The Ways of Establishing a better Teaching and Learning Atmosphere

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Abstract

The goal of this paper is to examine ways in which teachers can create a positive attitude toward learning in their classroom, and illustrate some of the strategies that effective teachers use to do this. This article outlines the kinds of knowledge, ideas and skills involved in building effective teaching environment. Classroom climate refers to the “affective” side of the classroom, such as feelings of the students have toward the lesson, toward the teacher, and toward their classmates, as well as the learning atmosphere of the classroom. As a teacher, you will find ways to create teaching climate, arrange your class to promote effective learning and find ways of managing your use of class time. In deed this research explores ways and solutions for creating a positive attitude toward learning in your classrooms and experiences the effectiveness of these implications in your students with their classmates.

Key words; effective teaching environment, effective learning environment, class management, class manner.

Introduction

Karman (2000) has described that establishing a positive learning had a significant role in teaching and learning process. In order to check teachers, we need to find ways of helping our students develop a positive view of their class, so that they have positive expectations for you and your lessons. There are some other important factors that Senior (2006) discussed included creating a safe learning environment for students where they are not afraid, to take risks or make mistakes. Establishing a professional credibility and a sense of purpose in lessons, and also establishing appropriate norms of classroom behavior. The content of a lesson can also have an influence on classroom environment. If the lesson is very difficult, students may become bored and distracted. Moreover there will be also points in a lesson where students will best work individually, such as when they are reading or listening to a text, or completing written exercises in a textbook or workbook. Individual work allows students to work at their own pace and to work on activities suited to their proficiency level or interests. Students need to have an atmosphere of respect and trust between teachers and students as well as a shared understanding of appropriate forms of classroom behavior. The class needs to develop a sense of community, of people working together cooperatively to achieve shared goals.
Generating a positive learning and teaching situation

This paper will examine ways in which you can create a positive attitude toward learning in your classroom, and illustrate some of the strategies that effective teachers use to do this. Classroom climate refers to the affective side of the classroom, such as the feelings the students have toward the lesson, toward the teacher, and toward their classmates, as well as the learning atmosphere of the classroom. As a teacher, you will need to find ways of helping your students to develop a positive view of their class so that they have positive expectations for you and your lessons. Senior (2006) suggested the following ways in which teachers can create an effective classroom climate.

Senior (2006) described some other ways in which teachers can create a positive classroom climate – for example, by using humor to create an informal class atmosphere, by building rapport with the students through discussing common interests and concerns, and by showing that they are friendly and approachable and are there to help their students. Additional factors that Senior discussed includes creating a safe learning environment for students where they are not afraid to take risks or make mistakes, establishing professional credibility and a sense of purpose in lessons, and establishing appropriate norms of classroom behavior. As I experienced the content of a lesson can also have an influence on classroom climate. If the lesson is very difficult, students may become bored and distracted. If the lesson is too easy, on the other hand, students may feel insufficiently challenged. In both situations, the results can be an unmotivated class.

Organize your class to encourage effective learning.

Since lesson plans represent a map of the territory teachers want to cover in a lesson and the route they want to take to get there and a successful lesson also depends on the kinds of interaction you provide during the lesson. This will include opportunities for interactions between the class and you as well as interactions among the students themselves. There are four possible ways to organize a class, that each offering different learning potentials such as: whole-class teaching, individual work, group work, and pair work

Whole class teaching

This approach of teaching involves teaching all students together; the extent through which you arrange your lesson for whole-class teaching will depend on the type of lesson you are teaching and on the particular stage of the lesson. A lesson may begin with a whole-class activity and then move to pair, group, or individual work. Whole-class, teacher-fronted teaching can serve to focus students’ attention quickly on a learning task. When carefully carried out, it can lead to the quick and effective achievement of lesson objectives, since time management is maximally under the teacher’s control. When planning your teaching, however, you will need to consider that whole-class teaching is appropriate you will also need to make the transition to other types of learning in order to promote student-to-student interaction and allow students to work on tasks at their own pace (Adam, 1999).
Individual work

There will also be points in a lesson where students will best work individually, such as: when they are reading a text or listening to a text, or completing written exercises in a textbook or workbook. Individual work allows students to work at their own pace and to work on activities suited to their proficiency level or interests; having learners work on their own also allows you to provide them with individual support and/or assistance. In planning individual work, you will need to consider how well students understand what is expected of them and whether the task provides adequate challenge, support, and motivation to sustain their interest (William, 2003). According to my teaching experiences in planning such activities important to see students need.

