



MENTORING: CREATING A POSITIVE CLASS ROOM CLIMATE TIPS

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ABSTRACT

Nowadays we can say that the scenario inside the classroom is totally different. Before some decades, whatever the teachers used to teach would be the Vedas for all the students. But when the new economic policy was implemented it became very tough for teachers to handle students. The students know well that this world is becoming very competitive and if they do not study well, they have to suffer a lot in the future. At the same time chances are there for them to succumb to the situation of them not understanding, or their presence not being recognized by their teachers. To be recognized by their teachers, they misbehave inside the classroom. By that they ask their teachers, “please recognize us”, but in a disruptive way for which teachers normally retaliate with severe punishment. So for the teachers it is very important to enter the classroom with good pedagogical methods to create a positive classroom climate.

INTRODUCTION

Objectives:

Readers should be able

- To create a conducive climate for student learning.
- To make a suitable atmosphere for students to enhance knowledge.
- To make both teachers and students fit in to the 21-st century competitive world.

Encourage the students:

When you enter the classroom, not only you but your students should also think that you are the boss of the classroom. So what a teacher does in the first few class sessions sets the tone for the rest of the semester. When students consider you as the boss of the class; consequently they expect your appreciation. So appreciate them when it is needed.

- Respect and honor students' beliefs, experiences, attitudes, abilities and goals. Anticipate their need to connect new learning with what they already know and believe. But remember to point out their flaws.
- Praise them openly and dispraise them privately
- Explain your expectations and moral codes inside the classroom.

Address students by their names:

Addressing students by their names will play a significant role to make a better relationship between teacher and students. If your students feel that their teacher knows them individually and is giving individual care to them, they will feel more comfortable in your class and they will be more responsive and vigilant. Sometimes if they make a problem "Ram, I did not expect this from you" is enough to control that student named Ram.

For example first I struggled a lot when I tried to remember the names of Bhutanese children. But later I asked their individual photographs and pasted in their observation notebook. Then it becomes very simple and easy for me to address all my students by their names. So you can maintain an observation notebook to maintain their personal data.

Acknowledge and admit individual differences:

Remember that your students are not equal vessels, who will take the same volume of water, so try to understand individual differences. The reason for those differences is very simple; because they emerge from various social backgrounds. Explain more clearly for the weaker students than for others. You should be responsive to the individual needs of students. There are simply too many differences among students for a teacher to be able to teach all of them the same thing at the same time. Teachers who alter instructions to accommodate individual differences send the message that they want to teach all of their students all of the time. Students are much more likely to participate actively in learning activities when they know that their teacher has carefully considered their needs. So teachers are supposed to change as per the individual student's need.

Sitting arrangement:

- Ask your students to come and occupy the front so that they can be close to teacher and can listen well.
- Do not allow anyone to sit alone. Ask them to sit with their classmates; even the reserved pupils feel comfortable and friendly and they can get together with other friends.

- For lecture method usual sitting arrangement may work well but for most of the student interactive activities sitting arrangements like ‘round’, ‘oval’ and ‘U-shape’ will make situations lively.

For example once I asked my students to come out of my classroom and to sit near a riverbank for a brain storming session. It encouraged all my students to forget their so-called disciplined classroom climate. They too felt free to come up with new ideas. Even the quiet students enjoyed it with a big bout of laughter. This method will be very much useful for their learning in the long run.

Democratic environment in your classroom:

Create a democratic environment in your classroom, even for decision-making. I did such experimentation in my classroom. One panel committee, which consisted of 8 members, was elected and I too served as one of the panel committee members. Since I was a class teacher I was nominated directly by-passing election (so called democracy?). If one is accused of committing a mistake, she/he has to appear before the committee and the committee will ask her/him to plead his defense. Then it will go for the appropriate sentence. That sentence if it's a punishment should also serve to make her/him realize her/his mistake (not for punishing her/him virtually).

For example in our school we had caught drug addicts who were punished by one-month suspension from school. When one of my students named Sherab Dema interviewed our Vice Principal for our monthly magazine she asked “Will the suspension for 15 days be the counseling for drug addicts?” Thus all the punishments should be for remorse of the convicted student and his or her going one step forward against taking drugs or repeating the same mistake.

So making a panel committee like students' court will make the students self-reliable and they will feel a fair and democratic atmosphere to bring their opinions out. The classroom has to be conducive for arguments. For this purpose, a teacher has to maintain a good personal relationship with all the students. Remember that everyone was good when they were born. So you should be very keen on tackling the problem's root instead of barking at the other tree. Create a safe environment for students' participation

Tips to be remembered:

- Teachers should be fun lovers because it is needed very much to make the class room alive; but still you should know where to use fun and pun and where to stop it.

- Remember the students who are making noise are better than those who are sleeping, because they are at least 'alive' mentally (But ensure they don't disturb their fellow friends). If you recognize them properly they can be the active listeners of the class.
- If some issues like collecting funds for class room maintenance rise, ask the entire class room to act as judges and give democratic room for the boy who does not like collecting funds to come up with his argument. But ensure that it should not affect your normal lecture time.
- Remember, Discipline never relates with scoring marks.
- Classroom is like your bedroom; Go for innovative methods daily.

Conclusion:

I practiced the above given 'ideas' in my classroom. Though it is said that the Bhutanese children are arrogant and slow learners; the above given tips and ideas helped its level best to create a wonderful climate for progressive Teaching and Learning. I think this is high time for all educationalists to change their old pedagogical opinions radically. Change is needed, because...

Outdated Teachers cannot produce Updated students

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