

Freedom Should Be in the Classrooms

Beknazarova Zarnigor Bakhromovna

Teacher at the Philology and teaching language department of the International Innovative University

Abstract: There are a lot of articles that criticize teachers and instructors but we should not forget the other factors which might have an influence on the quality of classes. So, the article is going to discuss the some bad habits of the department and its outcomes in the classes. According to the plan in the article we are aiming to support that (a) teachers should bring new path to the teaching style in order to stay in the same line with 21st century's learners, (b) and show some bad results which teachers may face with when department overact towards them, (c) also, the article supports the idea that teachers should teach students that not allowing is not always a punishment. And all of the three issues are going to be provided with short experiments which I have had and examples that I witnessed in my classes. First of all, supporting and guiding new ear's ESL teachers to become the best version of themselves is expected from the article. Secondly, motivating the higher departments of educational centers to let teachers stay in their line in order to increase the quality of the class is going to be discussed in the article. So, with other words, the article is criticizing neither teachers, nor students even it is far from blaming departments but highlighting bad or good points of some limits which could work for learners, teachers or department's profit if they follow and stop accepting it as a obligation or dependence or even punishment.

Key words: Freedom, Classroom environment, Education, Autonomy, Student empowerment, Critical thinking, Open expression, Creativity, Intellectual growth, Active participation, Independent learning, Respectful dialogue, Equity and inclusion, Student voice, Educational policy.

Introduction

The process of teaching has never been as difficult as now because there are numbers of sources of destructions, for example, laptops, phones, being in touch with social media all the time and at the same time teachers are being asked to involve technology during the classes. And who might know the technology better than who was born in the century of technology? Of course in most classes students' knowledge in technology is wider than teachers and it makes a challenging taking the charge of the classrooms for teachers. As Ellie Tran (2023) marks in her article that in a boring class with the voice of teachers echoing in your ears, trying to lift your eyelids to pay attention to what they are saying is not the best scenario for any class. In order to escape from such situation Elli also suggests in her Innovative Teaching Method that this type of method is not using all the cutting-edge technology or catching-up with latest educational trends (2023). To my frame of reference if teachers do not want to have the class they should work on creating new teaching strategies rather than trying to make themselves learn endless technology stuff.

According to Balasubramanian G (2021) chairperson and Board Advisor, International Council for School Leadership in Delhi believes that the departments of the teaching centers (schools, collages, universities) should be supportive so teachers could create learning nutrient but also emotional nutrient to the learners. By excessively controlling the educators department could kill the spirit and willingness of teaching and loosing the talents which they have not shown yet (Balasubramanian, 2021). Personally, in my first year of teaching I felt a pressure on my shoulders which was overwhelming as the department kept interrupting by entering to the classroom in the middle of teaching, or asking to do documents which were absolutely useless, or take picture through the cameras if I was sitting while checking student's

work. If teachers always stay overwhelmingly stressed, surely they become with the less feeling of humor or even could become less active during teaching.

It is obvious that some education centers, schools or even universities do not allow students eating in the classrooms, and Larry Ferlazzo (<https://www.edweek.org/teaching-learning>) mentions in his article that some teachers let students eat in the class, and they see it as a case where flexibility should take precedence over the learning environment. So, at the beginning the eating habit of my students never disturbed me at all, however, later I realized that there should be some limitation. And limits should be in the list of foods they choose but not for the eating habit at all. When I forbade my students from eating or bringing food to the class they started trying to eat sneakily during the class. But eating is anyway eating even students do their best to eat silently. And Larry Ferlazzo believes that if you let learners have some bite of cake they ask for a drink, too, then after a while they need to go to the restroom which means the half part of the class has already been stolen.

According to 2007 statistics American Association of University Professors (<https://www.aaup.org/file/ACASO07FreedomClassrmRpt.pdf>) reports in its site on internet, The professoriate is abusing the classroom in four particular ways: (1) instructors "indoctrinate" rules that might affect later in their personal career developing period rather than educate them what to do and what not to do to become persona among others; (2) instructors fail fairly to present conflicting views on contentious subjects, thereby depriving students of educationally essential "diversity" or "balance"; (3) instructors are intolerant of students' religious, political, or socioeconomic views, thereby creating a hostile atmosphere inimical to learning; and (4) instructors persistently interject material, especially of a political or ideological character, irrelevant to the subject of instruction. To support the first mentioned issue I would like to give an example from the situations that I have been experiencing since I have started working at one of the universities in my town. The University where I work cares more about the features which should be in the last stages and rather than emphasizing on education. Recently, a student argued that if demanding uniform is useful to them or not because right before coming into the class she was told off as she was not wearing uniform. For this reason she missed the half of the lesson which she was waiting for.

