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Students and Teachers Perspectives on Classroom Management in Moroccan Public High Schools: Interviews and Observation

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ABSTRACT

Classroom management is one of the most important factors behind a successful learning experience. This article argues that classroom management is more complex than disciplinary problems and that both teachers and students should be engaged to improve the quality of the teaching/learning process. This article, thus, aims at investigating both teachers and students perspectives of classroom management in Moroccan public high schools. This study has sought to use interviews and observations to shed light on the details of an effective classroom management. This article uses chiefly qualitative methods to address the major methods teachers use to achieve an affective classroom management and the perspectives of students' on what it means to study in an (un-)healthy learning environment. The results of fieldwork and interviews reveal that Moroccan public high schools' teachers and students are in dire need of the improvement of communicative skills and planning, the renovation of the curricula, and the involvement students in the learning process. According to teachers and students, these are the key factors that would ensure an effective classroom management in Moroccan public high schools.

INTRODUCTION

One of the most important skills that education heavily rests on is classroom management. No matter how much the teacher is competent, an effective classroom management is a fundamental key to success. It enables both teachers and learners to maintaining a positive rapport with each other first and then with learning itself. Jere Brophy defines classroom management as follows:

"Classroom management refers to actions taken to create and maintain a learning environment conducive to a successful instruction (arranging the physical environment, establishing rules and procedures, and maintaining students' attention to lessons and engagement in activities" (Brophy, 2011).

By defining classroom management, Brophy points out to the role it plays in learning. In the same vein, Ming Tak Hue says "effective teaching and learning can take place only if there is good order or positive learning climate in the classroom" (Ming-Tak, 2008). Therefore, for students to learn effectively, the teachers' mastery of classroom management skills is mandatory. Classroom management, as Brophy states, "is not an end in itself but a means for creating and maintaining a learning environment that is optimal given the intended curriculum" (Brophy, 2011). Insisting on keeping the classroom well-organized and students well-behaved do not but pave the way to a genuine learning to happen.

There are, indeed, two major ways of understanding classroom management. The first one links it to discipline only and how to find solve disciplinary problems. The second understanding deals with classroom management as skills in which teachers are required to develop other sub-skills like educational communication, student-

teacher relationship, and planning. While the former understanding remains limited, the latter highlights the interrelation between the aforementioned sub-skills to establish a healthy environment for learning.

This article supports Hue's idea that classroom management is "a means through which the wider aims of schooling can be fulfilled and students are socialized into moral, ethical and social values". As such classroom management is not limited only within the walls of the classroom but can be a gate through which students learn essential social skills that will help them in their everyday life by observing the teachers' managerial and problem-solving skills. There are many life competencies to learn when students are partners in managing their own classroom and respecting their learning time and the rights of their peers to learn in a problem-free atmosphere.

This article argues that classroom management is more complex than disciplinary problems and that both teachers and students should be engaged to improve the quality of the teaching/learning process. This article, thus, aims at investigating both teachers and students perspectives of classroom management in Moroccan public high schools. This investigation has sought to use interviews and observations to shed light on the details of an effective classroom management. This article uses chiefly qualitative methods to address the major methods teachers use to achieve an affective classroom management and the perspectives of students' on what it means to study in an (un-)healthy learning environment. It is important to highlight the most important tips for an effective classroom management that are generally tackled by theoreticians and practitioners in the field of education. This is why this article discusses ideas such as

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classroom rules, reinforcement and consequences, and finally the importance of communication and lesson planning. Another section of this article deals with a close analysis of the interviews with teachers and students on their enriching perspectives in classroom management. Teachers' contributions are highly needed as they enabled me to get closer to the real and practical methods they use to handle issues related to classroom management. Interviews with students are equally highly important because this article believe in the active role students can play in making classroom management a successful endeavor. Interviews with students make it also possible to understand their own expectations and justifications on successful and unsuccessful learning experiences which revolve around classroom management. Along with interviews, fieldwork in Moroccan public high schools - namely in Fez, Meknes and Kenitra - has also enabled this research to have a direct contact with both teachers and students and to have an on-site idea on classroom management methods and the different types of misbehavior that students manifest in Moroccan public high schools.

