CLASSROOM MANAGEMENT OF UTM TRAINEE TEACHERS

PEGGY TIONG

UNIVERSITI TEKNOLOGI MALAYSIA
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CLASSROOM MANAGEMENT OF UTM TRAINEE TEACHERS

PEGGY TIONG

A report submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the award of the degree of Bachelor of Science with Education (Chemistry)

Faculty of Education
Universiti Teknologi Malaysia

APRIL 2010
DECLARATION

I declare that this thesis entitled “CLASSROOM MANAGEMENT OF UTM TRAINEE TEACHERS” is the result of my own research except as cited in the references. The thesis has not been accepted for any degree and is not concurrently submitted in candidature of any other degree.

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DEDICATION

Special thanks to

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Abstract

Classroom management is a set of activities which teachers establish, plan, organize, arrange the curriculum and procedures so as to maximize and maintain effective teaching-learning process in a class. This research focused on two aspects of classroom management, which were physical environment and students’ misbehavior. This research was implemented to study how UTM trainee teachers create good physical environment of their classrooms and also their ways in handling misbehavior of students during teaching-learning process. Moreover, this research also investigated perceptions of UTM trainee teachers on their classroom management after their teaching practice. A total of 206 respondents had been chosen from seven courses of Faculty Education in UTM. These respondents were fourth year education students. The instrument used in this study is questionnaire which was self-constructed. From the findings of this research, UTM trainee teachers were concerned about the use of coloured chalks, boards and captions, the functioning of the fans and lights, noise level and clear view of the whiteboard in creating good physical environment of their classrooms. Arrangement of tables, desks and furniture as well as the decorating bulletin boards were not the major concern of UTM trainee teachers in creating good physical environment of classrooms. Findings also implied that UTM trainee teachers would choose actions taken-onto the students instead of referring their students to counseling teachers or ignoring their misbehaviors whenever they encountered misbehavior problems. Based on the findings, UTM trainee teachers claimed that they were excellent in preparing material and equipment but they perceived that they still needed improvement in creating a positive learning environment.
Abstrak

# TABLE OF CONTENT

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CHAPTER</th>
<th>TITLE</th>
<th>PAGE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>TITLE OF DISSERTATION</td>
<td></td>
<td>i</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DECLARATION</td>
<td></td>
<td>ii</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DEDICATION</td>
<td></td>
<td>iii</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ACKNOWLEDGEMENT</td>
<td></td>
<td>iv</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ABSTRACT (ENGLISH VERSION)</td>
<td></td>
<td>v</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ABSTRACT (MALAY VERSION)</td>
<td></td>
<td>vi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TABLE OF CONTENTS</td>
<td></td>
<td>vii</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LIST OF TABLES</td>
<td></td>
<td>x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS</td>
<td></td>
<td>xi</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

## 1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction 1
1.2 Background of the Study 3
1.3 Statement of the Problem 5
1.4 Research Objectives 6
1.5 Research Questions 7
1.6 Significance of the Study 7
1.7 Scope of the Study 8
1.8 Definition of Terms 8  
  1.8.1 Classroom Management 8
  1.8.2 Physical Environment 9
  1.8.3 Misbehavior 9
1.9 Limitation of Study 10
1.10 Conclusion 10
2 LITERATURE REVIEW
2.1 Introduction 11
2.2 Classroom Management 11
2.3 Teachers’ role in Classroom 13
2.4 Misbehavior in Classroom 14
  2.4.1 Causes of Misbehavior 16
  2.4.2 Managing Misbehavior 17
2.5 Physical Environment of a Classroom 19
  2.5.1 Use of Space in Classroom 21
  2.5.2 Colour 23
  2.5.3 Noise 24
  2.5.4 Temperature 24
  2.5.5 Bulletins Boards and Walls 25
2.6 Previous Research 25
  2.6.1 Use of Time 25
  2.6.2 Misbehavior of Students 27
  2.6.3 Physical Environment of a Classroom 28
2.7 Conclusion 31

3 METHODOLOGY
3.1 Introduction 33
3.2 Research Design 33
3.3 Instrumentation 34
  3.3.1 Section A (Demographic Information) 35
  3.3.2 Section B (Physical Environment) 35
  3.3.3 Section C (Misbehavior of Students) 35
  3.3.4 Section D (Perceptions) 36
3.4 Sampling 36
3.5 Research Setting 38
3.6 Pilot Test 39
3.7 Data Analysis 39
3.8 Research Procedures 41
3.9 Validity and Reliability 41
## DATA ANALYSES

4.1 Introduction
4.2 Demographic Data
4.3 Ways in creating good physical environment of classroom
4.4 Misbehavior of Students
  4.4.1 Misbehavior Problems
  4.4.2 Ways in handling misbehavior
  4.4.3 Other ways
4.5 Perceptions of UTM trainee teachers
4.6 Conclusion

## DISCUSSION, RECOMMENDATION AND CONCLUSION

5.1 Introduction
5.2 Ways in creating good physical environment of classroom
5.3 Misbehavior of Students
  5.3.1 Misbehavior Problems
  5.3.2 Ways in handling misbehavior
5.4 Perceptions of UTM trainee teachers
5.5 Implication
5.6 Recommendation for future research
5.7 Conclusion

## REFERENCES

APPENDIX A Research Instrument
APPENDIX B Certification of Research Instrument
# LIST OF TABLES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TABLE NO.</th>
<th>TITLE</th>
<th>PAGE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3.1</td>
<td>Krejcie and Morgan table</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.2</td>
<td>Populations of each course and the number of respondents needed in each sample.</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.1</td>
<td>Demographic data</td>
<td>44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.2</td>
<td>Percentage distributions and mean on ways UTM trainee teachers create good physical environment of their classrooms.</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.3</td>
<td>Percentage of UTM trainee teachers in facing each misbehavior problem during teaching practice.</td>
<td>49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.4</td>
<td>Actions taken by UTM trainee teachers when they face such situations</td>
<td>51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.5</td>
<td>Perceptions of UTM trainee teachers on their classroom Management after teaching practice.</td>
<td>56</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Abbreviation</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>PGCE</td>
<td>Post Graduate Certificate of Education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SPC</td>
<td>Sarjana Muda Sains Pendidikan (Kimia Minor Matematik)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SPK</td>
<td>Sarjana Muda Sains Pendidikan Serta Komputer (Kimia)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SPN</td>
<td>Sarjana Muda Sains Pendidikan (Sains)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SPM</td>
<td>Sarjana Muda Sains Pendidikan (Matematik Minor Kimia)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SPH</td>
<td>Sarjana Muda Pendidikan Kemahiran Hidup</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SPT</td>
<td>Sarjana Muda Sains Pendidikan Serta Komputer (Matematik)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SPF</td>
<td>Sarjana Muda Sains Pendidikan (Fizik Minor Matematik)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SPS</td>
<td>Sarjana Muda Pendidikan serta Sains Sukan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UTM</td>
<td>Universiti Teknologi Malaysia</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Chapter 1

Introduction

1.1 Introduction

Today, teachers know more about teaching than before as they have undergone more sufficient and better trainings. Teachers’ actions in their classrooms have great impact on the achievements of the students. This shows that teachers must have adequate classroom management skills or strategies to implement effective learning environment in the classroom. Effective classroom management has been able to provide classroom environment that foster learning and achievement.

The effective teaching through good classroom management remains a major challenge for teachers in the 21st century. Undeniably, one crucial key aspect of a teacher’s work is the practice of good classroom management. And this includes teachers’ ability to establish an effective communication with the students, whether the interaction is individually or in a group. Teachers should be able to talk to students about the lesson content, listen to students’ ideas and reasoning. They have to give their responses in a way that the students find it helpful and meaningful. If teachers cannot manage their own classroom and control their students, they cannot effectively teach.
With ineffective teaching process, all of the subject knowledge that teachers expect to impart on their students is useless as their students cannot or do not listen and participate in learning activities.

However, classroom management is not only about establishing a smooth learning routine but it also helps in preventing many unnecessary discipline problems. According to Moskowitz & Hayman (1976), once teachers are not able to control their classroom, it becomes increasingly more difficult for them to take back that control. Also, research from Berliner (1988), Brophy & Good (1986) shows that the time that teachers use to correct misbehavior caused by poor classroom management skills will decrease the rate of academic engagement in the classroom.

Classroom management seeks to optimize the amount of classroom time available for teaching of content and minimize classroom time spent in ways that interfere with teaching and learning. In the minimizing function, classroom management seeks to prevent students from engaging in counterproductive activities, such as irrelevant conversation with other students, disruptive noise-making, wasted time, and distractive movement – activities that subtract from the time available for the teaching of the content and for the students learning the content.

It is obvious to state that effective classroom management is facilitated if students are actively and successfully engaged in the planned program of instruction. Most teachers stress less on primary instructional tasks. When a teacher gives less attention on primary instructional tasks, a vacuum will be created in which misbehavior thrives, and this misbehavior further distracts the teacher from the primary instructional tasks. The effective teacher knows full well that effective classroom management is not primarily the process of reducing misbehavior, but rather the process of increasing appropriate behavior which facilitates the process in achieving primary instructional tasks.

Thus, the primary goal of effective classroom management is not the reduction of misbehavior or even the creation of an "orderly" environment. Student
learning is the primary goal of effective classroom management. Although the presence of order in a classroom does not necessarily indicate high levels of learning, effective strategies are used to promote learning and facilitate order of the class.

1.2 Background of the study

Historically, problems of teaching related to the areas of classroom management and organization have been of major concern to teachers. Teachers, who are the primary handlers of classroom and also the “manager”, bear most of the responsibility for smooth-running classes. With increasing demands from parents, schools and education ministry, becoming a teacher is not an easy job. Teachers have great burdens in teaching as each student has different needs. Thus, teachers must conduct their classes successfully so as to eliminate negative behaviors and reinforce a safe, respectful and motivating learning environment.

