

Classroom Management – Conceptual Gaps and Requirements in Teacher Education

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Abstract

Classroom Management refers to the wide variety of skills and techniques that teachers use to keep students organized, orderly, focused, attentive, on task, and academically productive during a class. The skills of classroom management are acquired during the B.Ed. course and imparted to student teachers in the theory section along with small training sessions. These classroom management skills need to be demonstrated during the teaching practice. The main focus of teaching practice for the teacher educator, shifts from learning to evaluation. The teacher educators often stress on the demonstration of teaching skills which are given more importance during the induction sessions of teaching practice, but little importance is given to demonstrating and developing the skills of classroom management. With this concern in mind the first year B.Ed. students after completion of their first part of the internship semester program were involved in this study to understand their perceptions on classroom management.

The study highlights the lack of theory-practice link, the anxieties and preparedness of students with reference to classroom management. The success of teaching is in the way a teacher manages a classroom is the message that student -teachers need to understand and not in completion of their lessons in time. The parameters of measuring the effectiveness of the teaching is also linked to how the class is managed. The definition of classroom management also requires much attention and a wider perspective is required to understand all the nuances of classroom management. The paper alerts all colleges of education to the much needed aspect of classroom management and also prompts them to take adequate measures to improve the same.

Keywords: Classroom Management, Theory-Practice link, Learning resources, Classroom behaviours, Differential Instruction.

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Classroom Management is a widely researched area and also a topic that gathers much discussion in the staff rooms. The B.Ed. course curriculum also includes a number of theories which trainees are taught in their classroom. The course also includes practicum where student teachers give actual lessons in the internship schools. Most often it is observed that student teachers plan good lessons but are not able to perform well in the internship schools due to classroom mismanagement. This affects the morale of the student teacher. The University or NCTE has not specified marks for planning of lessons, which involves a lot of effort of the student teacher and the respective guides. Therefore, non-performance or disturbed performance in the classroom leads to inability of the achievement of classroom objectives and then leads to loss of good grades for that particular lesson. Classroom management must be looked at from the aspect of the teacher, student and learning resources, their management and the interrelationship.

A study was thus undertaken to understand the perceptions of student teachers regarding classroom management. The sample taken were 48 student teachers. The tool used was a google form to understand their perceptions on the classroom management and also the extent of use of theory taught in regular classes in the internship situation. The statements made were positively and negatively worded, and percentage was calculated to understand the perceptions of student teachers.

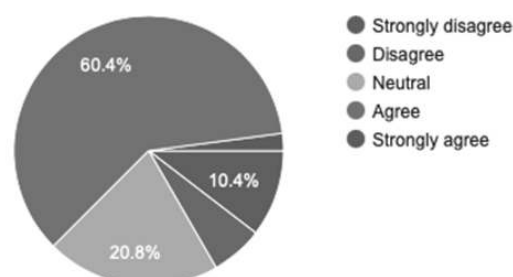
The aim of the study was to understand the perceptions of student teachers regarding classroom management.

The main objectives of the study are :

1. To study the perceptions of student teachers regarding theory practice linkage.
2. To study the perceptions of student teachers related to the nature and problems of classroom management.
3. To study the methods used by student teachers for effective classroom management.
4. To study the definition of positive classroom culture in the minds of student teachers.

Objective 1: To study the perceptions of student teachers regarding theory practice linkage

Fig. 1 : Theory -Practice link

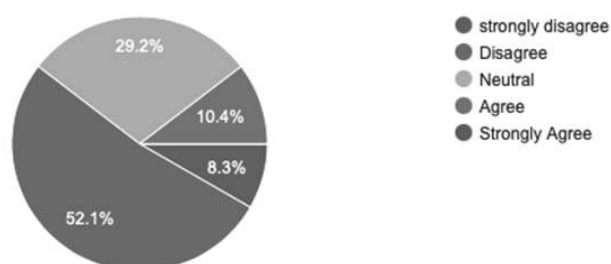


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The main difficulty faced by all teachers today is classroom management. In order to tide over this problem, it is very essential that teachers read and understand the theories of classroom management. The theories which teachers could refer to are – Theories of learning- classical conditioning, operant conditioning, Theory of constructivism, Theory of group dynamics, Theory of individual differences, Social learning theory, Theory of observational learning, Theory of connectivism, Mastery Learning model. The Roger's Unconditional Positive Regard is a theory of showing positivity to students and showing them that they are constantly cared for. The colleges of education must specifically ask student teachers to learn and link theory with practice. Most student teachers think that classroom management skills will be developed automatically once they are thrown into the classroom. Sadly, most teacher educators also think the same and provide little or no practical training in classroom management other than few theory classes. Classroom management requires serious attention from teacher educators as well as student teachers, where relevant theories and skills to be developed must be made aware at the time of teaching practice.