Colorado University (www.libarts.colostate.edu) believes that the freedom for learners to get education, seek for knowledge, and challenge ideas while building and sharing your own opinions is the foundation of what is called academic freedom. While looking through the article which Colorado University published in its page to discuss the reason why learners need academic freedom in the classroom I have realized that we, as people who has the power to create this atmosphere in the classroom always ignore some features during the class. Firstly, demanding them uniform or number of notebooks which are full of useless notes. Secondly, cornering them asking the reason of their absence in the last lesson which also causes wasting learners time. In the following page Colorado University argues that this freedom protects students from unfair treatment by instructors based on the student's opinions and beliefs which means that we as a instructors, teachers and educators must keep in mind that rather than blaming them for finding incorrect answer we could help them to change the way they approach the issue (www.libarts.colostate.edu). To my frame of reference this method helps realizing that learners' opinions are valuable and it will not be out of profit by expressing without feeling of fear about retribution by all students of the class. At the same time, the freedom to seek for new knowledge motivates learners to follow teachers' assignments and the given course content, even if they are not agree with it. Unfortunately I should mention that sometimes teachers cause discrimination by telling of students towards other students who are friends to that student and both sides feel uncomfortable if some keeps selling out their mistakes. A real well educated pedagogue never lets happen especially discrimination towards another learner whatever mistake he or she has made.

Over-controlling

As we know in the 21st century's all classrooms are provided with cameras through which the higher department observes both teachers and student in order to check the quality of the class. However, in some levels they forget about giving freedom to both seem to be thinking more about not doing something wrong which the department does not want to see while they should be involved in classes. As an example, at university where I work teachers are always told if students are seen holding phones. So, department is ignoring a problem which has negative effect for both sides teachers and students, respectively. Let's approach to the first side of the problem which illustrates the negative effect to teachers' teaching abilities. If department does not take into consideration this part of the constantly observing teachers' work they will soon stay with no teachers at the university at all. Personally I the classroom should have cross lines which only students and teachers should cross over. Cameras should work out of the classroom but not inside! The outside of the university needs more observation as the danger is always outside and let the observing the inside of the classroom teachers.

The lost of the feeling comfort among teachers

The other side of the problem is that, to my personal experience, recently we had a movie time with my sophomore students, as that day we had exam after class, and while watching they wanted to sit comfortable or some of them wanted to put their heads on the desk or lean on each other. And when I kept reminding that they cannot sit like that they got frustrated. In such situation one of my professor's words from Master's degree years at Webster comes to my mind and it sounds like this: "You do not have ask permission all the time for standing or leaving the room as you student of university already". And unfortunately I always feel shame for telling off a student for not asking permission to come to the blackboard or to some corner of the room. One is sure that telling them off is not an option because they are becoming an individual already and personally I consider that by trying to make them obey the outrageously countless and useless rules we only kill new growing their futures. For example, recently I witnessed a girl crying after one of the department members shouted at her for being late for the class and I do not agree if someone says that by shouting they have fixed the problem and the student never be late anymore. She will be late in the next morning or will not come at all or loses interest of studying. And here is one problem that I do care about which is becoming cruel teacher at the front of the students. The reason why say so is that department never tells students something they should do and something they should not do which causes students think that teachers are the members of the education who steal their freedom in the classroom. At the university where I work some members of the department is always taking picture of students and teachers which is annoying. During the class students are not allowed to use their phones I agree with it in some points but in some cases, to my frame of reference, they should be allowed to use it, for example during foreign language classes as they need their phone to use translator apps. But whenever I claim it the only answer I get is letting my students use book version vocabularies rather than e-versions. It is obvious that using book version vocabularies is only killing the time and personally I believe that putting students in such situations is equal to going down rather than going up. And whenever they see teachers sitting while teaching they will punish them by not paying fully for that month which is brutal and overwhelmingly unfair towards educators! In the classrooms freedom is needed not only by students but also by teachers, too.

Not allowing snacks is not punishment

Also there is another issue which I faced a lot during my first year experience and it was allowing or not allowing students to have snacks during the lessons. As they in their fast growing period they need snacks time to time. To my frame of reference it should be allowed. If they are allowed to eat during the lesson they will keep the whole their attention to the class and they do not have wait for the class finish and going to the café or university buffet. However, I still do agree for not allowing some snacks which has a strong odor as it may some students vomiting because there 25 students who has 25 different tastes.

As students need more energy for another four or six hours classes, they should be allowed to snacks during the classes. And I would like to highlight that if a student carries on they way to the class a cup of coffee it will never be the sign of disrespect to anyone at all. He or she carries a drink because they want it and they need it. So, I always say “yes” my students ask to have some snacks during the class and I have some bite myself, too. But there should be strict limitations as I mentioned above. However, sometimes I have to stop them eating for a while in order to help them control their attention which is usually accepted as a punishment by my students and it is not punishment in reality.

Reference

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