LITERATURE REVIEW

An Overview on Classroom Management

Establishing Rules

An efficient classroom management greatly depends on establishing rules at the very beginning of the year. In his seminal article "Classroom Management", Doyle Walter confirm that students tend to test the teacher's roles in the beginning of the year (Walter, 1980). Misbehavior increases in the beginning of the year and it is at this period that the teacher demonstrates whether or not s/he is able to handle this challenge. Therefore, it is at the beginning of the year that students should be oriented towards peaceful classroom environment. Rules grant a sense of confidence and security to both teachers and learners as there is a sort of law that both partners have to abide by. This also makes learners understand that everything in life lends itself to a set of rules that both teachers and students agree upon and respect.

As H. Paul LeBlanc states, in his book *Students Perception of Rules for Classroom Interaction*, rules are "essential for the smooth operation of classroom interaction" (Le Blanc, 1997). He adds that rules help us develop in children the "the ability to interact with others in pro-social ways, to resolve conflicts by peaceful means, and ultimately the ability to contribute productively to society" (Ibid). Thus, the role of rules is not only limited to the context of the classroom. Rather, they represent a competency that every learner should be acquainted with for a better social insertion and interaction.

However, it is not that easy to establish classroom rules since they need be reasonable, understandable, practical, simple, and convincing. Teenagers, for example, are usually not at ease with receiving orders, remarks or even instructions from adults. So, they find it difficult to accept - let alone apply - the rules. At this age, they often think

that the intention of adults is to exert power on them, which is why their resistance gets intense sometimes.

It is always useful to start with asking students "what does being in a safe environment mean? What does working as one team necessitate?" Learners feel encouraged to have their answers and suggestions listed on the board and set, eventually, as the classroom's general guidelines. As such, learners do not feel that the rules are imposed on them from an "authority"; they rather feel that they are partners in making decisions about their own learning. They, therefore, most likely tend to respect the rule and receive them with much enthusiasm.

While rules may vary from one teacher to another, they need to be explained and discussed, not only presented. Students might misunderstand the rule or just think it is worthless and arbitrary if it is not accompanied with a suitable and reasonable explanation. Teachers need to show the importance and the benefits of setting a certain rule to the general welfare of students.

For a successful collaboration, rules need to be understandable. Ron Clark, for instance, in his book *The Essential 55: An Award-Winning Educator's Rules for Discovering the Successful Student in Every Child* (2004), sets fifty five rules for students to follow. The rules might be logical, helpful and appropriate but the number is still too confusing for students who can in no way memorize all the rules they have to follow. A small number – from three to eight- of the most important general rules and guidelines will, surely, enable the teacher to reach his/her aim successfully provided that the rules are well taught, discussed and explained (Webster, 2014).

Rules should be set in accordance with some criteria like being stated in the positive form instead of negative one. For instance, instead of saying "don't make noise" the teacher can "stay calm or be quiet"; and instead of "don't be late", the teacher can say "be punctual" or "come on time". The way the teacher formulates the rules must be congruent with learners' differences like age and level. Here is a set of rules that are very essential for a healthy learning atmosphere:

1. Coming to class on time: the teacher might either ask them to come on time or to give them a maximum of 3 or 5 minutes to come. Flexibility is a valuable asset.

2. Respecting others: respecting others is an umbrella term as it includes respecting the right of other students to talk and to learn. Students should be reminded not to mock others or manifest any form of disrespect.

3. Using appropriate language: students should know that inside the classroom, only special and courteous language.

4. Handing in assignments on time: students should know assignments and deadlines are very important.

5. Bringing classroom materials: as students will always need textbooks, notebooks, pens and pencils. Forgetting them hinder the smooth flow of the lesson.

6. Taking permission before answering: unpermitted choral answers create noise which can be an opportunity for unnecessary chatting between students.

7. Taking permission before leaving the classroom: it is up to the teacher and to the school's interior laws to accept or not that students leave the classroom. Taking permission is necessary.

8. Working hard: the teacher should raise his/her expectations of students' performance to encourage them to work harder.

9. Keeping the classroom clean: asking students to clean the classroom if they make any mess teaches them a lot about respecting the place they belong to and work in. Along with establishing and explaining classroom rules, it is vital for teachers to maintain them throughout the whole school year by reinforcing them and demonstrating consistency. That is to say teachers are advised to remind of classroom rules from time to time and to also make use of the consequences if students violate these rules (Kelly, 2014).

Reinforcement and Consequences

Breaking classroom rules, even after they have been well-established and explained, can be very disappointing to teachers. However, this should be expected and normalized. Teachers have to equip themselves with the most adequate consequences to react to positive and negative behavior.

Time is an important factor as handling discipline problems should not be delayed. As Melissa Kelly says in her article "Top 10 Tips for Classroom Discipline and Management": "When you have classroom disruptions, it is imperative that you deal with them immediately and with as little interruption of your class momentum as possible" (Ibid). The effectiveness of the consequences depends on dealing with misbehavior first on time and second with a reasonable amount of time. Students might feel bored waiting for the teacher to react or solve an issue of discipline as they will also be deprived of their learning time.

It makes a huge positive difference to respond to students' disrupting behavior in private to make them avoid embarrassment in front of their peers. This act alone can gain teachers the respect of their students. Otherwise, responding publicly to misbehavior can generate confrontation (Ibid) between students and teachers which is the worst classroom experience for both partners. In this vein, Roberto Marzano says: "teachers' actions in their classroom have twice the impact on student achievement as do school policies regarding curriculum, assessment, staff collegiality, and community involvement" (Marzano, 2003). The wise actions of teachers can render the teaching experience a smooth and successful one.

Education is not only about overloading students with information, but it is also about mannerism and teaching them how to productively and positively deal with problematic situations. Therefore, teachers' adequate reactions teach students themselves how to control and supervise their emotions during disruptive or provocative moments. Sometimes, all the teacher needs

to do is to use some humour. Laughing at situations of small misbehaviors is very practical provided that it is accompanied with a reminder of rules and of appropriate behavior inside the class. On the one hand, this creates exactly the needed atmosphere which is replete with relief; on the other hand, this saves the teacher a lot of time and energy.

In classroom management, the proactive approach and the reactive approach are of a considerable necessity. Proactive strategies aim to reinforce the good behavior of students by creating some advantages for well-behaved students and granting them access to some opportunities. Proactive strategies refer to the notion of "reinforcement" which is divided into positive and negative reinforcement. According to Skinner (1938), positive reinforcement means adding something in order to increase the response (Heffner, 2001). This operates within two people: the giver and the receiver. Positive reinforcement can take the form of praise or reward (the teacher gives the praise or reward and the student receives). The aim of this reinforcement is to provide a stimulus in order to increase a response (good behavior). On the other hand, negative reinforcement means taking something negative away so as to increase a positive response (Ibid). For instance, stopping the negative comments after a good behavior is manifested. The negative comments are the negative stimulus that reinforces the good behavior of the students. The chances of reproducing a good behavior will increase.

For instance, reinforcement can be done by providing

1. Positive feedback: a positive encouraging note either written, to show to parents, or oral motivates students to reproduce good behavior.

2. Small gifts: teachers can reward students with small gifts like stickers, pens, or diaries.

3. Praising: The teacher can either praise the student orally in front of all his/her peers, write a note about him/her and post it on the wall of the classroom or have his/her name written on a certificate or on an "honors" board.

4. Withdrawing the students' name from the list of disruptive students. This reinforcement can be initiated after the student shows good behavior and respect for the classroom environment.

Reactive strategies (consequences), on the other hand, need to be logically connected to the rule. For example, since students love recess time, teachers should capitalize on this. A student who does not hand in his assignment or does not complete his work will automatically not be able to benefit from recess time. Jerry Webster argues that consequences should follow a progressive discipline plan and this is how he designs it (Ibid):

1. A Warning.
2. The Loss of a part or all of recess time.
3. The loss of privileges, such as computer time.
4. A letter home.
5. Parent contact by phone.
6. After School Detention.

7. Suspension or other administrative action as a last resort (Ibid).

The consequences are meant to teach and to merely replace an undesirable behavior with an accepted one. It is not meant either to leave a negative effect on the learner. Following this gradual discipline plan shows tolerance and gives the student several chances to adjust his/her behavior according to the general rule of the classroom.

Lesson Plans: Boosting Confidence

It takes a number of measures to ensure a smooth healthy learning environment and planning is a key factor in this process. I.K Davies says: "Lessons must be prepared for there is nothing so fatal to a teacher's progress as unpreparedness" (Yogesh, 2008). Students have the capacity to notice students who startle or show reluctance. This gives them a pass to interrupt the flow of the lesson and reflects a negative image about the teacher. Apart from being a witness on professional development, lesson plans help teachers' gain the respect of students who appreciate the remarkable efforts of that their teachers manifest.

Successful lesson plans should contain the following components

1. Objectives: The objectives should be clear, specific, well-articulated and formulated so that the other stages of the lesson can be easy to achieve (Aebersold, *et al.*, 1997). Equally important, objectives should lead students to achieve the desired skills.

2. Activities: Doyle Walter give much interest to activities He states that: "classroom order rests fundamentally on activities. [...] A teacher must first be able to sustain activities. A central part of the teacher's work, the, consists of selecting and arranging activities" (Walter, p10). They need to be highly stimulating and motivating in order to respond to students' needs and interests. They should also target students' critical and creative thinking.

3. Materials: these can pose problems for novice teachers especially if they have to move from one classroom to another. Therefore, a materials checklist is important in this case.

4. Homework assignments: They are an important part in planning a lesson; the instructions need to be clear and specific. It might be under the form of an in-class discussion, or a part of a following assignment (Aebersold, *et al.*, 1997).

5. Assessment: it can be either formal or informal to test students' progress and understanding of the lesson. An informal assessment can be a short quiz at the end of the session or an observation of students' correct answers of a certain activity.

There is no unique or perfect lesson plan. For instance Madeline Cheek Hunter, an educator who has developed a model for teaching and learning, includes seven steps in a lesson plan (Wilson, www.thesecondprinciple.com):

Review

It is essential to review previous materials related to this

lesson.

Anticipatory Set

Preparing students and making them interested in the lesson they are about to learn.

Objective

Stating the objective the teacher needs to meet.

Input and Modeling

Demonstrating and showing what the teacher tells.

Checking Understanding

determining whether students are making sense of the materials being presented. This can be done through guided practice.

Guided Practice

Immediately after instructions students need to be given the opportunity to apply or practice what they have just learned and received immediate feedback.

Independent Practice

When students seem to understand the information of the day, they should be given further practice. This time the teacher should offer help so as to encourage students to be as autonomous as possible.

As humans have different ways of assimilating information, it is highly important to cater for Howard Gardner's "multiple intelligences" in order to make the session very smooth to all the students. These intelligences are: verbal, mathematical, spatial, musical, Kinesthetic, interpersonal and intrapersonal. That is to say, activities have to be varied to ensure a dynamic and enjoyable atmosphere and to capture students' attention.

Communication: Positive and Hidden Meanings

Communication can do wonders to keep the classroom well-organized, and to avoid noise, lack of interest, boredom, and even violence sometimes. In his book Communication Ethics Today, Richard Keeble says:

Hardly any other concept is used as often as communication, when social behavior, interaction and information processing are described and explained. Scientists, politicians, journalists and commentators as well as 'ordinary people' turn to the concept of communication to explain all kinds of social phenomena [...] Apparently, the concept of communication has gained status as a kind of magic wand which may be used to explain almost everything (Keeble, 1988).

Communication, according to keeble, is a very comprehensive concept that defines one's success in various domains. The three actions he mentions, social behavior, interaction and information process, are closely related to the field of education. Gerbner, on his turn, defines communication as "the social interaction through messages" (Ibid) or as the stream or flow of information. Given the importance of communication, how can we acquire efficient communication?

