Classroom management for teaching English to young learners

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Introduction

Effective classroom management sets the stage for optimal learning. This explains why classroom management positively correlates with higher student participation, greater learning satisfaction, dropout prevention and reduced disruptive behaviour (Evertson 2013; Evertson and Weinstein 2006), and it is even suggested as the single variable with the strongest impact on student achievement (Marzano and Marzano 2003). Defined as the ability of teachers to establish and maintain order in a classroom within an education system that aims to foster learning as well as social and emotional growth, classroom management encompasses all of the teacher’s practices related to developing mode of instruction (e.g., lecturing, group work) and dealing with learner behaviour (Elias and Schwab 2006, Emmer and Sabornie 2015). The instructional dimension of classroom management includes teachers’ works such as grouping and seating, regulating classroom routines, timing activities, setting up and sequencing tasks, giving instructions, providing feedback and monitoring the learners. The learner behaviour management dimension, on the other hand, includes activities such as preventing, correcting and redirecting inappropriate student behaviour and developing learner self-regulation.

The bulk of research on classroom management has been drawn from Western classrooms where language education is not necessarily the focus. This chapter attempts to address this issue by bringing what the mainstream classroom management research has to offer to the English for Young Learners (EYL) classroom. The chapter first provides an overview of the historical perspectives of classroom management, shifting from its early development in the 1900s to the emergence of the ecological and the behavioural approaches to recent approaches to classroom management. The chapter further discusses five critical issues related to EYL classroom management, namely theoretical approaches, educational cultures, teachers’ backgrounds, classroom conditions and technology. Third, the chapter demonstrates how current contributions in EYL pedagogy have been devoted to the fairly mechanical aspects of instructional management with little attention paid to young learners’ behavioural management. Next, the chapter provides recommendations for practice to assist teachers with managing young learner behaviour. Finally, the chapter points to future
directions for EYL pedagogy at both the theoretical and practical levels and the much-needed reorientation in teacher education for EYL teachers.

**Historical perspectives**

**Early development**

One of the early modern Western educators, Bagley (1908), wrote that educators prior to the twentieth century embraced the machine-like and ‘military organization’ (p. 30) style of classroom management, while at the turn of the twentieth century, ‘most of the advanced and progressive educators’ were proponents of the self-government theory of classroom management (p. 31). The machine-like style of classroom management placed emphasis on rules and punitive consequences to manage student behaviour, whereas the self-government theory focused on the development of self-discipline within students. This conceptualisation of classroom management is consistent with the dual meanings of the term ‘discipline’ (Emmer and Sabornie 2014). The first meaning refers to the creation and maintenance of an orderly learning environment conducive to learning in which punitive consequences are used for correcting and prevent problem behaviour. On the other hand, the second meaning of discipline refers to ‘self-discipline’, also referred to as ‘self-regulation’, ‘responsibility’ and ‘autonomy’ within students. In this chapter, the term self-regulation is used, as it is associated with the students’ ability to inhibit inappropriate behaviour and exhibit pro-social behaviour under their own volition.

Throughout the first half of the twentieth century, the development of self-regulation was the primary aim of classroom management. Within this perspective, teachers employed a combination of teacher-centred and student-centred techniques, with greater emphasis on the latter (Emmer and Sabornie 2014). However, as a consequence of increasing behaviour problems in the second half of the twentieth century, there was a shift on the focus of classroom management and prevention from developing self-discipline to establishing order and managing student behaviour (McClellan 1999). With the prevalent views in the 1970s and 1980s pointing to school discipline as the greatest problem, classroom management was equated with maintaining classroom order and controlling student behaviour. The use of teacher-centred techniques of prevention and correction was the emphasis of practice and research, as seen in the emergence of the process-product, the ecological and the behavioural approaches.

**The process-product approach**

Researchers embracing the process-product tradition aimed to identify predictors of teacher effectiveness by drawing from the methodology of systematic classroom observation (Emmer and Sabornie 2014). They explored the relationships between classroom processes (particularly teacher behaviour and teacher-student interaction patterns) and subsequent outcomes (particularly adjusted achievement gain). The focus was on the system-level characteristics of schools that were successful in promoting high achievement and positive classroom behaviour among students (Doyle 2006). This perspective led to the notion of the importance of activity management, including how the teacher engages students and minimises disruptive behaviour by keeping activities on track, preventing intrusions and maintaining the flow of activities. Brophy (2006) stated that various studies within this tradition demonstrate that effective classroom managers: (1) provide sufficient advance preparation
to enable most, if not all, of their students to begin seatwork and other independent activities smoothly; and (b) monitor progress and provide individual assistance where necessary, but ensure the brevity and privacy of these interactions.

