REVISITING THE FIVE CATEGORIES OF CLASSROOM MANAGEMENT PRACTICES

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Classroom management is a critical skill that every teacher should have. In fact it is a skill which should be developed initially during the pre-service period, enhanced and polished during the in-service period of every teacher’s life. It is comprised of three central components: maximized allocation of time for instruction, arrangement of instructional activities to maximize academic engagement and achievement, and proactive behavior management practices (Sugai & Homer, 2002).

In their article, Simonsen, Fairbanks, Briesch, Myers and Sugai (2008) grouped classroom management practices into five categories namely: physical arrangement of classroom; structure of classroom environment; instructional management; procedures designed to increase appropriate behavior, and procedures designed to decrease inappropriate behavior.

The first consideration in the management of classrooms is its physical arrangement. The classroom structure should be fully maximized as classrooms with more structure have been shown to promote pleasing behaviors. The physical arrangement, when properly designed, and the instructional structure, when explicitly defined, create a classroom space where students can have greater involvement on tasks and display more helpful and attentive behaviors. However, overcrowding and distractions should be minimized and the students should have the maximum space they can have where they can actively engage in learning and social interactions.
Secondly, to improve the structure of the classroom environment, the teacher is expected to post, teach, monitor and reinforce expectations. Setting expectations and providing feedback are associated with decreases in off-task behavior and disruptive behavior and increases in academic engagement, leadership, and conflict resolution (Wehby, & Menzies, 2003).

In terms of instructional management, the teachers should actively engage students in observable ways. Engagement is the best arbitrating variable between instruction and academic achievement. If a teacher can get a student to be busy learning and studying then it will be difficult for him to engage in incompatible behaviors. When the opportunity for the student to interact or respond in the learning process, there will also be a positive effect on both student achievement and behavior.

Teacher need also to use a continuum of strategies for responding to appropriate procedures. There should be a focus on identifying and appropriate classroom behavior. Give appreciate whenever it is due. Displays of good behavior should be acknowledged as delivering praise for academic behavior increased student’s correct response (Sutherland & Wehby, 2001), work productivity and accuracy, on-task behavior and compliance.

Likewise, there ought to be a continuum of strategies for responding to inappropriate behaviors so as to avoid such behaviors in the future. Error correction is an important part strategy used in correcting academic, social and behavioral errors. When giving systematic feedback to correct a behavior, students tend to display correct behaviors on the next opportunity. There has to be a clear path of communication between the teacher, the student, the parents and other stakeholders to ensure a system that would address the inappropriate behavior.

Classroom management is necessary for a teacher to be effective and for the learning environment to be productive. However, to make classroom management a
success, a teacher has to train on the art. The five categories of classroom management practices discussed above can provide essential information to help teachers assess his strategies and develop his weakness in order to come up with a strategy designed to maximize the teaching and learning outcomes.

References: