

## **Professional Identity - Impact on students learning**

Professional identity is defined as the relatively stable and enduring constellation of attributes, beliefs, values, motives, and experiences in terms of which people define themselves in a professional role (Schein, 1978). Studies have shown that becoming a professional occurs on two levels (Hall, 1968; Kerr, VonGlinow, & Schriesheim, 1977). First, formal educational and entrance requirements for entry into the profession are needed. Next the development occurs on an attitudinal level, such as the individual's sense of "a calling" to the field. Stated another way, people entering a profession experience change externally, which is in the requirements of the specific career role, and internally, which is in the subjective self-conceptualization associated with the role (McGowen & Hart, 1990). This self-conceptualization can be viewed as one's professional identity.

### **Pre-Service Teachers**

New teachers begin as novices and advance through the developmental stages to finally become experts. Several reports indicate 25%-50% of beginning teachers resign during their first three years of teaching. Professional identity is a process of individual maturation and self-development that begins during a professional's initial training and evolves through the entry into and continued growth in the profession (Berliner, 1988; Brott & Kajs, 2001).

The assumption here is that professional identity forms over time with varied experiences and meaningful feedback which allows the individual to coordinate the external influences with their own internal belief system (Ibarra, 2000; Brott & Kjas, 2001). "A well defined professional identity happens on two levels: external and internal" (Brott & Kajs, 2001; Ibarra, 2000; Epstein, 1978). The picture or setting in

which this identity occurs shows mainly the external identity. That is how they are dressed, how they conduct themselves and their class, how the class interacts with them, and the resulting education that is achieved. Internal identity is more difficult to assess and much research has been done to show how those who match or fit in a given environment will thrive. The assumption being that if they are doing well externally, there must be underlying internal success. The two best known approaches to person-environment fit have been Holland's (1985) typological theory and the Minnesota Theory of Work Adjustment (Dawis & Lofquist, 1984).

The internal identity development occurs during the student teaching/master teacher mentor phase of training. The concept of 'becoming' a teacher has many levels. O'Conner relates this becoming to that of a mother. You do not just wake up one day and say 'oh I am a mum now". Instead they realize it is a journey. From acceptance of 'wanting to be', to acceptance of the responsibility of being to acceptance of learning along the journey and knowing that mistakes will be made to finally realizing that motherhood like professional teaching requires the taking on roles that we never dreamt in the beginning. (O'Conner, 2008)

### **Becoming an Educator**

Another way to look at this maturation process is to see the student teacher on a journey to 'becoming' a professional educator. The maturation process starts out with imitation where student teachers imitate mentor teacher's established practices. This imitation accomplishes two things. One is to try and 'fit in' in the classroom with the mentor teacher and the second is to see if the particular practice being imitated

coordinates with the student teachers personal style. Sort of like trying on clothes before you purchase to see if they fit (Grealish & Trevitt, 2005; Timmerman, 2009).

Student teachers require training to function today and education to meet the changes and challenges of tomorrow. (Schulman, 1998) The time in the field gives the student teacher the opportunity to not only sees but also to actually experience the connection between the university learning and the actual classroom.

Palmer argues that possessing the capacity for connectedness is inherent in effective teaching, which cannot be reduced to techniques precisely because of its emotional dimension. As Professional Educator we must know how to care the right way and amount. (Palmer, 1993; Grealish & Trevitt, 2005; Glasgow & Hicks, 2004) Student teachers with the collaboration of mentor teachers must constantly reflect upon teaching practices and their outcomes in order to improve upon them. The concept of Reflection is vital in the maturation process. Good teaching cannot be reduced to technique; good teaching comes from the identity and integrity of the teacher (Palmer, 1993).

Teaching style lies within us. During our journey in becoming of Professional Educators we must remain true to our internal beliefs. It is only then that we will respect ourselves and in turn gain respect of our mentors. (Glasgow & Hicks, 2005; Palmer, 1992) Palmer discusses good teachers 'refusal to harden their hearts' because they love learners, learning and the teaching life. This idea of including emotion and caring for the students and the profession permeates much of this literature review (O'Connor, 2008; Grealish & Trevitt, 2005; Timmerman, 2009).