Much of the first process-product research focused on individual behaviours or routines (e.g., brisk instructional pace, wait time, performance feedback), but more recent work has examined the efficacy of comprehensive models of teaching and classroom management derived from individual studies. Contemporary process-product research now defines effective teaching primarily through synthesis. Individual behaviours and processes related to positive student outcomes are combined into an effective teaching composite such as explicit instruction, authoritative classroom management and positive behaviour support. The idea is that teachers can be taught to employ process-product research findings in their classrooms, and that such strategies have positive correlation with student achievement and behaviour. Components of effective teaching and classroom management drawn from process-product research have been used as the foundation for many teacher education programmes (Gettinger and Kohler 2006).

The ecological approach
Brophy (2006) explained that the ecological research on classroom management resulted from studies of the characteristics of different classroom settings (e.g., whole class, small group, individual) and the unfolding of the activities occurring within them. The basic tenet of ‘the ecological approach is habitat, the physical niche or context with characteristic purposes, dimensions, features and processes that have consequences for the behavior occupants in that setting’ (Doyle 2006, p. 98). Thus, classrooms are environmental settings (ecologies) that can be examined according to the adaptation potential of different individuals. As a consequence, when the notion of person-environment fit is applied to classrooms, the settings’ physical characteristics and the affordances or constraints created by teachers, peers, administrators and others need to be taken into account.

The ecological approach research peaked in the 1980s, with a large emphasis on the ‘school effectiveness’ in relation to classroom management (Doyle 2006). Emmer and Sabornie (2014) stated that researchers within the ecological perspective employed descriptive and correlational methodologies to demonstrate that what best differentiated effective from ineffective classroom managers was not how teachers remedied misbehaviour but how they prevented it from appearing in the first place and from worsening and spreading. In preventing misbehaviour, teachers would be aware of classroom management dimensions, namely: (1) multidimensionality: a multitude of events and tasks in classrooms take place; (2) simultaneity: many things occur in the classroom at the same time; (3) immediacy: there is a fast pace of classroom events; (4) unpredictability: classroom events often take unpredicted turns; (5) publicness: classrooms are public, meaning classroom events are done and seen in public; and (6) history: a class accumulates a common set of experiences, routines and norms (Doyle 2006). By taking into account these dimensions, effective classroom managers would develop characteristics such as: (1) withitness – closely monitoring student behaviour and intervening early when misbehaviour is first observed and before it interferes with instruction; (2) overlapping – dealing with multiple events or demands at the same time; (3) momentum – starting and presenting lessons at a brisk pace, while allowing for only brief and efficient transitions; (4) smoothness – presenting lessons at an even flow, free from interruptions; and (5) group alerting – establishing and maintaining the attention of all students.
The behavioural approach

Another major line of research on classroom management is the behavioural approach. This approach recognises the importance of prevention, using positive reinforcement as its strategy of choice for preventing misbehaviour. Positive reinforcement refers to the effect ‘that is observed when a behaviour is made more likely to recur by a contingently applied stimulus that follows that behavior’ (Landrum and Kauffman 2006, p. 48). One prominent and effective application of positive reinforcement in classrooms is the use of provisional teacher attention that is aimed to increase students’ positive behaviour. The premise is simple: teachers attend positively to students when they are engaged in desired, appropriate task-related activity or behaviour. Compared with the ecological and process-product approaches, the behavioural approach places greater emphasis on correcting behaviour techniques, such as negative reinforcement and extinction. Negative reinforcement refers to the contingent removal of a stimulus in order to create the desired behaviour; for example, a teacher tells the students that they will not be given homework if they complete the task on time. Extinction, on the other hand, is ‘the phenomenon of a behaviour decreasing in rate or likelihood of occurrence when the reinforcement that has been maintaining it is removed’ (Landrum and Kauffman 2006, p. 50).