When we communicate, we always have a goal to achieve. So, before communicating a certain message, we need to be aware of the specific behavior that might arise and the learning outcomes that are expected. Teachers should anticipate the outcome of the communicated message by reflected on the following question: what will I see? What will I hear? What will I feel? Is this behavior in line with my goal? (Churches, 2010). This helps improve and tune one's communication according to the desired need. Body posture, facial expressions, voice tone, breathing, and words type are all very useful to positive communication. It is also strongly recommended that teachers notice the students' preferences for visual, auditory or kinesthetic learning styles (Ibid).

Lesson plans are also a sort of communication as they are an opportunity for the teacher to anticipate students' questions and possible dialogues with/between them. Lesson plans help the teachers reflect on their own perspective in teaching without neglecting students' perspective in learning (Ibid). Communication fails if either of these perspectives is ignored.

As mentioned in the previous section, it is better to address students using positive words since negative ones carry "hidden messages" which do not serve the principles of a fruitful communication. Richard Churches determines two scenarios when using two different ways to communicate the same message. The first message is: "When you have learned this you will be able to carry out your own project". The second message is: "If you are able to do this, then you might be able to do your own project". Churches argues that the use of "when" and "will" communicates a positive frame of thinking which is encouraging while the second message communicates possible negative outcomes which expects a degree of failure as the teacher says "if" and "might." Learners' attitudes are most often a reflection of these hidden attitudes (Ibid).

METHODOLOGY

This article adopts a qualitative research method as it focuses first on observation in five Moroccan public high schools in different cities, namely Fez, Meknes and Kenitra. Observation led to an in-depth analysis of the experiences of both teachers and students as far as the issue of classroom management is concerned. Observation has been tremendously important to this research as it enabled me to record types of students' misbehaviors and the ways in which teachers react to them.

The second qualitative method this article relies on is interviews which played a crucial role in understanding the motives behind students' misbehavior and teachers' perspectives on how to effectively manage classrooms. Interviewing students and teachers opened up multiple venues of understanding the issue of classroom management in Moroccan public high schools.

The focus on observation and interviews is motivated by the need to generate interactions that hold the potential to

enrich the discussion on classroom management, reflect on new ideas, and encourage more freedom of expression among students and teachers. The approach of content analysis is adopted to scrutinize the common ideas of students and teachers on classroom management.

RESULTS

Classroom management, as this paper investigates, needs a rigorous work and a deep research by the practitioners. It is the first key step towards an enjoyable and productive teaching/learning process. Teachers need to set classroom rules very clear in the very beginning of the year. They also need to discuss clearly the consequences of positive and negative behavior to reinforce the rules throughout the whole year. It is also recommended to work hard on communicational skills and on planning.

This paper considers both teachers and students very important partners in the process of managing the classroom. As this paper uses observation and interviews in Moroccan public high schools, it reaches a number of results. It seems that Moroccan public high schools need to reinforce the communicative skills among both teachers and students. A number of students complain that teachers react to their misbehavior using a tough language that teenagers find hard to accept. On the other hand, high school teachers complain about students' deficiencies in terms of communication as they tend to resort to verbal or even physical violence sometimes. Therefore, as communication is very essential in education and in classroom management, it needs to be given special attention by organizing workshop and sensitizing campaigns about the principles of promising communication.

Another result of this research paper shows that planning should be given tremendous care as it is an opportunity to communicate with students and anticipate their questions and to assess whether or not students have been able to understand the lesson. Senior teachers, particularly, seem to do without lessons plans as they claim that they have enough experience to carry out a lesson without the need of a lesson plan. Interviews reveal also that preparing lesson plans is more of a burden to some teachers. On the other hand, students revealed that they tend to misbehave in classes in which the teachers look unprepared or reluctant about the content of the lesson.

Old curricula are a serious problem in Moroccan high schools as they date back to 2005. Students manifest an alarming disinterest towards their learning as they consider their textbooks very outdated. They ironically comment on pictures including cassettes, iPods, or very old computers while today's technological devices have advanced substantially. Students, who cannot identify with the outdated content, resort to misbehavior.

It is also very important to discuss the role of the administration in Moroccan public high schools. Fieldwork revealed that there is a scarcity of administrators which does not allow a genuine control of students' behavior in the schools. For instance, students' absenteeism is noticed

to be very serious. Teachers claim that they need more administrators to control students' absenteeism as they need the collaboration of students' parents.

