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Classroom Order Management Strategies During Transitions Between Teaching Activities in Primary Schools

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Abstract

Transitions between teaching activities are an essential part of primary school classroom instruction. They involve adjustments to teaching arrangements and changes in students' learning tasks and participation patterns. Since primary school students are still developing their attention spans, self-control, and behavioral habits, transitions may be accompanied by distractions, disruptions, inefficient activity coordination, and unnecessary loss of instructional time. These issues can affect the continuity of classroom instruction and reduce the effectiveness of teaching activities. Effective classroom order management does not simply require students to remain quiet. Rather, it involves guiding students through different learning tasks by establishing appropriate procedures, clear transition signals, consistent classroom rules, and constructive teacher-student interactions. This paper examines classroom order management during transitions between teaching activities in primary schools. It discusses common problems and their underlying causes and proposes strategies involving instructional planning, transition rules, student behavior guidance, classroom time allocation, and teacher emotional regulation. The discussion aims to provide practical guidance for organizing classroom activities effectively and maintaining a positive learning environment.

Keywords: primary education, classroom management, transitions between teaching activities, classroom order, instructional organization

1. Introduction

Classroom instruction generally consists of several interconnected teaching activities, including lesson preparation, knowledge presentation, question-based discussions, collaborative learning, student presentations, and lesson summaries. Each activity has different organizational requirements and learning objectives. Teachers therefore need to adjust classroom arrangements according to instructional goals and students' learning conditions, enabling students to move smoothly from one activity to another. Although transitions between teaching activities may occupy only a relatively short period, they directly influence the continuity and effectiveness of classroom instruction. When transitions are poorly organized, students may struggle to understand new requirements, resulting in unnecessary conversations,

movement around the classroom, distractions, or limited participation.

Primary school students are generally active and easily distracted, while their self-regulation abilities are still developing. Compared with older students, they often require more specific behavioral guidance when classroom activities change. For example, when moving from teacher-led instruction to group discussion, students need to adjust their learning approaches, organize their materials, arrange their seating, and understand their new responsibilities. If teachers fail to prepare these arrangements in advance, classroom order may become difficult to maintain.

Existing research on primary school classroom management has addressed classroom routines, learning environments, student behavioral problems, instructional time management, and teachers' management competencies. Chen and Zhang (2019) identify the establishment of classroom routines, the creation of a positive learning environment, appropriate responses to student behavioral problems, and reflection on classroom activities as important components of primary school teachers' classroom management competencies. These perspectives provide a foundation for understanding order management during transitions. However, transitions have distinctive procedural characteristics. Maintaining classroom order therefore requires more than general disciplinary expectations; management strategies must be incorporated into specific teaching activities. Accordingly, this paper examines classroom order management from the perspective of transitions between teaching activities in primary schools.

2. The Meaning of Teaching Activity Transitions and Classroom Order Management

2.1 The Meaning of Transitions Between Teaching Activities

Transitions between teaching activities in primary school classrooms refer to the process through which teachers adjust learning tasks, organizational arrangements, instructional materials, and patterns of interaction according to teaching objectives and classroom progress. Common examples include moving from teacher-led instruction to individual practice, from individual learning to group collaboration, from classroom discussion to student presentations, and from knowledge acquisition to lesson summarization.

A transition does not simply involve changing the instructional content. It also requires adjustments to students' learning behaviors and classroom organization. For example, during group work, students need to understand the discussion topic, determine their respective responsibilities, and communicate according to the task requirements. When the discussion ends, they must stop interacting, organize their materials, and redirect their attention toward the presentation activity. These behaviors require appropriate guidance from teachers.

Therefore, transitions between teaching activities involve three interconnected dimensions: task transitions, behavioral transitions, and organizational transitions. Task transitions concern changes in learning content and objectives. Behavioral transitions involve adjustments to students' learning activities and participation patterns. Organizational transitions refer to changes in seating arrangements, learning materials, and interaction formats. Together, these dimensions constitute the basic process of classroom activity transitions.

2.2 Basic Requirements for Classroom Order Management During Transitions

Classroom order management during transitions refers to the process through which teachers organize and regulate student behavior, instructional time, and the learning environment to facilitate movement between different teaching activities. Its purpose is not to restrict students' normal participation but to help them understand their current responsibilities, recognize transition requirements, and participate appropriately in subsequent activities.

Yu (2010) identifies classroom routine management, classroom environment management, classroom activity management, and classroom behavioral problem management as important dimensions of primary school teachers' classroom management competencies. These dimensions are also relevant to the management of activity transitions. Teachers need to ensure that students follow established rules while also considering whether activities are appropriately arranged, whether the environment supports the new learning task, and whether emerging behavioral problems can be addressed promptly.