Applications of the behavioural approach commenced in the 1960s and 1970s. These applications, widely known as applied behavioural analysis, focused on the management of stimuli and consequences through controlled programming of reinforcement, extinction, response cost and other practices of punishment to promote desirable behaviours and to decrease the undesirable ones. Applied behaviourists emphasised the use of reinforcement to bring behaviour under the control of stimuli. The stimulus is a prompt that directs students to understand that certain forms of behaviour are desired, and performing them will result in reinforcement. Inability to perform the desired behaviour immediately will yield gradual improvement towards target performance level; it is maintained by reinforcing it often enough to guarantee its continuation. On the other hand, the behaviours that are incompatible with the desired pattern are overcome through non-reinforcement, or repressed through punishment. Early studies within this perspective often took place in special education settings and typically focused on the management of individuals’ behaviour. However, more recent research has broadened the scope of its application to groups, classrooms and schools, employing measures such as group contingencies, direct social skills training and school-home communication. The research has allowed researchers to examine the impact of interventions (e.g., reinforcement, extinction) on individual students (e.g., staying in the seat, remaining quiet) using single-subject or single-case experimental designs (Emmer and Sabornie 2014, Landrum and Kauffman 2006).

Recent developments

It is apparent that from the 1960s and into the 1990s classroom management had taken on a new meaning that was in contrast to the one that directed educators in the first half of the century (Emmer and Sabornie 2014). It is more common now to understand classroom management as ‘actions taken by the teacher to establish order, engage students, or elicit their cooperation’ (Emmer and Stough 2001, p. 103). Concurrently, there has been a reemergence of self-regulation development, as scholars have attempted to conceptualise classroom management and school discipline more broadly than that of order and compliance (Emmer and Stough 2001, Evertson and Weinstein 2006).
This shift of paradigm marks the application of the behavioural principle that started in the 1990s and is common nowadays, called the School-Wide Positive Behavioural Interventions and Supports (SWPBIS). Within SWPBIS, behaviour management is a school-wide concern, and classroom management is a central component that needs to be coordinated across administrators, teachers and other staff (Lewis, Mitchell, Trussell, and Newcomer 2014). This notion is embodied by Positive Behaviour Support (PBS), which is a collection of effective practices, interventions and system change strategies with evidence-based support. The scope is on the entire school as the unit of analysis, focusing on the school-wide, classroom and individual levels. There are three components involved: (1) the adoption of evidence-based practices; (2) data to categorise current status and effectiveness of intervention; and (3) systems that allow staff to accurately implement and sustain practices. This is a comprehensive approach that gives primacy to problem solving as well as action planning with a focus on accurate, sustainable and wide implementation across a continuum of settings and levels (Lewis et al. 2014).

A direct behavioural approach to PBS is seen in how students are taught social skills; the skills taught are identified in a behaviour matrix that comprises where students are to perform the specific social skills (Lewis et al. 2014). A recent national survey of social skills taught in SWPBIS schools demonstrates that the most common social skills found in matrices are those that ‘emphasize student compliance’ and those that are within three general categories of behavioural expectations: responsibility, respect and safety (Lynass et al. 2012, p. 159). In learning responsibility, for example, students are repeatedly directed (and reinforced) to ‘keep hands and feet to self’ in hallways, to ‘raise your hand for assistance’ in the cafeteria, and to ‘accept consequence of your behavior’ in the classroom. Similarly, in learning respect they are directed to ‘work quietly’ in the classroom, use ‘voice Level 2’ in the cafeteria and to ‘allow others to pass’ in hallways (Lynass et al. 2012, p. 155).

Following the emergence of SWPBIS, there was a call ‘for an approach to classroom management that fosters the development of self-regulation and emotional competence’ (Evertson and Weinstein 2006, p. 12). Scholars under the Social and Emotional Learning (SEL) approach responded to this call. They did not believe in the traditional goal of classroom management that prescribes the teacher to enforce discipline. While this ‘control’ goal of classroom management is undeniably important for the effective functioning of a classroom, it is teacher- and instruction-centred, and not student-centred. With schools becoming more focused on social, emotional and academic learning, a more holistic and student-centred goal for classroom management is necessary, and this goal is best achieved through internal control (i.e. self-regulation) (Elias and Schwab 2006).

