

Classroom Management in Primary and Secondary Education Literature Review

Aikaterini Vairamidou¹ & Pela Stravakou²

Abstract

During the last decades many theorists tried to define what classroom management is, which are the characteristics that make classroom management effective or ineffective, the factors that are connected to this term, the sectors of classroom management and if whether it is affected by external factors. The first definitions that have been given present classroom management as a synonym to discipline, but according to modern theories discipline is just a crumple of classroom management, as classroom management is a wide term that includes many aspects that are presented below.

Key words: classroom management, effective teacher, effective teaching, discipline, verbal-non verbal interaction, teaching environment

1. Introduction

What is classroom management? During the last decades, many definitions have been given to this term, starting from 1961, where it was mentioned that classroom management is strongly connected to the teacher's role in the class and the way he/she handles all the daily issues that may come up in the classroom (Brown & Phelps, 1961). According to more recent theories, this term does not only include the repressive actions a teacher can make, but it also includes all the preventive actions the teacher should make in order to ensure a thriving environment for all the pupils (Henley, 2006; Pianta, 2006; Helmke, 2011 as cited in Makarova & Herzog, 2013). Furthermore, classroom management is also related not only to student's academic success as it was considered, but also to their full development - sentimental, cognitive and social (Evertson & Weinstein, 2011 as cited in Trikkaliotis, 2014). It is also important to be mentioned that effective classroom management is directly connected to the development of children's inner discipline. Thus, children do not follow an imposed discipline because they are obliged to do so, but they co-decide on the rules of the class and the consequences that should be applied in case they do not follow these rules (Barns, 2010).

Nowadays, according to those definitions, teachers are presented to be more flexible (Saban, 2009), creating positive interpersonal relationships with their pupils, coming up to their needs (Ho and Lin, 2016) and cooperating with them in the classroom rules setting (Karantzis, 2011). Children and teacher can cooperate all together in order to create positive relationships and a supportive classroom climate (Jakobsen et al., 2002), elements that gradually lead to the development of self-esteem and children's self-control (Jones & Jones, 2004).

¹ PhD Candidate in the Department of Primary education, Democritus University of Thrace, Greece.

Address: 25B John Kennedy, Pylea, 55535, Thessaloniki, Greece.

E-mail address: katiavairam@yahoo.gr Telephone number: +306977443515

² Dr. Assistant Professor, Democritus University of Thrace, Greece. Department of Primary Education.

Address: Democritus University of Thrace, Department of primary Education, Nea Chili, 68100, Alexandroupoli, Greece

E-mail address: pstravak@eled.duth.gr Telephone number: +306974504098

Classroom management, in general, can determine either the failure or the success of the whole educational process (Uriegas et al., 2014).

1.1 Factors that are connected to classroom management

There are some factors that are connected to the term of classroom management. Below these factors are presented. These are as follows:

