Some questions to ponder on…

The School Climate

- Why are some schools more productive than others?
- What affects students’ motivation, aspirations and achievement?
- Do peers have more influence over students than teachers and parents?
The Effects of School Climate on Student Behaviour

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Sample Definitions of “School Climate”

Thomas I Ellis (1988)
➢ The aggregate of indicators, both subjective and objective, that convey the overall feeling or impression one gets about the school.

Brookover and his colleagues (1979)
➢ Composite of norms, expectations and believes that characterize the school social system as perceived by members of the social system.

Deal and Kennedy (1983)
➢ An informal understanding of the way we do things around here
The Difference Between “School Climate” and “School Culture”

The two terms are somewhat interchangeable.

**School climate**
refers mostly to the *school's effects on students*

**School culture**
refers more to *the way teachers and other staff members work together.*
The Differences in the Characteristics of Schools with Good or Poor climate

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Characteristics of a school with “good climate”</th>
<th>Characteristics of a school with “poor climate”</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Have enthusiastic and hardworking students</td>
<td>• Alienated students</td>
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<tr>
<td>• A dedicated, cooperative staff</td>
<td>• Teachers who are hostile or indifferent to the students and to one another</td>
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<tr>
<td>• A pervasive sense of trust, mutual respect and support between teachers and administrators</td>
<td>• A Principal who is out of touch with teachers’ needs, arbitrary and dictatorial in decisions and resistant to any change in the status quo</td>
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Lecture 3 : School Culture & School Climate
• Student attitudes are shaped to some extent by the structures (facilities) through which they are mediated (Ferreira, 1995).
• building conditions can directly affect the attitudes of students or the attitudes of teachers and parents which in turn affect student attitudes.
• Proshansky (1970) referred to physical settings and attitudes as follows: Physical settings-simple or complex-evoke complex human responses in the form of feelings, attitudes, values, expectancies, and desires.
• Stockard and Mayberry (1992) found that the quality of a physical plant or environment is related to non-cognitive outcomes, such as better attitudes toward school. These outcomes may eventually relate to higher academic achievement.
• Christopher (1988) concluded that human nature makes people feel better about themselves when their surroundings are pleasant.
• Students who have better attitudes usually learn more and work harder.
Components of a Positive School Climate

- Support for Teachers
- Physical Environment
- Excellence in Teaching
- School Values
- Positive Expectations
- Awareness of Strengths & Problems
- Caring & Respect
- Policies & Accountability

STUDENTS

Excellence in Teaching

- No substitute for a good teacher
- The mastery of skills in transmitting knowledge to students
- Motivating students to learn
- Managing classroom behaviours
- Teachers must not only develop good relationship with students but also have solid foundation in content and teaching method
- A teacher who lacks strong motivational and relationship skills may also be an ineffective teacher

Elements of Good Teaching

- Knowledge of subject
- Teaching skills
- Motivational skills
- Classroom Management Skills
- Relationship skills

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School Values

• A clear and understood school philosophy
• Students and staff can identify the school’s core values
• Rules and consequences are created based on these values
• Activities model these values
• Eliminate all interventions that are not congruent with these values

Awareness of Strengths and Problems

• Impossible to solve a problem when one is unaware of its existence
• A fundamental aspect of creating a positive school climate is to recognize areas that need improving and to build upon the strengths
• Small group discussions should be used to resolve problems in schools
Policies and accountabilities

• Policies regarding the prevention of bullying, the handling of bullying problems, and the accountability of the offenders are a fundamental aspect of a positive school climate.

• When establishing policy and accountability, all members of the community should be viewed as partners in decision making.

• This will make people committed to the policy’s goal, co-operate with one another and to implement the plan of action.

• Involve the community in the process of evaluating the implementation of policies. Eg: Year end evaluation of teachers.
### Caring and Respect

#### Know your students
- Learn their names, ask them about how they feel, what they think, show interest and learn about their lives outside of class and remember and demonstrate that you remember special things they have told you.

#### Use positive language
- Speak with students instead of speaking to them. Avoid the “coach attitude” of shouting directions at students. Avoid sarcasm. (Eg: Say “Thanks for helping” instead of “You’re such a good kid”)

#### Maintain appropriate expectations
- Match your expectations to the development of the student. Comments like “You ought to know that” or “I have told you a million times” usually indicate that a teacher is treating a student exceeding his development level.

#### Compliment conscientiously
- Compliment students for their achievement and or their efforts toward improvement. Eg: You got an a for the final exam. This grade represents many hours of hard work.
A well-known study by Rosenthal (1994) shows how teacher’s expectations influence students’ behaviours.