The SEL approach perceives children’s ways to communicate, to deal with emotions and to solve problems as part of a school’s classroom management programme. Since prevention is viewed in this manner, it includes promotion or development of social, emotional and behavioural skills that underlie self-regulation. Although it branches out from SWPBIS, the SEL approach is more concerned with the promotion of mental health and well-being. It includes programmes often referred to as positive youth development, resilience, character education, positive psychology, emotional development and moral education. It also embraces programmes for preventing mental health issues and risk behaviours such as alcoholism, drug abuse, teen pregnancy, bullying, school violence and suicide (Durlak et al. 2011). The SEL approach certainly views the importance of teachers’ cognitions and actions, but it considers it to be only one of multiple factors along with individual student, peer, cultural, developmental, home, school and community factors – all these factors operate in a transactional, dynamic fashion in determining student behaviour (Dodge, Coie, and...
Lynam 2006). In the SEL approach, lessons are taught both directly and indirectly using a mixture of instructional techniques involving students, such as applying social problem solving to real-life problems in the classrooms, moral reasoning discussions, social perspective taking, as well as training in relaxation, communication and anger management (Emmer and Sabornie 2014).

Critical issues

In this section, I will focus on five critical issues in the EYL classroom management. These issues are associated with educational approaches to classroom management, educational cultures, teachers’ backgrounds, classroom conditions and the presence of technology.

First of all, there appears to be no evidence of direct, deliberate application of the theoretical approaches to classroom management discussed in the previous section in the EYL classroom. Teachers resort to using various strategies in order to maintain classroom order and control young learner behaviour (Schneiderová 2013, Stelma and Onat-Stelma 2010, Zein 2013), but they appear to be short-gap measures rather than being underpinned by certain theoretical approaches to classroom management. The absence of a theoretical approach to teachers’ practices in classroom management indicates that teachers may not be informed of various educational and psychological approaches to classroom management due to lack of specificity in their pre-service education. This is true because in contexts such as Vietnam (Le and Do 2012), Indonesia (Zein 2015, 2016) and Europe (Enever 2014), the generic teacher preparation at pre-service level places a large emphasis on instructional management but leaves little attention to the management of young learner behaviour.

The second critical issue of EYL classroom management is related to educational cultures. Much of the work on classroom management comes from the general education field in Western contexts such as the USA (e.g., Evertson 2013, Durlak et al. 2011, Emmer and Sabornie 2015), where the ideas of student-centred learning and developing self-regulation are prominent. Little is known, however, as to how teachers manage the EYL classroom in other educational cultures, especially in the Eastern contexts. This is especially relevant because teachers face many challenges when implementing Western-imported methodologies such as communicative language teaching (CLT) and task-based language teaching (TBLT), which are not conducive to local classroom ecologies. For example, Eastern classrooms (and many in Africa and South and Central America, too) are generally large with limited facilities and resources. These factors constrain the implementation of communicative pedagogy (Butler 2011, Enever and Moon 2009). In addition, CLT and TBLT encourage learners to be autonomous; the role of the teacher is to facilitate this process of self-analysis rather than explicitly teach the language (Butler 2011). The autonomous role given to learners is in line with the perspective of self-regulation in classroom management that is widely embraced in the West. However, classrooms in the Asia-Pacific region, for example, place a large emphasis on teacher authority. Learners are expected to obey teachers — the focus of classroom management is on the development of classroom discipline rather than self-regulation. Thus, an issue of great concern is how teachers could manage a locally fitting and culturally responsive classroom to create a learning environment that is comfortable, caring, embracing, affirming, engaging and facilitative (Gay 2006).

Third, various studies have shown that teachers of different backgrounds demonstrate varying degrees of resourcefulness when it comes to managing young learners (Le and Do 2012, Oga-Baldwin and Nakata 2013; Schneiderová 2013, Shohamy and Inbar 2007, Stelma and Onat-Stelma 2010, Zein 2016, 2017). Generalist teachers who teach English along with
other general subjects, such as maths and basic literacy, tend to demonstrate anxiety about their English language proficiency, as they overuse their first language (L1) due to their lack of confidence in English (Butler 2004, Copland et al. 2014, Enever 2014, Zein 2016, 2017), while others use students’ L1 in order to maintain control and develop discipline because they cannot do it in the TL (Zein 2013). Despite this challenge, generalist teachers tend to be more adaptable in dealing with young learners (Zein 2013, 2017), and they also appear to be more eclectic in integrating English and other subjects (Le and Do 2012, Oga-Baldwin and Nakata 2013, Shohamy and Inbar 2007).

