

THE BASIS OF GOOD TEACHING: GOOD MANAGEMENT SKILLS

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Abstract

In this paper I explained my observations of lesson management and class control and tried to build up my own understanding. I observed and expressed two different teachers' classes at Bilkent High School. The grades of the classes were different; one of them was a 9th grade class and the other was an 11th grade class. I faced some classroom management techniques which were similar for both these grades but also there were specific situations and I explained them additionally in this article.

Key Words: classroom management skills, starting/ending the lesson, strategies for class control.

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Introduction

The purpose of this article was to express my observation of classroom management skills at Bilkent High School. The lessons that I observed were 9th and 11th grade classes. I noted both similar and different techniques in these classes and explained specific situations for each class.

School Experience: Introduction To Classroom Management

The first two lessons that I observed were a 9th grade class. The teacher was Devrim Özata. I observed his class control techniques and divided my observations into four parts such as *starting the lesson*, *during the lesson*, *strategies* and *ending the lesson*.

Starting the lesson requires settling the class first and getting attention of the students before saying anything about a topic. For example, when Mr. Özata entered the classroom, first he wanted everybody to stand up. The teacher waited for students not to talk to each other and be ready for the greeting, as it is usual in Turkish classes. Mr. Özata gained students' attention by staying calm and saying nothing, just waiting for them. After a few minutes the students realized this and the noise were decreased gradually. After the greeting part, the teacher changed some students' places. Some students had some protesting and asked "Why?" and some of them already said such a thing: "OK. I promise I will not talk to Ulaş during the lesson." The teacher dealt with these objections by staying calm and giving clear and definite instructions. Until the teacher was sure that the students were ready for the class, he did not try to tell the topic.

During the lesson, it is important to be aware of all the class; also of each student. I observed when the teacher started to ask some revision questions, he always used students' names. These kept students more awake and engaged them to the lesson. Additionally the questions were short, clear and suitable for their grade such as "What is (x, y) / AxB etc. ?" The

teacher gave clear instructions such as “Let’s think about this example on the board.” “Turn page 4.” “Write on your notebooks the set of $A \times B$.” etc.

It is important to make students conscious about their behaviors during the lesson. I observed a good example: Mr. Özata wrote names of some students on a small part of the board with some mines points near their names. These mines points indicated sometimes a talking without raising his/her hand, disturbing somebody or chatting during the lesson etc. But it could be changed according to the students’ positive behaviors during the lesson, even the names could be clear from the board. I observed the 9th grade students really cared about it. The teacher also did not forget the students who were participated in the class and acted in good; he gave plus points to them. I think these showed students that the teacher was aware what was going on the classroom since they tried to change their behaviors in a positive way.

Withitness requires a substantial effort during the lesson. Mr. Özata was very careful even what the students were talking about among themselves and who they were. For example, while the teacher was listening an answer of one of the students, he noticed another student saying a bad thing. The teacher did not interrupt the student who was answering; but later he wrote a mines point for the student who said a bad thing. The student objected first but the teacher just looked at him and said: “I heard.” It was also a good example of *overlapping* (Kounin, 1977).

Strategies make a class richer. I noticed that Mr. Özata did not turn his back to the class and he was mobile as much as possible. Although the class was not spacious enough to walk between desks he did not stand at the same place, he walked different corners. For example when the teacher was asking questions he came near the students and faced all students. The teacher had eye-contact with all students during the lesson.

After asking a question the teacher gave time all students to think and if he realized any misconceptions from students’ answers he redirected the class. Transitions were well-organized

for such situations in his lessons. Mr. Özata gave clear instructions, made jokes and told anecdotes to move the class from one part to another. I think it was a kind of formative assessment. Mr. Özata usually had questioning-answering parts in his classes. It usually occurred as a few minutes quick section in his lessons and it was such an exciting game for children. Because Mr. Özata always used their names by asking short quick questions, gave feedbacks shortly after and it made students awake and eager. The teacher cared the students' misconceptions, needs, behaviors and learning generally and used these questioning parts to gather data about his teaching/students' learning, I think. I observed he knew weak and clever students and adjusted his questions according to these. If a student was weak, the teacher helped her learning by asking questions gradually, giving some clues and by saying "Bravo! Go on..." he encouraged the student. Mr. Özata also did the same thing for a clever student, but the question was a bit difficult.

Ending the lesson sometimes could be unexpected. In fact, everything was usual on Thursday. Towards the end of the lesson, the teacher gave homework, wrote it on the board and mentioned about the next class. But although the lesson was not finished a noise occurred. The teacher wanted the students to be silent but they did not care so much. Upon this, the teacher explained he would ask five questions to five students and if he got the true answers, he would give permission them to go out. Otherwise he would continue to ask questions for each wrong answer and to ask his questions the first condition was silence. Students accepted it but did not stop speaking. They said each other: "Be quiet!" and the teacher waited for the first condition. The bell rang, but the teacher did not care. The lesson was the last one before lunch time. After ensuring the first condition the teacher asked his questions. When the teacher had wrong answers, he won a right to ask one more question. Students objected but could not change the dealing. The teacher enforced it during 20 minutes after the bell rang. I think it was essential

since the teacher set rules and these rules must include some sanctions. Otherwise there is no meaning of setting the rules.

The next blocked lesson that I observed was a 11th grade class. The teacher was Ece Biçer. I observed her class control techniques and divided my observations into four parts again.

Sometimes *starting a lesson* could take much more time than it is expected. Ms. Biçer faced such a situation when she entered the class on Thursday. There was a quarrel between two students about whose place the second row was. Students did not care about teacher's coming into the class and continued their quarrel. Upon this, the teacher made her voice's volume up and wanted them to be silent and sit. The teacher said that she was disappointed because of their behavior to each other and it was also disrespect to herself and to the guest teachers (Ayşenur and I). After that the teacher listened these two students and one more student except them orderly without making any comment.

The teacher gave general explanations about school rules and misbehaviors after that. The teacher said they all had same right to have a good education and they had to be respectful the rights of each other and it was more important than to be good at any lessons for her. Ms. Biçer did not accuse a specific student but said she was very upset because of what she saw. The teacher warned them and after giving an outline of the lesson she started the lesson with a revision part.

During the lesson the teacher gave definite instructions, the questions were clear and appropriate for their level. The teacher had eye contact with the students; especially with some specific students to make them involve to the lesson. Ms. Biçer explained some examples first, and then she wanted the students to solve the other exercises on the board. The teacher used students' names and was aware of interested and uninterested students. When a student was on

board or asked something, the teacher looked him/her and after listening carefully she response their questions.

Strategies encourage students to participate into the lesson. Ms. Biçer moved around and monitored the students when they were trying to do the exercises. The teacher gave help students with her gradual questions, clues and praise such as “Good idea, well done” etc. and transitions were smooth.

At the *end of the lesson* the teacher gave homework. She also made the deadline clear for the previous homework. The teacher gave time to the students to ask their questions generally and pack up.

Conclusion

The purpose of this article was to observe lesson management and class control techniques and build up my own understanding. I learned that classroom management skills are indispensable for a good teaching/learning environment. I think it will be more important for me as a new teacher in my profession’s first years. I should be sure about my pedagogical content knowledge as much as possible and be aware of importance of classroom management. If I set some rules then I must stand behind them. I should be conscious about what I observed during my school experiences.

"A Bilkent student does not lie, cheat, or steal or tolerate those who do. On my honor, as a Bilkent student, I have neither given nor received unauthorized aid on this academic work."

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