This individualism develops in response to teachers working conditions is characterized by isolation and privacy. As Andy Hargreaves (1992) observes "individualism is primarily a shortcoming, not a strength, not a possibility; something to be removed rather than something to be respected" (p. 171). Individualism is in stark contrast to collaboration and collegiality that are the cornerstones democratic discourses and the development of an activist professional identity.

### **RESULTING PROFESSIONAL IDENTITY**

Professional identity is a continual growth process, tempered by experience, manifested in wisdom, and developed through observation, experimentation, and implementation. An article in the Australian Journal of Teacher Education points out "In the main it is our teacher "engagement [that] allows us to invest in what we do and in our relation with other people gaining a lived sense of who we are" (Wenger, 1998, p.192). The resulting 'sense of who we are' is our own individual professional identity. Our identity is constantly changing (adapting) to new environments or even being completely reconstructed to fit the new group of students or social criteria. Instead of assuming that teaching is the sum of knowledge, beliefs, and skill, we assume that teaching occurs through participation in a community of practice. Therefore, participation constantly leads to the formation of a new identity (Wenger, 1998).

### **Knowledge of Students - Avoid the simplistic individual**

#### **Teacher involvement**

Teachers who are willing to become involved in their student's identity place themselves in a position to avoid the simplistic individual. Skinner noted that teacher involvement did not directly influence outcomes, but it had a significant benefit for student engagement, which then was significant in the path to student outcomes.

Skinner & Belmont showed, in addition, that the influences were reciprocal: Student engagement affected teacher involvement as much as teacher involvement influenced student engagement.

### **Get to know students**

To become involved in students identity teachers use tools that will pinpoint particular characteristics in the individual. Learning styles is one of these particular characteristics that teachers need to investigate (Martin, Potter, 1998; Perrin, O'Brien, 1990). These educators agree that school should spend more time developing a student's awareness of their learning style. When students understand their learning style, they no longer need to feel different and can take comfort in this realization. An example of this would be students who need total quiet to study or need to mobile during class (Martin, Potter, 1998).

Self Efficacy is also a particular characteristic that needs to be identified. Only when teachers understand the student's level of self esteem can they help meet the students individual needs (Sheryn, Spencer, Northey 2005).

Icebreakers are tools that work very well in creating a sense of comfort both for the teacher as well as the students (Magnan, 2005; Sheryn, Spencer, Northey 2005). A valuable teacher quality is pace of class, only through constant evaluation of students learning levels can a teacher maintain the proper pace (Wenger, 2008; Hargreaves, 1994; Dunn & Dunn, 1993).

### **View of the real world**

Real-world experiences usually evoke keen attention and a sense of wonder. This condition is a motivating context for text-based learning. “Ross (1988) confirmed these effects in an extensive meta-analysis of literature. He found that hands-on science activities aroused attention, questions, and active learning” (Guthrie & Wigfield, 2000). Guthrie et al. (1998) found that reading instruction when embedded within an intrinsically motivating hands-on science curriculum increased reading comprehension, strategy use, and problem solving in third and fifth graders. Romance and Vitale (1992) studied an integrated curriculum that combined reading and hands-on activities in science. In a quasi-experimental comparison, students in the integrated curriculum scored higher on measures of reading achievement and science knowledge than did students pursuing a traditional form of instruction. To explain these effects, Anderson (1998) reasoned that hands-on science activities would motivate students to read deeply and, thus, increase their conceptual learning from text. Her findings showed that students who read texts in association with hands-on activities had higher comprehension and greater gains in conceptual knowledge than did students who read the same texts without the intrinsically motivating context.

### **Support as individuals**

Explicit instruction includes teacher modeling, scaffolding, and coaching, with direct explanation for why strategies are valuable and how and when to use them (Duffy et al., 1987; Paris, Wasik, & Turner, 1991). Fundamental to most theories of intrinsically motivated learning is self-perceived competence (Bandura, 1997; Deci & Ryan, 1987). In the domain of reading, students are given a sense of self-perceived competence when they are taught strategies for learning from text (Pressley, 1997).

Guthrie and Cox (in press) describe the benefit of embedding direct strategy instruction in a context of inquiry. They report a successful teacher who helped students identify the qualities of information books that make them helpful, such as the tables of contents, indexes, captions, and diagrams. Teaching for reading engagement is an interlocked composite of teaching practices that support the merger of motivation and strategies (Guthrie et al., 1996).

