

Effective Classroom Management in Drama English Class

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Abstract—This work aims to find out some effective classroom management strategies in drama English classes. The four major components of classroom management, which are physical environment, learning, classroom procedures, rules and disciplines, will be firstly explored in theory and secondly researched in two real cases. The purpose of the study is to help teachers who are going to teach in drama English classes to gain better knowledge of specific classroom management strategies in order to enhance both their teaching and students' learning.

Keywords—classroom; management; drama

I. INTRODUCTION

Nowadays, more and more people learn English as a second language. The number of English learners around the world is only expected to grow [1]. Because of the wide usage of English, a multitude of young children start to learn English at an early age. In a traditional English classroom, teachers tend to teach English for tests, making students incapable of fluently speaking and listening. To change this phenomenon, educators keep seeking ways to change and improve the ways of teaching. Drama English class is one of the types of teaching educators find useful in changing the inefficient and inflexible English teaching atmosphere. What's more, as Andrew Sheehan pointed out, teachers of English lack of capacity of motivation students since they stick to outdated methodologies [2]. Thus, teachers need the help of effective classroom management strategies to get over boring and inactive classroom atmosphere.

The paper is composed of four main parts: theoretical background, methodology, discussion, and conclusion. In the theoretical background part, the definition of classroom management will be given out and four major components of classroom management will be discussed. A definition and values of drama English class will be given out. After that, two cases will be analyzed separately, in which different situations will be discussed and some specific classroom management strategies will be applied. From the results of the two cases, an overall discussion about the effectiveness and practicality of using specific classroom management strategies will be presented. In the end, a conclusion about applying specific classroom management strategies in drama English classrooms will be summarized, providing a detailed reference to drama English teachers.

II. THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

A. Classroom Management

1) Definition:

Classroom management refers to teachers' action which leads to the creation of a learning environment where positive interpersonal interaction is promoted and effective learning is facilitated. It aims to enhance the cognitive, personal and social growth of students, developing in particular their self-motivation, self-understanding, self-control, self-evaluation, and self-management [3]. An efficient classroom management must include active interaction between teachers and students and gain positive results of students' development. Therefore, some strategies are essential for teachers.

2) Four major components of classroom management:

a) Management of the physical environment:

The classroom physical learning environment is the classroom surrounding including the spatial arrangement of furniture, ceiling, chalkboard, lighting, fittings, decorative and all the physical enablers of teaching and learning in the classroom. Conducive classroom physical environment is an agent of intellectual stimulation and important factor in strengthening the child's educational development [4].

Teachers cannot decide the size or the shape of a classroom, but they can handle every kind of learning place smartly by themselves. The standard of a good physical classroom environment includes, first of all, a reasonable seating arrangement. Good desk arrangement can ensure full engagement of students and it is also convenient for teachers to observe all students. Interactions with both classmates and teachers can be done easily if they seat appropriately. Second, decoration, heating, and ventilation are conducive. Some decorations on the wall like pictures can inspire students' learning motivation. Good heating and ventilation provide students a healthy and upbeat learning environment. Third, room arrangements that may harm students when they move around in the classroom should not appear. Classroom safety is a prerequisite for students' further learning and free expression of themselves.

b) Management of learning:

Teachers can manage students' learning processes and outcomes through controlling the planning process and better

motivating students' engagement. Before class, teachers should have a comprehensive lesson plan. All knowledge and class activities should be rehearsed in teachers' minds to make sure the arrangement is all right. Only when the curriculum planning is done, teachers will have the confidence to get knowledge fully across to the students and improve their learning.

In addition, using strategies to motivate students to learn is of great importance. Self-determination theory provides teachers a lot of help. The theory focuses on three needs of humans: the needs of competence, relatedness, and autonomy (or self-determination). Competence involves understanding how to attain various external and internal outcomes and being efficacious in performing the requisite actions; relatedness involves developing secure and satisfying connections with others in one's social milieu; and autonomy refers to being self-initiating and self-regulating of one's own actions [5]. Teachers can make use of the theory and satisfy the three needs of students so that they can be motivated in class properly.

c) Management of establishing classroom procedures and rules:

Classroom procedures refer to classroom routines which call for specific behavior at particular times and on particular tasks [6]. For example, "complete homework timely and hand them in on the next morning". Procedures like this standardize students' daily routines in school and render their learning time more well-organized.

Classroom rules are guidelines for required student behavior. Classroom rules should be designed with the aim of promoting students' positive and on-task behavior rather than reprimanding disruptive behavior [7]. Clear and precise classroom rules help teachers control the whole class as well. For example, "no talking in class" and "raise your hands before speaking".

d) Management of classroom discipline:

Of all of the activities that comprise the role of a teacher, classroom discipline is one of the most significant and is clearly of concern to many parents and teachers [8]. Discipline is generally represented as what teachers do in response to student's misbehavior [9]. Without the orderly learning environment provided by classroom discipline, teachers may not be able to finish his or her teaching plan and students may be interrupted by those disruptive phenomena.

To manage misbehavior in the classroom, four levels of intervention strategies can be applied, which are permit or tolerate, non-verbal intervention, verbal intervention, and logical consequences. Permit or tolerate means teachers do nothing to students' misbehavior. For example, some students misbehave because of their attention-seeking purposes. Under this consequence, tolerate the misbehavior and keep on lecturing is the best way to deal with the situation. Non-verbal intervention refers to teachers alarm the student using body language or touching. While verbal intervention is the opposite dealing method, which includes verbal alert of teachers. The teacher may call the student's name directly and point out the misbehavior. Logical

consequence emphasizes that there must be a logical connection between students' misbehavior and the consequence. When educators see evidence that learners are pursuing mistaken goals, they should in a friendly and non-threatening manner point out the fact by identifying the mistaken goal and discussing the faulty logic involved with the learners [10]. For example, if students throw rubbish in the classroom, the teacher should tell those students that the classroom is a clean place to study and let those students clean up the rubbish immediately. All four levels of intervention strategies are helpful to classroom management. The choice of the use of the four strategies depends on different situations and different individual students.

B. Drama English

1) Definition:

Drama English class is a new type of English learning class coming out these years. It aims to help children learn English through playing and acting dramas. Drama English class can improve students' spoken English efficiently for it requires them to speak out English instead of listening to lectures. Students can learn new vocabulary quickly and grasp the skills of speaking English in a short time. An authentic and complete drama class goes from playing drama games, writing a play, choosing characters, practicing, rehearsing to showing in front of the audience on a real stage.

2) Values of drama English class:

From the whole process of the drama English class, a great number of values are worth saying. Alan Maley and Alan Duff make the point that dramatic activities are not the performance of plays before passive audiences; the value of these activities lies "not in what they lead up to but in what they are, in what they bring out right now" [11]. This comment can be interpreted as meaning that students do their 'acting' for language and imaginative activity [12]. The most obvious value of the class is to enhance students' English-speaking skills through relaxing and interesting class atmosphere. When they are practicing a drama, they not only speak English but also talk with teammates to exchange ideas about acting, which cultivate students' social skills and improve their imaginative and creative abilities. At the end of the class, they need to act out their drama on a real stage so that students' self-esteem and self-confidence will grow.

III. METHODOLOGY

This section aims to reach the main purpose of the study in the process of analyzing two cases in detail. Since two kinds of different classroom settings are observed, after describing the situations of two cases, the results of the observations will be discussed separately.

A. Case Study

Two observations were carried out in two different classroom settings. One (Case one) was in a traditional classroom, which had a lot of desks and chairs. The students were a group of twenty third graders. The class lasted two hours with ten minutes break. The other (Case two) one was in a reading corner of the school library. Some small and short chairs were put randomly and the space was surrounded by some bookshelves. The students were a group

of twenty fourth graders. The class lasted two hours with ten minutes break.