Many researchers and school leaders had worked out together in order to find the best classroom practices that can reduce the problems in school. According to Burgaz and Ekinci (2007), problems such as school violence, terror threat, drug abuse and loitering are common but difficult to overcome. Gradually, teachers have higher accountabilities in creating a safe and secure learning environment for their students. Although there are common classroom management techniques that are utilized in most classrooms to create optimal learning opportunities for students, teachers often develop their own management systems from a variety of techniques that suit well with their grade levels and class populations. However, management techniques may work well in some classrooms, but not in other classes with different classroom climate and students’ needs. Teachers need to be acutely aware of the needs of different student populations.

There are many goals of good classroom management. According to Eggen & Kauchak (1997), increased time-on-task, managing students’ problems, and maintaining positive student behavior are among the most important goals to be achieved. Generally, classroom management can be divided into two basic aspects,
which are problem prevention and problem solving. Problem prevention is about the plans which are taken to prevent the classroom management problems while problem solving is the implementation or applications of the plans to overcome the management problems. There are two general classroom management variables to be studied in this research. The variables are physical environment of the classroom and students’ misbehavior.

According to Lemlech (1988), physical environment of the classroom includes the setting of the classroom, space, brightness, cleanliness, decorations and also the facilities. There cannot be an “ideal” study environment but we can always have a satisfying environment. Students build up their learning concepts through their interactions with the environment. If a school can provide the facilities needed by teachers and students, the teaching-learning process can be more effective. Students can give in their cooperation and participation. Thus, a good physical studying environment is essential to the students.

Effective classroom management is influential in regulating student problems and leads to the prevention of misbehavior within the classroom. According to Burgaz and Ekinci (2007), students show a high level of participation and obedience when there are clear rules for behavior and activities within the classroom. Students occasionally need highly structured programs to help them change certain behaviors. Some students may even require a teacher’s constant assistance in demonstrating acceptable behavior. Teachers therefore must be able to implement classroom management techniques that have been proven effective.

Based on the general classroom variables stated above, trainee teachers have long been concerned about their lack of training and their lack of skills in dealing with challenging problems in classroom management. In UTM, every education student has to attend a period of teaching practice in order to apply their content knowledge, pedagogical knowledge and teaching knowledge. Through this period of teaching practice, a trainee teacher is able to experience and witness the education and teaching system of a school. However, trainee teachers are only equipped with theories and lack of the actual experiences in managing their classrooms. At a very
concrete level, what trainee teachers worry about before the teaching practice is how they will be able to work with their students. They cannot easily imagine what to expect from students concerning students’ earlier knowledge in certain subject, their thinking, and their behavior in a class. All these worries are closely-related to classroom management.

Trainee teachers knew the importance of classroom management as a good classroom management optimizes teaching-learning progress in the classroom. If they know the ways to enhance classroom management, they would have a better and smoother classroom routine. They might even face less misbehavior problems as classroom is under controlled. If trainee teachers can even create good physical environment in classroom, instructional activities can be easily implemented and students might even show more interest in the lesson and create less behavior problems.

1.3 Problem statement

Trainee teachers might face some problems in classroom management such as behavior problems and how to create a good studying environment. Indeed, trainee teachers had learnt about pedagogy, educational psychology and philosophy before they went for their teaching practice. However, they might have difficulties in applying all the concepts into their teaching. Some schools may also hardly provide the ample basic facilities to trainee teachers in which such situation will inhibit the learning process as trainee teachers do not have suitable teaching aids to enhance students’ understanding.

Conducting a good and interesting lesson is not an easy task. With limited experience and theory, a trainee teacher may face various classroom management problems. Unfortunately, there has been little research directed toward the development of effective and efficient ways for trainee teachers in the application of learning principles. This research is important to trainee teachers who might have experienced frustrations and pitfalls in their attempts to impart knowledge to their
students. The aspects to be studied in this research are physical environment of the classroom and misbehavior of students. This research studied the ways trainee teachers used to create good physical environment of the classroom which is important in teaching-learning process. This study was also conducted to explore the students’ behavior problems that trainee teachers faced during teaching practice in school. It also studied their perceptions on their classroom management after their teaching practice.

1.4 Objectives of the Study

The objectives of this study are:

i. to study the ways UTM trainee teachers used to create good physical environment of the classroom.

ii. to study ways UTM trainee teachers used to handle misbehavior of students during teaching-learning process

iii. to investigate UTM trainee teachers’ perceptions toward their classroom management skills after their teaching practice.

1.5 Research Questions

The main questions of this research are:

i. How do UTM trainee teachers create good physical environment of their classroom?

ii. How do UTM trainee teachers overcome misbehavior of students in a lesson?

iii. What are the perceptions of trainee teachers on their classroom management skills after teaching practice?