

Classroom Management of a Cape Verdean Higher Education Teacher

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Abstract- The purpose of this research was to seek for classroom management strategies that a higher education professor uses in the context of a course of Literature taught to 2nd year undergraduate students from CVPU- Cape Verde Public University (Pseudonym) located in Cape Verde and to explore the role of the professor in using classroom management strategies to establish or maintain favorable conditions for learning and what classroom management practices do teachers implement in order to avoid behavioral problems. This research focused on qualitative data collection and the instrument that was used to collect the data of this study was semi structured interviews. The participant of this study was a professor from CVPU- Cape Verde Public University (Pseudonym) located in Cape Verde. The findings indicate that communication seems to be a fundamental component in classroom management, and it seems to be associated with the teacher's concept of how students learn and their intentions for teaching. In addition, it also suggests that learning is a gradual process, as students approach the fundamental concepts in period of studies, solve problems by relating these concepts in the group discussions and, finally, synthesize and register their understandings in the quiz.

Index Terms- Behavioral Problems, Classroom Management, Classroom Strategies, Higher Education, Teaching and Learning Process

I. INTRODUCTION

Assuming that the act of teaching should be understood in a contextualized way, in time and in space, it is understood that the privileged space for this is the classroom and the time available is that of the class. It is there and at that moment that teachers and students establish certain particular social relations that may favor or disempower the process of teaching and learning. Assuming that the primary purpose of the school is the transmission of historically constructed knowledge to the new generations to understand how, in fact, teachers manage the most diverse situations in search of effective professional duty that is essential to improve the quality of education. Doyle (1986) defines two main teacher tasks associated with classroom

management: class management (group organization, definition of rules, disciplinary procedures and sanctions, articulation and sequencing of activities, etc.); and teaching the content of the program (following the program, motivating students, selecting and organizing resources, evaluating learning, etc.).

The classroom management denotes a competence of the teacher associated with his or her pedagogical knowledge and the context of teaching and that develops through the experience during his or her teaching trajectory. From this perspective, investigations about classroom management should be carried out considering the real contexts of teaching, from which can emerge indications of the main aspects considered by the teacher in the process of organization and management of his or her activities before and during his or her teaching practice.

Statement of the Problem and Purpose of the study

The classroom management is a subject little addressed in educational research, but it configures a fundamental competence of the teacher for the referral of classes and for the maintenance of an environment conducive to learning. It is a capacity that encompasses content management, time, space and people, in order to guarantee the necessary conditions for teaching and learning. The researcher understands that teachers play an important role in classroom management and it is extremely relevant that teachers examine their classroom managements and techniques in order to create a safe environment conducive to learning for all learners. In addition, she believes that being an effective classroom manager is extremely important to successful teaching and learning process and effective classroom management plays an important role in student's classroom achievement.

Therefore, this research project has as its aim to seek for classroom management strategies that a higher education professor uses in the context of a course of Literature taught to 2nd year undergraduate students from CVPU- Cape Verde Public University (Pseudonym) located in Cape Verde. Furthermore, this paper will also address the role of the teacher in using classroom management strategies to establish or maintain

favorable conditions for learning and what classroom management practices do teachers implement in order to avoid behavioral problems.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

According to the perspective of Amado and Freire (2009), the definition of classroom management includes the events that begin in the planning, with the organization and execution of each class held by the teacher “the orientation of questions and looks, reinforcements and incentives that he or she conveys to students” (Teixeira, 2011, p.115). Also it is included in this concept the evaluation that the teacher implements and the way how he or she manages and acts in relation to different conflicts and powers (Teixeira, 2012). Classroom management can also be described as the instructor responsibility to design and implement efficient classroom routines, policies, and procedures in order to ensure that students’ participate in class discussions, form cooperative learning groups, and accomplish class work, and several other classroom activities and interactions (Sterling, 2009). Classroom management can be also understood as the set of strategies adopted by the teacher, to maximize students’ cooperation and involvement and to reduce disruptive behavior (Arends, 1995; Wang, Haertel & Walberg, 1997, cited in Veiga 2013), maintaining an appropriate learning environment (Brophy, 1996; Djigic & Stojiljkovic, 2011). This concept involves the management of space, time and activities, as well as the management of student behavior, combining the characteristics of the teacher, his / her abilities and competences (Djigic & Stojiljkovic, 2011).