The second group of teachers consists of reassigned teachers, that is, those who formerly taught English to older learners in other sectors before being required to teach EYL, typically finding managing young learners over-challenging. As these teachers face a new teaching situation, they struggle to organise learning. For example, the various strategies they employ to control young learner behaviour, such as raising one’s voice, moving noisy children to different seats and using non-verbal cues to keep children silent, are often unsuccessful (Stelma and Onat-Stelma 2010). Native-speaking English teachers often have a similar issue. They may be able to provide richer input than local non-native English speaking teachers (Unsworth, Persson, Prins and de Bot 2015), but evidence suggests that native English-speaking teachers exert less influence on young learners’ learning behaviour because they have no L1 knowledge to discipline them (Oga-Baldwin and Nakata 2013) and demonstrate poor pedagogical context knowledge (Luo 2007). Specialist local teachers who have relevant qualifications in English language pedagogy and only teach English also have their own classroom management issue. They may be able to provide richer language input than local generalist teachers (Unsworth, et al 2015), yet studies suggest that they struggle to manage young learner behaviour (Shohamy and Inbar 2007, Zein 2013, 2017). This is primarily attributed to their lack of professional preparation; in Zein’s (2015, 2016) studies, for example, the pre-service education the teachers had undertaken was not sufficient to prepare them with adequate educational approaches to managing young learners.

Classroom conditions are also a major hindrance to effective management, as it has been found in studies at the global level (Copland et al. 2014) as well as local level studies in Vietnam (Le and Do 2012) and Indonesia (Zein 2017), among others. The large number of students in the classroom may even be more influential than the professional and educational backgrounds of the teachers in determining the way they manage the classroom (Zein 2017). Zein’s (2013, 2016, 2017) studies demonstrate that although generalist local teachers exhibited greater versatility in managing the classroom than specialist local teachers, both were often overwhelmed when dealing with simultaneous classroom events and learner demands in a classroom consisting of 40–50 students. This holds true especially when they had to teach in a classroom with the rigid four-row seating arrangement. On the other hand, specialist local teachers who only had to teach 20 children or fewer could manage their classroom without much difficulty. This was supported by the fact that when the classroom had removable chairs and desks, the teachers could easily switch from one pattern of classroom organisation to another. As Copland et al. (2014) suggested, unless language-in-education policies in countries with unfavourable classroom conditions change the situations, the current classroom management issue would remain.

The fifth critical issue is how teachers can effectively manage the EYL classroom with the presence of innovative technologies (e.g., games, smartboards, Power Point). Teachers in various contexts such as China (Li and Ni 2011), South Korea (Suh et al. 2010) and Japan (Butler et al. 2014) generally hold positive attitudes towards the value of technological innovations for teaching young learners. Nevertheless, the extent to which the presence of
technology affects EYL classroom management is unclear. Li and Ni (2011), for example, argued that teachers mainly use technology for teacher-centred purposes such as lesson preparation and instructional delivery, and in such a case emphasis on developing children-centred learning is absent. Another issue lies at how teachers manage the balance between children’s degrees of enjoyment and learning, because highly enjoyable games do not necessarily warrant learning (Butler et al. 2014).

Current contributions and research

Current contributions in language education have paid very limited attention to classroom management. Wright’s (2005) contribution on classroom management in language education provides a thorough overview of classroom management as it relates to language pedagogy and social contexts as well as implications for research; and yet it makes limited reference to teaching young learners. The issue of classroom management is even absent in publications on teaching EYL such as Bland (2015), Pinter (2011) and Rich (2014) and is only covered in one chapter in Moon (2006), Nunan (2011) and Shin and Crandall (2014). This is despite classroom management being reported as one of the most serious challenges in EYL classrooms at the global level (Copland et al. 2014) as well as in specific contexts such as China (Zhang and Adamson 2007), Indonesia (Zein 2013, 2016, 2017) and Japan (Aline and Hosoda 2006).

Moon (2006), Nunan (2011) and Shin and Crandall (2014) primarily emphasised the fairly mechanical aspects of instructional management including grouping and seating, setting up tasks and sequencing activities. Despite showing adjustments on aspects of teaching young learners, the heavy emphasis on the instructional procedures of classroom management shows resemblance to popular publications on language pedagogy (e.g., Harmer 2007, Richards 2015). This indicates that research on classroom management in the EYL pedagogy has not shown significant progress from the mainstream language pedagogy. By the same token, recent studies have underscored how EYL classrooms worldwide are characterised by learners’ inattentiveness (Copland et al. 2014), lack of discipline (Garton 2014), recurrent chatting and misbehaviour (Zein 2013, 2017) and unexpected anxiety (Yim 2014), suggesting that the work of EYL teachers is not merely limited to instructional management. The paucity of research into EYL teachers dealing with the complex issues of young learner behaviour management further reflects partiality in understanding classroom management, as it is only understood within the instructional management dimension. The other dimension of EYL classroom management, that is, young learner behaviour management, escapes the attention of researchers.