### **Recognize goals**

Goals developed by the teachers and the students in conjunction with external requirements from the school. Roeser, Midgley, and Urdan (1996) showed that teachers' learning-goal orientation in the classroom fostered their students' self-efficacy. When students believed that teachers thought that understanding the work was more important than simply answering correctly, students were likely to believe in their capacity to do the most difficult work. Students who were learning-goal oriented -- that is, dedicated to understanding content, using strategies effectively, and linking their new knowledge to previous experiences -- were likely to be more highly engaged than other students. In contrast, when students' goals are dominated by the performance orientation of seeking to outperform others or to demonstrate competence, they are less engaged in learning (Dweck & Leggett, 1988). The same is true of students in classrooms where procedures -- for example, correct completion of a complex series of steps -- are emphasized (Meece, Blumenfeld, & Hoyle, 1988).

### **Praise that is real**

Providing praise and rewards is a pervasive strategy for encouraging effort and attention. Effective teachers provide informative compliments that make learners feel a

sense of accomplishment and pride in their work. Wlodkowski (1985) suggests that praise should be “3S-3P”: praise that is sincere, specific, sufficient, and properly given for praiseworthy success in the manner preferred by the learner.

Note that teachers’ attempts at effective praise are not always successful. If students interpret praise as manipulative, their motivation may decline because they feel they are being treated as objects (Flint, Boggiano, Main, Barrett, & Katz, 1992). “However, when praise is sincerely given and interpreted as recognition of achievement, it can increase students’ self-perceived competence and motivation” (Guthrie & Wigfield, 2000, p. 414).

### **Evaluation to encourage**

Several classroom characteristics are necessary for effective student-centered evaluation. Teachers must provide ample time for students to think, plan, write, and revise (Oldfather & McLaughlin, 1993). Writing activities that invite a wide range of alternative genres and topics are more motivating than activities that are highly defined and constrained (Turner, 1995) -- but they are also more time consuming. Guthrie & Wigfield, 2000, p. 415)

However, if students are empowered to be express themselves, they will develop the view that knowledge is contextual, and that they can be effective users of strategies for knowing (Belenky, Clinchy, Goldberger, & Tarule, 1986).

Many investigators have suggested that some portion of evaluation should be directed toward student effort (Ames, 1992). When students are individually evaluated regarding their personal effort in the classroom rather than their status in comparison to



other students, they are likely to be task centered rather than grade centered in their view of evaluation (Rosenholtz & Simpson, 1984).

### **Motivate to Succeed**

Researchers have found motivation to be multifaceted. This means that within an individual, some types of motivation will be stronger than others. In motivation research, investigators have focused primarily on task-mastery orientation and performance orientation. Individuals with a mastery orientation seek to improve their skills and accept new challenges (Ames, 1992; Ames & Archer, 1988; Dweck & Leggett, 1988; Nicholls, 1979; Nicholls, Cheung, Lauer, & Patashnick, 1989). They are dedicated to content understanding and learning flexible skills. “Individuals with a performance (or ego) orientation attempt to maximize favorable evaluations of their ability.” (Thorkildsen & Nicholls, 1998). Performance orientation is seen as extrinsic motivation, which is associated with the use of surface strategies for reading and desire to complete a task rather than to understand or enjoy a text (Meece & Miller, 1999).

Although both these broad goal orientations have implications for motivation, most motivation researchers believe that the task-mastery goal is more likely to foster long-term engagement and learning than the performance goal, especially when the performance goal emphasizes fear of failure ([Ames, 1992](#); Maehr & Midgley, 1996).

Self-efficacy is another aspect of reading motivation. Bandura (1986) defines self-efficacy as “people’s judgments of their capabilities to organize and execute courses of action required to attain designated types of performances” (p. 391). Schunk and Zimmerman (1997) reviewed research showing that students with high self-efficacy

see difficult reading tasks as challenging and work diligently to master them, using their cognitive strategies productively.

