

## ***A managing teacher***

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### **Abstract**

Class management, a modern term which implies class discipline is also one of the most important factors in education (Yisrael 2012). A transfer from the old way of teaching into student-centred teaching has also changed the role of a teacher in education process. Accordingly, he is now more of a person who should help learners learn how to gain knowledge rather than give them the ready-made knowledge (Yisrael 2012). Therefore, a successful lesson is not only subject to a way of planning a lesson but also a way of managing a class.

Very little research is done in this field within the education system of young teachers (Yisrael 2012) in Prizren region and there is an assumption that they will learn this through their personal experience. Because of this, teachers find themselves in a difficult position when they begin work at schools, which influences the quality of teaching. Novice teachers find themselves filled with negative feelings of self-suspicion, extreme weariness followed with a low motivation for work (Yisrael 2012). This study presents a ways novice teachers can successfully begin to manage a class.

Key terms: teacher, teaching skills, class management.

### **Introduction**

This study emerges as a result of observing the challenges of novice teachers, and their continuous requests on how to manage discipline in the classroom. We hope that our paper is going to help young teachers understand, evaluate and appreciate the class management. Although successful management of a class is more than knowing a few management techniques and strategies, it is always helpful to make ourselves familiar with practices of other teachers who show achievement in this aspect of teaching, and read as much as possible on different management strategies that can be applied in this situation (Smith and Laslett, 2002). Our research presented through this article focuses on the aspect of a class management that aims at preventing discipline problems occur in the first help, rather than

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solve them once they happen. In the following lines we will present how teaching is related to managing then, show that a good class management is closely related to the effective teacher. Lastly, we will give a few strategies on how we can successfully manage a class.

### Teaching and managing

Teaching is like no other profession in the world. This is because there is more to the teaching than just going to an office, performing your duties and heading home. Any decent professional teacher will tell you that in addition to their daily teaching, they have also a pre-teaching and a post-teaching phase. The pre-teaching phase includes thinking about the lesson plan and activities; preparing worksheets and collecting relevant materials; drafting the lesson plan and anticipating drawbacks, and lastly organizing all this into a comprehensive teaching. Whereas in post-teaching phase, a teacher performs a number of duties such as correcting homework, replying individually to student's requests as per need, evaluating and assessing the good parts of the lesson and changing those that did not work well. Then, there is the teaching itself. Even this one is unlike any other job. First, in order to teach anything, the teacher needs to excel in knowledge of his own subject matter and wider. Secondly, a teacher needs to know how to deliver this knowledge, and thirdly needs to manage a classroom successfully in order to deliver this information properly (Wong and Wong, 2009). This relationship is shown below in Figure 1:

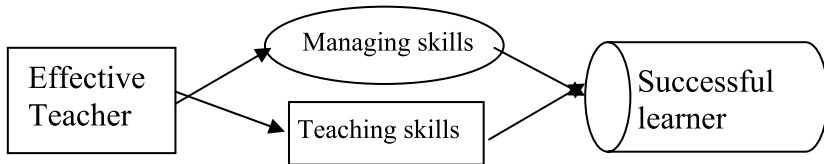


Figure 1.

A teacher then, is the sole maker of successful learners. A teacher has become a foremost figure in education due to the established significance in increasing the level of learning (Marzano et al, 2003; Wong and Wong, 2009). In light of above responsibilities, the teacher deserves a special care.

Therefore, educating young teachers and training them for the teaching process is inexpressible. One of the main challenges of a novice teacher that we have encountered during a teaching practice throughout primary schools in Prizren region, was constantly, discipline in the class. This is a primary reason why so many are reluctant to becoming a teacher and, one of causes that teachers around the world give up on their teaching profession at state schools (Yisrael 2012). Maintaining discipline in class was one of main concerns of teachers ever since teachers began teaching, on the other hand a systematic study of class management began quite late (Marzano et al, 2003). Very little importance was given to this area of education in Kosovo, too. Not having enough genuine knowledge at university studies, it is expected that novice teachers would get this understanding from practice, it is expected namely, that they learn from their mistakes (Yisrael 2012). However, they need these strategies on how to manage class at the beginning of their work as teachers and not after many years of experience (Yisrael 2012).