Current educational practices of classroom management have embraced the SWPBIS and the SEL approaches that combine the development of classroom discipline and self-regulation in association with the school-wide management, but there are no signs that these approaches have been reflected in the mainstream EYL classroom. Publications such as Moon (2006), Nunan (2011) and Shin and Crandall (2014) give little indication as to whether their classroom management techniques are underpinned by a theoretical approach to classroom management. Wright (2005) identified classrooms as multidimensional, highlighting the role of institutional and affective aspects of classroom management. For example, he underscored that classrooms are invariably located in institutions, and this institutional issue is influential in affecting classroom participation. He also stressed that teachers must attend to ways to engage students in classroom activities, something that he argued is a core issue of the affective aspect of classroom management. However, it appears that none of the
thematic approaches that Wright (2005) elaborated on are related to any specific approaches to classroom discipline and self-regulation, such as SWPBIS and SEL. This lack of a systematic theoretical approach to classroom management enmeshing EYL pedagogy suggests that much research needs to be done.

Recommendations for practice

Readers wishing to explore the instructional management procedures such as grouping, seating and timing; setting up and sequencing tasks or activities; giving instructions; and monitoring in the EYL classroom may want to consult Moon (2006), Nunan (2011) and Shin and Crandall (2014). This section discusses young learner behaviour management, given the scarcity of sources on it. The section focuses on the underexplored issues of dealing with learners’ lack of respect and attention-seeking behaviours.

O’Grady et al. (2011) stated that with the increasing number of students displaying challenging behaviour, the respect that teachers receive today has arguably decreased from two decades ago, and yet its significance within an educative relationship at any level is undeniable. They argued that learners who show lack of respect tend to exhibit rudeness against their teacher, and this could adversely affect teachers’ confidence. Teachers who receive various instances of disrespect and rudeness tend to feel undermined by learners who do not acknowledge them as a teacher, or they may feel a lack of acknowledgment as a human being. This certainly would diminish the interpersonal respect that the teachers have towards the learners and negatively affect the classroom atmosphere.

EYL teachers wanting respect do not need to impose themselves upon young learners. Instead, they need to demonstrate integrity and professionalism, which can be done in some contexts by meeting the following characteristics: (1) being punctual; (2) being well prepared; (3) being consistent in their manners and attitudes; (4) treating students fairly; (5) trying not to let personal feelings about individual students influence their professionalism; (6) not ignoring problems and work instead on addressing them; and (7) never losing their temper (Gower et al. 2008). When teachers are able to demonstrate these characteristics, they build a figure of authority; they can serve as a role model for their learners. When teachers become a role model, learners recognise the teacher’s efforts, appreciate them and under their own volition self-regulate themselves to develop a sense of respect for the teacher (Gower et al. 2008). This is the beginning for the development of self-regulation on the part of the learners (O’Grady et al. 2011).

Learners may exhibit lack of respect not only to their teacher but also other learners. EYL teachers could address this problem by implementing applied behavioural approach to establish respect among learners. One common strategy used is classroom rules. Classroom rules may apply both positive and negative reinforcements. The rules are meant to form a predictable atmosphere that maintains classroom discipline, prevents disruptions and encourages young learners to self-control. Things that may need to be included in the class rules are guidelines on arriving late, interrupting other students, forgetting to do homework and not paying attention. Learners would be reminded that adherence to these rules exhibits respect. The rules need to be based on moral, legal, safety and educational considerations, and they also need to be age appropriate, simple and be stated in positive terms. Involving learners to develop the rules is advisable, as learners who participate in creating the rules have higher understanding and are more likely to adopt the rules and obey them (Schneiderová 2013). Teachers may want to allow the learners to produce illustrated classroom rules by themselves; they may create and draw the rules as they see fit. These
rules may need to be displayed on the wall in order to help learners learn and follow them more easily. Teachers can point to them when the need arises. Once the rules are set, teachers may want to apply some behavioural procedures that reinforce appropriate behaviours such as ‘Good Behaviour Game’ where learners are put into teams and compete to receive prizes based on which team receives the lowest scores for negative behaviour (Lemlech 1999; Schneiderová 2013).