Classroom management is a fundamental step in ordering order, organizing teaching activities, and building an environment conducive to student learning. However, this theme receives little attention in teacher training courses and in educational research, particularly in the context of Higher Education, being a competence developed by the teacher during his teaching career. The first research on the organization and management of the classroom focused essentially on issues associated with order in the classroom, not establishing a direct relationship with the construction of a suitable environment for teaching and learning (Doyle, 1986).

However, since the 1980s, research has gone beyond the limits of order and has been associated with classroom management in teaching and learning processes (Gauthier et al., 1998). From this perspective, Doyle (1986) extends this concept, including the learning dimension, and conceives classroom management as a cognitive activity that allows teachers to anticipations that reduce the need for improvisations in order to promote learning. For the author, classroom management “consists of a set of rules and arrangements necessary to create and maintain an orderly environment conducive to both teaching and learning.”

Sterling (2009) emphasizes three fundamental dimensions of classroom management present in educational research: the management planning, the classroom management in a situation of interaction with students, and the evaluation and control of the classroom management activities. The first dimension refers to

the preparation and planning work that leads to a set of decisions related to the rules of coexistence and to the routines of class functioning, such as the sequencing of the activities and the implementation of a teaching plan. The second dimension refers to the application of disciplinary measures, the sanctions, the rules and procedures that govern the interaction between the agents of the classroom. It is, therefore, the supervision of the work of the students and the conduction of the dialogical interactions that are established in the classroom. The third dimension refers to the evaluation of the rules, procedures and disciplinary measures; therefore, it constitutes a reflexive activity of the teacher on the conduction of his or her classes.

The “management planning” is highlighted by the author as a fundamental stage of preparation for teaching, as stated:

The planning of class management begins not only with the preparation work, before the beginning of the school year, but also with the implementation and the communication of rules, procedures, relationships and expectations towards the students as soon as the year starts (Sterling 2009, p.29).

This planning begins before the beginning of a course and is established in the course of the classes, as a planning in action, particularly when the course starts, because this moment is fundamental so that the agents of the classroom know each other and the rules of Co-existence are shared (Sterling, 2009).

In the scope of Higher Education, Santos (2004), when dealing with the profile of the competent teacher, points out the ability to carry out pedagogical planning as a central capacity of this professional, who must “be clear about the objectives to be achieved in the development of the content with an adequate strategy and an evaluation that is consistent with what he or she has proposed. Plan your classes well and develop them competently (Santos, 2004, p.105).” Cunha (2009) evokes the concept of “participatory management” of the classroom as a characteristic of innovative experiences in Higher Education. In this process, the subjects involved participate in the classroom management from the conception of a planning for teaching to the analysis of the results, in which “there is a break with the vertical structure of power blaming the collective of the teaching and learning process through the proposals formulated” (p. 224). Effective classroom management not only permits the teachers to work with the pupils in a constructive and encouraging manner but also permits teachers to use preventative methods to avoid disruptions that are unnecessary (Schwartz & Pollishuke, 2013).

Thus, classroom management includes not only the physical appearance and the arrangement of the classroom, but also the classroom practices and rules, the responsibilities of the students required by the teacher, the student relationships, disciplinary actions, and the strategies the teachers use and the personalities displayed by the teachers.