Pair works

Pair work provides opportunities for sustained interaction and has long been recommended as a key means of promoting both accuracy and fluency in language use. Grouping students in pairs can take into consideration ability level, language and cultural background, and other factors that will facilitate a positive approach to learning. Students who are not familiar with this learning arrangement may need careful orientation and preparation for pair-work activities in the classroom (William, 2003). From my point of view pair work is more effective in large classes.

Group work

Group-based learning is widely used in all forms of teaching and significantly changes the interactional dynamics of the classroom. In language classes, it increases students’ talking time, helps promote self-esteem, and can increase student motivation by providing a risk-free environment for language practice. However, setting up group activities poses a number of challenges such as:

**Time:** The logistics of putting students into groups can be time consuming. **Circles:** Students often seat themselves in circles by age, language group, friendship, and so on. Limited language **proficiency:** low-level students may have difficulty following instructions or be intimidated working in a group with stronger students, causing them to remain silent. **Control:** Some teachers may feel that they are no longer in control of the class. **Group size:** Groups of four are easiest for ease of classroom management, especially for teacher-learners (Ray, 2005).

**Effective language lessons group formation:** You should select group members initially to achieve more of a heterogeneous mix that promotes peer tutoring and keeps the members focused on the task at hand. **Mixed proficiency levels:** One way is to mix the groups with learners of different proficiency levels, as they can help one another with different tasks for example, in higher-proficiency students can be given more challenging tasks, such as acting as the group reporter or taking notes about the group’s discussion. **Noise levels:** One student in each group can be appointed as a monitor to keep the noise at acceptable levels. **Nonparticipants:** Students who are unfamiliar with group work may not value group-based learning work. In this case, gentle persuasion may be needed (Ray, 2005).
Monitoring group performance: - Pause regularly to visually survey the class as a whole, each group, and individual students. Keep visits to each group short so you can continuously observe everyone in class. Give students feedback to note when they are on track as well as off track. When students seem to be going in the wrong direction, look and listen to each one see what they are doing before jumping in. When you do intervene, comments should be intended to guide students back to the point at which they could do the work themselves. When using a particular grouping arrangement, such as pair work or group work, it is important to make the purpose of the grouping arrangement clear to the students (William, 2001).

Find ways of managing your use of class time

Your classes may last from 40 to 50 minutes, but not all of that time is available for teaching and learning. You will often have procedural issues to attend, to returning assignments, discussing an activity you have prepared and describing how it is to be carried out. Some lessons have a good sense of pace and movement and maintain their momentum – an important part of retaining students’ interest and motivation in the lesson. Other lessons progress will be very slowly. Richards and Lockhart (1994) suggested a number of strategies that teachers can use to maintain the pace of a lesson: Avoid needless or overly lengthy explanations and instructions, and let your students get on with the job of learning. Use a variety of activities within a lesson, rather than spending the whole lesson on one activity. Avoid predictable and repetitive activities where possible. Select activities that are at the right level of difficulty. Set a goal and time for activities. Activities that have no obvious goal or conclusion or in which no time frame is set tend to have little momentum. Monitor your students’ performance on activities so that they have sufficient time to complete them – but not much time (Adam, 1999).

A useful way of thinking about the use of time in a lesson is through thinking of classroom time as consisting of the following four different categories: Allocated time; This is the time allotted for teaching a class in the timetable, such as the typical 40- or 50-minute class period. Instructional time; this is the time actually available for teaching after you have completed non instructional activities, taking attendance, returning homework, and so on. In a 40-minute class period, perhaps 30 minutes of instructional time might be available. Engaged time; this is that portion of time in which the students are actively involved in learning activities (also known as time-on-task). Perhaps it took some time for students to start the assigned activities since they spent some time chatting, organizing their desk or computer, assigning roles. Perhaps 25 minutes of the instructional time was actually engaged time. Academic learning time; this is the amount of time during which students are actively engaged and participating in an activity and learning successfully from it. If an activity is too difficult or was not well set up, students may spend some time on ineffective learning routines and strategies before they finally find a successful way of completing the activity (Dornyei, 2001).
Keep correct comportment manner in your classes.