The second issue is attention-seeking behaviours. Attention-seeking behaviours are commonplace in the young learner classroom; they can be disruptive to the lesson and may be time consuming to deal with. When it comes to overcoming attention-seeking behaviours, teachers need to be aware of the types. The first type of attention-seeking behaviours is not entirely negative. These include showing off having completed tasks or assignments, desiring to be praised and asking unnecessary questions. Integrating a series of behavioural approaches to this type of attention-seeking behaviour has proven useful. While sometimes teachers should ignore learners exhibiting these kinds of behaviours, at other times they should deliver positive attention to the learners. These can be done by: (1) making eye contact and smiling at the learner(s); (2) (culture permitting) patting the learner(s) on the shoulder; (3) checking in with the learner(s) about how they are progressing with their work; (4) passing the learner(s) a cheerful comment or compliment of their attitudes or work; and (5) calling on the learner(s) in class to share their answer (Lemlech 1999, Schneiderová 2013).

On the other hand, there are negative attention-seeking behaviours such as being loud, opposing or responding negatively to teachers’ authority and bullying other students. These behaviours are detrimental to building a positive classroom atmosphere and often interfere with the teachers’ abilities to maintain order and proceed with academic tasks. In dealing with these kinds of behaviours, teachers may need to implement preventive strategies such as asking questions to draw students’ attention, talking to the learner(s) and rewarding them. Teachers may also do corrective strategies such as warning the learners or setting up a conference meeting with their parents (Gower et al. 2008, Lemlech 1999, Schneiderová 2013).

At the extreme of attention-seeking behaviours are children who are diagnosed with attention-deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD). These children are likely to exhibit management problems such as non-compliance and oppositional behaviours. Researchers have suggested the use of straightforward approaches when dealing with ADHD learners (Blotnicky-Gallant, Martin, McGonnell, and Corkum 2015, Kapalka 2006, Reid and Johnson 2012). Reducing repetition has been suggested as a useful classroom-based intervention by Kapalka (2006). Blotnicky-Gallant et al. (2015) proposed interventions such as training learners to self-monitor their behaviour, reducing task duration/workload, allowing for oral rather than written task completion, chunking information into smaller sections, providing choice in activities and breaking homework and assignments into smaller segments. Reid and Johnson (2012) emphasised the sparing use of negative reinforcement such as reprimand and admonishment while maintaining the importance of setting up predictable classroom routines. All these interventions could help generate compliance of ADHD learners and restore order, allowing the teacher to introduce a new activity that provides a change of focus.

Future directions

Classroom management is a large issue that vitally influences the overall quality of learning environments and experiences, and determines whether they are conducive to the maximum performance of all students. A classroom conducive to learning is one that is facilitative
and builds a comfortable, caring, embracing, affirming and engaging atmosphere – in such a classroom learners’ discipline is less likely to be an issue and instruction can proceed smoothly (Gay 2006). EYL classroom management should be aimed towards the development of such a conducive classroom. Teachers’ instruction will not be effective unless the classroom is conducive.

With EYL pedagogy still generally focusing on instructional management, a shift of paradigm among EYL practitioners and researchers is vital: classroom management does not only comprise the instructional dimension but also the behavioural one. This paradigm shift needs to occur at both theoretical and practical levels.

At the theoretical level, addressing specific issues of young learner behavioural management is an important research agenda. Aspects of misbehaviour such as lack of respect and rudeness as well as seeking attention in the EYL classroom have not been explored in the literature. Furthermore, we know little about the way EYL teachers manage their emotions. Little, if not none, research has been done on the emotional strategies that EYL teachers employ in order to manage young learner misbehaviour. This issue of emotional regulation deserves attention in future research.

While conducting research into those areas is important, this direction should not create another partiality of classroom management. Teachers’ instruction and learner behaviour are inseparable – each shapes and is shaped by the other. Thus, research into teacher instructional management cannot be done solely on the pedagogical perspective per se without close scrutiny to its impact on young learner behaviour. This means research into corrective feedback in teaching EYL, for example, takes into account behavioural aspects such as learners’ responses to feedback. The same thing applies to research on young learner behaviour – considerations on how the behaviour impacts the teacher’s instruction need to be taken into account. Doing so will ensure future research tackles both dimensions of classroom management set out earlier in this chapter: instruction and behaviour.