- School. The school is a social institution, which is organized to train the human beings of every society (Xochellis, 2015). It is considered to be effective when their students show more progress in relation to their former level. Two parameters characterize a school as effective, the quality of education it offers and children's full development (Evaggelou, 2014). Effective schools are considered to be the ones that have vision and mission, safe environment, pluralistic perspective, success expectancy for all its students, positive interaction between teachers and students, a capable director as well as teachers, a good evaluation system (Epanchin et al., 1994) and is open to the parents of their children and in general has an outward-looking perspective to the whole community (Zotos, 1993).
- Classroom. The classroom is not only the place that gathers students, but it is also a social team, as a mean of discipline, and teaching methodology (Matsagouras, 1999). In general, inside a classroom many strong bonds are created, bonds of solidarity, bonds of support, bonds of mutual respect, and last but not least bonds of love (Zotos, 1993).
- Physical conditions of the class. Another important factor of classroom management is to create a proper learning environment, where children would be inspired, ready to make the best of their abilities. This physical environment consists of the following: the provision of the desks and seats and the other furniture of the class, the aesthetic condition of the class, logistics infrastructure, natural conditions such as lighting, temperature etc., and student's seats (Anagnostopoulou, 2005; Brown & Phelps, 1961; Dunne & Wragg, 2003; Gremmen et al., 2016; Sylwester, 1970; Underwood, 1987; Wragg, 2003).
- Classroom climate. The classroom climate can encompass both the physical environment and the social relations in the classroom (Chaplain, 2016). It is about the feeling you have, when you enter a classroom. It is not easily measurable (Papastamatis, 2006). A poorer classroom climate may have as a result children's disruptive behavior and it is a threat to the educational environment and to children's school performances (Persson & Svensson, 2017). The democratic climate in a classroom is a beneficial factor that contributes effective control of the class (Muuss, 1966).
- Effective teacher. Effective is considered to be the teacher who has quality in his/her attitude (Barns, 2010), obtains good relations and communication with his/her students demonstrating to them: love (Dreikurs & Kasel, 1978), honesty, immediacy, acceptance, calmness, determination (McPhillimy, 1996). The management skills of teachers are mostly effective in the prevention of undesirable behavior. So, in order to succeed effective classroom management, teachers should always take into account feelings, interests, skills and differences of children. Poor classroom management has as a consequence unwanted behavior (Kayikci, 2009). An effective teacher should apply some strategies for the prevention and confrontation of problems that may come up during the school year (Karantzis, 2011). *Prevention strategies* are considered to be the following: Getting ready before the inception of the school year, programming, co-operating with colleagues, studying the archives of the future pupils, looking for assessment models, keeping down important notes, organizing the classroom (Sylwester, 1970), coming in touch with parents (Brown & Phelps, 1961). Subsequently, when the school year begins they have to introduce to the children the school's rules (Wragg, 1993) and to co-decide classroom rules (Morgan, 2015). Finally, according to Kounin, throughout the lesson in order for the teacher to be effective and to prevent any unwanted behavior, he/she should be alert ('withitness'), use overlapping and smoothness (Wragg, 1993). Furthermore, he/she should maximize "the active teaching time" by holding children's attention throughout the learning process (Kyriacou 2009). This can be accomplished since teachers are well organized, use effectively their teaching time, involve students in the learning process and give them effective feedback (Jacobsen et al., 2002). Children can meet better when they know what follows next, when they know the program (Wong & Wong, 2014) and the goals of each lesson. *Confrontation strategies* are considered to be the following starting from ignorance, indirect intervention, direct intervention and implementation of consequences. Those should be applied gradually (Karantzis, 2011; Panagakos, 2014).

A contemporary teacher has updated knowledge and skills, knows strategies and techniques in order to handle effectively any difficulties that could be faced in the classroom (Poursanidou, 2016), and last but not least knows the school's philosophy, his/her rights and duties and the colleagues' attitudes (Underwood, 1987).

