

STRATEGIES DEVELOPED BY PRE-SERVICE BIOLOGY TEACHERS AGAINST UNDESIRABLE STUDENT BEHAVIOURS¹

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Abstract

İn this research, the strategies that could be used by teachers in order to eliminate undesirable student behaviours were investigated. The study was designed in the form of scanning model. The study group consisted of 90 students enrolled in the Department of Biology Education at Gazi University Gazi Faculty of Education. In the research, scenarios with the theme of undesirable student behaviours were employed as data collection instruments. The data were subjected to content analysis using the N Vivo 10 software. It was found at the end of the research that the most preferred strategies for eliminating undesirable student behaviours are moving the student to a different place in the classroom, verbal warning and assigning in-class tasks to students. Suggestions based on the findings were presented at the end of the study.

Keywords: Undesirable student behaviours, Biology education, Scenario

1. INTRODUCTION

Classroom management refers to the regulation of classroom environment and guiding of studies in classroom with an administrative, pedagogical and strategic perspective (Yılmaz, 2008). It is the elimination of obstacles in front of teaching, planning of teaching activities, use of class time efficiently and properly, ensuring student participation, choosing proper course materials, and management of physical factors, resources, relations and individuals (Jones, 1996). There exist

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numerous factors that hinder the execution of teaching activities as they are planned. One of these factors is undesirable behaviours encountered in classrooms (Temur, Temur and Tabak, 2009).

Today, the issue of undesirable student behaviours is a frequent issue that affects the educational agenda. Student behaviours such as chatting with or disturbing each other or engaging in efforts that are irrelevant to the class not only disrupt the harmony in the classroom but also negatively influence other students' and teachers' motivation. Negative behaviours shown by students to school managers and their peers is not only a popular subject for the media but also an issue about which the society is concerned (Elam & Rose, 1995).

Undesired behaviours encountered by teachers during classes cause anxiety in them (Tenoschok, 1985; Wheldall, 1991). Teachers need to be well-equipped in order to be able to cope with such undesirable behaviours (Merrett & Wheldall, 1992). Every behaviour that disrupts the class, or that makes it harder or impossible for students to obtain required acquisitions is classified as undesirable behaviour (İlgar, 2005).

Studies show that undesirable student behaviours decrease in positive classroom environments (Alkan, 2007; Atıcı, 2002). Giallo and Little (2003) found that new teachers develop anxiety because of undesirable student behaviours. Andrews, Taylor, Martin, & Slate (1998) determined that students who demonstrate undesirable behaviours have low levels of academic success.

Some studies emphasize on the role of the teacher in the classroom for the alleviation of undesirable student behaviours (Martin, Linfot and Stephenson, 1999; Bru, Stephens and Torsheim, 2002). Strategies employed by teachers may both eliminate and intensify undesirable behaviours. Departing from this point, the aim of this study is to determine the strategies employed by pre-service Biology teachers against undesirable student behaviours through scenarios with the theme of undesirable student behaviours.

2. METHOD

The study is a descriptive field study, in which the scanning model is employed. Scanning models are suitable for researches that are aimed at describing a past or present situation as it is/was (Karasar, 1999).

2.1. Study Group

The study group consists of 80 pre-service Biology teachers who are enrolled at Gazi Faculty of Education in Gazi University. Of these pre-service teachers; 38% are fourth-grade and 62% are fifth-grade students.

2.2. Data Collection Instruments

In the study, scenarios involving five different undesirable student behaviours were used as data collection instruments. The following are the themes of these scenarios: attracting attention, not doing assignments, listening to music during class, being late to class, and talking off topic during class.

2.3. Analysis of Data

The scenarios were subjected to content analysis using NVivo 10 software, themes were formed pertaining to each scenario, and these themes were expressed in frequency and percentage terms.

3. FINDINGS

In this section, findings obtained at the end of the research are presented.

Table 1 shows the findings pertaining to the undesirable student behaviour of attracting attention.

