

## LEARNING ATMOSPHERE: A VITAL FACTOR IN STUDENTS' LEARNING ENGAGEMENT

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There are three principal elements to make teaching and learning possible and attainable, and learning atmosphere or environment is said to be one of those principal elements. Learning environment refers to the diverse physical locations and contexts in which students learn. It is the sum of the internal and external circumstances and influences surrounding and affecting a person's learning. Hence, a favorable learning atmosphere must be provided for a more effective learning. But unfortunately, until now, it is one of the primary concerns driving educational researches. It is the need to better understand how learning atmosphere influences student learning (Bryk and Raudenbush, 1988).

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The school, specifically the classroom environment affects students' performance and achievement growth (Pianta et al., 2002). It is a composite of several factors. Foremost, the teacher is a relaxed, well poised, and enthusiastic person. He must provide a friendly atmosphere and maintained a well-managed classroom in terms of its physical features for classroom settings are likely to influence student learning especially during elementary school when students spend majority of their time at school. Classroom is where they grow, mature, and learn. This served as their second home. This is where learners are surrounded and interacts with other people. Everything that surrounds the learner, affects his/her learning atmosphere. Students may learn in a wide variety of settings, such as outside-of-school locations and outdoor environments. Not only are the four sides of the classroom considered as their learning atmosphere but also their home and their community.

Charlotte Mason documented three critical components of a complete education when she said, "Education is an atmosphere, a discipline, and a life." Looking at the first of these, several elements of a home atmosphere contribute to the learning of the learners. Parents must always secure a non-threatening atmosphere for the learner since it will affect the learner's attitude towards studying. Furthermore, a study area with good physical set-up must be provided. As we all know, learners' home is said to be their foundation or the so-called informal learning set up (Donaldson, 1978). Home is the sole molders of the student's character, personality, behavior, and their early literacy development. This is where the student first learns the basic knowledge a man must know. Home is where the learners learn on how to read, write, count and even how to act properly in a social setting.

Learning takes place when the learner interacts in a social setting as they acted upon the environment (Vygotsky, 1981). Meaning to say, the kind of community that the learners have, plays a significant role on fostering students' learning. Everything in the community that the learner encounters contribute to their learning. Its physical condition, variety of residents and its social aspects affects student's learning.

These environments whether it is physical or psychological facet, affect the way that the learners are being motivated to engage themselves in learning. Students' engagement in the classroom has become an important consideration on measuring a student's learning. Student engagement refers to the degree of attention, curiosity, interest, optimism, and passion that students show when they are learning or being taught, which extends to the level of motivation they must learn and progress in their education. It is classified as a major determinant if the students are willing enough in acquiring knowledge. It determines if learning is of students' interest. By several periods, some teachers are curious on why their students do not look as if making any substantial progress in engaging themselves in the classroom daily discussions. They are not fond of engaging themselves in different activities provided by the teachers. One apparent factor behind

this situation is conducive learning atmosphere is not provided whether at school, at home and at the community.

Thus, the Department of Education, through the help of teachers, parents and other stakeholders continuously work hand in hand to ensure that a satisfactory learning atmosphere at school, home and in the community was maintained and as much as possible, it must be continuously enhanced to secure students' active engagement both in classroom and extra-curricular activities.

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pg. 19