Style of managing teaching process as classroom management determinator

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Abstract: Didactics often stresses how the quality of teaching depends, among other things, on classroom manaegment. Classroom manaegment is here approached as organizational, educational and didactic competence that expresses itself in teaching organization, definition of educational goals and aims of the teaching process and in the clever choice of teaching methods and forms of activities. Whereas teaching methods are often in the focus of didactic studies, styles of teaching and classroom management are seldomly addressed. Teaching process is guided through application of a particular style of management. Leadership style of one particular teacher considerably influences numerous determinators of the teaching process- classroom climate, discipline, parents cooperation... The empirical part of this paper will look at teachers' attitudes towards an important determinator of classroom manaegment- the style of management applied in teaching practise.
Keywords: classroom management, style of management in the teaching process, teaching process.

1. Introduction

Even with doors closed it is possible to tell the classrooms full of excitement and enthusiasm from those filled with tension and fear or those with complete anarchy. All these various characteristics of classroom atmosphere are detemined by style of governing the teaching process and classroom management. The phenomenon of government or management, in theory as well as in practise, has been in the focus of many scholars' and experts' attention. This is understandable taking into consideration the fact

that the success of any organization greatly depends on the quality of its management. Managment as a term embodies various activities and is made complete by four different elements (government, examination, supervision, leadership). (Jurić, 2004.) Management is considered one of the most important human activities so in analogy we can say that classroom management is one of the most important school activities. Its main goal and function is to lead a particular organization, in our case students or a class, towards fulfillment of set educational goals. For the purpose of this paper, taking into consideration studies and experiences of notable scholars of this and related subjects (Sanford, Emmer, 1986; Marušić, 1993; Staničić, 1999; Rijavec, 2001; Jurić, 2004; Everston, Emmer, 2006.) we shall define classroom management as teacher's activity that leads to realisation of previously set educational goals, is concentreted onto a heterogenous group of students of a certain class (or their combination) and their activity and involves: planning of teaching activities, organisation and preparation with the use of most appropriate methods and forms of teaching, leading the teaching process with the use of didactic principles as well as evaluation of the teaching process.

2. Styles of managing the teaching process - a theoretical consideration

One of the most important functions of management is leadership.

Although, theoretically speaking, all manager's functions are equally important, it is possible to conclude from the work of some scholars that leadership is nevertheless the most important function of management (Staničić, 1993; Srića, 1994; Sikavica, Bahtijević-Šiber, Gaiger, 2004.; Emmer, Gerwels, 2005.; Salender, 2008.) While management as a governing activity is defined as the process of directing others towards the fulfillment of a certain task,when it comes to leadership importance is especially given to the capability of influencing those who are fulfilling a certain task. From the educational point of view we can define leadership as an art of influencing the students to work in their set tasks readily and willingly (adopted according to Sikavica, Bahtijević-Šiber, Gaiger, 2004.) Hence the understanding that the main point of leadership is in the readiness and the willingness of students to follow the teacher. The complexity of managing the teaching process keeps on astonishing all those who try to study it and find out more about the possibilities of rational management. Teaching process is associated to many characteristics such as efficiency in teaching,

fluency among subjects in the teaching process, appliance of teaching media, styles of teaching, didactic principles, consideration for didactic systems, classroom atmosphere and many other characteristics of the teaching process itself. The Muenich study Scholastik singles out the following charasteristics of teaching: govenrment of the class (efficiency in organisation,classroom management), structure (structuring the subject through instructions which regulate students' attention), support (individual counselling, evaluation of student's situation), concentration towards motivation (advantage of encouraging weaker students), social environment (social and emotional climate), variety or diversity (dynamics of teaching activities, changing of chosen forms of teaching) (according to Palekčić, 2007.:93). Teacher as a classroom manager should answer the following three questions while managing the teaching process : 1.what kind of students is he or she managing, 2.which styles of management in the teaching process are available for him or her, and 3.which style of management is most appropriate (adapted according to Rijavec, 1995.)

Leadership style in teaching can be defined as characteristic individual teaching methods, actions and techniques typical for one leader-teacher in relationship towards students and tasks realized in the educational process (adapted according to Stančić, 2006). Shaping of theories which deal with the phenomenon of leadership styles started at the beginning of the 20. century and concentrated on the experiences of managers in profit organisations. Later on interest for leadership shifted towards non-profit fields of work including education. There are theories of leadership styles that are based on personality traits of those in leadership positions. Representatives of this theory tried to show that all successful leaders share the same unique traits. " Validity of this theory has many times been tested and among many characteristics a few have been singled out for which it can certainly be claimed that they have enormous influence upon the success of leadership. These are: energetic, dominant, self-confident, knowledgeable about the set task." (Staničić, S; 2006:244) Although these characteristics proved to be important they are not the crucial factor in selecting candidates for leader's position. Unlike the theories of personality traits, behaviourist theories say that it is the behaviour of an individual and not his traits which are of crucial importance when it comes to successful leadership. Styles of leadership in the teaching process within the frame of this theory can be observed according to the focus upon the task or upon students.(Rijavec, 1995). Leadership focused on the task includes setting of tasks, organisation, setting time frames, supervision and guidance as well as control, whereas

leadership focused on relationship with people (students) includes support, communication, improving relationships among members of the class, active listening, feedback. Leadership in the teaching process which is focused on the students will certainly make student feel more satisfied and create a more positive emotional and social climate in the classroom, but we can not be certain if this satisfaction will produce better efficiency and better results in students work.

Likert's model of leadership style singles out seven key dimensions based on which leadership style can be determined: motivatin, communication, interaction and influence, decision making, goals, control and effects.Empirical analysis of these dimensions in a large number of leaders led to establishing four characteristic styles of leadership: extremely autoritative style (autocratic), wellmeaning autoritative style (fatherly), advisory style (consultative) and participative style (democratic) (Stančić, 2006.) One of the most important results of Likert's research that "leadership style is the cause of efficiency of an organisation" (Mušanović, Lavmja; 1993:117) can be applied to classroom seeing one class of students as an organisation and assuming that the leadership style of one teacher is the cause of the efficiency of the educational process. One typical classification of leadership styles is based on the criteria of using authority in educational process. It provides us with three different styles: autocratic, democratic and laissez faire style. The teacher with autoritarian or autocratic style of leadership sets firm rules and standards,does not want to discuss or negotiate with students, teaching is clear and well structured, leadership in the class is effective and strict, movement within classroom is restricted, studying goes on in silence, teaching is focused on goals,aims and material, and then on students and individual approach, teacher applies punishment, all situations and relationships are focused on the teacher, he or she makes most of the decisions, classroom is filled with tension and fear, students although successful are often not satisfied. The teacher with democratic style of leadership helps to set the rules in the classroom by including students in creating those rules, he or she is ready to discuss and negotiate the reasons for students' choices, often encourages students' task related activities, uses various teaching forms and methods, offers individual support if needed, movement inside the classroom is not restricted, tolerates different ways of learning and quiet murmor that doesn't disturb others is allowed, he or she is focused primarily on students and then on tasks and goals and finds time for individual approach, is motherly or fatherly, encourages the class to be a team, respects the class president and the class is filled with enthusiasm and

excitement. In this leadership style students are extremely pleased and they are independent, selfconfident, willing to take risks, have a positive selfimage and are socially responsible. Laissez faire style teacher does not introduce or follow rules, students' initiative is on a high level, his interference with the flow of the teaching process is minimal, does not intervene unless exteremely necessary, does not follow closely every classroom situation, leaves decision making largely to the students, there is no clearly structured code of behaviour, system of award and punishment is not clear and consistent, students set the level of noise in the classroom as well as move freely around and the teacher intervenes only in extreme situations, does not stick to set discipline norms, does not follow up deadlines, classroom is a picture of anarchy filled with student conflicts and dissatisfaction. (Baumrind, 1973, 1987, prema Vizek-Vidović, Vlahović-Štetić, Rijavec, Miljković, 2003; Kiper, Mischke, 2006.)

3. Methodology of the empirical part of the research

3.1. Problem and goal of the research

Theories of leadership styles testify the fact that leadership is a very complex process. Although they leave the impression of mutual exclusivness they actually are complementary in their different approaches towards leadership in teaching process. Based on these theories we can assume that successful leadership in the teaching process depends on the teacher as classroom manager and his traits, leadership style he or she applies, as well as on the students' traits and many other specific situational factors. Therefore, we have directed the empirical part of this study towards researching teachers' attitudes towards style of leadership in teaching process regarding teacher's authority.