## **Instructional Decision Making - Explain Content & Meet Students Needs**

### **Emotional and Interpersonal Development**

If the responsibility falls to the schools and teachers to make up for society's lack, schools have not yet responded to the social change. In fact, current educational reforms including curriculum frameworks are so filled with content, standards, benchmarks, and coverage that there is little room left to care (Hargreaves, 1994). Although cognitive development has been central to educational research, students' emotional development has been stressed far less. Novak and Fischer (1998) pointed out the lack of attention that past educational debates have paid to the interpersonal nature of teaching and learning. The current goals and aims of education are fixed toward the acquisition of content, but they should not be the only priority of our schools. "A focus on content ignores our children, their anxieties and relationships in the service of making them more competent in academic skills." (Noddings, 1992, p.4). Essentially by placing educator's focus on intellectual development, we fail to help students develop emotionally. Our goals should not be limited to content but should embrace the development of the whole child. As Dewey said, "We cannot teach children who are organic wholes as though they were mere collections of attributes or faculties." (Dewey, 1972, p. 54). Dewey refused to separate the intellectual from the moral and warned against starving human sensibilities. He explained that to learn to think independently and critically in a classroom means learning to think feelingly. Educational goals should

be dedicated to full human growth and address both the intellectual and emotional realms Hargreaves (1994) claimed that creating conditions where better emotional and cognitive understanding could occur between teachers and students should be an educational priority. He viewed emotions as part of the core of teaching. From his perspective, current educational reform efforts have ignored one of the most fundamental aspects of teaching, the emotional dimension. Emotional needs cannot go unattended when the goal is to educate. Unattended needs act as obstacles in the way of the educational process. Until they are addressed and taken seriously, they hinder the educational process and create higher chances of failure. When emotional needs are met, students will be more likely to engage in learning. Intellectual motivation will be stimulated and their desire to learn what is being taught will increase (Rogers, & Renard, 1999).

### **Cognitive Development vs. Emotional Development**

There is a general decline in self-esteem during adolescence (Milgram, 1992). Self-esteem lowers as self-consciousness is heightened (Wigfield & Eccles, 1994). Self dissatisfaction seems to be the most dramatic during the 6th grade for early adolescent students. (O'Connor, 1977). Following entry into middle school, early adolescents become increasingly more negative about themselves (Wigfield & Eccles, 1994), partly as a result of the transition from elementary to middle school. The changes that happen in adolescence vary among individuals and comparing themselves with one another can be upsetting. Adolescents often feel as though their bodies don't measure up to others when they are going through so many awkward physical changes. Cognitive abilities, including the ability to reason abstractly, also vary among students (Milgram, 1992).

These varying levels can determine academic performance and when performance is low, compared to others, one's self-esteem may be lowered. As adolescents become more and more conscious of themselves, they also may start to worry more about what others think of them. They are developing the ability to see other points of view and to empathize, and as a result, they wonder increasingly what impression they are making on others (Milgram, 1992). This maturing ability to empathize is another factor that contributes to an already heightened level of awareness and self-consciousness. In addition to a struggle with self-esteem, adolescents struggle with strong emotional reactions and instability. They either love school or they hate it, adore their classes or despise them. They have a tendency to rush into anything that interests them and can become so excited that they lose self-control and then can just as quickly revert to the opposite extreme (Michael, 1964). They like things with which they are familiar although they have enlarged their horizons. They are prepared to be challenged but may exhibit extremes of enthusiasm or dislike. Stamina and energy are variable and moods change fluctuating between melancholy and optimism (Michael, 1964). They are taking long strides toward maturity but still display evidences of instability and extremes of emotion.

The complexity of this age makes understanding difficult and demands from the teacher a delicate but firm touch. Teachers can be disturbed by the pupil's tendency to withdraw, to brood, even sometimes to be sullen and unresponsive (Michael, 1964). However, instructors need to be patient and fair and find a good balance between being too soft or too firm. Although students want to be accountable and respect discipline, their conduct is often related to attitudes toward the teacher (Michael, 1964). They can be especially critical of the teacher's methods of handling the class. A teacher who

exhibits fairness, patience, and understanding may most affectively interact with adolescent students.

However, “if the teacher is able to maintain a consistently friendly, warm and non-punitive attitude over a sufficient length of time in the face of what is often active hostility, a new social attitude may eventually develop” (Michael, 1964, p.22). Any adolescent, regardless of their attitudes and behaviors, because of the developmental turbulence they face will benefit from sympathetic and understanding teachers (Milgram, 1992). Support, praise, and encouragement from teachers may help them find triumph in their struggles and see them successfully through the tribulations of adolescence. “Virtually all of our behaviors in the classroom constitute emotional lessons that we teach our students about the meaning of development.” (Solodow, 1999, p.25).