Lacking class management skills, the novice teacher is left alone to face many difficulties in the first years of his teaching career, on one side trying to hold the lesson and on the other side struggling with discipline in class. Working under such weight and, constant pressure and scrutiny from administration in education and society to achieve results in learning, negative feelings of losing confidence in teaching, extreme tiredness and low motivation for work give rise within novice teachers (Yisrael 2012). This, as a result, influences the quality of teaching that he is capable for offering. This negative effect can even lower the level of cognition that might be expected from good pupils (Marzano et al, 2003).

What is a class management?

Class management is a present-day term which means discipline in the classroom. The change in the term has followed the development of new teaching methodologies. The new approaches have shifted the centre of teaching from the teacher unto the learner. The learner is not only a passive onlooker anymore but, an active participant raised to a dimension of constituting a subject in the teaching process. This new situation pushed for teachers to alter their approaches to teaching, accordingly. Asking a learner to follow orders simply would not hold water anymore. This new methodology showed that learner misbehaviour can be seen as an inappropriate behaviour to the teacher, only, because from the learner's point of view it is purposeful (Lewis, 2009). By and large, discipline issues are seen not as deliberate wrongdoings but rightful necessities of individual learners in voicing their dissatisfaction and frustration with ineffective teaching. Knowing only your subject matter then, is not enough to maintain discipline in the class. But just because the old techniques of maintaining discipline no longer work, this does not mean that teachers are incompetent (Lewis, 2009). This only means that they must acquire some additional skills to manage the classroom in the new environment, the environment which acknowledges the learners' rights (Lewis, 2009).

Although this term, in most of the cases, means a control that teacher has over the learner or the teaching process, it has many more aspects in itself. It is the capacity of teachers to maintain "order in the classroom, while promoting appropriate pupil values" (Lewis, 2009, p.10). For Wong and Wong (2009) it is the ability of a teacher to organize students, space, time and materials for the effective learning environment. Wragg (2001) believes that besides these skills and managing discipline, a teacher has to manage also teaching and learning strategies, pupils' behaviour, safety and wellbeing, interactions with others, progress, as well as relationships with students and with parents, school support staff, and other agencies.

What is a good class management?

Wong and Wong (2009) describe a good managed classroom as a relaxed learning environment without confusion or disruptive behaviour, where learners are involved in learning and know what is expected of them, based on clear teacher instructions. Such an effective class is of course, managed by a successful teacher. Competent teachers thus, in most of cases, are those that are skilled in using time and resources and can win support from learners (Wragg, 2001). The behaviour of a teacher during a lesson and his natural authority is another aspect that has an effect on class management (Ur, 1991). In relation to this, Farr (2010) observed six principles that characterize a successful teacher. This specific

educator demonstrates leadership skills by working hard to set goals and urging learners to reach them; planning purposefully and maintaining effective execution throughout.

Unlike Farr, Yisrael (2012) believes that there is a single feature that distinguishes a successful managing teacher from an unsuccessful one, and that is the presence of fear that they will not be able to achieve discipline in class. Therefore, it is fundamental that we remove fear of failure from the teacher, if we want learners to respect us, and by increasing teachers' self-confidence we are going to make teaching more successful for the teacher, and learning more pleasant for the pupil (Yisreal, 2012). In this view, Yisreal (2012) identified four types of fearful teachers: the buddy teacher, who tries to become friends with learners; the blind teacher who chooses to be ignorant and not see the learners' needs; the overreactor that makes a fuss about everything and sends learners out of class for trivial reasons; and lastly the sympathizer being an overly sympathetic teacher who lowers his standards due to being sorry for the learner's bad family situation.

Prior knowledge of pupils is another strategy for accomplishing a good class management that Yisraeli (2012) suggests. Here teachers should make an attempt to get information about the psychological situation and development of learners before they come in front of children in the classroom such as for example, information how learners think about themselves, how they wish others to see them. The teacher should try to understand and respect each learner as an individual in itself. A teacher thus, builds up relationships with learners, which is part of a successful management, and to this aspect of class management in particular, was given the least importance (Yisrael 2012). Another way of building up connections with pupils is when a teacher takes part in activities outside school hour showing thus his/her care towards learners, such as e.g. sponsor a club, a graduation party, sport event, after school counselling, and such where pupils can see their teacher in the light of a real person and not only as an official in education (Yisrael 2012).

