THE PHILOSOPHY OF CLASSROOM CLIMATE AND CHANGE FOR THE BETTER TEACHING AND LEARNING PROCESS

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Abstract

There are different approaches in teaching and learning process. One among the method is classroom teaching. Is there an effective classroom teaching in present scenario for the better teaching-learning process for the learners? An effective classroom climate leads to positive learning environment. There are many factors which determine the positive learning environment. The origin of success lies in an educational system is ‘The Classroom’ without which the process of teaching and learning would not take place. The classroom makes education easier and successful. The classroom climate sometimes is referred to as the learning environment. It includes a wide range of educational concepts like physical setting, the psychological environment and numerous instructional components related to teacher and students characteristics and behaviors. The impact of change and classroom climate on students and staff can be beneficial for or a barrier to learning. In my paper I would like to concentrate on the topic how classroom climate and change enables the individuals’ teaching and learning successful and colorful.

Keywords: Classroom, climate, change, factors, teacher and students

Introduction

Positive change is the philosophy of growth and development. Everything that we perceive in and around us undergoes changes. Great discoveries and inventions came to existence after lot of struggles and changes. We, human beings too undergo changes when we are in the womb of our mothers and even life after the birth. Now, the question is, Are we teachers ready to undergo any changes in terms of teaching, using/adapting certain new techniques to make our teaching really a noblest profession? Or

Do we encourage the students to undergo any positive changes to make the learning to have an impact in their life? Or

Do we promote optimistic changes in our classrooms to have a healthy environment for better teaching and learning?
In this paper, I would like to concentrate on “Changing Classroom Climate” for the promising results. This paper has three dimensional views. They are (1) The Teacher, (2) The Students and (3) The Environment. But as a teacher I would like to highlight and enrich my thoughts more on the first (The Teacher) aspect.

**Importance of Classroom Climate:**

We all know the spaces we live and work in affect us. We are likely to find soft colours soothing, clutter distracting and high temperatures soporific. Classroom climate is seen as a major determiner of classroom behavior and learning. Understanding how to establish and maintain a positive classroom climate is seen as basic to improving ones academics. Classroom climate sometimes is referred to as the learning environment, as well as by terms such as atmosphere, ambience, ecology, and milieu. The Impact of classroom climate on students and staff can be beneficial for or a barrier to learning. This paper suggests significant relationships between classroom climate, student engagement, behavior and achievement, social and emotional development, teacher burnout and overall quality of college life (). For example, studies report strong associations between achievement levels and classrooms that are perceived as having greater cohesion and goal-direction, and less disorganization and conflict. Research also suggests that the impact of classroom climate may be greater on students from low-income homes and groups that often are discriminated against.

**Promoting a Positive Classroom Climate:**

A proactive approach to develop a positive classroom climate requires careful attention to (a) enhancing the quality of life in the classroom for students and staff, (b) pursuing a curriculum that promotes academic, social and emotional learning, (c) enabling teachers to be effective with a wide range of students, and (d) fostering intrinsic motivation for classroom learning and teaching (5). With respect to all this, the literature advocates

- A welcoming, caring, and hopeful atmosphere;
- Social support mechanisms for students and staff,
- An array of options for pursuing goals;
- Meaningful participation by students and staff in decision making;
- Transforming a big, classroom into a set of smaller units that maximize intrinsic motivation for learning and are not based on ability or problem-oriented grouping;
• Providing instruction and responding to problems in a personalized way;
• Use of a variety of strategies for preventing and addressing problems as soon as they arise;
• A healthy and attractive physical environment that is conducive to learning and teaching.

The Teacher Development:

From time immemorial, teaching takes place in our life. From king maker to pin maker, there is a teacher behind them. Teaching is not only a noble profession but also a challenging profession for it deals with young minds to realize their potentials and perform well to excel in their career. As in the words of Sarvapalli Radhakrishnan, A good teacher must know how to arouse the interest of the pupil in the field of study for which he is responsible; he himself must be a master in the field and be in touch with the latest developments in his subject, he must be a fellow traveler in the exciting pursuit of knowledge (1). Each and every teacher tries in their best ways to contribute for student community and a few teachers come out successfully. What prevents others not to perform well? If they follow the following strategies, I am sure the teachers become successful in their profession. They are,

1. Teacher Enthusiasm:

   Enthusiasm is a prerequisite for any teacher to be effective. Without love for work one cannot achieve the objective. In present times, due to most teachers’ lack of enthusiasm, there is no room for creativity and innovation. There is no niche and skill differentiation in teaching. The outcome of a teacher with less enthusiasm will result in producing students with less transparency in knowledge. In general, enthusiasm is seen as an attitude of a teacher or a student as manifested in classroom pedagogy.

   Ralph Waldo Emerson, an American philosopher says, “Nothing great was ever achieved without enthusiasm.” “Enthusiasm was the most powerful unique predictor of students’ intrinsic motivation and vitality level of teacher enthusiasm (high vs. low).” Teacher’s enthusiasm which promotes students’ motivation is scarce in this present scenario. People enthusiastic appear to have something extra or a certain spark about them which attracts people to them. The students who receive an enthusiastically delivered lecture will have greater motivation. They too experience higher levels of vitality. Enthusiasm mostly
comes from within, but individuals certainly can learn to generate or increase the level of enthusiasm (7).

The teacher plays a vital role on the process of student’s motivation to learn. In spite of knowing who a teacher is? and what it means to be a teacher?, you and I as teachers of colleges and universities, Do grumble at times of extra hour of handling class or additional alteration class. We do not want to work beyond the scheduled given time table. As trained teachers, we show a partial disinterest in handling the subject as traditional lecture method, in which professors’ talk and students listen.

The common obstacles and barriers of lack of enthusiasm are classroom climate, students behavior, lack of experience and sustained energy, faculty self-perceptions, self-definition of roles, (as a teacher, as a motivator, as a counselor, … ) family problems and psychological reasons like lack of confidence, etc.

2. Student Motivation:

An enthusiastic teacher should have high regard for his/her students. Each student should be given positive reinforcement in the class. Transmitting positive reinforcement by telling the students that they have high abilities and will excel to their highest abilities. In addition, setting positive reinforcement in the class will help students to have a proper motivation both in the subject matter and in life. We cannot change the students’ family situation, personal goals, intelligence, and diet or sleep habits. But we can change the atmosphere for learning in our classrooms (6).

3. Effective Interaction:

Effective interaction between the teacher and the students creates an environment that respects, encourages and stimulates learning. Frequent student faculty contact is a most important factor in student motivation and involvement. Teacher, who is enthusiastic, will establish a good rapport with their students. Establishing interpersonal relationships is crucial to form a trusting bond with each student. I believe that the students simply respond better, work harder and achieve more when they know that their teacher is genuinely concerned about the success of their students and the quality of the students’ lives. Thus, each and every student will make a significant contribution to the work. All teachers are not loved, because of the lack of relationship/rapport with the students.
4. Effective Classroom Management:

Classroom reflects the teacher’s knowledge, enthusiasm and the responsibility for creating a learning environment, which will effectively nurture the students’ desire to learn and to accept the challenges of thinking and inquiring into all that, is offered by the teacher. Every teacher needs to have proper classroom management skills. Teachers provide subject knowledge and create the atmosphere and context for learning. But in addition, teachers establish attitudes and values in the classroom. Classroom management is not about disciplining the class, but it deals with how effectively one manages the classroom (2). Classroom management deals with how to take roll, keep an effective grade book and how to discipline students.

4.1. Classroom Space:

One of the easiest ways through which we can draw the attention of our students is to use the entire space of the classroom as our stage, rather than just at the front of the room. We need to think of the whole classroom as space we can use. Walking across to the middle of the opposite side not only reinforces the concept visually, but also holds the students’ attention by moving into their space.

4.2. Ability to design lessons and activities:

Teacher’s passion for the subject is the first step to design the lessons and activities. One of the most important skills of a teacher is, to how to design and implement lessons in the classroom. Designing lessons involves how to cater the needed curriculum into discussions, activities and assignments. The teacher should also be able to follow whether the students have mastered the lessons or not. So it is evident that the understanding of a subject taught by a teacher depends on the methods of teaching adopted.

4.3. Assessment Activities:

Assessment is an opportunity for the students to experience the real world of success. The teacher should not instruct the students to answer multiple choice tests or give an essay, but also forces students to not only show what they have learned, but also apply the new information. In addition, the teacher can ask the students to work in group to problem solve.
An assessment that does not offer students an opportunity to fail is useless. When we are afraid to fail students who deserve it, we don’t show justice to our profession. Any activity that prepares the students better for what they will actually face as adults is a good assessment.

5. Technology in and outside the classroom:

Integrating technology in teaching becomes the new dimension for the teaching paradigm. An educator must rely on technology to inspire the students and create a mild interest towards the student’s most challenging subject, and to create a healthy, interactive environment in the classroom. Here comes some technologies which could be useful for making the classroom interesting:

5. 1. Webpage

A teacher can produce a webpage in sites.google.com for giving instructions, assignments and homework. With a Google id and password, create a webpage. Select the Class teacher template and apply it. After this, it gets a little more technical but it's far from difficult. There are only a few options to choose from which include: "create page", "edit page", "more actions", and "site settings".

5. 2. Websites for sharing material with students

Teachers can share the assignments, notes and essays via websites such as Classjump.com. Now, we can reach each and every student through this site.

5. 3. Blogs

With a Blog, we can give comments, clarifications and opinions on a particular subject to our students even after the class hours. Visit edublogs.com. There click “free” template. There fill your details. Then name your Blog. At last, start blogging.

5. 4. Penpals

Create an account in epals.com. Select “Join Now” option. Register your email address in epals.com. You will get a mail with your temporary id details. In this way, you have created an account. Then advertise for your class details and your programme
initiatives. You also can create monitored mail addresses for your students. Introduce your students to the global project experience.

5. 5. Webinars

Like ordinary classroom seminars, virtual seminars (i.e.) video conferences can be arranged for the enrichment of the quality of education. Websites like dimdim.com, yugma.com, Yuuguu.com, Vyew.com and Mikogo.com can be tried in this aspect.

5. 6. Web journals

Using the websites like Weebly.com and sites.google.com we can run a virtual journal (weekly or monthly) of your campus. Not only will this improve the creativity of the students but also this will improve the writing skills of our class.

5. 7. Social Networks:

Social networks like face book, whatsapp, instagram discussion boards can be used for doubt clarifications or giving instructions even for getting feedback about your class from students.

5. 8. Mobile phones

In the mobile phones, with the help of 4G phones, a video conference can be conducted. Through mails we can send assignments and marks reports of the students. Through MMS, we can send a video or audio file of our class work to the students.

Conclusion:

Our generation is facing a lot emerging economies, emerging super powers and emerging policies. Our teaching must prepare them not for just exams but for facing this multi-faceted typhoon. If we integrate the technology with teaching by implementing all the above said things, teaching-learning process will become an interesting one. As Abdul Kalam says, “Winners don’t do different things but they do things differently”. The ideas described in this paper can facilitate a positive start to the student and provide a structured and encouraging environment. The concepts of good classroom design, listening skills, self-determination, and building class community are transferable from different levels students. These concepts are common to all students. Building classroom connections through these concepts can lead to student achievement gains. Planning ahead and applying these concepts
is imperative to successful teacher student interaction and creating a positive classroom environment.

References: