

WHAT IS THE ROLE OF TEACHER IDENTITY IN CLASSROOM MANAGEMENT? HOW DOES IT AFFECT SUPERVISION/CLASSROOM OBSERVATION?

Teacher identity can broadly be defined as the personal and cultural characteristics and experiences of teachers. Teacher identity has been associated with the discipline being taught – for example the ‘language identities’ of language teachers and the ‘mathematical identities’ of mathematics teachers. Teacher identity as a notion has been used to signify multiple attributes, from teacher perceptions of what they do in the classroom, to enacted pedagogies in the classroom, to observed teacher dispositions. In other words, it is the lived experiences, personal and professional beliefs, and dispositions that impact the personhood of a teacher.

Teacher identity does affect the classroom and learning environment. If a teacher is self-aware, he or she is better able to empower their students, and therefore facilitate an effective learning environment. One area where self-awareness is particularly important is regarding one's cultural beliefs and biases, which definitely affect teaching effectiveness. When we understand and appreciate our own heritage, we are better able to understand and appreciate that of others, specifically our students. This ability is increasingly important as our classrooms become more and more culturally diverse - which leads to a broader view of our world, and of each other. How a teacher personally is partially reflects on their teaching and classroom management skills. They practice what they believe in and what they think would enable a positive learning atmosphere. Having a teacher identity gives a strong foundation on the teacher's beliefs and characteristics, which in turn would help establish their beliefs in the classroom.

Below are some common and useful classroom management strategies:

- i. Identify yourself
- ii. Be friendly, not a friend
- iii. Be articulate, provide simple instructions
- iv. Forge a class identity
- v. Appreciate the students
- vi. Assume the best in students
- vii. Do value the small things
- viii. Praise what and when possible
- ix. Be organized
- x. Have a plan and a backup plan

The authenticity of teachers is rooted in their ability to be able to express their personal thoughts, feelings, and knowledge in the classroom. Unfortunately, our education system does not allow this to happen enough. Most of it dictate the curriculum, and demand strict centralized control

and assessment, leaving teachers running after these prescriptions instead of more innovative teaching.

The added value of teachers is in their ability to express their uniqueness in the ways they teach, and their personal points of view regarding the materials being taught. The lack of teachers expressing their identity leave classrooms boring, dry, and impersonal. Since very few learners in our context are autonomous learners, teachers still need to maintain a hands-on teaching method and teacher-centered classroom. Teacher's identity does not only affect the classroom environment because the teacher sets the tone and culture of the classroom based on his values, attitudes and belief system, but they also constantly modify and remodify his/her expectations of learners based on what the learners brought into the classroom and also their expectation.