

Inactive Classroom Atmosphere in China: Predicament and Constructivist Solutions

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Abstract. Building an engaging and intriguing classroom atmosphere is considered one of the most effective strategies instructors may employ to promote learning in the classroom. Along with the development of China's educational policy, the concept of classroom atmosphere has attracted increasing attention from domestic scholars. However, it raises high demands for current Chinese teachers, who are more adaptable to teacher-centred and exam-oriented teaching methods, to create positive teacher-student interactions and an active classroom atmosphere. This paper explores the current dilemma of China's classroom atmosphere and their culturally based references and then expands on possible teaching styles from the view of constructivism by comparing different examples and presenting convincing results. By introducing constructivism and several fellow ways of learning and discussing the origin and the overall outcome of those ways attempt to find a utilized way for educators to deal with the issues and inconveniences they are currently facing, and ultimately provide a reasonable and accurate suggestion for those who are concerned.

Keywords: Classroom atmosphere, teacher-student interaction, constructivism, teaching strategies.

1. Introduction

The classroom atmosphere is one of the most important elements in students' learning processes in today's educational setting. A positive, interactive and stimulating classroom environment promotes the transfer of knowledge and the deepening of learning. Nonetheless, it cannot ignore a rather obscure but no less significant issue that arises in many classrooms: an unproductive classroom atmosphere. Numerous elements, including as instructional strategies, the dynamics between teachers and students, and the demands of the educational system, might contribute to this atmosphere.

As it has been widely seen and recognized already about the overall Chinese teaching classroom environment, the entire system is constructed to cultivate students for the upcoming College Entrance Examination in twelfth grade [1]. Teachers are using their teaching methods around this as a major goal and view this as their major target, thus leading to a dominant trend of teacher-centred education within most of mainland China. This usually results in a dull and ineffective classroom environment, triggering negative effects that could undermine the quality of the classroom atmosphere and, more importantly, the intake of knowledge and degree of learning the students receive [2].

The solutions that have been provided and examined by international schools taking on this issue from a constructivist perspective are to introduce a form that transforms the way of educating, making the classroom student-centered could improve learning outcomes and resolve the current issue in China. It is advised to introduce constructive teaching ideas such as Project-Based Learning (PBL) and collaborative learning and make them suitable for China to perform, which would be the main focus of this paper, to discuss and support Mainland China's common average educators with theoretical directions.

2. Inactive Classroom Atmosphere in China: The Predicament and Possible Reasons

The current situation in the Chinese classroom atmosphere is that the negativity of teacher-centred classrooms has performed itself to an extent for the majority of educators to already notice. Despite

recent reforms to the educational system, a number of issues still exist and have a direct impact on student engagement and motivation in the classroom.

Conventional teaching approaches, which place a strong emphasis on the teacher's authority and the students' passive acquiescence, are still widely used. Students who are taught in this manner lack an active interest in learning since there are no components of inquiry-based learning or classroom engagement. The overemphasis on test results in the Chinese educational system is another reason for the passive environment in the classroom. In an attempt to pass the demanding test system, students often place more emphasis on rote memorization than on in-depth comprehension. Exam-oriented education hinders the growth of practical application and critical thinking, which detracts from student engagement in the classroom. Additionally, the interaction and communication between teachers and students also have a significant role in the overall ambiance of the classroom. It might be difficult for teachers to give each student the attention they require in China due to large class numbers. This makes it harder to engage students and provide individualized instruction.

To fully understand this issue, it is needed to find the causes behind it. One Tempting factor behind this logic of behaviour is the effect of traditional culture such as the perspective of Confucianism and Taoism has brought on the average Chinese, both students and teachers care about their reputation and their image presented to other people [3]. Concepts and perspectives have asked the Chinese to be cautious about what they would say and tend to listen more instead. Such as "a gentleman wants to be slow in words, but quick in deeds" came from "The Analects of Confucius" and "Benevolence" [2]. These words have always been very significant in Chinese traditional culture and those concepts are already deeply rooted in every Chinese making them approach things with it in their mind, whether conscious of it or not. Reasonably under the control of traditional culture, students have developed the habit of listening more, watching more, and speaking less since childhood.

In addition, the power distance between teachers and students resulted in students being more reluctant to speak in front of teachers to maintain respect for teachers [4]. They fear being criticized by the teacher if the answer is not what their teacher looking for or is incorrect and they would be laughed at and be embarrassed and filled with disgrace, meanwhile, they also fear that they would answer the question correctly making all the other students look bad and make himself seem superior then everybody else. Finally, students could fear that the discussion could lead to potentially disgracing the teacher if he or she did not manage to respond to the discussion. Despite the different mindsets, it will all result in an inactive classroom environment.

Teachers are also essential in forming the classroom environment, and relationships with students depict directly the relationships between teachers and students. They are keeping themselves quiet if they dislike the teacher. Teachers who tend to be despotic and take charge of everything lack such relationships with students. The classroom would only be one side of knowledge given by the teacher to students without any emotional connections between the two sides. The same thing also happens while trying to maintain their superiority and absolute control over the class, when the teacher educates the classroom with a tone containing a sense of authority students naturally form a habit of listening instead of providing their ideas [3]. On the flip side, teachers who are willing to listen to students and create proper conversation. It could inspire students to get close and have their guard down to communicate and exchange ideas that could benefit both sides.