- **Effective/ineffective teaching.** *Effective teaching* is about organizing all the goals in order to succeed learning (Kadianaki, 2008). According to Borich (2014), effective teaching is about recognizing the interactive methods between teacher and students in the class that influences cognitive and sentimental student's performance. Teaching should be considered as art. According to this, all talents a teacher has such as music, art etc. should be used throughout the teaching process (May, 2011). Furthermore, some specific knowledge or strengths a teacher may have in a certain subject such as Maths, Geography etc. could be incorporated in the lesson, promoting children's interests (Underwood, 1987). Effective teaching is enhanced through programming, presentation, attention and assessment (Kyriacou, 2009). The role of the teacher in effective teaching is of vital importance, but teaching is not only under the teacher's control, it is also based on the interaction between students and teacher (Barns, 2010). In order for teaching to be effective children should be active listeners who know their rights and their responsibilities and understand the need of implementing consequences when there is unwanted behavior (Ross, 1994). *But why is teaching not always effective?* There are some factors that are related to an ineffective teaching such as: lack of eye contact, lack of children's interest and indifference from the teacher's side (Barns, 2010) and when exists the culture of assimilation and not the culture of integration in multicultural classes (Makarova & Herzog, 2013).
- **Verbal and non verbal interaction.** Verbal interaction is about communicating with others orally and it has some principals such as: speech, language, quality of voice, phonetic characteristics, language ability. On the other hand, non verbal communication is an outcome of series of phenomena, expressions and gestures. Appearance is included in this category (Vasilioi, 2004b). The non verbal attitude is widely known as body language, and it indicates the feelings of a person. According to a research the two genders decode differently the non verbal attitude and differences were also found among teachers from different social-economic backgrounds (Vrettos, 1994). Non verbal interaction, such as eye contact contributes to the prevention of unwanted behavior, while verbal interaction contributes to the confrontation (Konti, 2011). When a problem arises, teachers should keep their calmness and look for the causes of the problem, rather than talk to their students in an intense way (Schain & Polner, 1964). It is true that, the whole communication of the group influences the classroom climate (Bany & Johnson, 1969; Hurt et al., 1978). Teachers should be effective managers and apply properly all the communication messages through different directions and provide proper feedback (Ho & Lin, 2016).
- **Discipline.** Discipline is the obedience between two people or to an authority. From educational approach the target of discipline is self discipline/self control (Aravanis, 1998). When is an attitude considered to be problematic? When it prevents the educational process and as a result it prevents the other pupils having the right to knowledge. Both teachers and students are responsible for the behavior of children (Fontana, 1994; Levin & Nolan, 2004). As far as children are concerned, their behavior is influenced by many parameters such as socio-cultural and economical background, family, ability, sex and age (Andreadou & Andreadou, 2017). More specific about age, when children grow up their relations change, they are more critical to their teachers, and their parents, they need acceptance and qualification (Smyrnakis, 2015). As far as teachers are concerned, the fundamental elements that influence student's behavior are: teacher's personality, style of teaching, active teaching time, classroom organization, implementation of rules (Papanastasiou, 2016). Furthermore, some of the school factors that are connected to discipline are mutual respect between teacher and student, compliance to the rules of the class, appliance of student centered teaching, confrontation of students as equal, reassurance that the school discipline ensures children's dignity (Kyrides, 1999). So in conclusion, the basic risk factors for the development of behavioral disorders are family background, school factors and personal factors. So, as far as school factors are concerned (which is the only that can be managed), the key to problematic behavior is considered to be *prevention* of unwanted behavior (Andreadou & Andreadou, 2017) and the key of prevention is preparation (Muuss, 1966; Ross, 1994). A well prepared teacher, who shows respect to the students, has much less disruptive problems to face (Kyrides, 1999; Ross, 1994). Traditional pedagogy suggests punishment as a technique to prevent and confront adverse behavior and establish order. Physical punishment is against the law. Its long-term effects are so destructive and make people act with so much aggression (Matsaggouras, 1999).

According to more recent pedagogical theories, in the case that a teacher confronts problematic situation in the classroom, he/she should distract the attention of the child, remind classroom rules and apply the logical consequences of children's behavior (Barns, 2010; Dreikurs, 1968) immediately after the unwanted behavior, correlating the consequences to the behavior. The upper goal that every teacher should keep in mind is to create a flexible environment where effective behavior is encouraged for all the students and that teachers themselves are not ok by just controlling the ineffective behavior of children (Jones & Jones, 2004), but by making themselves less necessary to their pupils (Fontana, 1985).

- Specific groups of pupils. In this group there are all the pupils that have some specific characteristics such as pupils that confront difficulties, gifted and talented pupils, pupils with communication disorders, language disorders, pupils with emotional and behavioral difficulties, pupils with physical disorders, pupils with different language (Charles & Senter, 2008) and pupils with not categorized educational difficulties (Chaplain, 2016; Livaniou, 2004). The teacher should be able to adapt his teaching towards all his/her pupils, noticing the developmental pace of every student, focusing on his/her specific needs. Screening is a useful tool for detecting the difficulties a child confronts (Karyda, 2008). Teachers should firstly be educated on the detection of the disorders and then on the methods and strategies that will be needed in order to help the student in the class (Livaniou, 2004). When the first disorders are noticed, teachers should address the specialists as soon as possible, in order for the child to be helped. The sooner those disorders are noticed and intervention is carried out in a timely manner, it is more likely a child's environment to be more supportive and his/her self-esteem not to be highly injured from the negative reactions of the others (Kalantzi-Azizi & Karadimas, 2004 as cited in Stampoltzi et al., 2016). According to Matsaggoura (1999), teachers accept the heterogeneous arrangements, with the inclusive education of "normal" and "special" students.