1) Case one:

The drama English class was in a traditional classroom. Desks and chairs were orderly arranged in the center of the classroom. Decorations on the wall were colorful and diverse, such as the display of students' homework and some famous quotes. The lighting and ventilation conditions were good. The size of the classroom was not so big for it nearly had no space for students to move freely. The teacher was an experienced drama English teacher, who had been teaching drama English classes for five years. The students were extremely energetic and most of them were talkative.

The first thing the teacher did when she went into the classroom was to ask students to help her rearrange the desks and chairs. After she told them to move those desks and chairs to three sides of the classroom, she did it with students together and set an example to them. The center part of the classroom was empty after thirteen minutes' rearrangement. Then, the teacher gave an instruction: "make two lines". The students reacted slowly and some of them were even playing around with others. The teachers began to put those students in lines by herself. "Be quiet!", the teacher gave out another instruction with her index finger putting in front of her mouth. She stood there and looked at every student's eyes to make them quiet. After everyone was settled down, she began to talk about her rules of the class. There were ten rules in total and all of them were precise and direct. The lasting part of the class was to do drama games with students. There were four different types of drama games. Two of them could only be played group by group because of the limited space. There were two groups in the class. When one group was playing games, the teacher required the other group to stay in the side quietly and looked at the playing group carefully to find out if there were some mistakes at the same time. What's more, the teacher repeated her rules during the games again and again. The whole two-hour drama class was successful and students played happily while learning English vocabulary and expressions. However, there was one girl in the class who was too shy to speak anything. She stayed alone and avoided speaking to her classmates. The teacher recognized that and invited her to be "teacher" in the word-card game. She seemed to be surprised and happy to stand in front of her classmates and took control of the game.

2) Case two:

The drama English class was in a reading corner of the school library. This was a famous school in the city and all the school facilities were in a high rank. The reading corner had some short soft chairs and was surrounded by bookshelves. This area was carpeted and everyone should take off his shoes before entering. A whiteboard was provided by the library. The teacher was an experienced foreign teacher from England. He taught drama English classes for more than five years. But this was his first year to teach in a foreign country. All students were energetic and they loved the reading area so much for they could run freely.

When the teacher first came to the place, he found that the space was too large to control the students. Therefore, he started to use all short chairs to enclose a smaller space with the help of a translator. Students were required not to move out of the enclosed space. Those students were so excited that it was hard to calm them down. The teacher went to ask those moving students to stop by himself one by one and ask the translator to help him settle down the other students. There were three naughty boys who did not listen to the teacher at all. The teacher ignored them and started to talk about the rules of his class. He showed the students some body signs and their meanings. When he did the sign, they should react to him as he required. During the whole drama games section, there were always some absent-minded students. The teacher walked close to them and stopped beside them to talk about the game rules or invite them to set an example to others with him. For the three naughty boys, they refused taking part in any games and kept talking and laughing. The teacher tried to talk to them during the break and found that their oral English was not good enough to talk to them. Therefore, the teacher asked help from the translator and asked the translator to talk to them. During the talk, he knew that those three boys loved race cars so much. In the latter part of the class, the teacher invited the three boys to act as race cars and spoke some simple sentences. They nodded their heads and took part in the drama games.

B. Results

The main objective of the result is to find out what classroom management strategies were used by teachers in the two drama English classes and the consequences of those classroom management strategies.

1) Case one:

The first thing the teacher did was to rearrange the desks and chairs in the classroom. The center of the classroom must be empty because students need to play drama games and act in a space without interference. The seating rearrangement was done by the teacher and students together efficiently. Putting all the desks and chairs along the sides of the classroom can also decrease the rate of injuring students when they were playing games and moving.

The teacher had a detailed lesson plan for the class. She wrote it several days ago and planned all the class activities. Her plans for each drama game include the time, the number of groups, the rules of the games and some notes. She almost prepared all the details in the class which helped her control the class easier.