A negative environment such as silence among the students could also be caused by the way teachers ask questions might be a direct cause of pupil's silence. For instance, pupils' knowledge reserves are insufficient and the questions are excessively challenging. Teachers are not supposed to push the questions too far and ask questions too soon, giving them not enough time to process the information. Effectively responding to a student's response is also crucial if teachers do not respond positively or encouragingly and the students fail to receive any feedback or evaluation, they will believe that their answers are irrelevant their importance of participating within the class is insignificant and useless.

3. Constructivist Teaching Strategies: Possible Solutions for Creating a Positive Classroom Atmosphere

3.1. Constructivism

Meanwhile, certain educators have come up with a solution which its very roots and origins were planted nearly a century ago. Named Constructivism, the concept of constructivism can be explained as learning is the process by which individuals make sense of their experiences and come to comprehend and use them [5]. Those ideals have already been applied and are starting to prove and demonstrate themselves in the places where they originated. Numerous psychologists have already paved a promising way that could be a potential answer to the issues that were presented to all educators [6]. Educational constructivism, also known as pedagogical constructivism, is based on the notion of the famous Swiss psychologist Jean Piaget's cognitive development as a biological adaptation, as well as the views of Vygotsky, Bruner, and others [7]. Fast forward to the 60s of the 20th century, an American psychologist and educator Jerome Bruner devoted his life to the study of instrumental conceptualism. Based on this concept centred on the student's personality, it is concluded that learning is the process by which students actively deduce and verify principles and rules [7]. It is a subjective way for students to process information. It is then divided into assimilation and adaptation. Assimilation is the process of receiving unknown knowledge and making connections and corresponding to the information introduced from outside the current knowledge and the knowledge that already has been fully understood, analyzing the reasons for it, and digesting and absorbing it as part of the knowledge that is already known. Adaptation means that with the change in the external environment, the original cognition can no longer receive and adapt to this new information, so the entire cognitive system is deconstructed and reorganized [7]. It can be seen that the entire environment, social, cultural, and historical background will have a non-negligible impact on a person's academic performance, attitude, efficiency, and many other aspects.

Constructivist or student-centred learning asks students a discussible question and then asks them to work together in small groups to find one or more answers. Students actively participate in experiments and draw their conclusions. Teachers help students form new ideas and make connections with prior knowledge, but they delegate discovery and discussion to student groups. Students work in teams to discuss and decide on answers to questions posed to the class, which are then presented to the entire group. Based on prior knowledge, students can build their understanding of the material and dispel any misunderstandings they may have. Such practices may rebalance the distance between teachers' and students' perception of power in the classroom, and make the atmosphere more dynamic and inspiring.

3.2. Constructivist Teaching Methods

PBL is considered another effective teaching strategy, which is to promote teaching in an altered way and the continuous proposal of solutions to problems. Which is believed to improve the comprehensive abilities of students under such teaching methods [8]. It differs from the mainstream of teacher-based learning and turns the students into the subject of the class. Problem-based learning could constantly keep students intact and view issues from a perspective like never before. They are not just contributing to the class as learners but they are taking part and playing roles such as critics and commentators, which expands beyond the base of one-sided knowledge giving of teacher-based education. As mentioned above, with a teacher-based education system the students wouldn't truly learn the subjects but only use them as a tool for coping with upcoming tests and pressure from teachers and parents. In such cases, the student lacks understanding of the knowledge that they are obtaining. PBL tends not to restrict the way of approaching one problem or the future expansion on related topics. It is a way of learning driven by the students themselves.

Constructivism also emphasizes the importance of collaborative learning and the important role of context and writing in teaching [9]. This allows teachers to be flexible in their position as an educator. This educational model used in schools encourages students to actively participate in learning and

effectively manages the teaching needs of the instructors. A classroom environment that stimulates self-directed education and initiative. Using the students' participation in teaching to gain the ability to understand the context and make generalizations. The constructivists focus on the individualized approach to the student's situation, teaching students according to their aptitude and facilitating communication between teachers and students across identity and age gaps and with school representatives, whether from within or outside the school. At the same time, the beneficiaries are not only the students but also the teachers who can learn from the students. The paper that is out of the plane becomes a three-dimensional action and benefits from learning, from the process of research to experience, to learn, to understand, to change. Communication with students and with the community.

Overall, accumulated knowledge and experience which demonstrates the constructivist teaching approach is significantly helpful for resolving the stalemate. The desperate need for change has already been widely noticed changes have been made and constant new attempts have been applied in diverse learning contexts in China. It is suggested that domestic teachers could utilize constructivist teaching methods such as PBL and collaborative learning to create an intriguing classroom atmosphere.

4. Conclusion

This paper concludes the different influential factors such as traditional culture and teacher-student interaction and how they will result in an inactive classroom atmosphere those could deeply affect the learning outcome and classroom environment, the will driving students to learn on themselves, their denotation to learning and many more aspects that educators would agree on valuing as important to improve the quality and efficiency of classrooms. In China, the majority of classrooms held teacher-based classrooms a majority of several deep and unchangeable factors but this resulted in issues in Chinese educators' vision meanwhile the chance of a possible solution for educators to learn and extract knowledge to reform became an addition to the collection of knowledge and response and for educators to react to those similar issues in the future. Constructivist teaching methods are suggested to create a novel path for China's educators in building a student-centred and student-liked classroom atmosphere for teachers to consider.

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