Effective classroom management is extremely important because it helps students to be motivated, to exhibit appropriate behaviors, to boost confidence and enhance their learning. “Classroom management is a critical and complex component in the creation of effective learning environments” (Bennett & Smilanch, 1994, p.14). Richardson and Fallona (2001) state that the student learning and the classroom rules set by the teachers

are directly related, though, they consider that the most significant aspect is the classroom management set at the first week of the academic year. Also, Soodak (2003) argues in her research study, *Classroom Management in Inclusive Settings*, how the excellence of a classroom environment permits students to feel comfortable, safe and encouraged. When these aspects are present in a classroom the students' learning improves and misbehavior and disciplinary issues are reduced. Wentzel (2003) states in *Motivating Students to Behave in Socially Competent Ways* that when students have a strong sense of belonging it helps them to achieve good outcomes, encompassing educational motivation, a sense of effectiveness, and emotional well-being. "Also, a strong sense of belonging has been related with a desire to learn and an increase in understanding, while a lack of belonging has been related with undesirable educational outcomes such as absence and withdrawal from school" (Mansor et al., 2012, p.37). Therefore, effective classroom management is considered to be important not only for the classroom achievement, but also for the accomplishment of students' wellbeing and learning and for encouraging appropriate behavior. The use of classroom management skills may be a key component to help students to engage in the classroom. Usually one of the consequences of lack of engagement in the classroom is students' misbehavior. When students are not engaged in the classroom, they will get bored, resistant to teacher's instructions, which may cause conflict in the classroom if teachers do not possess classroom management skills to control this kind of situation.

Roache and Lewis (2011) discuss the relationship between students and teachers, and its effects on students' misbehavior in their study entitled *Teachers' Views on the Impact of Classroom Management on Student Responsibility*. In this study, they put together different views of different authors in relation to "student-teacher" relationship and how it is related to student behavior. One of the approaches they discussed is Canter's (2010), and it falls into a "teacher-oriented" model, which means that the teacher has clear expectations of students' behavior, and what is considered good behavior is enforced by rewards, while on the other hand what is not considered good behavior is addressed by "appropriate punishment". Another approach, supported by Gordon (1974) is the "student-oriented" one. The ones that defend this approach, for instance Gordon, believe that "obedience" is not the key for students to develop responsible behavior, but they should follow a "self-regulatory" process, where they are responsible for controlling their own behavior (Roache and Lewis, 2010). Furthermore, Roache and Lewis also discussed a "group-oriented" approach, which is supported by researchers like Dreikurs, Grunwald & Pepper. These researchers believe that students develop responsible behavior by forming decision groups, with the teacher as a guide to help them follow through the rules (Roache and Lewis, 2010). Dreikurs is a pioneer in the study of behavioral issues, but unfortunately I could not have access to any of his primary studies.

Roache and Lewis had the purpose to examine teachers' points of view on classroom management strategies and the perception they have of the relationship between students' responsibility and these strategies. This study was conducted in Australia, with 145

primary and 363 secondary school teachers. Questionnaires were applied, and after analyzing the data, the researchers found that when students misbehave in the classroom teachers become concerned, and they tend to adopt management strategies like punishments that instead of solving the problem may cause students to misbehave even more. One of the important issues that this primary research shows is that the use of punishment in the classroom may not necessarily be a good way of managing students' misbehavior.

The Classroom Management Idea Book created by Peace Corps (2008) also discusses strategies that teachers can use for a well-managed classroom:

1. Create a motivational environment by getting students involved in classroom activities. It is very important that teachers give students clear directions at the beginning of classes so they know what they are expected to do. It is also important that teachers demonstrate constantly that they believe every single student have the ability to learn.
2. Make every minute count by planning each lesson in advance, and by writing down every learning objective. Not every teacher may think of it, but it is important to be prepared with an emergency lesson or activity in case anything out of the ordinary happens.
3. Be prepared for students' misbehavior, which might be a challenge for teachers. One good strategy is to begin the school year by sharing with students the concept of misbehavior, and to establish a working system with rules and consequences. To make this more effective, allow students to participate in the creation of consequences for breaking the rules in the classroom.
4. Keep everyone engaged, because when students are challenged to think actively, they get involved in learning, which helps them develop critical skills. It is also important to always praise students for their willingness to try and answer questions.
5. Be creative, this is where teachers really put into action their ideas. They can use resources such as pictures, maps, activity ideas, arts and crafts instructions, magazines, and all materials they may find helpful to their classroom.
6. Give students choices, for instance, when found in situations where teachers have no choice unless to punish students misbehavior, it is a wise strategy to let students choose between two possible punishments, Peace Corps (2008).

