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The influence of assertive classroom management strategy use on student-teacher pedagogical skills

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1. INTRODUCTION

This quantitative study examined the influence of teacher-educators' use of assertive classroom management strategies on English as a foreign language (EFL) student-teacher generic-education and language-teaching skills. Concerns have been voiced that many teachers fail to communicate target skills and information to their students though they possess abundant subject-content and pedagogical-content knowledge. Traditionally, teacher-educators have been concerned with assisting students to grasp a defined body of knowledge through information transmission. Currently, teacher-educators face the challenge of assisting student-teachers to learn how to learn so that they can face political, social and economic uncertainties and to become independent lifelong learners. This demanded new ways of educating student-teachers who, too, have to handle the very task (Shawer, 2010; Shawer, Gilmore & Banks-Joseph, 2008). Some key skills student-teachers need to develop involve their use of effective classroom management strategies (Shawer, 2006).

No doubt that classroom management has paramount significance to effective pedagogy, because classroom disruption decreases learners' cognitive and overall development. As a result, effective classroom management forms a gate to stable teaching and learning. Classroom management simply means the ways teachers control disruptive behaviour in order to allocate as much as possible of classroom time and effort to teaching and learning activities (Victor, 2005).

Pedagogical content-knowledge is the whole range of teaching knowledge and skills that teachers acquire to be able to communicate pedagogical content. It involves subject and generic-education teaching skills. Subject pedagogical content-knowledge includes those teacher- and student-based teaching strategies and techniques which could be used solely for teaching particular subjects. For example, the Audio-lingual Method, a didactic teacher-based teaching strategy, and Communicative Language Teaching, an active-learning and student-based teaching strategy, are used exclusively in teaching languages. On the other hand, generic-education pedagogical content-knowledge includes those teacher- and student-based teaching strategies and techniques which could be used for teaching almost all subjects. For example, the Lecture Method, a didactic teacher-based teaching strategy, and Cooperative Learning, an active-learning and student-based teaching strategy, are cross-subject teaching strategies (Shawer, 2009).

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

The current study was put in context through reviewing the literature round classroom management strategies and pedagogical content-knowledge. This section concluded with stating the research questions.

All teachers dream of maintaining their classrooms free of disruption. To achieve this, they need to shape and correct learners' behaviour in loving and caring ways and settings that inspire, achieve and maintain positive behaviour. The terms classroom 'discipline' and 'management' have been often

considered as synonymous. Although discipline “is an instrument that moulds, shapes, corrects, and inspires appropriate behaviour,” it is mistakenly associated with punitive procedures. Classroom management, on the other hand, includes “ways to effectively reduce misbehaviour in the classroom setting” (Victor, 2005, p. 7). In particular, classroom management involves “all the things that a teacher does to organize students, space, time, and materials so that instruction in content and student learning can take place” (Wong & Rosemary, 2001, p. 84). In addition, it “consists of practices and procedures that a teacher uses to maintain an environment in which instruction and learning can occur” (p. 10). This requires teachers to use organizing strategies, including things relevant to space, time, and materials so as for teaching and learning to occur.

Teachers most often face acts of disruption, defiance, and inattention in their classrooms. No wonder that only half of classroom time is spent on teaching and learning activities whilst the rest is wasted on classroom management (Geiger, 2000). Well-managed classrooms show little confusion, disorder, and anti-social behaviour. Effective teaching and learning cannot take place in contexts full of disruption. Discipline is, therefore, “necessary for proper character development, academic study, living with others, personal habits, [and] physical development of the body” (Victor, 2005, p. 12).

2.2 Classroom Management Strategies

Classroom management strategies involve: (a) organizing, (b) teaching management, (c) teacher-student relationship, and (d) teacher sanctions/ reward (consequences) strategies (Shawer, 2006). Some of these strategies are concerned with administrative rules, while others target actual classroom pedagogical activities.

Classroom organizing strategies guide teachers to use and develop behavioural classroom protocols, including arriving in and exiting classroom, seating students, turning in homework, and going to the restroom. Daily routine procedures, such as keeping supplies organized and handling paperwork, show the difference between well- and less-managed classrooms. In well-managed classrooms, teachers introduce ‘transition’ procedures that set out classroom protocols to students on day one. For example, teachers make clear what students should know as the appropriate activities when assigned work is complete (Canter, 1992). Effective behaviour management is difficult to achieve through inhibiting disruptive behaviour. Rather, teachers can turn students voluntarily compliant by respecting and being considerate with them. Without training in various management strategies, teachers make the mistake of punishing rather than managing (Burden, 2003; Cangelosi, 2004; Charles, 2001).

Effective classroom management also depends on the teaching quality, which teachers could achieve through using teaching management strategies. Effective classroom management occurs when teachers choose stimulating tasks that sustain interest. When pedagogy is boring, students cannot get positive or compliant. Therefore, teachers need to choose tasks which students genuinely need (relevance criterion of pedagogy). When teachers ignore students’ needs, they cannot expect them to comply or attend to learning activities. Further, teachers must make tasks realistic, meaningful, manageable, and achievable (task suitability to student schemata). Asking students to approach tasks beyond their reach results in student objection and dissatisfaction, whereas easy tasks leave no option to students but side talking to pass the time (Shawer, Gilmore & Banks-Joseph, 2009).

Choosing substantial pedagogical input gives students the feeling they learn new and useful things (content-substantiality). Trivial tasks fail to engage students in learning or keep them silent. Classroom

management requires teachers to use activities that defuse attention-seeking behaviours, like group- and pair-work because these keep students busy working rather than side-talking. Moreover, addressing style and ability differences keeps learners engaged in learning through providing extra tasks and material to fill in the time gap between low- and high-ability and fast and slow students. This also allows teachers to fill in the time when having extra lesson time without things to do. In addition, teachers should always set and implement time-limits for activities to encourage students to seize the time for learning instead of disruption. It is also important that teachers look confident before students by knowing how to use apparatus and having clear understanding of lessons (Shawer, 2003).

Learning styles are also keys to effective classroom management for driving students to prefer learning through certain modalities more than others (Victor, 2005). 'Visual style' learners prefer to see language written in order to approach tasks at a degree of easiness. 'Auditory' learners need to listen to the language they learn, whereas 'kinaesthetic' students prefer to move around and handle things in the learning situation (Tomlinson, 1998). Visual students are better disciplined through using eye contact and behaviour charts, auditory learners need information to be repeated back to them and making use of voice pitch, whereas tactile students need hands-on activities. Once students take in information through their preferred channel of learning, they rarely cause trouble (Victor, 2005).

Learning styles could be grouped into 'organizers', 'researchers', 'relaters', and 'doers'. Organizers prefer to deal with learning enterprises in a logical order therefore disorganized tasks may stimulate their disruptive behaviour. Unlike Organizers, researchers question the rationales behind tasks. If their queries are not answered, this may trigger their disruptive behaviours (Victor, 2005). Relaters who like interaction with others can be managed through creating a context that involves good relationships, fairness, personal interactions, approval, praise, and affirmation. Doers who like participating in hands-on activities prefer guidelines to rules, opportunities to show leadership, and empowerment when being disciplined.

Academic procedures concern the management of classrooms through the quality of pedagogical input and strategies. Lesson planning is not only crucial to effective pedagogy but also to effective classroom management. Each lesson should reflect students' learning needs, by anticipating their performance and behaviour. This enables teachers to amend their lesson plans when they go wrong or when problems arise. For example, planning a lesson where students move around requires teachers to have clear ideas of how to move quickly and efficiently from one activity to another. Moreover, teachers need to always justify their pedagogical input to convince students to accept and actively participate in learning activities. To facilitate learning and keep order, teachers need to provide clear task instructions and be able to use resources. In small group discussions, teachers assign roles to group members, including leader, recorder, and timekeeper (Canter, 1992).

Positive student-teacher relationships improve student affective and cognitive development, increase motivation, and minimize anticipated negative behaviours ([Bradley, Pauley & Pauley, 2005](#)). Teacher-student relationship strategies assist teachers to establish and keep good relationships with students. Good class managers start firm and get relaxed later. Good classroom managers also defuse confrontations, keep clam, take the heat out of the situation, do not argue with students, and use students' names, humour, and constructive criticism. Moreover, they look alert and do not neglect early infringements of classroom rules. Being firm and consistent leads learners to conform (Shawer, 2006).

Good classroom managers do not shame, use verbal reprimand, threaten, embarrass, suspend, or expel students (Geiger, 2000). "The teacher should act in a professional manner and always remember that he/she is... not a teenager" (Victor, 2005, p. 6). They understand students' psychology as learners pass through different development stages, each with distinctive affective and cognitive implications. Effective communication is, therefore, necessary to create contexts that foster mutual respect between students and teachers through active listening techniques, avoiding traditional communication roadblocks, and responding with empathy to student anxiety and frustration ([Brown, 2005](#)).

The teacher sanctions/ reward strategies also influence classroom management. Teachers should not box students into a corner, as this incurs confrontations and disruptive behaviour. They can use tangible rewards, their institution reward system, and their own system but rewards should always be visible. For example, praising good students in public, giving merit points, and displaying good work. If possible, teachers write down good students' names in the honouring list on class and school boards. As regards sanctions, teachers should tactfully use a range of methods to discourage disruptive behaviour, keep questioning behaviour to get students accustomed to discipline, and avoid overreaction. Suitable reprimands such as negative reinforcement, making trouble-makers lose privileges, and isolating, separating or even detaining students are good ways of punishment. Other staff and parents could be involved if students continue to disrupt classroom teaching, but teachers must act instantly and avoid whole class punishment (Shawer, 2006). Teachers can also use positive recognition to reward those who stick to the rules and a punitive system to punish those who violate them (Victor, 2005).

2.3 Pedagogical-Content Knowledge (Teaching Skills)

Pedagogical content-knowledge constitutes the crux of teacher development, in addition to subject and curricular content-knowledge (Shulman, 1986). Teachers cannot teach effectively or well-manage their classrooms without grasping the information, principles and theories of their subjects. However, subject content-knowledge is insufficient to make competent teachers. Curricular knowledge assists teachers to understand curriculum domains, models, evaluation, syllabi, and materials and different programmes, and how these relate to other disciplines (Pollard & Triggs, 1997).

Subject and curricular knowledge, however, have limited use without assisting teachers to develop a broad range of teaching skills necessary for them to demonstrate they can transform their subject and curricular knowledge into forms comprehensible to learners; using different teaching strategies, procedures, techniques, examples, and other useful ways of content representations. Pedagogical skills, therefore, enable teachers to understand learners and what facilitates and impedes their cognitive, affective, psychomotor, and social development (Pollard & Triggs, 1997; Shawer et al., 2008). With subject, pedagogical and curricular knowledge, teachers become self-confident since meagre or abundant subject, curricular and pedagogical knowledge influence their ability to better manage their classrooms (Shawer, 2006). EFL teachers who have developed a range of teaching skills can handle "different learner strategies, be good classroom managers (organizers, initiators, monitors, advisors and resource-providers), help students to learn from their errors, motivate them, promote learner autonomy and cater for different abilities and learning styles" (Basanta, 1996, p. 263).

2.4 Previous Research

The literature on classroom management revolved round assertive and non-assertive teachers.

Assertive teachers had two classroom management styles. Autocratic/ authoritarian teachers managed their classrooms by imposing behaviour and instruction related protocols on their students. In contrast, democratic teachers involved their learners in almost all classroom undertakings. On the other hand, non-assertive (lassie-fair) teachers paid little attention to classroom order. The non-assertive or passive teachers' impact on students was negative, since their students felt frustrated in their anarchic classrooms. Similarly, students felt disappointed and suppressed in the hostile or authoritarian teachers' classrooms. In contrast, assertive teachers who showed confidence and consistent expectations had positive effects on student behaviour, as they learnt how to trust and respect others (Canter, 1992).

Research has shown that teachers taking classroom discipline a priority provided a conducive context to effective classroom teaching and learning whereas lassie-fair contexts had negative implications for classroom pedagogy (Akar & Yildirim, 2004; Lacina-Gifford, Kher & Besant, 2003; Pedder, 2006). However, research investigating the direct impact of classroom management on learning has been sparse. Most research focused on training teachers to use a set of classroom management strategies to well-manage classrooms. The 'means' and 'end' have been classroom management itself because researchers examined the impact of some strategies on improving classroom discipline. However, the literature supplied the current study's experiment with the most effective classroom management strategies in addition to hinting at close links between effective classroom management and effective learning and teaching.

One line of research examined the impact of classroom management techniques on student behaviour. For example, Victor (2005) conducted an experiment to examine the impact of some classroom management techniques (means) on improving student behaviour in the classroom (end). The study concluded that the treatment programme resulted in significant improvement in students' positive behaviour, such as a decrease in non-compliance, shouting, and tantrum.

Another strand of research examined the impact of certain management strategies on teacher classroom management skills. Akar and Yildirim's (2004) study indicated that constructivist contexts assisted teachers in organising students in cooperative work and taking individual differences into consideration. Schmidt (2006) concluded that classroom management training enabled teachers to respond to different student characteristics, behaviours, and instructional needs in addition to developing appropriate relationships with students and parents. Slider, Noell & Williams (2006) reached similar conclusions.

A third line of research investigated teachers' cognition of effective and ineffective classroom management strategies. Lacina-Gifford et al (2003) examined pre-service teachers' knowledge of most effective strategies. The study concluded that most teachers found talking to students, involving parents, reinforcing good behaviour, and rearranging classroom as effective strategies. In contrast, confronting, yelling at, lecturing, and punishing students were ineffective strategies.

Few studies examined the relationship between classroom management and learning. Cher, Meow & Ching's (2005) study indicated that effective classroom management strategies, such as establishing disciplinary and educational rules and dividing work among students, had a positive impact on student learning. Pedder (2006) reached similar results.

Many cross-subject studies indicated a positive impact of abundant teacher pedagogical knowledge

on their ability to teach and student learning (e.g., Gudmundsdottir, 1991; Kinach, 2002; Lee, 1995). Similarly, previous EFL studies indicated a positive influence of abundant teacher pedagogical knowledge on improving teaching ability and student learning (e.g., Barkhuizen & Gough, 1996; Gahin, 2001; Author, 2009). Other studies indicated that program interventions improved EFL teacher ability (Borgan & Thai Ha, 1999; Linne, 2001; Schleppegrell & Bowman, 1995). It has become clear that no research examined the impact of classroom management on student-teachers' pedagogical skills. The current study, therefore, sought to answer these research questions:

1. Have the target classroom management strategies been actually used in the classrooms under study?
2. What are the student-teachers' perceptions of the target classroom management strategies impact on their generic-education teaching skills?
3. What are the student-teachers' perceptions of the target classroom management strategies impact on their language teaching skills?

3. RESEARCH DESIGN

As shown in figure 1, positivism underpinned this research ontological (one form of reality) and epistemological stance (detachment from rather than interaction with the research subjects). Positivism also guided this research at the methodological level through using two 'nomothetic' research strategies (survey and experimentation), data collection instruments (questionnaires), and data analysis techniques (t-test) (Guba & Lincoln, 1994).



Fig 1: The quantitative research design

3.1 Research Strategies

To answer the research questions, this study used two research strategies. A method is a medium by which data is collected, whereas a strategy or methodology is a general framework that connects data gathering instruments to theory and to the researcher's epistemological stance (Harvey, 1990). Research questions guide researchers to use certain strategies and data collection methods than others (Miles & Huberman, 1994). The researcher first surveyed use of target classroom management strategies to ensure they had been put into action in real classrooms (study's first phase). Having made

sure of their use, the experimental method was used to assess their impact on student-teachers' teaching skills (second phase). It should, however, be pointed out that both research methodologies were in line with the study's positivist stance (Cohen, Manion, & Morrison, 2000).

Survey research described and interpreted the status of classroom management strategy use because surveys are good at describing ongoing processes. In particular, a cross-sectional design was used to collect data from different subjects at one point of time (Cohen et al., 2000). To answer the first survey design question, the survey questionnaire (appendix A) collected data for testing this null hypothesis.

1. No statistically significant differences of the mean scores at 0.05 would be found between the experimental and control group in teacher-educators' use of organizing, teaching management, teacher-student relationship, and sanctions/ reward classroom management strategies.

The second and third research questions needed an experimental design to assess the impact of teacher-educator's strategy use on student-teachers' teaching skills (Robson, 1993). Experimentation could examine such an impact more than other methods because this study sought to verify the effect of some independent variables on other variables. Through experimentation, the researcher controlled extraneous variables and eliminated rival causes so that the impact of classroom management strategy use (independent variables) on student-teachers' pedagogic skills (dependent variables) could be assessed (Cohen et al., 2000).

The study dealt with several internal validity concerns. For example, pre-tests were not used to avoid the influence of pre-testing on post-testing and history effects were controlled by also avoiding pre-testing. Moreover, randomization neutralised any significant events that might have taken place, whereas 'instrumentation' effects were kept to the minimum through standardizing and administering questionnaires only once. This way, this study controlled the 'when' and 'who' in instrument administration (Campbell & Stanley, 1963).

This study employed the true experiment post test-only control group design (design 6) because it makes use of randomization and control groups. For example, quasi-experimental designs exclude randomization, while pre-experimental designs do not involve control groups. Randomization was therefore needed to establish group equivalence, whereas control groups acted as a reference against which mean differences were compared. Design 6 was particularly used to neutralize pre-testing effects on post-testing. "The pre-test is... not actually essential to true experimental designs... The most adequate all-purpose assurance of lack of initial biases between groups is randomization... Randomization can suffice without the pre-test" (Campbell & Stanley, 1963, p. 195). According to Campbell and Stanley, this design 6 formula was used:

Experimental group R X O¹

Control group R O²

The formula shows both the experimental and control groups were randomly selected (R) and were both subjected to post-test only (O¹ and O²). It further shows that only the experimental group received the independent variable (X). The experimental questionnaire (appendix B) collected data to test the following null hypothesis and to answer the second and third research questions.

1. No statistically significant differences of the mean scores at 0.05 would be observed between the experimental and control group in their generic-education and language teaching skills.

The researcher officially taught the teaching methodology course to junior student-teachers in the first semester. The subjects were divided into two groups. Target classroom management strategies were used in the experimental group's classrooms. The course involved teaching 'generic-education' and 'language/ subject' teaching strategies and skills (see sections 1 and 3.3.1 for details). When the researcher started to collect data from the students, he explained the research purpose and relevance to them. No deception occurred since all student-teachers had to take the teaching methodology course. In addition, teacher-educators were allowed to use different methods every semester. Complete anonymity and confidentiality were assured and maintained (Bell, 1993; Lester & Lester, 2010).

The researcher used systematic probability sampling to draw the subjects from a known population consisting of 400 EFL junior student-teachers. The table of sample size required a sample of 196. The frequency interval of systematic sampling was decided by this formula: f (frequency interval) = N (total population number) \div SN (required sample number) (Cohen et al., 2000, p. 100). The calculation was $400 \div 196 = 2.04$ (rounded up to 2). Therefore, every second name on the list was included into the sample. The first name was selected randomly. For example, the researcher selected name number 23, name number 25, name number 27 and so on until 196 (increased to 200) subjects were selected from 400.

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Anonymous and closed-item questionnaires allowed the subjects to answer in their own time and to comment freely on sensitive issues, such as the impact of teacher-educators' classroom management strategy use on student-teachers' learning (Cohen et al., 2000). Questionnaires "encourage students to reflect on their recent learning experiences and to comment on them by answering specific questions to focus their response" (Pollard & Triggs, 1997, p. 73). By asking students to respond to a five-point Likert scale and assigning category weights, it was possible to quantify the responses, give more choices, and separate the subjects within the same group (Oppenheim, 1992).

Questionnaire items were derived from the research purpose and questions. A fact paragraph explained the questionnaire purpose. Sections started with broader and easy questions to encourage cooperation whereas complex and sensitive items came in subsequent sections (Kane, 1985). Questions that baffle the respondents were revised. For example, double-barrelled questions, asking two questions in one, and double-negative questions that confuse respondents were revised. Factual and opinion questions about classroom management strategy use and impact were asked (Oppenheim, 1992).

Two questionnaires were used with student-teachers. The 'survey questionnaire' came in four parts (appendix A). Classroom organizing strategy use constituted the first profile. It comprised eight items enquiring into classroom routines of accessing and returning resources, handing in assignments, seating students, going to toilet, and student and teacher punctuality and attendance. The second profile included teacher-educators' use of teaching management strategies. It comprised 11 items enquiring into task difficulty, stimulation and substantiality, attention-defusing and timing. Teacher-educators' use of teacher-student relationship strategies formed the third profile that involved 10 items.

This enquired about the extent to which relationships with students were good, bad or firm, type of criticism, confrontations, and teacher reactions. Finally, teacher use of sanctions and reward strategies fell in the fourth profile. It comprised eight items enquiring about use of praise and merit points, behaviour questioning, getting or losing rights, and college administration involvement.

The second questionnaire, experimental questionnaire, came in eight parts (appendix B). The first profile (seven items) enquired into the impact of teacher-educator classroom management strategy use on student-teacher generic-education teaching skills. This included using lecture, discussion, inductive, and deductive methods in addition to problem-solving and cooperative learning. The second profile (13 items) assessed the impact of strategy use on lesson planning skills of how to explore the teaching context, write aims and objectives, start, develop and end lessons in addition to assessing learning and evaluating teaching.

The third profile (four items) assessed the impact of strategy use on developing student-teacher language teaching skills of using direct, audio-lingual, grammar-translation, and communicative method. The fourth (four items), fifth (eight items), sixth (four items), seventh (seven items), and eighth profile (eight items) assessed the impact of teacher-educator strategy use on student-teachers' skills of teaching reading, speaking, listening, grammar, and vocabulary respectively. Items contributing to questionnaire profiles were drawn from the relevant literature, course elements and from the researcher's teaching experience (e.g., Akar & Yildirim, 2004; Brown, 2005; Author, 2006; Victor, 2005).

and Data Analysis

Questionnaires were content validated through ten EFL teacher-educators who examined questionnaire content and made modifications in wording and item number and sequence. Having made the changes required by the jury, five EFL teacher-educators made sure questionnaire content addressed the research purpose and questions. Further, two doctoral EFL educational researchers looked at the questionnaires (Bloom, Fischer & Orme, 1995).

Questionnaires were checked for reliability through Cronbach's Alpha. Although split-half, Kuder-Richardson and Alpha coefficient all check internal consistency and require instruments to be run once, Kuder-Richardson and Alpha coefficient differ from split-half in that both do not require splitting the instrument into two sections. Moreover, Kuder-Richardson is suitable only for dichotomous types of instruments (e.g., yes/ no questions), whereas Alpha coefficient was particularly used because both questionnaires involved items that carried different weights. It checked the variances of all items from the first to the last (Gall, Borg & Gall, 1996).

The researcher calculated reliability using SPSS, version 14 (Coakes & Steed, 2007). Cronbach's Alpha was (0.91) for the survey questionnaire and (0.94) for the experimental questionnaire which exceeded the cut-off of 0.80 set by Gall et al (1996). Reliability for each questionnaire was conducted on a sample of 40 students who did not take part in the study. Using the SPSS program (version 14), the t-test was calculated to examine the differences between the experimental and control group in their mean scores. "Design 6 is perhaps the only setting for which this test [t-test] is optimal" (Campbell & Stanley, 1963, p. 196).

4. RESULTS

The survey research findings (first phase of the study) were presented first, followed by the experimental findings (second phase). Had the survey findings showed no classroom management strategy use, the experimental part would not have been conducted.

4.1 Survey Design Results (Phase 1)

This section presents the survey design findings by testing the survey design hypothesis to address the first research question. Table 1 shows differences in the mean scores between the experimental (39, 49, 40, and 31) and control group (22, 34, 31, and 23) in favour of the experimental group. The overall variable (aggregate scores of the four strategies) mean score of the experimental group (159) also exceeded the control group mean score (110). These descriptive statistics results meant that the experimental group students observed their teacher-educator put into practice classroom organising, teaching management, teacher-student relationship, and reward/ sanctions strategies, whereas the control group did not observe use of these strategies in their classrooms.

Table 1: Descriptive statistics (survey design)

Strategy	Group	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Organizing	1	100	39	1.29845	.12984
	2		22	8.68908	.86891
Teaching	1	100	49	3.79282	.37928
	2		34	8.23564	.82356
Relationships	1	100	40	8.55388	.85539
	2		31	12.12750	1.21275
Punish/Reward	1	100	31	5.12664	.51266
	2		23	6.74544	.67454
Overall	1	100	159	16.23471	1.62347
	2	100	110	35.12842	3.51284

Although descriptive statistics (Table 1) showed differences between the mean scores of the two groups, these differences were further tested for significance using the independent-groups t-test (the between-subjects design) to determine whether the differences were true. The independent-groups t-test was used because it could determine the difference in means between two sets of independent scores, as the case in this research. This design means participants appear in only one group. The t-test assumptions were checked before actual analysis. Normality of each sample was conducted because they were independent through the Kolmogorov-Smirnov and Shapiro-Wilk tests. Both tests were insignificant ($p \geq .05$). This meant the two groups were drawn from a normally-distributed population and, therefore, the normality assumption was met (Coakes & Steed, 2007).

Table 2 (column 1) displays the four strategies/ variables according to which the two groups were compared in addition to the overall variable. Another t-test assumption (group equality) assessed through Levene's test for equality of variance (column 2) indicated significant F-ratios ($p \leq .001$ and $.002$). This indicated that the group variance assumption was violated, meaning that group variances were not equal across the four variables as well as for the overall variable. Therefore, the null hypothesis stating equal group variances was rejected while accepting the alternative hypothesis that stated group inequality.

Table 2: Survey design t-test values of two independent samples (experimental and control)

Dependent variable Management strategies	Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means				
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference
Organizing	Equal variances assumed	156.974	.000	19.236	198	.000	16.90000
	Equal variances not assumed			19.236	103.419		16.90000
Teaching	Equal variances assumed	74.780	.000	16.797	198	.000	15.23000
	Equal variances not assumed			16.797	139.187		15.23000
Relationships	Equal variances assumed	20.990	.000	6.327	198	.000	9.39000
	Equal variances not assumed			6.327	177.960		9.39000
Punish/ Reward	Equal variances assumed	9.771	.002	9.171	198	.000	7.77000
	Equal variances not assumed			9.171	184.757		7.77000
Overall	Equal variances assumed	72.627	.000	12.737	198	.000	49.29000
	Equal variances not assumed			12.737	139.445		49.29000

Since the group equality assumption was breached, the “equal variances not assumed” t-test values were consulted. As shown in Table 2, the t-values for both the “equal variances assumed” and “equal variances not assumed” were typical and significant ($p \leq .001$) across the four and overall variables. Therefore, the current study rejected the null hypothesis stating that statistically significant differences of the mean scores at 0.05 did not exist between the experimental and control group in teacher-educator use of classroom organising, teaching management, teacher-student relationship, and reward/sanctions strategies. In contrast, this study accepted the alternative hypothesis stating that statistically significant differences between the experimental and control group existed in strategy use. This confirmed that the experimental group observed their trainers put into practice classroom organising, teaching management, teacher-student relationship, and reward/sanctions strategies, whereas the control group did not observe use of these strategies in their classrooms.

On this basis, the current study answered this first research question: have the target classroom management strategies been actually used in the EFL classrooms under study? The findings clearly indicated that the target classroom management strategies (classroom organizing, teaching management, teacher-student relationship, and teacher sanction and reward) were put into practice in the classrooms of the experimental group, but they were not used in the control group classrooms. These results made it possible for the research second phase (seeking to examine the impact of classroom management strategy use on student-teachers' pedagogic skills) to be conducted in section (4.2).

4.2 Experimental Design Results (Phase 2)

This key section presents the experimental design findings by testing the experimental design hypothesis and addressing the second and third research questions. Table 3 shows a comparison drawn between the two groups in eight variables as well as the overall variable. It indicated differences in the mean scores between the experimental (30, 59.52, 17, 18, 35, 18, 30, and 34) and control group (19, 37, 13, 12, 21, 12, 21, and 24) in favour of the experimental group. The overall variable mean score of the experimental group (241) also exceeded that of the control group (159).

Table 3: Descriptive statistics (experimental design)

Teaching skills	Group	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Generic-Methods	1	100	30	6.07139	.60714
	2	100	19	8.24584	.82458
Generic-Planning	1	100	59	8.26026	.82603
	2	100	37	14.00771	1.40077
Lang-Methods	1	100	17	3.29449	.32945
	2	100	13	4.63604	.46360
Lang-Read	1	100	18	5.90027	.59003
	2	100	12	4.67376	.46738
Lang-Speak	1	100	35	6.03957	.60396
	2	100	21	9.30480	.93048
Lang-Listen	1	100	18	3.17973	.31797
	2	100	12	4.19546	.41955
Lang-Gram	1	100	30	5.79895	.57990
	2	100	21	8.04191	.80419
Lang-Vocab	1	100	34	6.73465	.67346
	2	100	24	9.74626	.97463
Overall-Impact	1	100	241	42.43216	4.24322
	2	100	159	62.44871	6.24487

These descriptive statistics findings meant that the experimental group felt their trainers' classroom management strategy use helped them to develop their pedagogical skills of using generic-education teaching methods and lesson planning skills. This also helped them to develop their pedagogic skills of using language teaching methods and reading, speaking, listening, grammar, and vocabulary teaching skills. The control group, however, felt the non-use of these classroom management strategies negatively influenced their ability to develop both generic-education and language teaching skills.

Although descriptive statistics in Table 3 indicated clear differences between the mean scores of the two groups, an independent-groups t-test was used to determine whether the differences were true (significant). As pointed out in section 4.1 above, the researcher used the independent-groups t-test to determine the differences in means between two sets of independent scores. The t-test normality assumption was met through the Kolmogorov-Smirnov and Shapiro-Wilk tests, since both tests were insignificant ($p \geq .05$). This meant the two groups were drawn from a normally-distributed population (Coakes & Steed, 2007).

Table 4 displays the eight variables (teaching skills) according to which the two groups were compared in addition to the overall variable. Group equality, another assumption for t-tests, was assessed through Levene's test for equality of variance which yielded significant F-ratios ($p \leq .05$). The significant F-ratio of the Levene's test meant group variances were not equal across the eight and overall variables. Therefore, the null hypothesis stating equal group variances was rejected while accepting the alternative hypothesis that stated group inequality (Coakes & Steed, 2007).

Since the assumption of group equality was violated, the "equal variances not assumed" t-test values were consulted and, as shown in Table 4, were significant ($p \leq .001$) for all the variables. Therefore, the current study rejected the null hypothesis stating that statistically significant differences of the mean scores at 0.05 did not exist between the experimental and control group in their generic-education and language teaching skills. In contrast, this study accepted the alternative hypothesis stating that statistically significant differences between the experimental and control group existed in their generic-education and language teaching skills. This confirmed that the experimental group perceived their trainers' use of classroom organising, teaching management, teacher-student relationship, and reward/

sanctions strategies improved their generic-education and language teaching skills.

Table 4: Experimental design t-test values of two independent samples (experimental & control group)

Table 4: Experimental design t-test values of two independent samples (experimental & control group)

Dependent variable Teaching skills	Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means				
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference
Generic-Methods	Equal variances assumed	10.865	.001	10.195	198	.000	10.44000
	Equal variances not assumed			10.195	181.960		10.44000
Generic-Planning	Equal variances assumed	34.453	.000	13.043	198	.000	21.21000
	Equal variances not assumed			13.043	160.425		21.21000
Lang-Methods	Equal variances assumed	13.504	.000	7.842	198	.000	4.46000
	Equal variances not assumed			7.842	178.671		4.46000
Lang-Read	Equal variances assumed	4.244	.041	8.702	198	.000	6.55000
	Equal variances not assumed			8.702	188.142		6.55000
Lang-Speak	Equal variances assumed	28.207	.000	12.494	198	.000	13.86000
	Equal variances not assumed			12.494	169.844		13.86000
Lang-Listen	Equal variances assumed	10.208	.002	11.037	198	.000	5.81000
	Equal variances not assumed			11.037	184.517		5.81000
Lang-Gram	Equal variances assumed	14.165	.000	9.178	198	.000	9.10000
	Equal variances not assumed			9.178	180.043		9.10000
Lang-Vocab	Equal variances assumed	19.088	.000	8.770	198	.000	10.39000
	Equal variances not assumed			8.770	175.988		10.39000
Overall-Impact	Equal variances assumed	19.999	.000	10.837	198	.000	81.82000
	Equal variances not assumed			10.837	174.352		81.82000

On the other hand, the control group perceived their trainers' little or non use of target strategies hardly contributed to developing their generic-education or language- teaching skills . This confirmed the descriptive statistics data and meant the experimental group felt their trainers' use of target management strategies created a context that helped them to improve their pedagogic skills of using generic-education teaching methods and lesson planning skills. Such strategy use also created a context that helped them to develop their skills of using language-teaching methods and skills of teaching reading, speaking, listening, grammar, and vocabulary. The control group, however, felt trainers non- use of these strategies created a context that deprived them from developing their generic-education and language-teaching skills.

On this basis, the current study answered these second and third research questions: What are the student-teachers' perceptions of the target classroom management strategies impact on their generic-education teaching skills? What are the student-teachers' perceptions of the target classroom management strategies impact on their language teaching skills? The findings clearly indicated that actual use of target classroom management strategies created a context that enabled student-teachers in the experimental group to develop their generic-education (second research question) and language-teaching skills (third research question). In contrast, non-use of these strategies created a context that prevented the control-group students from developing their generic-education (second research question) and language-teaching skills (third research question).

5. DISCUSSION

The current study examined teacher-educators' assertive classroom management strategy use and its impact on student-teachers' generic-education and language pedagogical skills. The research findings were discussed round these two purposes.

5.1 Assertive Classroom Management Strategy Use

The current study found differences between the two groups across the four categories of classroom management strategies (organizing, teaching management, teacher-student relationship, and sanctions/ reward strategies) (first research purpose). Concerning organizing strategies use, there were differences in favour of the experimental group. This meant the teacher-educator and student-teachers in the experimental group followed clear routines about accessing and returning resources, handing in work, going to the toilet, entering the classroom before the teacher, seating students, and checking attendance. The control-group students, however, observed their teacher-educator paid no attention to these strategies. This meant that the experimental-group teacher-educator was an effective teacher who created a pedagogical context conducive to learning through these assertive strategies, while the control-group students were deprived from such a context. These findings concurred with previous research conclusions confirming that effective classrooms involved actual use of these assertive strategies, whilst ineffective classrooms did not involve them (Akar & Yildirim, 2004; Lacina-Gifford et al., 2003; Pedder, 2006; Victor, 2005).

The findings also showed differences between the two groups in teaching-management strategy use. The experimental rather than control group teacher-educator used stimulating tasks that sustained interest and relevant tasks and input that students needed. Further, the teacher-educator in the experimental group made tasks realistic, meaningful, manageable, and achievable. On the other hand, the control group felt their classroom pedagogical content trivial. The interesting thing about this finding was that the experimental group found content substantial, whereas the control group found it trivial although both groups studied the same course content. Why then both groups viewed the same pedagogical content differently. A possible explanation was that the teacher-educator did not use organising strategies in the control group, which confirmed Pedder (2006) and Victor's (2005) findings about the negative impact that lack of appropriate classroom order has on classroom teaching and learning. Moreover, this finding agreed with the current trends about this issue (Burden, 2003; Cangelosi, 2004; Canter, 1992; Charles, 2001; Author, et al., 2009).

The results further revealed differences between the two groups in teacher-student relationship strategy use. Again, the experimental rather than control group trainer kept and maintained good relationships with students by defusing confrontations with trouble-makers, keeping clam, taking the heat out of the situation, using students' names, being firm and consistent, and using humour and constructive criticism. This finding was in consonance with those of [Brown](#) (2005) and Geiger (2000) who found these as the qualities of good classroom managers as well as with the works of [Bradley](#), et al (2005) and Shaver (2006).

The results also indicated differences between the two groups in teacher sanctions/ reward strategy use. The experimental rather than control group trainer followed an appropriate reward and punishment policy through using tangible rewards, praising good students in public, giving merit points, and displaying good work to the whole classroom and school. This again came in line with the qualities of good classroom managers indicated by, for example, Akar and Yildirim (2004), Lacina-Gifford et al (2003), Pedder (2006), and Victor (2005).

5.2 Impact of Assertive Classroom Management Strategy Use on Teaching Skills

We come back to the impact of classroom management strategy use on learning in terms of student-teacher generic-education and language-teaching skills development (second research purpose) . The results indicated that classroom management strategy use in the experimental group created a pedagogical context that significantly improved their generic-education teaching skills. This created a context that helped them to improve their ability of using lecture, discussion, inductive, and deductive methods in addition to problem-solving and cooperative learning. Moreover, such strategy use contributed to improving their lesson planning skills, including ability to explore the teaching context, write clear and precise aims and objectives, start, develop and end lessons in addition to assessing learning and evaluating teaching. Similarly, assertive classroom management strategy use created a context that assisted student-teachers to improve their language pedagogical skills, including ability to use direct, audio-lingual, grammar-translation, and communicative methods effectively. Moreover, this contributed to improving their skills of teaching the reading, speaking and listening skills in addition to improving their ability to teach grammar and vocabulary.

On the other hand, poor, little or no use of such strategies created a different context that deprived student-teachers from proper development of such generic-education and language-teaching skills. The current research findings on both use and non-use of assertive classroom management strategy use concurred with those of Cher et al (2005), Geiger (2000), Pedder (2006) and Victor (2005). They concluded that effective classroom management strategy use impacts positively on classroom teaching and learning whereas poor, little or no use of these strategies had negative implications for both teaching and learning.

The current study, however, did not explain why some teachers tend to use assertive classroom management effectively while other teachers do not use them or use them poorly. Previous research indicated that certain contexts such as constructivist contexts (e.g., Akar & Yildirim, 2004) and training in particular strategy use (e.g., Schmidt, 2006; Slider et al., 2006) helped teachers to develop effective classroom management strategies. Previous, however, did not examine why trained teachers do not translate learned strategies into actual classroom practices. Future researchers may explore the contexts and motives behind that.

6. CONCLUSIONS AND FUTURE PRACTICE

Based on the evidence drawn from this research, the current study concluded that assertive classroom management strategy use created pedagogical contexts that significantly improved student-teachers' generic-education and language-teaching skills. In contrast, little, poor or no use of these strategies created a different context that deprived student-teachers from proper development of generic-education and language-teaching skills. Therefore, this study recommended training teachers in teacher-training institutions to develop and use effective classroom management strategies so that they can achieve effective teaching and learning. Effective classroom management strategies are as important as teaching skills. It also recommended embedding assertive classroom management skills into professional development programs. Researchers should be cautious about generalizing the current study's findings since it relied on self-reporting rather than ability measures in assessing the impact of target strategy use on teaching skills. Future researchers could, therefore, use systematic classroom observation in examining classroom management use and employ testing and performance measures to assess the impact of target strategy use on student learning and teacher performance.

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Appendix (A): Student-teacher survey questionnaire

Kindly circle only one group:

(Group: A)

(Group: B)

This questionnaire aims to examine your observations of your teacher's use of a number of classroom management strategies in your classroom. Your help in completing this questionnaire is very much appreciated. Thank you in advance for the effort and knowledge you kindly agree to contribute to this research. I assure you of complete confidentiality and anonymity.

Please read each statement and insert the response (**1, 2, 3, 4** or **5**) that tells HOW TRUE OF YOU THE STATEMENT IS in the box next to the statement. You must insert only one answer in each box.

- 1 = **Never** means that the statement is not at all true of *your teacher* or *you*.
- 2 = **Very little** means that the statement is very rarely true of *your teacher* or *you*.
- 3 = **A little** means that the statement is true of *your teacher* or *you* less than half the time.
- 4 = **Medium** means that the statement is true of *your teacher* or *you* about half the time.
- 5 = **Much** means that the statement is true of *your teacher* or *you* almost all the time.

Answer in terms of how well the statement describes **your teacher** or **you**. Do not answer how you think you should be, or what other people do. There are no right or wrong answers to these statements.

SECTION 1: YOUR CLASSROOM OBSERVATION OF TEACHER ORGANISING STRATEGIES

- 1. the teacher follows specific and strict routines of accessing and returning resources.....
- 2. the teacher follows specific and strict routines of handing in work and assignments.....
- 3. the teacher follows specific and strict routines of going to toilet.....
- 4. the teacher specifies a strict time of entering the classroom, where nobody can enter beyond it.....
- 5. the teacher follows specific and strict routines of seating the students.....
- 6. the teacher follows specific and strict routines of checking student attendance.....
- 7. the teacher comes to lectures on time
- 8. the teacher misses lectures.....

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SECTION 2: YOUR CLASSROOM OBSERVATION OF TEACHING MANAGEMENT STRATEGIES

- 1. the teacher chooses stimulating tasks that sustain our interest (content interest criterion).....
- 2. the teacher provides the topics which meet our needs (content relevance criterion).....
- 3. the teacher provides very difficult tasks for us to do (content suitability criterion).....
- 4. the teacher provides very easy tasks for us to do (content suitability criterion).....
- 5. the teacher provides substantial (important) content for us (content substantiality criterion).....
- 6. the teacher uses group work to get us busy working instead of having side talks (attention-seeker defusing)..
- 7. the teacher provides extra tasks to fill in the time gap between low and high ability students
- 8. the teacher sets out time limits for us to achieve tasks, so as to seize time for learning.....
- 9. the teacher looks confident in front of us.....
- 10. the teacher seems to have clear understanding of the lesson in mind.....
- 11. the teacher always keeps us busy doing something (no time gap without work).....

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SECTION 3: YOUR CLASSROOM OBSERVATION OF TEACHER-STUDENT RELATIONSHIP STRATEGIES

1. the teacher keeps good relationships with students.....
2. the teacher first started firm with us and then got relaxed.....
3. the teacher defuses confrontations with provocative and trouble-making students.....
4. the teacher stays calm and 'takes the heat out of the situation'.....
5. the teacher avoids arguing with the students.....
6. the teacher uses the names of the students.....
7. the teacher uses humour in the classroom.....
8. the teacher uses constructive criticism of students.....
9. the teacher accepts constructive criticism from students.....
10. the teacher looks alert and uses eye contact.....

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SECTION 4: YOUR CLASSROOM OBSERVATION OF TEACHER PUNISHMENT & REWARD STRATEGIES

1. the teacher praises good students in public (reward/ reinforcement).....
2. the teacher gives merit points to good students (reward/ reinforcement).....
3. the teacher displays good work of students to the whole class (reward/ reinforcement).....
4. the teacher questions behaviour (he does not let unacceptable behaviour go).....
5. the teacher makes students of unacceptable behaviour lose rights and privileges (punishment).....
6. the teacher separates trouble makers by asking each to go and sit in another place (punishment).....
7. the teacher uses whole class punishment (blanket punishment).....
8. the teacher involves college/ school manager when a problem escalates.....

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Appendix (B): Student-teacher' experimental questionnaire

Kindly circle **only one** group:

(Group: A)

(Group: B)

This questionnaire aims to examine your perceptions of the impact of your teacher's classroom management strategies on your teaching skills. Your help in completing this questionnaire is very much appreciated. Thank you in advance for the effort and knowledge you kindly agree to contribute to this research. I assure you of complete confidentiality and anonymity.

Please read each statement and insert the response (**1, 2, 3, 4** or **5**) that tells HOW TRUE OF YOU THE STATEMENT IS in the box next to the statement. You must insert only one answer in each box.

- 1 = **Never** means that the statement is not at all true of *your teacher* or *you*.
2 = **Very little** means that the statement is very rarely true of *your teacher* or *you*.
3 = **A little** means that the statement is true of *your teacher* or *you* less than half the time.
4 = **Medium** means that the statement is true of *your teacher* or *you* about half the time.
5 = **Much** means that the statement is true of *your teacher* or *you* almost all the time.

Answer in terms of how well the statement describes **your teacher** or **you**. Do not answer how you think you should be, or what other people do. There are no right or wrong answers to these statements.

SECTION 1: IMPACT OF TEACHER'S CLASSROOM MANAGEMENT STRATEGIES ON YOUR SKILLS OF USING GENERIC EDUCATION TEACHING METHODS

My teacher's classroom management strategies helped develop my teaching skills of how to use

1. the lecture method in the classroom.....
2. cooperative learning strategies (e.g. jigsaw) in the classroom.....
3. individualised learning in the classroom.....
4. the deductive method in the classroom.....
5. the inductive method in the classroom.....
6. the discussion method in the classroom.....
7. problem-solving in the classroom.....

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SECTION 2: IMPACT OF TEACHER'S CLASS MANAGEMENT ON YOUR TEACHING SKILLS OF LESSON PLANNING

My teacher's classroom management strategies helped develop my teaching skills of how to

1. explore the context of teaching (e.g. student prior knowledge, needs, interests).....
2. specify lesson aims and objectives (e.g. general statements or specific observable behaviours).....
3. achieve cognitive objectives (e.g. students to get new information) and affective objectives (motivation).....
4. achieve psychomotor objectives (physical handling of things, like drawing a map).....
5. target specific levels of cognitive objectives (e.g. knowledge, comprehension, analysis, synthesis).....
6. target specific levels of affective objectives (e.g. receiving, responding, valuing,).....
7. target specific levels of psychomotor objectives (e.g. imitation, manipulation, analysis, precision).....
8. use organisational strategies in the classroom (e.g. seating students, preparing resources to be used).....
9. start a lesson (e.g. using organisational strategies/ advance organisers and reviewing previous lesson).....
10. develop a lesson (e.g. teacher role, student role, method to be used, material to be used).....
11. end a lesson (e.g. summarising the lesson and setting out home work).....
12. assess learning in the teaching session (e.g. observing who participates, asking oral questions).....
13. evaluate teaching (e.g. asking myself if each phase of the lesson was done successfully).....

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SECTION 3: IMPACT OF TEACHER'S CLASSROOM MANAGEMENT STRATEGIES ON YOUR SKILLS OF USING LANGUAGE TEACHING METHODS

My teacher's classroom management strategies helped develop my teaching skills of how to

1. the grammar translation method in the classroom.....
2. the audio-lingual method in the classroom.....
3. the direct method in the classroom.....
4. Communicative Language Teaching in the classroom.....

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SECTION 4: IMPACT OF TEACHER'S CLASS MANAGEMENT STRATEGIES ON YOUR SKILLS OF TEACHING READING

My teacher's classroom management strategies helped develop my teaching skills of how to

1. teach reading in the pre-reading phase (e.g. prediction, previewing, semantic mapping, scanning).....
2. teach reading in the while-reading phase (e.g. take notes, follow ideas order, answer some questions).....
3. teach reading in the post-reading phase (e.g. get central idea and main ideas, answer detail questions).....
4. select the reading material (e.g. authentic, pedagogic or adapted material, interesting topics to students).....

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SECTION 5: IMPACT OF TEACHER'S CLASS MANAGEMENT ON YOUR SKILLS OF TEACHING SPEAKING

My teacher's classroom management strategies helped develop my teaching skills of how to

1. teach opening conversation skills.....
2. teach students ways of keeping a conversation going.....
3. teach closing conversation skills.....
4. use collaborative activities for developing conversational skills.....
5. use free discussions in teaching conversation.....
6. use role-play in teaching conversation.....
7. use gap-activities in teaching conversation.....
8. select the speaking material.....

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SECTION 6: IMPACT OF TEACHER'S CLASSROOM MANAGEMENT ON YOUR SKILLS OF TEACHING LISTENING

My teacher's classroom management strategies helped develop my teaching skills of how to

1. teach *listening* in the pre-reading phase (e.g. prediction, working on key vocabulary, topic discussions).....
2. teach *listening* in the while-reading phase (e.g. listen for gist, key words or specific information).....
3. teach *listening* in the post-reading phase (e.g. provide specific information/ main idea, answer questions).....
4. select the listening material (e.g. authentic, pedagogic or adapted material, interesting listening topics).....

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SECTION 7: IMPACT OF TEACHER'S CLASSROOM MANAGEMENT ON YOUR SKILLS OF TEACHING GRAMMAR

My teacher's classroom management strategies helped develop my teaching skills of how to

1. teach the meaning of structure (e.g. visual and verbal representation, a situation).....
2. teach the structure form.....
3. teach structure meaning and form in communicative activities.....
4. use the deductive method in teaching grammar.....
5. use the inductive method in teaching grammar.....
6. use the communicative method in teaching grammar.....
7. use the grammar-free method in teaching grammar.....

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SECTION 8: IMPACT OF TEACHER'S CLASSROOM MANAGEMENT ON YOUR SKILLS OF TEACHING VOCABULARY

My teacher's classroom management strategies helped develop my teaching skills of how to

1. use ostensive techniques in teaching vocabulary (e.g. pictures, realia, physical expressions).....
 2. use verbal techniques in teaching vocabulary (e.g. synonyms, antonyms, word family, cognates).....
 3. use audio techniques in teaching vocabulary (e.g. a tape).....
 4. present the vocabulary sound.....
 5. present the vocabulary written-form.....
 6. present the vocabulary meaning.....
 7. use repetition in teaching vocabulary.....
 8. present vocabulary in context.....
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VN:R_U [1.9.11_1134]