers as means to an end as opposed to a valuable for its own sake.

6. Short-sighted focus – Teacher focuses on what will stop the problem today and relieve the current crisis or stop the unwanted behaviour, as opposed to taking action intended to change or eliminate the problem in the long-term. The problem seems to go away for a while but comes back again in short time. Upon reflection the teacher might consider if the goal of the intervention is to feel better or to get results, common examples include bribes, guilt, and shame dramatic episodes, sarcasm, put-downs and punishments.
7. Personal praise for desired behaviour – Teacher gives general or emotional messages to pupils for doing what the teacher wants. This brings comparison of healthy and unhealthy praise in the classroom.
8. Victim and /or external use of language- Teacher uses an excessive amount of language that project a plea to pupils to change their behaviour because the teacher had been wronged or does not deserve to be treated with such disrespect.
9. Ignoring pupils' basic needs – Teacher thinks and acts with an orientation base on how pupils behaviour affects their interest, where it is either good or bad depending on how much trouble it gives them, rather than examining all pupil behaviour within the context of meeting a need of some kind.
10. Passive Hostility – Rather than taking action (the only thing that changes behaviour) the teacher expects pupils to respond to anger, threats, tortures, shaming and random punishments teacher assumes that pupils behave because the teacher has been forceful or repetitive enough to make them aware of how they should act. The result of this strategy is a long-term deterioration of the teacher-pupil relationship, however levels of motivation and an increase in behavioural problems especially from pupils with negative identities,

### Conclusion

The classroom is the teacher's work environment. It has been observed that work environment components such as physical facilities, information services motivation and teacher-students relationship are likely to influence classroom management which forms the school climate. Therefore teachers should play leading roles in the classroom

management towards attaining educational objectives and thereby promoting positive school climate in Nigerian educational system.

**Recommendations:**

Management tasks in the classroom are extremely varied and complex and the efficient and effective performance of these tasks and functions is the responsibility of the class teacher. In order for the teacher to perform his classroom duties maximally and ensure effective teaching-learning outcome through good and effective classroom management and control that would promote positive school climate in Nigerian educational system, the following recommendations is put forward:

1. There should be reasonable number of pupils under the supervision of a teacher in the classroom. In other words, the class-size should not be so large that it can bring about administrative in efficiency.
2. There should be defined and structured channel of communication.
3. The teacher should show the pupils love and understanding but be firm and fair.
4. The teaching methods to be adopted by the teachers must be varied to arouse the interest of the pupils and make the lesson less monotonous.
5. Adequate learning resources must be employed to bring about teaching effectiveness.
6. Teacher must be mentally alert, well composed, enthusiastic, well-informed, creative and friendly.
7. Recognition should be given to the individual differences of the pupils and positions and assignments given based on their capabilities.
8. There should be continuous and relevant evaluation strategies.
9. Cordial relationship should exist between the teachers and parents. This will reduce cases of indiscipline among pupils.
10. Teachers must have a mastery of the subject-matter and be professionally qualified.

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