DISCUSSION

1-Students' Perspectives on Classroom Management

This section analyzes the perspectives of students on classroom management through two major research methods which are interviews and fieldwork in Moroccan public high schools in three Moroccan cities: Fez, Meknes, and Kenitra. It was, indeed, a real delight to have the chance to talk to students and uncover their brilliant ideas and wishes for a promising educational experience. Students are important partner in managing the classroom which is why it is indispensable to shed light on their ideas.

The first question I chose to ask students is "what kind of misbehavior do you think you commit in the classroom?" Karim, a student replied that he chats in the classroom with his peers. He continued:

I do not consider chatting and talking to my friends a kind of misbehavior. Teachers do not understand me. I cannot keep silent for one hour. Sometimes, I need to move, sing, or drum. I even changed my major from mathematical sciences to economics because there students are too hardworking and prefer to keep silent while I can't.

"Understanding" is a recurrent word that students use to describe their relationship with teachers. It seems that students and teachers have different understandings of what misbehavior is. Karim is the kind of students who prefers to talk, move, touch, and learn in an unconventional way. Ahmed, another student, happens to sing and chats while learning. He confirms that this does not prevent him from following the lesson and that he answers the teacher whenever he asks him.

I asked Salma the following question: "have you ever shown any misbehavior in the classroom and what was it?" Salma replied: "yes, I did. Once, I was talking with my friends; the teacher got very mas and insulted me. I replied with an insult, too." The first part of this research paper focused on discussing the important of a positive communication. Robert Marzano (2003) argues that "In a recent meta-analysis of more than 100 studies (Marzani, 2003b), we found that the quality of teacher-student relationships is the key stone for all other aspects of classroom management". He equally confirms that discipline problems tend to be 31% fewer when teachers and students relationship is of high quality. Teachers need to expect beforehand that students happen to misbehave and that this is normal. They rather need to anticipate solutions to any possible misbehavior and to implement the principles of productive communication which can also give an effective lesson to students on how to deal properly with annoying situations.

During my fieldwork, I noticed a number of examples of misbehavior. One of the most common examples in Moroccan high schools is not bringing the textbook. Interviews revealed that students give two major excuses.

Some confirmed that they just forget them at home while others confirmed that they cannot carry loads of books as they live far from the high school and often they have to take public transportation or to walk home. Others pointed to their families' precarious financial situation which does not allow them to buy textbooks for all the school subjects.

Leila, who confirms that she misbehaves either by neglecting the lesson or by chatting with her friends, states that

The curriculum is boring. Subjects like history and geography are needless for me. Until now, I do not know why I have to study the Russian revolution and memorize the lesson. Why do I have to? Some lessons do not have any value for our present and our reality. Sometimes, I wonder if I am going to use what I learn here somewhere else.

Not only Leila but a number of other students question the viability and pertinence of the curriculum of some school subjects. Mehdi, another student, contends that he prefers to study something that can help him have access to reputable universities and institutes and to succeed his post-baccalaureate journey. The English textbooks, for instance, were released in 2005; the content of some texts and dialogues are outdated and do not respond to students' interest. In the curriculum of the second year of the baccalaureate, a text on sport invokes the example of football players who resigned a long time ago. Another text on humor invokes the example of humorists who are no more performing and that students do not know at all. In my fieldwork, this type of outdated contents stirs the irony of students. The lack of interest in the content leads students to produce inappropriate behavior.

However, a number of students revealed that the teachers bring extra materials and activities to the classroom to attract students' attention to the lesson. Indeed, as a number of students do not understand why they study certain school subjects, teachers need to explain the rationale behind any lesson and its importance to the development of their knowledge. Leila suggests that teachers should allow them to decide on the content of the lesson. She says: "I want to know about the current financial crisis hitting the whole world not about an event that happened two centuries ago". In this vein, students suggest that teachers develop their communicative skills and allow them freedom of speech.