3.2. Research sample, measure instrument and methods of data processing

Research sample contains 256 teachers from four different regions in Croatia: Slavonija, Podravina, Gorski kotar and Zagreb with surroundings. This research uses method of assessment and the instrument is a scale of assessment (Lickert type). Teachers' attitudes towards leadership styles in teaching process were researched. The instrument contains 21 statement answered by the participants using Lickert five-degree- scale: don't agree at

all or *never*, mostly don't agree or *very rarely*, neither agree nor disagree or *neither rarely nor often,* mostly agree or *often*, completely agree or *always*. Data processing was done with Statistical Package for the Social Sciences SPSS 13.0. In order to determine the descriptive indicators of specific particles and scales we used descriptive parameters (arithmetic middle, standard deviation, minimum and maximum value).

3.3. Received results and conclusive reflections

Table 1: Descriptive parameters of particles used to measure styles of teaching process management

		N	M	SD
1.	I find time to listen to all the students from the class.	265	4,26	0,751
2.	I critisize bad work and at times punish it.	265	2,81	1,223
3.	My students set classroom rules on their own and I have no need to implement them.	265	2,75	1,043
4.	My students have a great sense of freedom in the classroom.	265	3,83	0,833
5.	I take into consideration students' suggestions when creating the teaching process.	265	4,12	0,814
6.	I take care that the capabilities of all students are put to use	265	4,24	0,714
7.	I take care that my students cooperateas a team.	265	4,40	0,696
8.	I bear in mind students' basic social needs.	265	4,54	0,570
9.	I maintain classroom discipline	265	4,42	0,586
10.	I let students decide upon some issues in my authority.	265	2,34	1,120
11.	I decide what is to be done and how to do it in the classroom.	265	3,40	0,900
12.	I give students complete freedom in approaching tasks their own way.	265	3,85	0,910
13.	I allow students to submit homework even past the due date.	265	2,88	1,172
14.	If the student misbehaves I use discipline measures during lesson.	265	3,32	1,052
15.	Therehas to be complete silance in my classroom for the students to be able to study.	265	3,00	1,094

16.	I don't consider it my problem if the students don't finish their task on time.	265	2,89	1,121
17.	I always try to axplain the reasons behind my rules and decisions.	265	4,51	0,646
18.	I consider it right not to accept appologies when a student is late for class more than twice.	265	3,15	1,149
19.	More important than the control for me is that students feel good in my classroom	265	4,00	0,923
20.	My students know they can always interfere while I speak without having to fear me.	265	3,88	1,089
21.	I often have no need of implementing discipline measures during lesson.	265	3,84	0,830

Table 1 clearly shows that the participants demonstrated high level of agreement with those particles describing teacher as a leader of the teaching process who needs to take care of needs and capabilities of every student and dedicate a certain amount of time to every student.

Agreement was high also among those who consider work to be closely linked to discipline and that teaching should support team spirit. Participants mostly agree upon statements related to maintaining discipline and respecting basic social needs of students. Their attitudes mostly differed when it came to criticizing student's work, strict respect for deadlines, issues of teacher's authority and postponement of tasks' fulfillment...These attitudes point to the behaviour of teachers in the teaching process and defines their management style. Lowest degree of agreement on the five degree scale points towards statements related to introduction of students into the management of the teaching process, independent setting of rules by students, criticizing and punishing students as well as issues of time frames. Analysis of the descriptive parameters of particles allows us to conclude that the participants showed high degree of agreement with statements compatible with the democratic style of leadership, while significantly lower middle values appear in those statements related to the autocratic style. Similarly, standard deviations point to high degree of agreement in statements inherenty characteristic of democratic style of leadership in the teaching process. The presented research allows us to conclude that the development of democratic relations within the Croatian society has obviously influenced the styles.The research points to a high level of democracy in the classroom management of participants. Even though a

more detailed analysis of leadership styles surpasses the frame and goals of this study it appears to be useful to define possible latent dimensions found at the sublevel of intercorelation of particles and in that way define the structure of factors in styles of leadership of the teaching process. It is also useful to define variables that can influence the style of leadership in teaching. These mentioned intentions will surely be the next step towards a deeper study of teaching process management by the author of this paper.

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