At the practical level, the development of a classroom conducive to learning is central in EYL pedagogy. To achieve this, an integration of approaches to classroom management where teachers play an authoritative, not authoritarian, role has been found to characterise the most effective teachers and schools (Bear et al. 2011, Gregory, Cornell, Fan, Sheras, Shih, and Huang 2010). Authoritative teachers are similar to authoritative parents, as they prevent misbehaviour and stimulate compliance in the short run but also develop self-regulation in the long run. This is accomplished through the creation of balanced dimensions between child rearing and classroom management where responsiveness and demandingness are concomitantly applied (Gregory et al. 2010). An authoritative approach may help teachers to create such a balance, as they more effectively and efficiently achieve the dual aims of classroom management: (1) order, engagement and compliance and (2) self-regulation.

Emmer and Sabornie (2014) argued that the implementation of the authoritative approach allows teachers to integrate techniques from the ecological, behavioural and SEL approaches through a school-wide perspective of classroom management that involves teachers, management, administrators and other parties. This has implications for language instruction: it ceases to be seen in isolation and devoid of the school context; rather, it moves towards an holistic framework of EYL classroom management that aims to foster young learners’ learning development while being an integral part of the school curriculum and educational agenda. This means classroom management is seen in the context of the development of self-regulation within individual students as well as the maintenance of discipline within the school as the large learning ecology.
An SWPBIS approach to EYL pedagogy seems befitting, making young learner behaviour management a school-wide concern, and not just the concern of an individual EYL teacher. This is especially relevant because in many EYL contexts, English is introduced to children alongside other subjects, and is usually in a multilingual classroom where other languages exist. However, it remains to be seen how the practice of managing the EYL classroom is perceived alongside the management of teaching other subjects or languages. The concern is that given the wide importation of Western methodologies that might not be entirely appropriate to the local contexts, more behavioural issues might manifest in English language classrooms rather than in classes in other subjects or languages. A school-wide approach ensures a balanced focus on self-regulation and classroom discipline. The implementation of a SWPBIS approach to EYL pedagogy could provide solutions to the problem created by the implementation of Western-imported methodologies such as CLT and TBLT that emphasise the development of self-regulation. Holistic classroom-based interventions prescribed by the SWPBIS approach may help reduce classroom disruptions to minimal while, increasing learners’ self-regulation emphasised by those imported Western methodologies.

This commands coordination across administrators, teachers and other staff and takes into account the affordances and constraints (Lewis et al. 2014). Further, it requires specialist EYL teachers to work collaboratively with classroom teachers or teachers of other subjects through different levels of schooling to achieve positive classroom management. This is relevant in many EYL contexts worldwide where teaching English to children is a confluence of interests of different stakeholders (Enever and Moon 2009). Promoting order, discipline, engagement, compliance and self-regulation is a joint interest of relevant parties who take into account the broad spheres of language-in-education policy, national ideology, societal values, misbehaviour rates and the school’s educational cultures.

Third, it is vital to reorient teacher education. Classroom management should be an integral component of teacher education programmes, with a view to develop methodologically versatile specialist EYL teachers. These are teachers who can teach English properly and can deal with young learners appropriately. There has been a call to move from generic preparation of EYL teachers to training in specific areas to produce such versatile teachers (Enever 2014; Zein 2015, 2016), and yet major concerns seem to remain on teachers’ language proficiency and instruction (Butler 2015). If teacher education programmes wish to tackle those focal concerns, a cross-fertilising approach may be implemented. Such an approach allows prospective EYL teachers to study cross-departmentally or institutionally. They could undertake relevant courses that provide them with adequate preparation on the management of young learner behaviour in, for instance, child psychology or classroom-based interventions. Another approach is an integrative one; EYL teacher education programmes can retain their focus on teachers’ language proficiency while developing learning-teaching options that integrate instructional and behavioural management dimensions. Courses on teaching methodologies and second language acquisition within the programmes are therefore designed to ensure this integration. The suggestion for cross-fertilising and integrative approaches is, nevertheless, still within the realm of theoretical speculation. Further research is warranted.

Further reading


This handbook is the most current and comprehensive account of classroom management that includes classroom management approaches, models and programmes.
   This book provides teachers with the skills, approaches and strategies necessary to establish effective management in the primary school classroom.

   This handbook provides a rich account of classroom management that includes classroom management approaches, models and programmes.

   This book provides a comprehensive overview of ADHD including introduction, assessments of ADHD learners, medication, classroom-behaviour interventions and self-regulation strategies.

**Related topics**
Motivation, differentiation, difficult circumstances, classroom language

**References**