In the whole class, the four drama games had different types. Students were motivated all the time for there always had something new for them to learn and play. Therefore, students concentrated their attention until the end of the class. It was worth pointing that the teacher asked another group of students to pick the mistakes of the other groups when they were staying in the side. Although this group of students could not take part in the game, it did not mean that they were off task. They still needed to be motivated by taking part in the game in other ways. As for the girl who was too shy to speak. The teacher invited her to come out and became a "teacher". She could feel the care from the teacher

and she knew that the teacher was observing her all the time. Because of that, she found relatedness with the teacher and became willing to speak and take part in.

As for the classroom procedures and rules, the rearrangement of the desks and chairs became a classroom routine of the drama English class. This routine saved both the teacher and the students' time greatly. The ten rules of the class were given out by the teacher at the beginning of the class. And the teacher repeated again and again, which made students get used to the rules quickly and cooperated with the teacher efficiently.

2) *Case two:*

The place of this drama class was not a traditional classroom, making the arrangement more difficult and complicated. However, the foreign teacher found out a useful and easy way to make the space more available. He used those existing chairs to enclose a small space for drama class, which made the controlling of students easier.

The teacher took a large tool bag with him that day. All the props and costumes were in that bag. It was evident that he made a detailed plan before the class. Those word cards and props helped him conduct all the drama activities smoothly.

All the drama games in this class were different. Sometimes the students needed to dance and sing, and sometimes they were required to act out a drama written by themselves. All those novel activities kept students highly motivated and engaged. As for the three naughty boys, the teacher found that their English levels were low and they could not understand what he was talking about in the class. It meant that they lacked competence in English so that they could not catch up with other classmates. To motivate them to engage in the activities, the teacher invited them to do what they liked and what they were interested in. After that, they gained confidence and became willing to take part in the class.

As for the classroom procedures and rules, the foreign teacher did the same thing as the teacher in case one did. He required students to move those short chairs to the right place every time before the class. What's more, he conveyed his class rules to students precisely and directly at the very beginning of the class. Those procedures and rules helped the teacher manage the drama class efficiently, especially for foreign teachers who could not use the students' mother tongue to talk to them.

When it comes to the management of discipline, the teacher handled the misbehavior of the three naughty boys properly. In the first half of the class, the teacher found that the three boys misbehaved in the class and did not have a sign to change their behaviors. The teacher chose to tolerate their misbehaviors for he did not want to waste other students' time. During the break, he talked to the three boys privately. This private talk allow him to know the reasons for misbehaving better and found specific strategies to deal with them. The three boys were more willing to talk to the teacher because the teacher showed enough respect to them and never let them lose their faces in class. There were also some

other absent-minded students during the class. The teacher used non-verbal intervention to draw their attention back to the class. He walked close to them and looked at them, which were the strategy of proximity interference and signal interference.

IV. DISCUSSION

From the results of the two cases study, it is possible to find out some specific classroom management strategies for drama English class. The drama English class is different from the traditional English class. Although many classroom management strategies are beneficial, not all of them can be applied or can be useful in drama English class. Therefore, it is meaningful to discuss the practicality of those classroom management strategies which have talked in the theoretical background under the condition of drama English class.

A. *Management of Physical Environment*

1) *Seating arrangement:*

The seating arrangement in a classroom is of vital importance. It is the same with the drama English class. However, in the drama English classrooms, teachers seldom use desks and chairs so that the implication of "seating arrangement" may have a little difference. The arrangement in drama English classroom refers to the arrangement of a proper space. How can a drama English teacher arrange a space to make sure his or her students can have both enough moving place and can be easily controlled by teachers is the most important thing a teacher should think about before a class. If the space is too large, students may be absent-minded and move out of the teacher's sight. What's more, it is struggling for teachers since they need to shout out every word just because of the large space. On the contrary, if the space is too small, students may get hurt by other facilities and it requires teachers to have better understandings of classroom management strategies.

2) *Decorations, heating and ventilation conditions:*

Drama English class is a new type of class. Although it is productive in improving students' English skills, it will not substitute traditional English classroom. Most of the drama English classes are held once or twice a week. And most of the schools will hold the drama English classes in students' original classroom or some space like stadium. Therefore, the places are uncertain. Those decorations on the wall or other places will have little influence on drama English classes. The heating and ventilation conditions are uncontrollable as well.