## **Successful Management Strategies**

Defining strategies that are successful in managing the class and that are used by skilful managing teachers varies between individuals. These are skills and abilities which are identified within capable teachers during research carried out in this area of education by experienced teachers and researchers. For instance, Ur (1991) produces a list of 22 tips on how to manage a class that comprise of preparing interesting lessons that address each learner; varying their teaching strategies; speaking clearly and giving clear instructions; to getting silence before speaking to the class; treating pupils with respect, and using humour constructively. Researchers like Smith and Laslett (2002) talk about four classroom management rules in order to prevent idle time which is at the core of behavioural issues. The first one (get them in) stresses the importance of activating learners as soon as the class starts in order to prevent unnecessary waste of time and waste of student's attention. The second one (get them out) addresses the process of ending the lesson, which helps the learners to take away the memory of an effective learning. The third (get on with it) and the last one (get on with them) include a thorough planning of a lesson with a special stress on effective use of questions and social connection with the learners. Although there are slight differences about what managing abilities should teachers have, there are some common ones that most researchers agree with. Here we are going to mention a few that we think are the leading ones in a set of these skills.

One of these strategies that ensure success in class management is establishing procedures and sticking to them. Wong (2009) believes that it is not the discipline that causes a problem to beginner teachers, but it is lack of procedures and consistency in their teaching. It is very important for an interne to establish rules and procedures at the beginning of each school year. These classroom procedures are established set of rules that regulate specific courses of action that occur in a classroom. These procedures can include a number of various rules including the most simple one of saying “please” and “thank you”, to the more complex ones like specific procedures for students that are late; procedures for getting the attention of the class; procedures for learners seeking help and alike (Wong and Wong, 2009). Some successful teachers prefer to design their own rules that learners need to adhere to, and some others decide to do this together with the learners. The latter gives a clear message to the learners, right at the very beginning of a course that they have to take responsibility for their own learning and behaviour.

Once the procedures are decided, the next step is to ensure that they are taught properly so that learners make the habit of following those rules, so novice teachers should be encouraged to spend few classes to rehearse and teach these procedures (Wong and Wong, 2009). Whether these rules will be effective or, not depends very much on how consistent is the teacher him/herself in following them each and every time and being a model to the learners (Wong and Wong, 2009). So establishing the rules is just as important as sticking to them.

Another strategy that we wish to present here is the relationship of teachers towards learners. This strategy corresponds with the goal of education, which is to teaching to the learners the humane values and responsibilities, tolerance and understanding (Lewis, 2009). Most of the researchers in education agree that this bond with learners is as significant as the teaching we deliver to them (Farr, 2010). Here we are going to mention a single technique in this highly noteworthy strategy and this is remembering the names of the learners you teach (Ur, 1991). Knowing who is who in your class is the first but essential step in both preventing the discipline issues, because the identification of troublemakers is easier, but also through this you let learners know that you care for them (Smith and Laslett, 2002). The task of remembering each individual learner’s name is not an easy task, especially for some teachers that teach hundreds of those daily. Here teachers can benefit from tactics for memorizing words, such as game of association, visual placement or, intentional repetition. One of such tactics that can help you with your memory is urging learners to repeat each other’s names as often as possible. This can be done with slight adaption of any activity just by asking them to use names instead of pronouns. For instance while giving information about each other instead of saying “she loves cakes”, they say “Albina loves cakes” or, exchange the names in a coursebook with the names of the learners. You can use these tactics as long as you feel that you can easily remember the learners by their names. The teacher-learner relationship presents the social aspect of teaching and as such it incorporates various notion. This aspect covers everything that makes for a positive attitude towards learners; the belief that they can achieve their goals or that they can do better either in their academic skills or socially appropriate skills that each respectful citizen should have (Lewis, 2009).

## Conclusion

The abovementioned strategies show clearly that classroom management is “a combination of skills, knowledge and understanding” (Smith and Laslett, 2002), the abilities of a successful managing teacher depend very much on his/her humane virtues and their ability to continue and be a model teacher that learners can look up to. Such a teaching model, almost certainly will not be afraid from discipline and pupils; teachers will have confidence in themselves and their objectives. Therefore, with their humane model they will plant the seed of mutual manners and respect into a new generation for a present-day Kosovo society and wider. Our study in focusing on a managing teacher, aims to bring to light the key role of a teacher in education and modern progress of a society. Being one of fragments with the most influence in new generations, teacher education and training deserve to receive a far better care. Only in this way, can a society have an influence in its own development and an advancing progress into XXI century.

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