Furthermore, the problem of students' misbehavior is one that goes beyond the classroom. Rusby (2011) related the school environment and school staff procedures to students' behavior. In her study entitled *Observations of the middle school environment: The context for student behavior beyond the classroom*, she discussed school environment and school staff procedures as very important in helping students develop appropriate behavior. Rusby believes that staff management procedures and environmental factors have the power to positively or negatively influence students' behavior. The use of clear rules and effective behavior management are important for a good "staff-student" relationship, and the lack of such environment can result in students' behavioral problems (Rusby, 2011). While conducting this study, students from 18 middle schools were used as participants, and the methodology was

based on observations. Observers/research assistants were trained and placed in the schools as to assess staff and students' behavior. As there were different environments in each school, there were obviously differences found in students and staff behavior. Most importantly, it was found that staff practices were deeply related to student behavior.

I do believe that school atmosphere, as well as home atmosphere, are important factors in controlling the problem of misbehavior. Most students have behavior problems because they have a difficult relationship at home, because they face violence, or because the family structure is not efficient in providing values that are important for someone to be able to develop positive behavior. Schools have to be equipped with staff members that are trained and able to deal with students that bring behavior problems from home. According to Stormont, Reinke & Herman (2011) "...schools currently lack systematic and coordinated efforts to meet the mental health and behavioral needs of students...". In their study entitled *Teachers' Knowledge of Evidence-Based Interventions and Available School Resources for Children with Emotional and Behavioral Problems*, Stormont, Reinke & Herman (2011) discussed a set of behavior interventions that can help teachers and schools deal with students with behavior problems. One of them is the establishment of "tiers of support with increasing levels of intensity" to reduce or prevent behavior problems. At a general level, all students receive the same instructions for correct behavior. Once teachers determine that these instructions are not efficient for certain students, they provide those students with additional intervention, which are generally conducted in small groups. In case these additional instructions do not prove to be efficient for certain students, teachers have to use specific strategies for students' individual needs. In that case they will have to develop a specific plan to address the behavior problem (Sugai et al. 2000, cited by Stormont, Reinke & Herman, 2011).

In this study, the researchers aimed to find out the knowledge of teachers about intervention programs to help students with behavioral problems, and the methodology used was the application of surveys. Participants included 239 teachers (early childhood and elementary education) from 5 school districts. This research comes to show that teachers have a very limited knowledge of the programs available; however, this cannot be generalized. The results apply only to the teachers that participated in the study; nevertheless, the same research can be conducted in different schools and districts. It is important to add that in addressing students behavior problems, I believe that teachers have to work together with parents for more efficient results because, as I mentioned above, behavior problems may be caused by family environment problems, and in that case teachers alone cannot achieve desired results while using strategies for behavior problems. The next chapter will provide detailed information on the methodologies used in conducting this research.

III. METHODOLOGY

Sample Population

One professor from the CVPU- Cape Verde Public University (Pseudonym) located in Cape Verde participated in this study. The professor investigated is a Master in African Literature and Languages and he acts as an English Professor in Higher Education for more than 20 years and he is recognized by his peers and students as a competent teacher. For more than 15 years he has been the coordinator and professor of a Literature course offered annually to 2nd year undergraduate students of the English Studies course. I chose this professor because he has stood out for years in the institutional evaluation carried out at the end of each semester, in which students evaluate their teachers through a questionnaire.