Krashan (2000) claimed that in order to teach a successful lesson, there needs to be an atmosphere of respect and trust between teachers and students as well as a shared understanding of appropriate forms of classroom behavior. The author added that the class needs to develop a sense of community, of people working together cooperatively to achieve shared goals. This will not happen if students do not take the class seriously (Krashan, 2000) it means if some students are allowed to disrupt the class with inappropriate talk or behavior, if students use their cell phones or send text messages during lessons, if students choose when it suits them to come to class or to start work on an assignment. A challenge for the teacher, especially one who is new to teaching, is to establish norms for appropriate classroom behavior so that the students develop a sense of responsible and cooperative behavior during lessons. Rather than adopting the role of discipline master, you should work with your students to establish an acceptable set of class rules that will allow for productive teaching and learning. This can be done in several ways for example ask the students to discuss what they feel appropriate rules for classroom behavior should be. Propose different ways of dealing with classroom issues. Of course the rules you establish should apply both to you and the students if you expect your learners to take the rules seriously. In one class, the teacher and students agreed that the door of the classroom would be locked once the lesson started. A few days later, the teacher arrived late for class and found that the students had locked the classroom door!

Dornyei (2001) has given some example of class rules.

For students;

Let’s not be late for class. Always write your homework. Once a term you can “pass,” that is, say that you have not prepared. In small-group work, only the L2 can be used. If you miss a class, make up for it and ask for the homework.

For teacher;

The class should finish on time. Homework and tests should be marked within a week. Always give advance notice of a test.

Create a culturally sensitive classroom

Second-language classrooms by their nature contain students with diverse cultural and educational backgrounds. Teaching students with different cultural backgrounds requires particular levels of sensitivity and awareness. Some of the characteristics of what can be called a culturally responsive classroom such as: Legitimizing students’ cultures and experiences. This can be achieved by inviting students to share information about their cultures and by showing a genuine interest in finding out more about different cultures and their contributions in lessons. This may involve adapting or supplementing topics from the textbook or curriculum to include information from the learners’ cultures. Using the cultural legacies, traits, and orientations of diverse students as filters through which they learn academic knowledge. This may involve adapting teaching methods to accommodate the preferred learning styles of the students.
In a culturally sensitive classroom, the teacher’s goal is to shape the learning environment in such a way that it can accommodate a wide range of native languages, cultures, racial-ethnic backgrounds, religions, learning styles, and abilities. Dornyei (2001) offered a number of ways in which this can be accomplished, and suggestions like the following can help you to focus on the cultures represented in your classroom: Familiarize your learners with interesting/relevant aspects of the students’ cultures. Develop your learners’ cross-cultural awareness systematically by focusing on cross-cultural similarities (and not just differences) and by using analogies to make the strange familiar. Collect common stereotypes and prejudices about the second-language speakers, and discuss how valid these are. Share your own positive cross-cultural experiences in class. Collect quotations and statements by well-known public figures about the significance of language learning, and share these with your students. Ask your students to bring to class various cultural products (magazines, music, TV recordings, and videos). According to my experiences try to supplement your textbook with authentic materials. Encourage your learners to share interesting information about their cultures and to prepare a presentation in the class. Arrange meetings with speakers from different cultures, and invite some interesting experienced teachers to your class.

**Conclusion**

To sum up the article creating a positive learning has a significant role in teaching and learning. In order to check that learning is taking place it is important to establish a successful learning environment. Moreover students need to have an atmosphere of respect and trust between teachers and students as well as a shared understanding of appropriate forms of classroom behavior. The class needs to develop a sense of community, of people working together cooperatively to achieve shared goals. Also in a culturally sensitive classroom, the teacher’s goal is to shape the learning environment in such a way that it can accommodate a wide range of native languages, cultures, racial-ethnic backgrounds, religions, learning styles, and abilities. Finally a number of strategies that teachers can use to maintain useful class atmosphere and achieve teaching and learning aim for an effective learning in the class. I wish instructors to read this paper and apply them in their classes for achieving a successful teaching and learning environment.
References