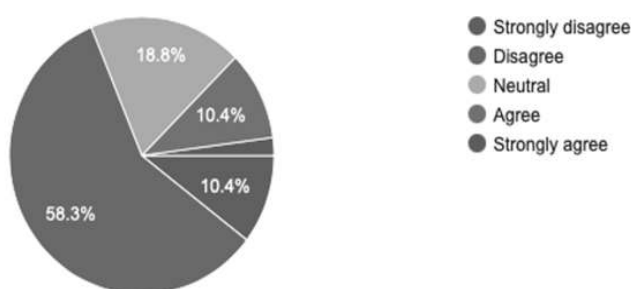
Objective 2: To study the perceptions of student teachers related to the nature and problems of classroom management

Fig. 2: Lesson completion v/s Classroom Management



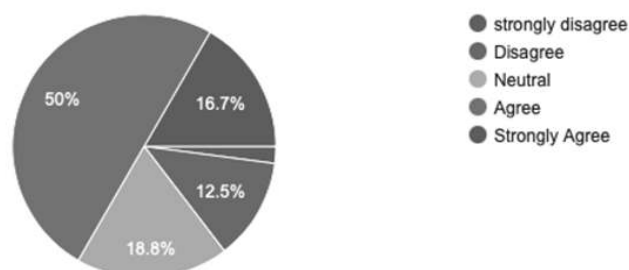
During the teaching practice, student teachers are evaluated by the teacher educators, when asked where is the main focus, on lesson completion or on classroom management, 48% of the student teachers replied that their main focus was on completing their lesson than on classroom management. This shows that the student teachers consider the classroom management as separate to the teaching process and that classroom management includes teaching. The concept of classroom management needs to be broadened in colleges of education.

Fig. 3 : Classroom Management – a burden for teachers



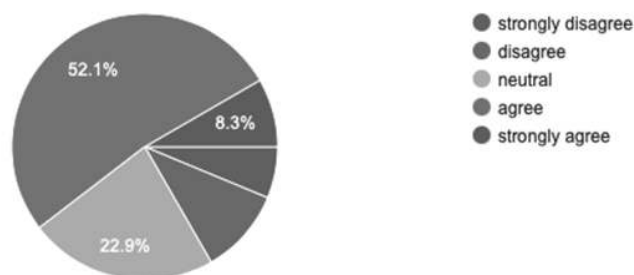
Classroom management is an integral part of any teacher's responsibility, considering it as an additional burden will lead to a secondary attention to this activity. Most student teachers dread to manage the class and prefer to choose classes where there are less classroom management problems. Students who are quiet and docile are preferred rather than students who are over enthusiastic and jumpy. Most student teachers treat such students as disturbing characters of the class and make them quiet by giving strict instructions right in the beginning. This dampens the enthusiasm of the school students and thus the student teachers have a calm class which helps them complete their lessons successfully. It also ensures that they are in total control of the class. The above pie chart which asks the student teachers whether classroom management is a burden for them, 58% of the student teachers denied the fact but 42% either agreed or were neutral, which shows the divide in the thinking.

Fig. 4 : Classroom Management – Teaching Efficiency



50% of the student teachers deny that classroom management is a test of their teaching efficiency. This reveals the fact that these student teachers are not convinced about the integration of teaching with classroom management. This lack of knowledge can cause serious deficiencies in the lesson planning. It is seen that there is no section in the lesson plan for classroom management strategy. Thus student teachers are not prepared with any strategy of classroom management so they either give up or use trial and error method at the spur of the situation. A proper planning with the existing classroom management empirical and conceptual theories can bring in better management.

Fig. 5 : Anxiety before the class

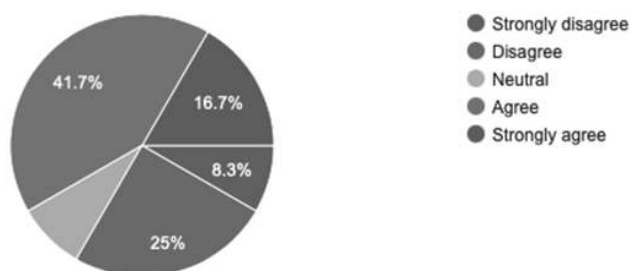


52% of the student teachers deny that they were anxious before the class began. They were not anxious about how the class will be and how they will manage the class. 48% of the student teachers agree or are neutral regarding the anxiety before a class. This anxiety before the class begins, can be turned into confidence if the student teachers are well versed with the context of teaching and how they are going to handle the classroom. The anxiety could be because of the fear of the

unknown. This could be avoided if the teachers are well aware of the different types of students and the different methods of classroom management, and the relevant skills required for the same.

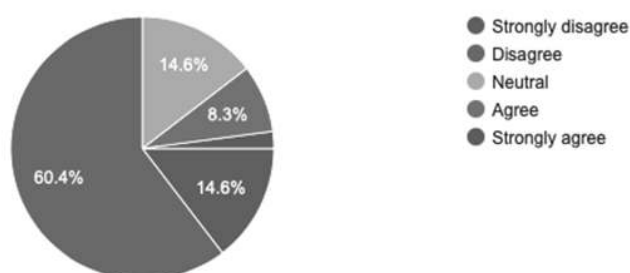
Objective 3: To study the methods used by student teachers for effective classroom management

Fig. 6 : Involvement of Regular teachers in Classroom management during Teaching practice



Around 58% of the teachers either agreed or are neutral with reference to the involvement of the regular school teachers in managing the class during teaching practice. This shows that student teachers looked for external support to handle the class, and did not want to get involved in classroom management, which also means that student teachers consider that smooth teaching is without any classroom management problems. The student teachers need to be aware of all the dynamics of the classroom in which they are teaching before they start teaching in a particular school. It is seen that most often a school is selected, content is chosen from the respective teacher and then the student teachers are thrown into the classroom to teach. Teacher educators observe the lessons and give feedback, and the entire teaching practice becomes an act of evaluation rather than an act of training. It is often seen that school teachers also instruct their school students beforehand saying that the lesson that follows is evaluated and the student teacher will lose marks if they disturb the class and they must be in their best of behaviours. This then converts an actual situation into an artificial situation of teaching practice and everybody gets into the examination mode. Teaching practice is a part of the internal assessment activity and the goal of internal assessment is overall growth and development of the student and not grading and marking.

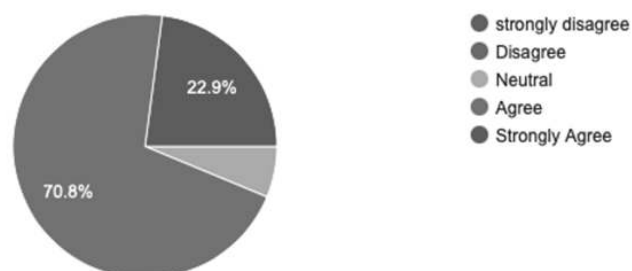
Fig. 7 : Loss of patience in classroom management



Loss of patience in classroom management is a routine thing among teachers, due to this what follows is screaming,

shouting, throwing students out of class and also worse thing is corporal punishment. This happens due to lack of knowledge of how to deal with the situation. It is seen that 60% of the teachers state that they do not lose their patience while handling the students in the class. 40% of the teachers do lose their patience and this could lead to adverse effects on children. This shows the level of preparedness for classroom management. The student teachers resort to classroom management skills for implementation in the classroom.

Fig. 8: Teaching Practice – Teacher's classroom management behaviour



93% of student teachers either strongly agree or agree to the fact that teaching practice has helped in understanding their own classroom management behavior. Actually, the theories do mention about appropriate teacher's classroom management behaviors, but when the teacher is actually placed in the classroom the situational factors, affect the teacher, which forces the teacher to exhibit certain classroom management behaviors. Student teachers must then reflect and check whether the behavior's exhibited are in line with the expected behaviors in the theories of classroom management.

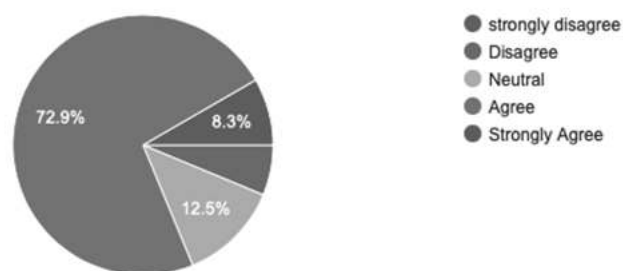
Fig. 9: Time allotted in Lesson planning



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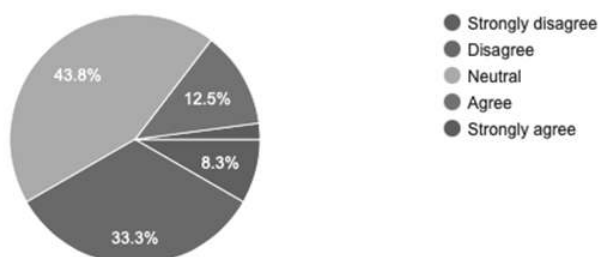
44% of student teachers disagreed with the fact that time must be allotted at the stage of lesson planning itself. This means that the lesson plan doesnot have a component of time allocated for classroom management. If a student teacher has a class for 30 minutes then the time allotted for classroom management must be 6-7 mins, which would mean 20% of the time allotted. The consciousness of the time allocation will help student teachers to complete their lesson along with duties related to classroom management effectively, it would also lead to slight stretching of the instructional time if needed keeping in mind different kinds of learners.

Fig. 10: Classroom management -Kind of students



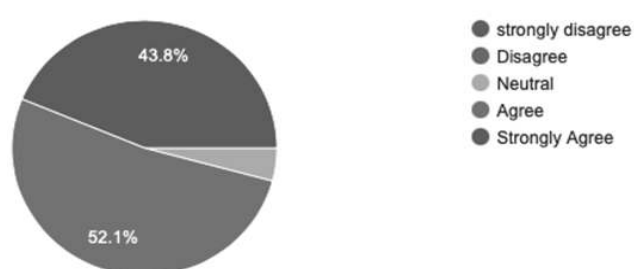
The knowledge of classroom management includes handling of different kinds of learners in the classroom. It is seen that 73% of student teachers do not consider classroom management as understanding the class in terms of the different kinds of learners in the classroom. This poses a danger as student teachers will then consider the classroom as one whole unit rather than as individuals with separate natures and abilities, which is the basis of differential instruction. How many B.Ed. institutions are even making student teachers aware that the classroom is not one homogeneous group but heterogeneous in nature and dealing with different personalities in the classroom could be quite challenging.

Fig. 11: Possibility of handling learners differently



46% of student teachers consider it possible to handle the learners differently. It is seen that 54% of the student teachers have either agreed that it is not possible or remained neutral about this fact. Classroom management is about handling and treating different learners meaningfully. The B.Ed. course hardly stress on this aspect, so theories of differential instruction are not a part of the practical training process even though a bit of it is present in the syllabus.

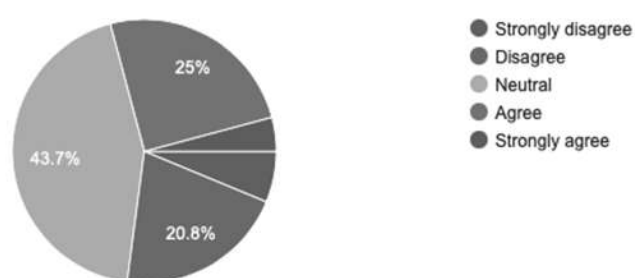
Fig. 12: Classroom management skills



99% of the Student teachers agreed that classroom management is related to a bundle of skills that student

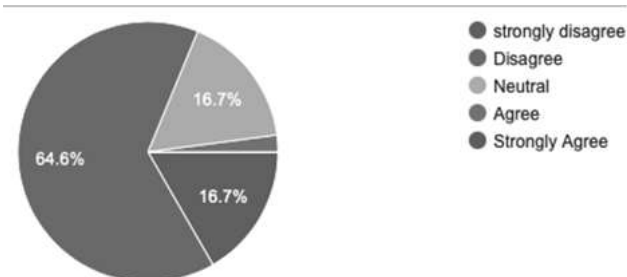
teachers need to apply in the teaching practice. Therefore skill development in classroom management must take place in B.Ed. colleges. The colleges have lectures on classroom management and also a session of related problems in classroom management the question of how to manage students in the classroom cannot be learnt through theory but must be developed through workshops where skills can be built upon. The student teachers need to focus then on development of skills like communication, handling learning resources, teaching skills of questioning, reinforcement, explanation, skills of dealing with special learners, and skill of evaluation.

Fig. 13: Managing class v/s teaching difficult concepts



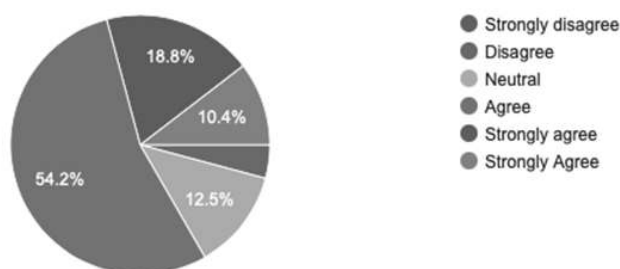
30% student teachers have agreed to the fact that it is tougher to manage the class than to teach difficult concepts. 44% of the student teachers have remained neutral to this question. This reveals that classroom management is difficult for student teachers and doesnot come naturally. The context of the classroom affects the teaching process and student teachers consider it as a major hurdle in teaching. It also shows the fact that cognitively the student teachers may have the knowledge but it is tough to practice.

Fig. 14 :Failure in Classroom Management



In the self - assessment of the success or failure in classroom management, approximately 18% of the student teachers consider themselves as failures in classroom management, it must be noticed that 17% of the student teachers are neutral to this question. It is good to see that 65% of the student teachers were successful in classroom management during their teaching practice. If we consider those who agreed as failures and the neutral category it is seen that 35% of the student teachers do not want to claim that they were successful in classroom management. This leads to the fact that much has to be done with reference to classroom management.

Fig. 15: Need to develop skills of classroom management



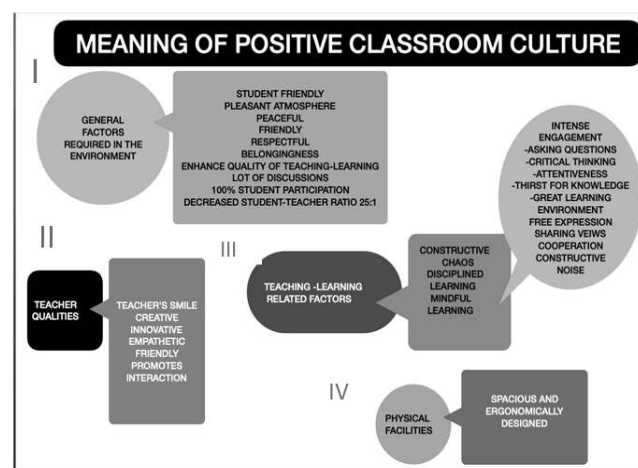
45% B.Ed students admitted that they need to develop skills of classroom management. Classroom management therefore is not a skill that runs parallel with the teaching skills. Although colleges claim that they have intense training in teaching skills there is a gross neglect of classroom management skills. The student teachers are marked on their teaching effectiveness but effectiveness in classroom management also needs to be given attention.

In order to tide over the problems faced in the classroom during teaching practice, and to teach effectively student teachers use a number of methods. The analysis of the qualitative responses showed that they use two types of methods for classroom management preventive and reactive methods. Classroom management is only considered as student teacher interaction and how to manage it effectively to deliver the lesson. It is seen that 10% of the students use reactive methods and the other 90% of the students use preventive methods and reinforcement techniques to boost the morale of the school students. The preventive methods used by the student teachers are as follows: giving clear instructions at the start of the lesson, maintaining constant eye contact with students, being humble in one's approach, organizing fun activity that will interest students, using assertive tone while giving task related instructions, asking questions while teaching, motivating students to engage themselves in activities, using innovative methods of teaching always, connecting with each student meaningfully, discussing current information in lessons to maintain students' interest, using life oriented examples, using interesting games, using chalkboard to write points and showing videos, giving breaks during the lesson for students to ask questions, conducting short meditative exercise in class. The reactive measures used by teachers are : calling out roll nos., taking the calendar and giving it to the principal and the supervisor, asking class monitors to write names, asking difficult questions to students who disturb the class.

Objective 4: To study the definition of positive classroom culture in the minds of student teachers.

Student teachers must develop their awareness about positive classroom culture in order to understand the larger goal of classroom management. The responses for the Positive Classroom Culture were classified into four areas : General factors required in the environment, Teacher qualities, Teaching -Learning related factors, Physical facilities. When asked about their views on positive classroom culture the student teachers had views compiled in the diagrammatic format as shown below:

Fig. 16 : Perceptions of Positive Classroom Culture



Classroom management must be considered as an important component of the teaching -learning practice in colleges of education. There are several problems happening in schools like violence in children, lack of planning of resources, mismanaged classroom learning experience, no attention given to learning outcomes, bad communication among teachers, students and parents, lack of physical facilities for teaching learning, lack of differential instructional methods etc. All these problems can be tackled by using the different techniques of classroom management. Student teachers must be taught the theory and skills related to classroom management intensely in a modular format. The colleges of education must conduct regular workshops on classroom management and train students on the skills required for classroom management like communication (oral and written), different methods of teaching, handling student behaviours, managing classroom resources, using technology, skill of reinforcement etc.. The society is grappling with value depletion and the school has to take great responsibility as it is dealing with impressionable minds. The formative years of the students must be handled with great care and concern by the teacher. This will develop strong values in the child which will be applied in life. Therefore, colleges of education are where the transformation can take place in teacher trainees, these teachers on entering the teaching profession can bring in the desired changes through appropriate classroom management.

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