Single problem-multiple responses: Lack of congruency toward misbehavior

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Abstract

The present paper focuses on the teacher strategies towards nine specific cases. The findings stemming from the analyses of interviews show that the strategies used by the teachers are as following: individual talk about reason, displacing the student from group, inviting the students who ridicule to empathy, warning, monitoring, getting help from school director or psychological counselor, ignoring, coming closer and touching, questioning, giving responsibility, changing student seat, sending out, giving punishment, and advising. Furthermore, the results of the study indicate that although the same or similar managerial problems or disputes deserve similar solutions, teachers do not demonstrate coherent approach toward the same undesired behavior.

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1. Introduction

Classroom management has long been studied in school life. The term classroom management differs from individual to individual, even in different institutions different exercises could be seen. Management strategies may also be perceived variantly. Constituents of teaching field such as instruction, motivation or assessment may be considered and used as a significant component of a classroom management. Therefore, the purpose and definition of managing classroom becomes noteworthy and can be stated as “actions taken to create and maintain a learning environment conducive to successful instruction” (Brophy, 2006; p.17). Effective teachers, on the other hand, are prominent actors of classroom life and should behave as effective managers as well (Doyle, 1980). In the same line, the most crucial role of a teacher is the role of classroom manager since there is no effective teaching and learning in the poorly managed classrooms (Marzano, et. al., 2003). In other words, an effective classroom management is vital to design an effective teaching and learning environment (Brophy, 1983; Emmer, et. al., 2000).

The literature points out some misbehavior types frequently observed in classrooms such as talking out, being extremely noisy, complaining about classmates, irritating pupils, misusing materials, illicit talking, inappropriate movement, studying without plan, doing other things during the lesson and talking without permission (Akkok, et. al., 1995; Atici & Merry, 2001; Durmuşçelebi, 2010; Sayın, 2001; Türnüklü & Galton, 2001). In Turkish case, Turkeç (1986) finds that 45.9% of teachers used warning and advising students, 8.3% of the teachers used sending the students to the counseling service, 6.8% of them preferred talking to the parents and 5.3% of the teachers used the technique sending the students to the disciplinary committee as a measure. On the contrary, Aksu (1999) reports...
that teachers frequently use management strategies, as having eye contact, talking the child, touching, warning, and asking questions rather than the punishment, such as reprimands, corporal punishment, and isolation of the child from the classroom are less preferred methods. According to Çelik (2002) teachers mostly select the strategies which stop the undesired behavior immediately or minimize its negative effects. Similar to Aksu (1999) and Serin (2001), Baloğlu (2001) also finds that the teachers in their classes frequently prefers these classroom management strategies to prevent the misbehaviors: ignoring some behaviors, eye contacting, approaching, changing seats, making jokes, talking to families, and other strategies. Furthermore, Güleç and Alkış (2004) in their study reveal that the teachers in state and primary schools generally prefer to use similar strategies in classroom environment. With this respect, the purpose of this study is to describe the most frequently used strategies by the teachers to handle student behavior in an appropriate manner.

2. Method

The qualitative, interpretive research method from the phenomenological perspective was utilized in the study; in-depth interviews were considered as the main source of data collection. Nine questions were emerged in the interview protocol, which were related with the cases of student misbehavior in the classroom setting.

Nine teachers constituted the sample of the study. It was considered that the maximum variation sampling method was used; teachers in this study were selected were from mathematics, biology, physics, chemistry, literature, foreign language, and computer fields.

In this study the qualitative data collected through interviews and written responses received from teachers were subjected to content analysis to explore the teachers’ responses and their coping strategies. Each interview was transcribed, organized, and simplified by labeling the data with descriptive codes.

3. Results

In terms of coping with the student behavior in the classroom, the teachers exhibited both communalities and striking differences in responses and strategies for the given cases.

To start with, the teachers were asked about their response to the students who had been blamed by another student for cheating during exam. The responses given by the teachers can be seen Figure 1.

Another case was about homework. Teachers were asked about a student who had not done the homework because of having too much homework in other courses. The most common strategies that the teachers used are advising and warning the student. Other strategies are individual talk about the reason, help from the authority, and monitoring the student for other homework (Figure 2).

In the third case, teachers were questioned for the strategy they use if there had been an attention problem in an activity. The responses are summarized in Figure 3.
Teachers were also asked what they would do if a successful student had not accomplished the given responsibility in the fourth case. The strategies are presented in Figure 4.

The fifth case was related with the students who had not listened to the lecture. The methods preferred by teachers can be seen in Figure 5.

Teachers were asked about the strategy to how to cope with the argument occurred between two students during the lecturing. Most of them preferred to warn both of the students and talking individually about the reason of the argument. Other responses are summarized in Figure 6.

For the seventh case, the teachers were asked the strategy as a response to ridiculing one of the students in the group. The most common responses are presented in Figure 7.

The teachers were asked about the response to student who repeats the same undesired behavior despite warnings. Most of them use warning as a response. Other responses are summarized in Figure 8.
4. Conclusion

This study might present useful information for exploring the interaction patterns among students and instructors, and the teachers’ responses towards student misbehavior, their classroom management strategies, and finally the overall atmosphere of the schools. As explained in the literature, the classroom management is the whole strategies, regulations, principles, and rules used by the teachers to provide the most effective learning environment for students (Aydın, 1998; Köktaş, 2003). For that reason, studying on the classroom management strategies is crucial since students can learn more effectively when there is a little confusion and misbehavior in the classroom and when they have more productive activity times (Doyle, 1980). This fact apparently discloses the role of teacher for managing the class as also implied by the present study. Teachers prefer certain ways to manage their classes and their main motivation is generally to detect the source of the student behavior and develop a strategy accordingly (Erol, 2006). In this line, similar to the findings obtained in Güleç and Alkış’s study (2004), there are some strategies mostly used by the classroom teachers to deal with the given cases; and these strategies found in the present study are as following: ‘individual talk about reason, changing the group of student, inviting the students who ridicule to empathy, warning, monitoring, getting help from school director or psychological counselor, ignoring, coming closer and touching, questioning, giving responsibility, changing student seat, sending out, giving punishment, and advising.’ It can be inferred from the study that there are variety of ways for establishing the order in the class and not every teacher uses the same classroom management strategy or displays the same response to the same undesired behavior. The reason of this variety in teacher response is explained differently in the literature. According to Nakamura (2000), the teachers are inclined to manage their own classroom based on the way they were managed. Furthermore, Smith and Ragan (2004) state that the beliefs and values represent the teachers’ own educational philosophy; and Ozmon and Craver (2008) also point out that educational philosophy changes educators’ activity in the classroom. Due to this fact, the classroom management strategies might differ based on the educational view and philosophy of the teacher. Besides the philosophy, Jones (1999) indicates that instructional methods preferred by the teachers are as well keystones for the preference of classroom management strategies. The training of these teachers on the classroom management in their faculty years also affects the way they prefer and use management strategies during their profession (Jones & Jones, 1995). Lastly, whatever the reason of the differences in the management strategies, Emmer and Stough (2001) suggest that “the management style that teachers employ should be congruent to the teachers’ instructional goals for their students, the types of activities used in the classroom, and the characteristics of the students themselves” (p.104).

On the other hand, the congruence among the strategies of different teachers in wider platform is also important for providing the consistency and stability in terms of rules, regulations, and principles in any school or classroom. For that reason, while it is natural, according to the literature, for teachers to make use of different methods for the student behaviour in the classroom, this might cause the students to handle their teachers tactfully since not every teacher acts similar towards the same behavior. To sum up, this study displayed how teachers’ perspectives differ towards handling the student behavior to have suitable and productive learning environment for instruction. The factors affecting and explaining the differences and similarities in teachers’ responses could also be explored in the further studies. Moreover, the quantitative version of this study could be conducted by increasing the number of the cases and the participants to get a more general picture about the issue.
References


