

## Classroom Management Strategies in Online Environment: A Comparative Study on Novice and Experienced Teachers

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**Abstract:** Online classes, like face-to-face classes, need effective management so that they do not get out of the teacher's control and students have valuable and meaningful learning. Undoubtedly, the teacher has an effective role in teaching the student, and successful online classes are the result of a set of common roles and responsibilities between the teacher and the students. The purpose of this study was to investigate the problems of online classroom management and the methods and strategies used by novice and experienced teachers and to review the most appropriate techniques for planning and refining effective online and teamwork topics and discussing time and volume management strategies. Work and issues related to the online environment. For this purpose, the researcher has used a qualitative method and observing classes and semi-structured interviews used as instruments in this research. The results of this study showed that the professional development of online education, especially in the field of classroom management, requires a set of practical strategies, knowing how to communicate well with students, and having an effective classroom management program, managing asynchronous discussions and online teamwork. The results of this study can be useful for teachers, especially novice teachers, in effectively managing online classrooms and increasing learning opportunities for all students, from disruptive behaviors, which is often very important because these are often the main components of online learning. Prevent in class and provide solutions for better online learning.

**Keywords:** Classroom Management Strategies, Online Environments, Novice Teachers, Experienced Teachers.

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### 1. Introduction

Online classes are one of the most controversial issues that have been investigated these days due to the presence of the Covid 19 virus because it has replaced face-to-face classes due to the closure of schools and universities and even many private institutions. Online classes, just like face-to-face classes, need effective management so that they do not get out of the teacher's control and students have valuable and meaningful learning. In online teaching, knowing how to communicate well with students and having an effective classroom management plan, such as using strategies for managing asynchronous discussions and online teamwork, is crucial because these are often key components to learning online. Also, the amount of work in online education varies compared to face-to-face teaching, so having an active teacher and having workload management techniques can greatly help his or her online learning experience (Harrison, 2021).

The role of the teacher is undoubtedly student education, and successful online classes are the result of a set of shared roles and responsibilities between the teacher and the students (Hattie, 2013). By supporting theoretical perspectives, the beliefs and assumptions of these roles and responsibilities fall into the four main areas of practice in the classroom. These areas include classroom teaching and learning, classroom behavior management, and the classroom environment (Harrington and Franklin, 2019). In fact, it is essential to be aware of the distinctive features of the online environment and the appropriate ways to communicate, interact, motivate and support students, while many of these educational and communication strategies are not necessary for face-to-face classes.

According to current situation, teachers in every field of study and in all age groups are forced to establish their classes online despite all the appropriate scientific, practical and technical challenges at home (Hodges et al. 2020). The most important challenge for school and university teachers is the lack of knowledge of the educational content required for online teaching (Ching, Hsu and Baldwin 2018). Over the past year, due to the online nature of school and university classes, many recommendations have been provided to teachers to manage online classes (Bets 2020). Most of these online classroom management strategies are about teaching tools and content that teachers can use in their online classrooms. In online learning, the performance of teachers is very important because students' learning depends on classroom activities and is evaluated based on criteria independent of the teacher's personal grades (Daher and Shahbari, 2020). Online environment management also includes skills in planning, self-monitoring, and time management to deal effectively with the workload. The purpose of this study is to investigate the problems of online classroom management and the methods and strategies used by novice and experienced teachers and examines the most appropriate techniques for planning

and modifying effective online discussions and teamwork, and discusses time management strategies, workload, and issues related to the online environment.

## 2. Review of Literature

Classroom management includes preventive and responsive strategies that teachers use to support and facilitate academic and social / emotional learning in the classroom (Everston & Weinstein 2006, p. 4). So, classroom management means the strategies that teachers use in the classroom to provide an environment that supports student learning.

Many studies have been reported on the problems of novice teachers in relation to online classrooms and the creation of appropriate structural space in the classroom, preparing students to learn and dealing with challenging behaviors and disrespectful interactions and disruptive student behaviors (Baker, Gentry, & Larmer, 2016; Chesley & Jordan, 2012; Goodwin, 2012 ;Greenberg, Putman, & Walsh, 2014). Studies also show that effective online and face-to-face classroom management skills and strategies can only be acquired through teachers' experience. Researchers believe that classroom management is a major challenge for novice teachers, but how and when to provide adequate educational materials is very important and practical. (Baker et al., 2016).

### 2.1 Communicating Online

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Managing online classes primarily involves communicating between teachers and students. Communicating in an online environment requires more planning in terms of content, presentation, and time than communicating in the face to face environment. These online communication methods directly change the success or failure of the student. (Ku and Rosen, 2010). Christine Bates (2009) in an article titled " Lost in Translation: Importance of Effective Communication in Online Education" about the strategy of online communication, describes her communication model called "Tubbs", in which messages are conveyed, whether verbal, non-verbal, intentional or unintentional. In this model, she points out that the transmission of the message can be affected by the communication channel. In face-to-face classes, communication with students is not only verbal but also includes visual and auditory components such as body language, gestures, facial expressions, eye contact, etc. This communication channel, whether verbal or non-verbal, can affect how students learn from what they receive. But in an online classroom, the emphasis is clearly on verbal and written communication, and many components such as vocabulary, semantics, syntax, and the way text messages are transmitted and interpreted have a significant impact (Bettes, 2009).

One of the most important issues in online communication is the presence of the teacher visually. Students should be able to see the teacher in order to maintain privacy between the student and the teacher in the online environment and also to motivate students. The presence of a teacher can improve students' learning and create a sense of community in the classroom (Schwartz, 2021).

Other communication strategies in online classrooms include: In the online environment, it is best for the teacher not to wait for a predetermined time or a certain number of comments before responding and to respond quickly to students because the answers quickly show students that the teacher values their participation in the online class. The teacher's feedback should be a model. For example, always start the class with something positive and at the end of the class, make suggestions for further studies. Students should be encouraged to respond to each other and participate in discussions. The teacher should be able to boost students' self-confidence so as not to hinder student participation. Discussions should be summarized, it is better to interpret the main views to lead to a general summary so that the previous discussion is best completed before the next discussion (Schwartz, 2021).

Managing online classes has been a serious challenge for new teachers, especially in the last year (Harrison, 2021; Schwartz, 2020; Milliken, 2019; Franklin & Harrington, 2019). Unlike experienced teachers, novice teachers often feel unprepared to manage a structured online environment, engage with students' learning in the online environment, and deal with challenging behaviors (Schwartz, 2020; Baker et al., 2016; Greenberg et al. Others, 2014). Regarding classroom management, Marzano (2003) claimed that one of the most important roles of teachers in the classroom is the class manager. Good class management uses effective strategies to enhance students' social behavior and academic content at each level in all areas and at the appropriate time (Evertson & Weinstein, 2006; Marzano, 2003).

As important as the role of the teacher is in the management of online classrooms, the role of the student is also important in establishing communication and interaction between the teacher and the knowledge of affairs. Students help the teacher discover their strengths and weaknesses by sharing ideas and ways of thinking. While students are responsible for interacting and communicating, teachers can modify and improve their teaching methods to provide different contexts and opportunities for students to learn (Kong & Song, 2013). Group activities provide an opportunity for students to become more motivated in online classes and to demonstrate their contribution by engaging with the teacher in learning. Basically, time is the most important factor in students' success in group activities that the teacher, by managing time, gives the necessary time to process their knowledge (Meador, 2019).

Fush (2014) suggested that it is very important for educators to have a specific training plan for managing their online classes and training tasks. He also encourages teachers to set and expect reasonable expectations of themselves and the student from the very beginning of the course.

### **3. Methodology**

#### **3.1 Research Design**

This study examines online classroom management strategies with a focus on comparing the performance of novice teachers to experienced teachers. The research questions of the study were:

Q1: What are the best strategies and techniques for effective classroom management in online education?

Q2: What are the key skills demonstrated by experienced teachers who are defined as being effective classroom managers?

For this purpose, the researcher has used a qualitative method in this research. Qualitative approaches are commonly used to describe and interpret new or under-researched topics and do not rely on empirical terms or statistics, but use words and images as experimental materials for reflection and analysis (Saldana & Omasta, 2018). Because human perception and reaction are the main focus of this research, this method has been used using semi-structured interview and classroom observations.

#### **3.2 Participants**

The population of this study was 20 participants divided into two groups of English language teachers who are teaching at the intermediate level (10 participants in each group). The first group included novice teachers with a maximum teaching experience of 3 years, and they have started teaching their online classes since last year due to the closure of schools, universities, and private institutions with the outbreak of the Covid-19 disease epidemic. The second group were experienced teachers with a minimum of 12 years of teaching experience and have had several years of online classroom teaching experience during their teaching years.

#### **3.3 Data Collection and Procedure**

To examine teachers' challenges and strategies in managing online classrooms, the researcher observed participants' classes. All teachers sent 6 recorded files of their classes after each session to the researcher for direct observation. The researcher observed 3 sessions of six files randomly from all 20 participants. A total of 60 online classes were observed and all tips and strategies were written down for analysis.

In the second phase a semi-structured interview designed by Milliken (2019) that includes a list of questions about online classroom management. Some of the questions in this interview were removed from the original version in accordance with the teaching conditions in Iran. Participants were asked to share examples of when and how to implement specific classroom management strategies and their experiences with online teaching. All

participants received the interview form via a link via social media. Prior to the interview, the researcher explained the purpose and expectations of the interview to them. All the participants completed the interview form within three days of receiving it. The participants responded differently to the interview. Some of them typed their answers and others recorded and sent their voices to answer.

### 3.4 Data Analysis

To analyze the data, the observations of the classes and the participants' answers to the interview interpreted to answer the study questions. The TA method is used to analyze observations and interviews. In this method, information is coded and categorized by focusing on the challenges and the management strategies of online classes.

## 4. Results

### 4.1 Class Observation Results

According to the researcher's observations of the online classes, both groups of novice and experienced teachers were analyzed and interpreted. According to the researcher's observations, 7 out of 10 novice teachers faced the problem of time managing for presenting the material. They were also unable to create group discussions and encourage students to do work group to learn better. The strategies of the novice teachers were slightly different according to the teacher's teaching style and the special needs of the students. In general, their biggest weaknesses include lack of infrastructure, time management, and lack of interaction in the classroom and inappropriate use of classroom materials. The performance of the three teachers in presenting the content was excellent and successful in terms of how they were taught and the use of more images and emphasis on tone of voice and tone of voice and time management in presenting the curriculum.

The observations of the second group of classes, including experienced teachers, were also analyzed. Maintaining a high proportion of positive and corrective interactions with students in experienced teachers was highly commendable. Effective methods for experienced teachers can be noted to change some of the curriculum and assessments to be more appropriate for online education, turning role-plays into podcasts, turning portfolios into practical activities, using non-verbal corrections, managing discussions Group and attention to class expectations.

In answer to the first question what are the best strategies and techniques for effective classroom management in online education? It can be said that time management of lesson material, quick teacher feedback through a variety of tools, a sense of community, and the use of verbal tools, discussion, and group activities are essential for greater impact on learning in online classrooms. The teacher should be able to recognize the preventive nature of classroom management, anticipate potential problems, and structure the classroom to address problems before they occur. With such potential problems in mind, the teacher should become more aware of the diverse nature of the students involved in each particular class. However, if preventive classroom management is an integral part of course preparation, the online learning environment can be as rich and useful as the traditional environment (Daniel P. Stewart, 2008).

### 4.2 The Result of Semi-Structured Interview

In the interview, each participant explained how to manage the class and the strategies used, either in writing or by recording their voice. Teachers were also asked to report on the challenges and problems they face, as well as their experiences in managing online classrooms. All of them were analyzed and interpreted. Participants mentioned different ways to present the curriculum and time management. They also talked about creating and maintaining positive connections with students, which is one of the most important strategies. The use of these strategies in classroom management showed that participants are aware of the importance of positive interaction strategies with students, a concept that is often considered as a measure of classroom space in the classroom management discussion (Mrachko et al., 2017). Most novice teachers stated in interviews that students' enthusiasm and motivation to learn the language is very low and they have few tools to create creativity and motivation for their students. For example, some teachers describe their problems as follows:

- It is not possible to use Para-linguistic features such as body language, movements, facial expressions, eye contact, etc. in online education, which has affected class control at different levels. Some naughty students who are well skilled in computer science use some tools to answer the questions and activities in online classes without using their personal knowledge, and I cannot ensure of better cooperation and active participation of students.
- In my opinion, the online environment has made it difficult for teachers to monitor students' behavior and their cooperation and progress, and has caused a sense of isolation.

- In an online course, no one can hear your screaming. Studying only with a computer as your companion can be scary. There are no whispers in the classroom, and there is no command presence in front of the classroom to ask everyone to listen. Online space is a completely different space that only some people can get used to.
- I think it's easy to use technology in teaching, but in practice it is not so simple. Most scholars today expect a particular type of technology and application to be used in classroom presentation, but you need to carefully consider which technology is most effective in enhancing student interaction and improving learning. Using these applications used with our country's internet problems is not necessarily equivalent to good education...

The second research question was: What are the key skills demonstrated by experienced teachers who are defined as being effective classroom managers? The results revealed that effective online classroom management is important to create and maintain an environment that facilitates learning. Considering the response of experienced teachers to interview questions and observing their classes, the results indicated that they used prevention and response strategies to encourage students to be motivated to learn and social behaviors and reduce inappropriate behaviors. Effective prevention strategies include creating and maintaining a good and warm classroom atmosphere, communicating positively with students, using structured methods to motivate students to learn, such as preparing podcasts, instructional videos, pictures, charts, the use of highlighting or bolding written items to emphasize and create visual learning, providing appropriate instructional content with online instruction, and scheduling presentation of content and group activities were other strategies used by experienced teachers.

## 5. Conclusion and Discussion

The results of this study showed that the professional development of online education, especially in the field of classroom management, is well accepted by English teachers. Previous studies suggest that providing professional development of classroom management determines how well participants can use the skills taught (Marquez et al., 2016; Milliken and 2019). According to the observations of the classes, they all followed a certain rule, such as class rules, instructions, content activities, and objectives. This shows that novice teachers, like teachers with experience, understand the importance of clear expectations as well as how to implement this skill. Managing an online classroom is a difficult process and teachers need to be trained to implement the best practices. This allows the teacher to choose the best and most appropriate strategy for student education (Milliken, 2019). The results revealed that teachers tend to study online classroom management, ways to better present content, and solve online teaching problems. These results are consistent with the results of several previous studies (Herbert et al., 2016; Nguyen, 2015; Milliken, 2019; Franklin and Harrington, 2019; Harrison, 2021). Participants in this study agreed with participants in the Milliken (2019) study on the use of strategies and the existence of online classroom management problems. Participants also requested the creation of courses and workshops to teach online classroom management techniques and strategies to increase their knowledge of best classroom management practices. This increase in teachers' knowledge effectively refers to the impact of the online environment as a teaching tool.

## 6. The Implications and Suggestion of the Study

The results of this study can be useful for teachers especially novice teachers in the effective management of online classrooms and enhancing learning opportunities for all students, prevent disruptive behaviors in the classroom and provide solutions for better teaching in the online environment. Improving teacher quality through Effective classroom management and behavior is an important step in improving the results of online and special education for all students (Oliver, 2007). Classrooms as learning spaces where nurturing life and creating knowledge in students will help shape the future of the country. Ensuring a positive academic experience for both teacher and student relies on flexibility, understanding, creativity and patience. Creating student-teacher participation in the learning environment is very important and guarantees success in education. For further studies, researcher suggests that, given the potential problems, this study should be examined from the point of view of students' perspectives and problems in learning online classes. In addition, it is suggested that more research be done focusing on teachers' knowledge and skills in effective classroom management in other disciplines and at different levels. Statistical methods can help to examine the relationship and correlation between variables and qualitative techniques to obtain better results and deeper understanding.

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## Appendix

### Teacher Demographics.

1. How many years have you been teaching?
2. What is your current role ?  
Classroom Management Practices
3. How do you communicate your classroom expectations to students ?  
Describe a specific example of this?
4. How do you build and maintain positive relationships with your students?  
Describe a specific example of this?
5. In the event of student misbehavior, what strategies do you utilize most often?

Classroom Management Training Experience

6. On a scale of 1–10, with 10 being expert and 1 being novice, how would you describe your knowledge of classroom management best practices before the online classroom management training and why?
7. On a scale of 1–10, with 10 being expert and 1 being novice, how would you describe your knowledge of classroom management best practices after completing the online classroom management training and why ?
8. On a scale of 1–10, with 10 being fully capable and 1 being incapable, how would you describe your ability to manage your classroom before the online classroom management training and why?
9. On a scale of 1–10, with 10 being fully capable and 1 being incapable, how would you describe your ability to manage your classroom after completing the online classroom management training and why?
10. How has your experience with this online training positively impacted your effectiveness in the classroom?