Effective transition management should demonstrate clarity, continuity, and

appropriateness. Clarity requires teachers to communicate specific expectations and avoid ambiguous instructions. Continuity requires sufficient connections between consecutive activities to reduce unnecessary waiting. Appropriateness means that teachers should adopt different management approaches according to the nature of the activities and the developmental characteristics of students, rather than treating every transition as an occasion for disciplinary intervention.

3. Common Classroom Order Problems During Transitions

3.1 Unclear Transition Instructions

In some classrooms, transitions depend primarily on teachers giving temporary verbal instructions, such as asking students to begin a discussion, take out their exercise books, or stop their current activities. When teachers provide only general instructions without explaining specific procedures or completion times, students may interpret the requirements differently. Some may move quickly into the next activity, while others remain engaged in the previous task.

For example, when teachers ask students to participate in group discussions without clarifying the discussion topic, speaking arrangements, or expected outcomes, students may interpret the activity as unrestricted conversation. Consequently, classroom noise may increase, and some students may move away from the intended learning task. Such situations are not necessarily caused by students' lack of discipline. They may also result from insufficiently specific transition instructions.

3.2 Insufficient Coordination Between Teaching Activities

Different teaching activities are interconnected. When teachers fail to establish appropriate connections between consecutive stages, students may experience interruptions in their learning process. For example, after explaining new knowledge, a teacher may immediately ask students to complete individual exercises without explaining how the exercises relate to the preceding content. Students may then become uncertain about the purpose of the task and repeatedly ask for clarification.

Some classrooms also experience excessive activity changes. Teachers may arrange discussions, games, presentations, and exercises consecutively in an attempt to make lessons more engaging, without allowing students sufficient time to prepare and adjust. Although the teaching formats appear varied, students may not have enough time to understand and adapt to each new task. As a result, instructional efficiency may decline rather than improve.

3.3 Insufficient Management of Student Behavior During Transitions

Behavioral problems during primary school classroom transitions commonly include unnecessary conversations, leaving seats without permission, playing with learning materials, losing concentration, and failing to stop previous activities promptly. In particular, after group discussions, classroom games, and student presentations, students may remain highly excited and require some time to return to a more focused learning state.

Wang (2021), in a narrative study of the development of classroom management competencies among novice primary school teachers, discusses classroom rules, student behavioral problems, and teacher-student interactions as important aspects of classroom management. This perspective highlights the importance of teachers' ability to recognize and respond appropriately to student behavior. If teachers only criticize students after classroom order has deteriorated, without establishing preventive transition procedures, classroom management may remain largely reactive.

3.4 Inappropriate Allocation of Transition Time

Classroom instructional time is limited, and each teaching activity requires an appropriate amount of time. When transitions are not adequately prepared, students may spend excessive time finding learning materials, adjusting their seating arrangements, or waiting for instructions. This reduces the time available for actual learning.

In her study of classroom management competencies among novice primary school English teachers, Wu (2021) identifies classroom time management as an important dimension of teachers' management abilities. The study also discusses problems such as unreasonable time allocation across teaching activities and excessive instructional time being consumed by maintaining classroom order. These issues indicate that transitions involve not only behavioral management but also the effective allocation of instructional time. Teachers who focus exclusively on completing individual activities while overlooking the time required to

connect them may struggle to maintain the overall continuity of classroom instruction.

4. Strategies for Managing Classroom Order During Teaching Activity Transitions

4.1 Planning Teaching Activities in Advance to Reduce Uncertainty

Classroom order management should begin during the instructional planning stage rather than only after disruptions occur. When preparing lessons, teachers should determine the sequence of teaching activities according to instructional objectives and clarify the learning goals, organizational arrangements, and transition requirements of each stage. For activities involving seating changes, learning materials, or group collaboration, teachers should plan the necessary procedures in advance to avoid excessive last-minute arrangements.

For example, in a primary school Chinese language lesson, a teacher may organize activities into several stages: text explanation, individual thinking, group discussion, and student presentations. Before group discussion begins, the teacher can introduce the discussion question and explain the expected outcomes and time limit. Students can then enter the next activity without repeatedly asking for clarification.

Instructional planning should also emphasize connections between consecutive activities. Teachers can use questions or learning outcomes from the preceding stage to introduce the next activity, helping students understand why the transition is necessary. For instance, after explaining a text, a teacher may raise a question related to its content and invite students to discuss it in groups. In this way, transitions become natural extensions of the learning process rather than disconnected activities.

4.2 Establishing Clear and Consistent Classroom Transition Rules

Classroom rules help students develop stable expectations regarding their behavior. Teachers can establish basic procedures for different transitions, including stopping the current activity, organizing learning materials, listening to instructions, adjusting seating arrangements, and beginning the next task.

These rules should not be overly complicated. Instead, they should be expressed in language that students can easily understand and remember. For example, teachers may agree with students that when a particular signal is given, they should stop discussing, face the teacher, organize their desks, and wait for further instructions. Through repeated use of the same procedures, students gradually become familiar with transition expectations, reducing the need for repeated reminders.

Chen and Zhang (2019) emphasize the importance of classroom routines in primary school classroom management. In the context of teaching activity transitions, classroom routines should extend beyond general requirements concerning classroom discipline and homework. They should also cover the procedures connecting different learning activities. Teachers can integrate transition rules into everyday instruction so that students gradually develop the habit of following them voluntarily rather than treating them as temporary disciplinary requirements.

4.3 Using Clear Transition Signals to Guide Behavioral Adjustments

For primary school students, verbal reminders alone may not always produce consistent results. Teachers can use fixed verbal expressions, gestures, countdowns, or simple visual cues according to the characteristics of classroom activities. These signals can help students recognize when they need to adjust their learning behaviors.

For example, before a group discussion ends, teachers can provide a time reminder so that students know the activity is about to finish. Once the discussion is over, teachers can use an agreed gesture or short verbal signal to remind students to stop talking, organize their materials, and face the front of the classroom. Compared with repeatedly raising their voices or criticizing students, consistent transition signals are more likely to establish clear behavioral expectations.

Different activities may require different signals, but their basic use should remain consistent. Teachers should avoid changing signals too frequently because students may need to repeatedly learn new procedures, increasing the difficulty of transitions. For younger students, teachers can incorporate pictures, gestures, and demonstrations. For older primary school students, external reminders can gradually be reduced to encourage greater independence in managing their learning activities.

4.4 Encouraging Student Participation and Developing Self-Management Awareness

Classroom order management should not depend entirely on teachers' instructions. Students are also active participants in classroom activities and can undertake certain organizational responsibilities under teacher guidance. For example, during group work, group leaders may remind members to organize materials and summarize discussion results. After classroom presentations, students can follow agreed procedures to collect and return learning materials.

Student participation in classroom management helps them understand the practical value of classroom rules and gradually develop self-management abilities. However, responsibilities should be appropriate to students' ages and capabilities. Teachers should not transfer the responsibility for maintaining the discipline of the entire class to a small number of students.

Teachers should also reinforce positive behavior through constructive feedback. When students complete transitions according to established procedures, teachers can provide specific encouragement by recognizing a group's efficient preparation, orderly organization of materials, or ability to stop discussions at the appropriate time. Compared with general instructions to follow classroom rules, feedback directed at specific behaviors helps students understand which actions should be maintained.

4.5 Allocating Transition Time Reasonably to Improve Instructional Efficiency

Teachers should incorporate the time required for transitions into the overall lesson plan rather than focusing exclusively on knowledge presentation and learning activities while overlooking the time needed for preparation, organization, and coordination.

Before an activity begins, teachers can prepare the textbooks, teaching aids, and learning materials required for the following stage. For group activities involving seating changes, seating arrangements can be clarified before the lesson to reduce unnecessary movement. When an activity does not require changes to the classroom layout, teachers can make use of existing seating arrangements to avoid unnecessary movement.

Time allocation should also reflect the complexity of each activity. Simple tasks may require relatively short transitions, whereas activities involving material organization, group rearrangement, or presentation preparation require additional time. Teachers should avoid constantly rushing students merely to keep up with the lesson schedule. At the same time, excessively long periods without meaningful tasks should be minimized. Appropriate time allocation allows students to complete necessary preparations while maintaining the continuity of classroom instruction.

4.6 Managing Teacher Emotions and Creating a Positive Transition Environment

Teachers' emotional states influence their classroom management approaches and may also affect students' classroom behavior. When transitions become disorganized, teachers who immediately express impatience, anger, or frustration may create additional emotional tension, making classroom order even more difficult to maintain.

Zheng (2021), in a study of primary school teachers' classroom emotional management, discusses teachers' self-regulation, classroom atmosphere management, and instructional evaluation as relevant aspects of emotional management. This perspective suggests that transitions require attention not only to student behavior but also to emotional interactions between teachers and students.

Teachers should maintain a calm tone and respond appropriately to occasional behavioral problems during transitions. When a small number of students fail to complete a transition promptly, individual reminders may be more effective than criticizing the entire class. Teachers should also acknowledge students' positive cooperation. A stable and supportive classroom atmosphere can reduce resistance to transition instructions and gradually integrate order management into normal teaching activities.

5. Differentiated Management Across Different Types of Teaching Activity Transitions

5.1 From Teacher-Led Instruction to Independent Learning

This transition involves students moving from a listening role to active thinking and independent task completion. Before ending an explanation, teachers should clarify the specific learning task, completion requirements, and time allocation. They should also ensure that students understand which textbooks or learning materials are needed. For younger students, teachers can demonstrate the required procedures, while older students can be

encouraged to organize their learning independently according to the task requirements.

5.2 From Individual Learning to Group Collaboration

The transition from individual learning to group collaboration usually involves increased interaction among students and may lead to unnecessary movement and conversations. Teachers should clarify group membership, discussion tasks, activity duration, and expected outcomes in advance. This reduces the time students spend reorganizing themselves after entering their groups. Teachers can guide groups that are easily distracted through classroom observation and appropriate questions without frequently interrupting the entire class.

5.3 From Group Collaboration to Student Presentations

The key challenge in this transition is helping students end their discussions and redirect their attention toward presenting and listening. Teachers can provide advance reminders that the discussion is about to finish and ask each group to select its presentation content and representative. During presentations, other students should be given specific listening tasks, such as recording important ideas or considering questions raised by the presentation. This helps prevent presentations from becoming activities in which only a few students participate while others engage in unrelated conversations.

5.4 From Classroom Activities to Lesson Summarization

Lesson summarization requires students to move away from specific learning activities and return to broader understanding and reflection. Teachers can use blackboard notes, keywords, or guiding questions to organize the learning outcomes generated by previous activities. This helps students review the main content of the lesson and understand the connections between different teaching stages. The summarization stage should not introduce too many new tasks. Instead, it should help students consolidate what they have learned and bring the instructional process to a coherent conclusion.

6. Continuous Improvement of Teachers' Classroom Order Management Competencies

The ability to manage classroom order during teaching activity transitions develops gradually through everyday teaching practice. Teachers need to understand basic classroom management methods and adjust their approaches according to students' developmental characteristics, classroom conditions, and instructional content.

Wang (2021), in examining the development of classroom management competencies among novice primary school teachers, emphasizes the role of practical exploration, individual reflection, and support from others in professional development. This suggests that teachers should not rely exclusively on fixed management practices. Instead, they should pay attention to how different teaching activities are implemented. After each lesson, teachers can reflect on whether transitions were smooth, whether students understood the instructions, which stages involved excessive waiting, and whether management approaches affected students' willingness to participate.

Schools can also provide opportunities for teachers to learn from one another through classroom observations, teaching demonstrations, and professional exchanges. Teachers may develop different effective approaches to organizing activities and maintaining classroom order. Sharing specific classroom cases can help teachers identify weaknesses in their own management practices.

Novice teachers, in particular, should avoid relying excessively on criticism and disciplinary instructions. The purpose of classroom management is to ensure that students can participate effectively in learning activities, rather than keeping them in a constant state of passive obedience. Teachers should integrate rule guidance, instructional planning, and student participation so that classroom order gradually develops from students' understanding and acceptance of classroom expectations.

7. Conclusion

Transitions between teaching activities are an important process connecting different stages of primary school instruction. Their organization directly influences instructional continuity and the effective use of learning time. Because primary school students are still developing their self-management abilities, transitions may involve unclear instructions, delayed behavioral adjustments, insufficient coordination between teaching activities, and inappropriate time allocation. These problems are associated not only with students' developmental characteristics but also with teachers' instructional planning and classroom

organization.

Improving classroom order management during transitions requires teachers to incorporate management strategies into specific teaching activities. Teachers should plan activity sequences in advance, establish clear and consistent transition rules, use appropriate signals to guide behavioral adjustments, and develop students' self-management awareness through participation and positive feedback. Reasonable time allocation, stable emotional regulation, and continuous instructional reflection are also important for improving classroom management.

Classroom order should not be regarded as a means of restricting student participation. Rather, it is a necessary condition for supporting effective learning. By integrating order management with instructional activity design, teachers can reduce unnecessary waiting and disciplinary interventions, establish natural connections between different teaching stages, and ultimately improve the organizational efficiency of primary school classroom instruction.

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