When asked about why they misbehave in the classroom, some students mentioned that they tend to chat, make fun, or use the mobile phone in classes in which the teacher seems to be unprepared. Mariam says: "even if we are still students, when the teachers start the lesson we know whether they are sure about what they teach us or not. Some teachers look reluctant and confused. Others look so confident and charismatic. We know with whom to misbehave" It is always a valuable tip to go the classroom well-prepared and equipped with very attracting activities to make students very busy during the whole session. The previous sections discussed the importance of planning

which a sort of communication with the student and also the importance of activities.

Teachers' perspectives

Interviewing teachers and observing how they deal with issues of classroom management have been enriching to this paper. As Robert Marzano (2003) states "the teachers' actions in their classrooms have twice the impact on student achievement as do school policies regarding curriculum, assessment, staff collegiality, and community involvement". My teacher interviewees are, unanimously, concerned about the idea of classroom management. They all confirmed that the first step to a successful learning/teaching experience is classroom management. As an answer to the question: "how do you make classroom management a successful endeavor?" one teacher says: "I must have many eyes. On the one hand, I have to be a good teacher explaining and facilitating the tasks for students. On the other hand, I have to keep students calm and interested. This is really challenging". This quote shows that the teacher is really aware of his multitasks and that teaching is not only about delivering a good lesson but also about preparing a healthy atmosphere.

Teacher Mohamed explains how he deals with classroom management:

I give much attention to the beginning of the school year. I start as a strict teacher. I would make it very difficult for myself if I started lenient. I never smile to them or be flexible in the beginning of the year.

This quote reminds me of the saying: "never show a wolf your teeth". According to the teacher, if he smiles to them or if he is nice with them, they might misunderstand him and take him for an easy teacher who does not have a strong personality. The teacher confirms that being nice is something to avoid not during the whole year but only in the beginning. This teacher is not the only one who holds the same idea as many of his colleagues confirmed that they believe in this strategy. Many other teachers, however, disapprove of being tough with students. They believe that students might lose interest in learning as a sign of resistance. One of them states that a loving teacher makes his/her students love the subject and the opposite is also true. This reminds of a quote by James L. Hymes, Jr (1955): "if you want to strike some extra blows for discipline, love children, and help them to love you."

As an answer to the same question, a teacher stated that it all depends on the contract she signs with her students in the first session she meets them. She says:

The contract is very important. In the beginning of the year, I ask them 'how do you expect me to be?' and 'what do I expect from you?' We answer both questions altogether and I ask them to copy the answers and sign the contract. We both consider it a real contract. It gives us so much confidence and a great sense of responsibility towards the teaching/learning process and towards our teacher/student relationship.

Considering students partners in the process of setting the

classroom rules has many beneficial returns. Students feel responsible about their own learning and on keeping the classroom an enjoyable space. My interviewee confirms that whenever students break the rules she refers them to the contract. This act teaches responsibility and the value of respecting agreements and partnerships.

In my fieldwork, I have noticed that some teachers use pictures to redress students' behavior in the classroom. Whenever someone shows some kind of misbehavior, the teacher posts a picture that reminds the student of the correct behavior to show. There is, for example, one about chewing gum, one about the mobile phone and one on chatting with friends.

In a classroom I was observing, the teacher tended to use only facial expressions to redress students' misbehavior. Teacher Youssef frowns at his students without uttering a word and students stop talking when he is explaining. He also sits in his desk and students quickly understand that he is unhappy with their behavior.

Some teachers claim that misbehavior can differ even from one branch to another. Nine teachers complain about students who belong to literature and human sciences branches more than they complain about students who belong to physics or mathematical sciences branches. The teachers claim that the former misbehave more because many of them are low achievers which makes them, at times, resort to noise and other mis-practices due to their lack of interest in learning.

My interviews with teacher revealed that they prefer to solve problems themselves without referring to the administration which they consider as a sign of "weakness." However, they all confirmed that calling the administration is mandatory in some cases like when the student does not looks "drunk or drugged", or when a physical fight happens between students. Some teachers insisted on the importance of contacting parents when students' misbehavior does not seem to be easily and affectively controlled.

