BUILDING DESIRABLE LEARNING ENVIRONMENT THROUGH POSITIVE REINFORCEMENT

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In every classroom, teachers have to deal with students who have diverse personalities, attitudes and behaviors. It is unavoidable to encounter students who will challenge the teacher's patience. But, a classroom is not only made up of learners who are hard to deal with because there are still students who do well in class. Also, those students who are hard-headed can also perform well and in able for them to likely repeat those desirable behaviors, positive reinforcement by the teacher is needed. Different positive reinforcements are important part in the teaching-learning process.

According to an article published on EduZenith website (2015) regarding positive reinforcement, it was stated that positive reinforcement is the encouragement that follows good behavior. It is done in order to emphasize the positivity of the action. As a consequence, the person feels encouraged to repeat the positive action that earned the praise in the first place. This means that students are more likely to repeat the desirable behavior observed by the teacher because they are motivated to strive more. There will be a mind-set that the teacher will praise them or they will be given rewards for doing well.

If there will always be positive reinforcement given by the teacher, students will be inspired to strive more because they will feel that they are appreciated and the good things they do in class are noticed by the teacher. If those desirable behaviors and
Publications

attitudes become the basic routines of the students, it will create a desirable learning environment because they are participating and more engaged in the discussion and in the different activities in the class. The more participation they give, the more it is possible for the teacher to achieve the expected learning outcomes.

However, Smith (2016) claimed that positive reinforcement can increase the probability of not only desirable behavior but also undesirable behavior. She gave an example wherein if a student whines to get attention and is successful in getting it, the attention serves as positive reinforcement, which increases the likelihood that the student will continue to whine. Smith gave this negative effect of positive reinforcement that is why it is important to choose appropriate and effective reinforcement, depending on the students because a reinforcement may be effective to some students and may be useless to others.

In addition, in choosing a reinforcer, Smith said that the teacher must observe what the student seeks out. Asking the student of what does he or she wants to earn could also help so that the teacher will identify what can motivate the student. Furthermore, reinforcement must also be delivered consistently so that the students will also be consistent in performing desirable actions. Also, the reinforcement must also be delivered immediately because if the student will have to wait longer before receiving reinforcement, the effect will be reduced or worse, lost.

Even simple verbal reinforcement can give students a lasting effect which can drive them to seek for some things that can improve themselves and their performance in class even more. "Very good", "Excellent", "Job well done" and other praises can give them feeling of
achieving something in class. It is much better if these will be heard in the entire class so that other students will also be motivated too to perform well so that they will also be rewarded even by those simple praises by the teacher. Reinforcements can also help them to condition them that their actions must always be a practice inside the classroom.

Determining the negative behaviors and giving corresponding discipline must not always be the focus. Teachers must also notice the good deeds of the students and how they will be more motivated in performing well in the class. Every student has the potential to get high scores in tests, answer correctly during oral recitation and shine in different activities that teacher gives. Inspiring them to keep on improving can be a great sign. Sometimes, the right reinforcement is what it takes for them to bring out the best in them and to believe in themselves that they could do better.

References:
https://eduzenith.com/positive-reinforcement-in-classroom