3) *Facilities which may hurt students:*

As for the facilities existing around the classroom, teachers should pay more attention to them. Drama English classes are dominated by drama games and acting. Students are supposed to move freely within a space. Because of the kinetic characteristic of the class, some emergencies may happen unpredictably. It is a prerequisite that teachers move away from those facilities as many as possible and remind students not to move outside the enclosed space repeatedly.

B. Management of Learning

1) Planning:

Writing a detailed lesson plan and prepare all the props before a drama English class is essential. It is not enough if a teacher just thinks about the process of the class. Because a drama English class consists of different drama games and those games rarely bear any similarities. What's more, different classes have different numbers of students. Teachers should make changes each time to ascertain the drama games can be suitable for different groups of students. For example, as for the game of hot-seating, 24 students should be divided into six groups, while 30 students should be divided into five groups. And those changes should be made according to the real situations of each class.

2) Motivation:

A drama English teacher should learn to find the most efficient way to motivate students. Drama English classes require the highly-engagement of students. All kinds of activities and performance can only be done when students are fully concentrated on them.

According to the self-determination theory, the three needs of humans must be met in the drama English classes. Firstly, teachers should help students find out their advantages and encourage them to show out their advantages bravely. If students are less competent, find something else to help them gain confidence. Students can participate a lot better when they are confident enough. Second, teachers should build strong relationships with each student in order to create a sense of relatedness. Students tend to react actively if they sense that teachers are caring about them and look highly upon their progress. Third, there are always some students who are reluctant to take part in the activities. At this moment, the grasp of autonomy makes sense. Teachers can let students think about what they want to act or perform in a drama or game and let their wishes come true. Students are more likely to accept that because they gain a sense of autonomy and can choose a character for themselves.

C. Management of Classroom Procedures and Rules

1) Classroom procedures:

Although students would not take drama English class every single day, the classroom procedures or routines should exist in each student's mind. In drama English classes, teachers need to take control of many trivial details by themselves so that they may not have extra time to be wasted. In order to begin the class immediately after they get into the classroom, students should remember to rearrange those desks and chairs beforehand.

2) Classroom rules:

Every drama English teacher can have different classroom rules due to every person has their habits, but every drama English teacher must set up their rules at the very beginning of the first drama class. Classroom rules are the most capable assistant of drama English teachers. For example, different body languages have different commands. Teachers just need to act out his or her body language without saying a word and students will respond to the teacher. However, students may not remember teachers'

rules in the first two or three lessons. It is a must for teachers to consolidate their rules by repeating them and doing them again and again.

D. Management of Discipline

Misbehaviors do exist in every classroom. Traditional classroom teachers have four intervention strategies to cope with misbehaviors. However, drama English teachers should try their best to avoid using verbal intervention. The drama English class is fast-paced. Teachers are not hoped to stop during a game and waste time to call on students. The teachers are more encouraged to use permit or tolerate and non-verbal intervention. If the misbehaving student does not change his or her behavior, it is better for teachers to talk to him or her privately after class.

V. CONCLUSION

The outcomes of the study tell some effective classroom management strategies which can be applied in drama English class. Some of the traditional classroom management strategies are not applicable in drama English class and some are still efficient.

From the four major components of classroom management, the seating arrangement in the management of physical environment is of vital importance. The management of learning, including planning and motivation, is indispensable as well. The careful planning of a drama class sets the benchmark for the whole class. The management of procedures and classroom rules vary from teacher to teacher. Remember to set up the procedures and rules at the very beginning of the class. As for the management of discipline, it is highly recommended to choose interventions such as permit or tolerate and non-verbal intervention for they can save time and they are more acceptable to students.

To finish with, the drama English class provides students a new way to learn English and stimulates their abilities in different aspects. In order to make the drama English class more beneficial to students, specific effective classroom management strategies should be applied. Teachers should learn the theories of those strategies and bring them to practice.

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