1.2 The three sectors of classroom management

Classroom management has three broader sectors. Chaplain (2016) suggested a classroom management plan, which is based on: the design of the arrangement of the classroom environment, acquirement of social skills that are requested for the development of effective relationships among students and between students and teachers, adoption of teaching strategies and development of professional skills.

- As far as the physical environment is concerned, it has a double meaning. It is referred both to the material environment and to the environment of activities that is a point of expression and creation. Here, there is an interaction between child and its environment, physical and social-cultural (Germanos, 1998). The furniture and the different areas inside the class should be flexible and designed for many uses. The furniture should be created according to children's dimensions (Matsaggouras, 1988). There should also be some tools for fine and gross motor skills indoor and outdoor. Children should participate in the decoration of their class with all the natural elements that have been gathered from the schoolyard (Giagounidis, 2015). Teachers should regulate all the conditions of the class such as decoration, color of the class, flowers in the class, temperature, ventilation (Sylwester, 1970). Moreover there should be space in the class for activities and on the wall for children to put their work up (Charles & Senter, 2008). Everyone in the classroom is responsible for keeping the classroom in good condition (Sylwester, 1970). According to Kyrides (1999) the effective adjustment of the school class that promotes the interaction among students, reduces discipline problems. Some teachers choose from the beginning of the school year, to put their children in rows because they think that it will be a more successful lay out resulting in a more tranquil classroom but later on they choose to organize their students in small teams, in order to co-operate with each other (Gremmen et al., 2016). According to recent studies, it is suggested that desks in a class should be put in a circle, promoting the team learning and the socialization of the children that will be the base for creating a positive school climate, promoting academic results and minimizing the appearance of problematic behavior (Loupas et al., 2017). It has been confirmed that, the learning opportunities that are given to each child is strongly connected to where he/she sits in the classroom. It is observed that strong pupils usually sit in front and more central, so there is an often interaction with the teacher, while at the same time teachers tend to encourage them. On the other hand, weak students do not very often interact with their teachers. It is highly important that pupils disperse in the class so as to create heterogeneous working groups (Matsaggouras, 1987). In conclusion, it is referred that teachers should participate in the design of school

buildings, in order to ensure the effectiveness of school infrastructure including the creation of labs, libraries and health care (Zotos, 1993).