Having in mind the purpose of this study, this research focused on qualitative data collection. With the purpose to get the necessary information in order to answer my research questions the instrument that was used to collect the data of this study was semi structured interviews. According to McDonough & McDonough (2004) are those interviews "that have previously idealized questions, but giving the researcher flexibility to change the order and format of the questions" (p.183). With the purpose of obtaining the information necessary to answer the research questions it was chosen one data collection instrument as a way to avoid doubts arising during the data collection phase and to ensure the clarity of the data.

Plan for Data Analysis

The data was collected from the performance of the professor in his Literature course integrated by twenty four undergraduate students and whose objective is to provide a global vision of the general principles of Literature. The course was structured from two central teaching strategies, which are: the "periods of studies" and "discussion groups". In the "periods of studies" students meet in groups of six to answer a set of questions about key concepts and information related to a topic in class. These questions were available in the handbook of the course delivered at the beginning of the course and were answered with the support of the textbook delivered by the professor at the beginning of the course. A period of study is performed in an average period of two hours. The group discussions are held with all students, organized in turn. It discusses problems that articulate the information and concepts addressed in the periods of studies. Such questions are available in the handbook or removed from the textbook. Each group discussion is performed in an average period of two hours.

IV. DATA ANALYSIS

After the collection of the data through the methodology discussed in chapter II, the data was analyzed in a statistically valid, reliable, and coherent way. As the purpose of this chapter is to establish how the data was analyzed, below is an explanation of how the instrument described in Chapter II was analyzed.

The data collection was done with the accomplishment of a semi-structured interview that was recorded in audio and video and integrally transcribed. Also it was used as a data source the teaching planning developed by the professor for this course. The interview aimed to mobilize the professor's narratives about his knowledge and experiences about: the purposes and objectives for the teaching, the students and their understandings, the teaching strategies and the curriculum; considering the Literature course given to 2nd year undergraduate students of the English Studies in the first semester of 2016, more precisely during the month of November.

The professor points out the teaching planning as a fundamental step of his practice. This planning includes: the teaching staff, the summary of the course syllabus, A suggestion of bibliography for the course, the indication of websites with software for further studies, a description of the main teaching activities and evaluation criteria, a schedule with the content programming and activities that will be carried out in each class, a study guide for each subject, with questions and problems for the accomplishment of the period of studies and group discussions, and some appendices.

It is therefore a detailed and systematic planning that intends to anticipate the steps that the professor has chosen to guide his teaching. This planning is shared with the students on the first day of class, each of which receives a copy in the form of a handbook. On that day, the professor presents his teaching approach, clarifies doubts and initiates teaching activities. In this way, the students can have an overview of the course and the subjects and activities that are scheduled for each day of the class. At the beginning of the course the professor tends to be more attentive to the group, since it is a moment of adaptation and incorporation of the teaching strategies adopted in the discipline. However, as the students incorporate the dynamics of the classes and become more autonomous, the professor starts to interfere less and less in the learning process.

The class schedule is adjusted according to the progress of the course and if the students advance beyond the proposed one, the teacher proceeds to approach the following subjects. The following is a clipping of the calendar provided by the teacher in his teaching planning, in which he proposes an estimated period to approach a set of subjects.

Month	Day/period	Activity and Subject
November	14(morning)	PS - Non-Fiction - Objectives 1-5.
	16(morning)	GD - Non-Fiction - Exercises 1-5.
	21(morning)	PS - Fiction Part I - Objectives 1-10.
	23 (morning)	GD - Fiction Part I - Exercises 6, 7 and 9-12.
	28 (morning)	PS - Fiction Part II - Objectives 2-9.
	30 (morning)	GD - Fiction Part II – Exercises - 2, 3, 4. Quiz I.

Table 1 - Calendar clipping of the subjects and activities drawn from teaching planning.