The teachers stress the importance of setting a set of consequences both positive and negative to respond to students' behavior. For positive behavior, teachers give bonuses which motivate students to a great extent. Incentives, indeed, have proven to be a very efficient way to motivate and stimulate students' attention and willingness to study especially if teachers make them aware that they can "earn" their grades themselves. Incentives can either be a bonus or an encouraging word that leaves a positive impression as I have noticed in my fieldwork. Praising students when they perform well makes them very proud and boosts their confidence. Concerning the negative behavior, teachers suggest to lower students' grades so as to feel compelled not to break any classroom rule. Other teachers opted for calling the administration or parents.

CONCLUSION

The aim of this research paper was to shed light on one of the most important conditions to lead a successful teaching and learning experience which is classroom management.

There is an outstanding literature on this issue that every practitioner should refer to. This article discussed a number of interrelated issues. First, the establishment of clear, reasonable, and practical classroom rules holds the tenets to pave the way for a peaceful and enjoyable atmosphere. Many teachers prefer to “sign the classroom contract” in the beginning of the year as they consider a positive sign that brings about confidence and the sense of responsibility among students. It is advisable that rules be stated in the positive form instead of the negative one. Teachers should set a limited number of rules to be better remembered and maintained by students like punctuality, respecting others, using appropriate language, doing assignments, and bringing classroom materials.

After setting classroom rules, teachers need to set the appropriate consequences to try to guarantee that misbehaviors do not recur. First, dealing with cases of misbehavior should never be delayed in order to demonstrate the extent to which having a healthy classroom atmosphere is important. Ignoring misbehavior would give the impression that it is a normal practice inside the classroom. This paper referred to the proactive approach which means the reinforcement of positive behavior through positive feedback, small gifts, and praising and the reactive approach which is about the consequences that should result in misbehavior. Reactions to negative behavior should be gradual as they are not meant to punish but to teach.

Another very important element in classroom management is planning. Lesson plans, as this article highlights, boosts confidence and reflects a positive image on the teacher as being competent and responsible. Planning, also, helps teachers cater for the multiple intelligences of students as well as their learning styles by diversifying teaching approaches, methods and materials. They also help anticipate problems related to the lesson. It is a form of communication. Talking about communication, this paper considers it the remedy of a lot of ills. It is, indeed, a comprehensive concept as Keeble explains it.

The second part of this article deals with the analysis of the perspectives of both teachers and students on classroom management in Moroccan public high schools using observation and interviews as research methods. Observation and interviews were used to test whether or not practitioners benefit from the abundant literature on classroom management and to analyze the situation of classroom management in Moroccan public high schools. This study revealed that generation gap is one of the problems that students point out to. That to say, there is a generational disagreement about the definition of misbehavior. Some of what teachers consider “misbehavior” is considered by students as a normal practice. Another problem is the lack of a genuine and healthy communication. Both students and teachers complain about communication deficiencies which sometimes worsen the relationship between teachers and students.

Both teachers and students comment on the outdated

curriculum. Teachers stress that the content of the text books has become ridiculous as they were released in 2005. Texts, conversations, pictures, and examples are no more appealing to students because they now live in a different era and this makes students demotivated to learn and, eventually, resort to manifesting some unsound practices inside the classroom. Students, on their part, question the viability of studying some lessons and ask for a more updated curriculum that better responds to their needs and that is able to cope with the contemporary world we are living in.

This article finds out, also, that planning has a tremendously important role in classroom management. Students revealed that they do not tend to show any misbehavior with charismatic and confident teachers. Students stated that they have the ability to know if the teacher is well-prepared for the lesson or reluctant about what s/he teachers. They showed that they respect teachers who are well-prepared.

All in all, this article recommends that classroom management be dealt with with much attention and consideration as it holds the potential to define the atmosphere and the quality of the teaching and learning experiences. Equally important, this article finds it very crucial that the ministry of national education in Morocco reconsider the wary curriculum and work on the publication of an updated one. On another level, this article recommends that teachers benefit from a continuous training that can help them cope with the latest teachings theories and advances as well as the remarkable generational gaps in order to be able to deal with teenagers who most probably do not hold the same modes of thinking.

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