- Psychosocial environment is considered to be the learning environment, where its psychosocial characteristics, are related to the sentiments that derive from pupils during their interference in the educational process. Those feelings affect their academic performance (Frenzel et al., 2007 as cited in Sotiriou, 2014). In this environment there is an emphasis on the skills of human relationships; specifically, relationships among students, students-teachers, among teachers, teachers-parents (Charles & Senter, 2008). According to Ho and Lin (2016) effective classroom management includes the creation of positive relationships between teacher and students, the creation of supportive classroom climate, coming up to student's sentimental needs. The modern school has a very important social mission. Its mission is to help children develop their social skills, that will help them to enter the society and in parallel, it creates a positive environment for social relations throughout proper educational handling (Bikos, 1990). The psychological climate in class is strongly related to student's attitude and feelings. This climate is analyzed in five indicators. The degree of satisfaction (the biggest is the degree, the strongest is the interest for participating in the educational process), the coherence among students (when it is strong it can lead to a functional class), the competition mostly for the degrees, the disagreements and conflicts among the parts of the school class, and the difficulty of school exercises (Sousamidou-Karaberi, 2000). All those factors are strongly connected to the anxiety that students may feel at school (Sotiriou, 2014). The contemporary school has to develop the appropriate conditions in order for both competition to be eliminated and all this anxiety that leads to problematic behavior (Bikos, 1990). According to Fontana (1996), many behavioral problems are a cry for getting attention. So, the development of strong sentimental and social relations in the children's family, school and a friendly environment contributes strongly to their school performance. It is true that a competitive climate provokes competition to the whole team but children with sentimental resilience that feel supported and coherent to their school team can handle this anxious situation effectively (Babalís, 2017; Chatzinikolaou, 2015). So, a technique that will help student's anxiety to be eliminated is conversation. Conversations should take place and should also be enhanced during the school year. Conversations are vital to a democratic environment, involving all students together in the team, helping them to understand and take over their responsibilities, helping them to recognize the needs and the sentiments of themselves and their colleagues, and by extension helping them to support each other (Dreikurs, 1968). The most dominant element for children's socialization is practicing their responsibility, their co-operation, and their self-discipline. Socialization is referred as the maintenance of one's uniqueness in the social whole (Kogoulis, 2004). So, children become co-workers to teachers in classroom management, as they are educated to handle on their own not only their undesirable behavior, but also the undesirable behavior of their colleagues. This way, the fair play and cooperation is enhanced, children learn how to express their feelings in a positive way, they learn to think and listen and in general, they show more communicative abilities (Tiganouria, 2017). Through contemporary research, it is very important that all the members of the group take part actively in the teaching process. So, through this cooperation and this co-support that will derive, their self-esteem is enhanced, their motives for learning are increased and social relations are built with strong foundations based mostly on love and respect (Tomlinson, 2015; Tsileponis, 2017). According to Durlak et al. (as cited in Karpouza et al., 2017) student's sentimental learning is a continuous dynamic process, that is referred to the development of empathy skills, self-regulation skills, self-awareness skills, expression of personal sentiments and management of interpersonal relationships. Classroom environment influences children's psychosocial development in many ways, for this and towards this direction many prevention and sentimental health programs are developed. Those programs are focused on the person, its sentiments, its social framework, and its interpersonal relationships.
- Teaching environment is the environment of teaching and learning and consists of three dimensions: teachers, pupils and activities (Kyriacou, 2009). In this environment the educational process is presented as an approach of three dimensions: programming, implementation, and assessment (Jacobsen et al., 2002). It is well known that teaching is the core of a teacher's role (Polyzoakis, 2008). According to Wragg (1993), the teaching methods are strongly connected to classroom management. There are two well known techniques, the authoritative way and the tolerant way. According to the authoritative way, the responsibility of a teacher is of vital importance in order for chaos to be prevented and also children themselves expect from their teachers to be strict. The critics of this theory support that, the authoritative teaching can be easily oppressive and children cannot manage their own attitude as they have learnt to follow only external control.