Three hypotheses have been forwarded:

- Proposes that teachers who do not expect success from their students:
  - Spend less time with their students
  - Hold nonchalant (‘tidak-apa’) attitudes about their academic abilities
  - Use more condescending language when addressing them
  - Provide less feedback about their work
  - Teach more simplistic materials to them
  - Prompt for answers to questions in class less frequently than those whom they perceive to be bright
Support for Teachers

Teachers play an important role in creating a positive school climate

Workshops or in-service training sessions served as traditional venues for supporting teachers

Continuous training, coaching and support more important for sustaining behaviour change than one time event

Support group meetings can greatly enhance teachers’ dedication to apply new skills in classrooms help each other in numerous way Teachers view their colleagues’ classroom experiences as valuable source of practical knowledge (Smylie, 1989)
Physical Environment

When striving to provide a positive school climate, school administrators should examine the following:

• Cleanliness
• Recognition of school community members (displaying students' artwork, science projects etc)
• Aesthetic appearance (graffiti promptly removed, artworks displayed on walls, walls painted with attractive colours)
• Organization (classrooms organized, supplies easily found, clutter kept to a minimum, space beyond classrooms ie: library, outdoor spaces)
• Safety (is the building safe? Do students have a mechanism to report problems? Are teachers prepared to handle an emergency ie: fire? Is the playground free of rocks and elements that could hurt someone?)
School Climate and Low Achieving Students

- Home environment
- Teacher expectations
- School Climate
- Self-concept
- Achievement

Lecture 3: School Culture & School Climate
1. Home environment

Influences of home environment, race and socioeconomic status on school climate

Types of students

- Rich
- Poor
- Families which stress education
- Families which do not stress education
- Highly motivated toward educational attainment
- Not motivated toward educational attainment

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James Coleman’s study on *Equality of Educational Opportunity* concluded that the effects of the home environment were more significant in students’ achievement than effects of the school program.

1. Home environment

- Most important
- Studies done by Christopher Jencks and the Plowden Report from Britain confirmed this.

- Secondary importance
- Recommendations to integrate the schools so that lower-class students would share an education with middle-class students will result in a climate more favourable to achievement.
2. Self-concept

- Refers to the way individuals view themselves in particular roles
- Varies depending on each different role being considered
- This view determines to a large extend how people perform in given roles
- To carry out a role, individuals must feel they can be successful
- Raise students’ self-concept and academic expectations and school’s achievement level will be raised
### 2. Self-concept

Self-concept has several dimensions:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>What individuals expect of themselves</th>
<th>How they feel about their ability to carry out a role</th>
<th>The value they place in the role</th>
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3. Student Achievement

■ In Jackson’s book, Life in the Classrooms, he mentioned that schools reward incompetence.

■ The reward for success is more hard work

■ In his research, the most important variable was the students’ sense of futility, hopelessness and the sense of frustrations that their teachers do not care about their academic achievement.

■ Wilbur Brookover, in his book “School Social Systems and Student Achievement” reported on an attempt to put the concept of “school climate” into practice using variables to alter school climate. It was reported that schools achievement levels were raised significantly.
4. Teacher expectations

- Teacher expectations affect student performance

- Teacher quality affects students’ achievement.

- High standards set by teachers also generate greater effort on homework

- Low teacher expectations are linked to poor academic performance of low-achieving student when low achievers are given fewer opportunities to interact and participate in classroom activities
Teachers high expectation that all their students can and will learn

Frequent review of students’ progress indicate a high expectation teachers have on their students which will promote a good school climate
3 steps to achieve a positive school climate and prevent low achieving students

1. Clear goals and core values
2. Expectations for academic success
3. Order and discipline


Lecture 3: School Culture & School Climate
1. Clear goals and core values

- Creates a shared sense of purpose amongst students, faculty, parents and the community
- Clear goals and core values offer guidelines for decision making
- Schools without clear goals and core values cannot provide direction to staff
- Members of schools without clear goals and core values are not focused on the same targets for improvement
- Schools with clear goals and core values translate words into actions
- The written goals bond staff, students and parents to create a sense of community
- With the shared sense of purpose, members of the school are able to articulate what constitutes good behavior in a precise, uniform manner
2. Expectations for academic success

- *Miller, Smey-Richman and Woods-Houston* mentioned that successful schools operate within a school culture in which the principal promotes the core value of high expectations for student achievement and teachers believe that all students can learn.

- Staff in effective schools have higher expectations for student accomplishment.

- In schools where it is policy to group students according to their academic ability, academically low achieving students tend to achieve and behave poorly.

- Researchers (Bock and Moore) suggest that if community norms and expectations for achievement are low, parents and students may tend to overestimate children’s degree of success in school and the caliber of education being received.

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3. Order and discipline

- Lack or order and discipline is a major problem facing public schools

- Student misbehaviour was the main stressor in the school environment (Nurul Izzah Abdul Samad, Zailina Hashim, Saidi Moin & Haslinda Abdullah (2010) *Assessment of Stress and Its Risk Factors among Primary School Teachers in the Klang Valley, Malaysia*. Malaysia: Global Journal of Health Science. Available from: www.ccsenet.org/gjhs)

- Dependant on teacher styles:
  1. **Authoritarian**
     - Formal power is vested and used by the teacher
  2. **Democratic**
     - Students are involved in the decision-making which affects classroom activities
  3. **Laissez-faire**
     - There is general freedom in the classroom
Conclusion

• It can be concluded that school climate does affect students’ behavior and performance. Thus, it is vital that schools provide a good climate for students to excel in their studies.

• It can be concurred that students who have better school climates usually learn more and work harder.

• The most important factor that influenced students’ behavior was the creation of a positive classroom environment and school climate where students felt respected and cared for.
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