In this section, it is presented a program for the teaching of two subjects: fiction and non-fiction. It can be observed that the time available for the approach of each subject is varied. To address the subject "Fiction" the professor suggests one period and to address "Non-Fiction" he also suggests one period. To set the time necessary for the approach of each subject requires the professor to know about the quantity of matters associated to each subject, the strategies used and the stage of students' development.

It is essential for him that the studies are carried out during the classes, as this will allow interaction among students, which for the teacher is an opportunity for them to develop "the skills and abilities", which are directly related to the two main teaching strategies proposed in the discipline, the period of studies and the group discussions. However, according to the professor the option of a group work requires more time for study in the classroom and this directly implies the selection of contents.

The choice of teaching strategies that favor interaction among classroom agents suggests that the teacher's approach does not prioritize the teaching of conceptual contents and corroborates with its purpose that students develop skills and abilities. Another aspect that stands out in the teacher's approach is the organization of teaching activities, which begin with the period of study, continue with the group discussion, and at the end of a cycle of subjects the students hold a "Quiz", which for the teacher "is a learning strategy, it is not an assessment of what they already know. It's a way for them to learn." This structure is maintained throughout the discipline, being interrupted only for the application of one of the three official evaluations proposed in the discipline. The group work also requires an adequate space and infrastructure, as the students need to organize themselves into groups and move through the classroom. Therefore, in order for the periods of studies and group discussions to be carried out, it is important that the chairs can be moved and that the class is not composed of a large number of students. The professor also emphasizes that it is "essential in this type of work, they have literature, they have what to read, this is necessary, and otherwise you cannot do the period of study".

The context in which learning will take place is an element considered by the teacher in the definition of his strategies, because in order for the activities to be carried out and achieve their purposes, it is fundamental that the necessary structural conditions and human resources exist. The professor also emphasizes that his approach requires the interaction between the professor and the students and, therefore, numerous classes make difficult its implementation. During the periods of study, students are free to leave the room and perform their activities at the pace that is convenient for them. The professor reveals that he deals with his target audience in a flexible way and he seeks to create a pleasant learning climate. The professor reveals to have knowledge about the characteristics of his target audience, who are young and adolescent, and so it does not require a rigid posture of his students. For him, a posture with more flexibility

does not imply lack of seriousness neither of the professor nor of the students and that the structure of the discipline allows the students to know the dynamics of the classes and to take responsibility for their learning. In the same way the professor deals with the control of the frequency in the classes. He proves to be quite flexible with the control of the students' frequency and even so, according to him, few are missing classes. For the professor, this is due to the fact that the students recognize the importance of participating in the classes and this can be an indication that the approach proposed in the discipline is approved by the students.

V. CONCLUSION

In this research it was possible to recognize that this professor conducts the classroom management considering: 1) his teaching strategies, 2) the elaboration of study plans for the students, 3) the strategic sequencing of his activities, 4) the organization of students in the classroom and (5) the human and material resources available for teaching. He emphasizes the importance of detailed teaching planning and presents a systematic organization of his activities based on the triad periods of study, group of discussion and quiz; which constitutes a central nucleus of activities that direct the teaching. Communication seems to be a fundamental component in classroom management, since the teacher provides his teaching planning to the students, in which he indicates his teaching objectives and strategies and reveals to be very flexible with the rules of coexistence in the classroom. His appreciation of teaching planning and the way he conducts his classes suggests that one of his goals is to create the conditions necessary for the students themselves to implement this planning and the role of the teacher is to oversee this process. In the case of this study, the classroom management seems to be associated with the teacher's concept of how students learn and their intentions for teaching. His emphasis on activities that provide interaction among classroom agents suggests that for him, learning is favored by interaction among the students.

It also suggests that learning is a gradual process, as students approach the fundamental concepts in period of studies, solve problems by relating these concepts in the group discussions and, finally, synthesize and register their understandings in the quiz. According to him, the choice of student-centered teaching strategies directly implies the selection of the contents for teaching and depends on some variables, such as: a small number

of students, an adequate space for teaching, support of monitors and didactic material for all students.

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