- On the other hand, the tolerant way believe that children can control themselves effectively and they are able to manage logical behavior, while at the same time the advocates present that less time is left to be dedicated to teaching (Wragg, 1993). According to Tsirigiotis (1994) the collectively, participatory way is more convenient to the pedagogical idea of contemporary school securing collaboration and student participation. In order for teachers to exercise effective classroom management they should: choose the way of teaching, use their time effectively, supervising by being alert, confronting the deflections in a proper way (Wragg, 2003), ensuring student's participation (Wong & Wong, 2014). Student's participation is based on their active involvement in the educational process, posing questions, working all together or individually, using all their senses, dedicating time for thinking during the day (Sylwester, 1970). It is suggested to develop activities that promote internal incentives and techniques, so that students are encouraged to act according to the instructions of the teacher (on task) (Cangelosi, 1997). The most well known teaching approaches that derive from the communication mode of teacher and students are: teacher-centered, where teacher is in the middle of the educational process and constitutes the regulatory factor of the whole teaching process, student-centered, where students are in the very center of the educational process, mixed approach, where both are equally involved and group-centered approach, where active role is undertaken by a small group of children, where children learn to communicate, experiment, and develop their critical thinking (Matsaggouras, 1999, 2004). It becomes clear that this final teaching approach contributes to their personal and social development (Kogoulis, 2004). Knowledge should be a creative activity, where ideally, students should be responsible for it and the teacher is transformed to co-researcher, helper, animator, and responsible for the preservation of a democratic climate in the school class. Teachers should help students to delve deeply into knowledge (Petroulakis, 2005). In order for teachers to maximize learning outcomes, they should use differentiating teaching (Mitsi, 2017). Differentiating teaching is qualitative, student-centered, considering student's needs and is connected to evaluation. Learning is centered towards the educational needs of students (Tomlinson, 2015) showing emphasis on the personalized teaching needs, which takes into account and highlights the heterogeneity of students in a school class (Athanasakis & Mitrentsi, 2013). Teaching strategies are effective when students are taught the syllabus they have to, take an interest in the lesson and find the educational process entertaining, so as to start on their own the whole learning effort undertaking gradually bigger responsibility for the design and the assessment of their own work (Good & Brophy, 1978). In order for teachers to improve their teaching skills, it is helpful to create a course diagram in cooperation with a teacher-observer, or alternatively to videotape the course and do self-assessment (Gross, 2009). Towards this direction, lifelong learning is vital and should be inevitable for all the members of the school community in order to modernize their teaching methods and techniques, to improve education and school in general (Chatzidimou & Stravakou, 2005) and to acquire specific knowledge about all the educational sectors they feel unable to manage easily.

1.3 External factors that influence classroom management

There are some external factors that influence classroom management. Those factors are: school philosophy and policy (Ellis & Tod, 2015), the principal and his/her way of management (Stravakou, 2003), colleagues and the relationships among them (Anagnostopoulou, 2005), the intervention of local authorities that indicates an external influence dimension (Blase, 1991), community and its relationship with school (Mylonakou-Keke, 2017), and family background and their attitude towards the school (Stabouli, 2017).

2. Conclusion

According to recent studies, discipline and positive classroom climate constitute factors that assure classroom management, with the teacher contributing to the development of interpersonal relationships, strengthening group cooperation, adopting positive behavior (Koula & Koula, 2017). In order for a school crisis to be solved, it does neither need persistence to the spirit of discipline, nor to the implementation of sanctions. Where emphasis should be given is to the bridge of communication between teachers and students, where teachers should be close to their students, observe attitudes, and listen carefully to every need emerging (Georgiou, 2003). Both teachers and students should follow classroom rules, as classroom rules contribute to the smooth function of the school class, to the maintenance of positive climate and to the elimination of unwanted behavior. Rules should be firm, clear, necessary and should be easily applied (Borich, 2014).

Teachers should strengthen positive behavior (Pekridou, 2007), and relations between teachers and students should be based on mutual esteem, respect and trust. Discipline should never be connected to punishment, but to children's socialization (Gousia-Rizou, 2006). Dreikurs and Kasel (1978) support that in a well organized classroom few discipline problems are presented. Classroom discipline is strongly connected to classroom management. Specifically, it is an aspect of classroom management. Discipline should be connected to all the preventing actions a teacher should make in order to promote a more cooperative climate, a climate of respect where children can unfold themselves, so as to meet the utmost of their potential.

The most important aim of the teachers is to develop self-control to their students (Aravanis, 1998). Children develop self control when they are in a classroom environment where they have strong interpersonal relationships with their teachers and their colleagues, when they are encouraged, and their positive behavior is recognized, where teachers try to find out the causes that provoked unwanted behavior and educate children to find solutions that are fair to all (Makarova & Herzog, 2013). The most effective factor that helps teachers to give answers to daily issues that may come up is the sufficient pedagogical training and ongoing training of teachers (Karamane, 2013). Education is a professional right that contributes to the professional, pedagogical and teaching armor and constitutes a hope of modernization and improvement of education and school in general (Chatzidimou & Stravakou, 2005).

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