Table 1 Strategies Developed by Pre-Service Biology Teachers against the Undesirable Student Behaviour of Attracting Attention

Theme	Frequency (f)	Percentage (%)
Verbally warning the student	32	36
Talking in private with the student outside the class	21	23
Ignoring the student	18	20
Asking a question related to the subject	9	10
Denying the student right to speak	7	8
Asking the student to cover the subject	5	6
Assigning the student with a task related to the course	4	5
Sending the student to the counselling service	4	5
Learning the reason of his/her behaviour	4	5
Disregarding the student	3	4
Sending the student off	3	4
Changing his/her seat	2	3
Warning the student using body language	1	1
Disciplining the student	1	1
Organizing educational activities that would attract students' attention	1	1

Table 1 shows that the solution strategies most expressed by pre-service Biology teachers against this undesirable student behaviour are; verbally warning the student (36%), talking in private with the student outside the class (23%), and ignoring the student (20%). Apart from them, the themes of sending the student off (3%) and disciplining the student (1%) were also expressed by pre-service teachers.

Table 2 shows the findings pertaining to the undesirable student behaviour of not doing assignments.

Table 2 Strategies Developed by Pre-Service Biology Teachers against the Undesirable Student Behaviour of Not Doing Assignments

Theme	Frequency (f)	Percentage (%)
Talking in private with the student outside the class	15	17
Inquiring about the reasons of not doing the assignment	11	12
Giving more assignments to the student	11	12
Disciplining the student	11	12
Talking to the student's parents	10	11
Threatening the student with oral exam grade	9	10
Reinforcing those who did their homework	8	9
Verbally warning the student	5	6
Giving extra time to the student	5	6
Giving more attractive and interesting assignments	4	5
Talking with the student about the benefits of doing homework	3	4
Sending the student to counselling service	3	4
Tolerating the student	3	4
Making him/her do the homework during class	2	3
Rewarding those who did their homework with extra grades	2	3
Ignoring the student	2	3
Talking with the student about the harms of not doing homework	1	1
Assigning the student with a task related to the course	1	1
Giving special attention to the student	1	1
Giving responsibility to the student during class	1	1
Giving secondary punishment	1	1

Table 2 shows that the solution strategies most expressed by pre-service Biology teachers against this undesirable student behaviour are; talking in private with the student outside the class (17%), inquiring about the reasons of not doing the assignment (12%), giving more assignments to the student, disciplining the student (12%) and talking to the student's parents. Apart from them; themes such as giving responsibility to the student during class (1%) and giving secondary punishment (1%) were also expressed by pre-service Biology teachers.

Table 3 shows the findings pertaining to the undesirable student behaviour of interrupting the class by talking off-topic.

Table 3 Strategies Developed by Pre-Service Biology Teachers against the Undesirable Student Behaviour of Interrupting the Class by Talking Off-Topic

Theme	Frequency (f)	Percentage (%)
Verbally warning the student	22	24
Assigning the student with an in-class task (Making him/her write on the board or making him/her read)	21	23
Changing the student's seat	20	22
Asking a question related to the subject	11	12
Sending the student off	11	12
Disciplining the student	5	6
Warning the student using body language	3	4
Ignoring the student	2	3
Inquiring about the reason of his/her behaviour	2	3
Threatening the student with grades	2	3
Making the student emphasize	2	3
Not giving right to speak to the student	1	1
The teacher's self-questioning	1	1
Using mobbing methods	1	1
Insulting the student in class	1	1
Threatening the student with grades	1	1
Talking with the student	1	1
Sending the student to counselling service	1	1

Table 3 shows that the solution strategies most expressed by pre-service Biology teachers against this undesirable student behaviour are; verbally warning the student (24%), assigning the student

with an in-class task (23%), and changing the student's seat (22%). Apart from them; the themes of insulting the student in class (1%) and threatening the student with grades (1%) are among other responses given by pre-service teachers.

Table 4 shows the findings pertaining to the undesirable student behaviour of listening to music during class.

Table 4 Strategies Developed by Pre-Service Biology Teachers against the Undesirable Student Behaviour of Listening to Music during Class

Theme	Frequency (f)	Percentage (%)
Taking away the student's music player	31	34
Using different teaching activities in order to attract the student's attention to the class	13	14
Verbally warning the student	9	10
Talking in private with the student outside class	8	9
Inquiring about the reason of the behaviour	6	7
Sending the student off	6	7
Asking a question related to the subject	4	5
Ignoring the student	4	5
Disciplining the student	4	5
Assigning the student with a task related to the course	3	4
Warning the student using body language	3	4
Threatening the student with grades	3	4
Talking with the student's parents	3	4
Changing the student's seat	2	3
Using mobbing methods	2	3
Giving assignments to the student	1	1
Sending the student to the school management	1	1
Counselling the student	1	1
Consulting with the counselling service	1	1
Teaching the student with music in private	1	1
The teacher's self-questioning	1	1
Telling a story on the issue with a moral	1	1

Table 4 shows that the solution strategies most expressed by pre-service Biology teachers against this undesirable student behaviour are; taking away the student's music player (34%), using different teaching activities in order to attract the student's attention to the class (14%), and verbally warning the student (10%). In addition, the themes of teaching the student with music in private, self-questioning of the teacher, and telling a story on the issue with a moral were also emphasized.

Table 5 shows the findings pertaining to the undesirable student behaviour of being late to class.

Table 5 Strategies Developed by Pre-Service Biology Teachers against the Undesirable Student Behaviour of Being Late to Class

Theme	Frequency (f)	Percentage (%)
Inquiring about the reasons of being late to class	32	36
Not letting the student in	26	29
Verbally warning the student	24	27
Talking with the student's parents	9	10
Asking the student to bring a document from the school management	8	9
Disciplining the student	5	6
Rewarding the student when he/she comes early	4	5
Talking in private with the student outside class	3	4
Giving secondary punishment	2	3
Sending the student to counselling service	2	3
Assigning the student with an in-class task	2	3
Making the student cover the subject	1	1
Tolerating the behaviour	1	1
Threatening the student with oral exam grades	1	1
Reprimanding the student	1	1
Organizing activities that would attract all students' attentions in the earliest classes	1	1

Table 5 shows that the solution strategies most expressed by pre-service Biology teachers against this undesirable student behaviour are; inquiring about the reasons of being late (36%), not letting the student in (29%), and verbally warning the student (27%). Besides, the themes of threatening the student with oral exam grades (1%), and reprimanding the student (1%) were also expressed by pre-service teachers.

4. DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

In this section, findings obtained at the end of the research are presented along with suggestions based on these findings.

Against the undesirable behaviour of attracting attention; the pre-service Biology teachers mostly stated the strategies of verbally warning the student, talking with the student in private, and ignoring the student. Ogden (1998) pointed to the strategy of warning students among the strategies most frequently employed by teachers. Sadik (2000), on the other hand, determined that teachers mostly employ the strategy of ignoring against undesirable student behaviours.

It was found that the pre-service Biology teachers mostly employ the strategies of talking in private with the student outside class, inquiring about the reasons of not doing the homework, giving more assignments to the student, and disciplining the student, against the undesirable student behaviour of not doing assignments.

Against the undesirable student behaviour of listening to music during class; it was determined that the pre-service teachers mainly developed the strategies of taking away the student's music player, organizing activities that would attract students' attention, verbally warning the student, and changing the student's seat. Tulley and Chiu (1995) emphasized on the effectiveness of employing different teaching practices in alleviating undesirable student behaviours.

Against the undesirable student behaviour of being late to class; it is observed that the pre-service Biology teachers mainly developed the strategies of inquiring about the reason of being late to the class, not letting him/her in, and giving verbal warning.

It is seen that the strategies developed by future Biology teachers against undesirable student behaviours show diversity within and across types of undesirable behaviours. Moreover, it is observed that majority of the pre-service teachers tend not to discipline students against behaviours other than not doing homework, and that some pre-service teachers tend to reward desirable behaviours as a strategy to eliminate undesirable ones. Walker, Steiber, Ramsey, & O'Neill (1991) reported that teacher behaviours such as constantly showing harsh attitudes towards students, not

adequately supporting positive behaviours and frequently disciplining certain students might exacerbate undesirable student behaviours. On the other hand, the strategies reported most against many undesirable student behaviours are those of verbally warning students and talking with students. Among the notable findings is that some pre-service Biology teachers tend to send off the student out of the classroom as a solution strategy.

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