Supportive teacher and peer relations have been found to contribute to positive school functioning for adolescent students (Ryan, Stiller & Lynch, 1994). Students who felt they had no one to rely on while experiencing emotional or school concerns have been likely to show lower levels of self-esteem, motivation and identity integration than those students who felt supported (Ryan, Stiller & Lynch, 1994). A teacher can effectively provide them with the emotional and school support that they need (Ryan, Stiller & Lynch, 1994).

### ***Classroom Community***

Researchers have supported the idea that a classroom that values both the affective and cognitive realm and an atmosphere of community is the type of environment in which teachers are most effective and learning is most successful (Hansen, 1998; Larrivee, 1999; Strahan, Smith, McElrath, & Toole, 2001). Hansen

(1998) informed educators that community can be understood as another name for order, in the sense of establishing relations that allow teachers and students to grow intellectually and morally. He reflected on Aristotle's claim that people cannot flourish without this sense of community. Our connections with other people is how we grow and become human. The child as, Vygotsky (1962) described, is not learning about the world alone but in unison with others who are representative members of both the culture and the language. Likewise, according to Dewey (1972), to conduct education ethically we must consider the child as both an individual and a member of a specific society. He claimed this as the school's responsibility to society and believed the workings of society ought to be reflected in schools. In this way students will learn the skills necessary for functioning in society. Social capacities evolve from the social conditions that prevail and these internal processes must eventually be tied to action (Bigge, & Schermis, 1999). The school can only prepare children for social life by engaging in social life. This means the classroom ought to reproduce the typical conditions of social life. The formation of social relations is essential if learning is to take place. "Knowledge emerges from human interaction and affects subsequent human interaction." (Hansen, 1998, p.399). When people work together in situations of positive interdependence, achievement levels are higher (Bruner, 1990; Gardner, 2000; Vygotsky, 1962). Bruner (1990) encouraged learners to actively engage in the learning process and claimed the importance of the instructor and students' co-existence in a more cooperative position with respect to this process.

Cooperative learning experiences in the classroom put children in contact with one another and can help them to develop morally, socially, and emotionally. The

relationships that students have with peers contribute significantly to their sense of belonging, social importance, self-esteem, and connectedness to the learning environment. Cooperative learning strategies have been shown to promote social competence and pro-social values, and to reduce anti-social and behavior problems in school-age children (Dasho, Lewis and Watson, 2001). Cooperative learning also provides opportunities to build community, hold up social interaction skills, and to benefit children with the feeling of success from contributing to group success. “Conscious and deliberate efforts to help children develop strong interpersonal skills are an essential aspect of a socially and emotionally sensitive school climate” (Fopiano & Haynes, p.52, 2001).

In organizing cooperative learning experiences, Dasho, Lewis & Watson (2001) designed blueprints for the teacher that focused on choosing intrinsically motivating tasks in which students engage, teaching skills in working together such as helpfulness, sharing responsibilities and respect, and reflecting and sharing perspectives on the experience of working together. They suggested that children getting to know each other in the beginning of the school year would help these skills develop more readily and may diminish the opportunity for the ‘picked-on’ child to emerge. When teachers are trying to build trusting relationships among students, they should refrain from practices such as writing the names of misbehaving children on the board (Dasho, Lewis & Watson, 2001). This could cause ill effects on the relationships as children often don’t want to play with the “bad” kids or the kids in trouble. Singling kids out for any reason can undermine friendships, whether because of humiliation or envy. It also places the

focus on the individual successes and failure rather than on the feelings and needs of others or social and ethical development (Dasho, Lewis & Watson, 2001).

In order to learn how to engage in caring relationships, considerate of feelings and needs, skills in emotional and interpersonal intelligence's that contribute to an atmosphere of social and caring relations must be taught (Dewey, 1972). Studies show that humans are not born instinctively knowing how to cooperate with others, therefore, interpersonal and group skills must be explicitly taught (Gardner, 2000). Transforming a classroom environment into a caring community will result in students who will more naturally connect with the content with which they are confronted and will more naturally connect with the people they encounter. The classroom provides the context in which caring connections can become a part of a child's experience and subsequent cognitive structures and behaviors. When children interact within their environment they form their understandings and realizations (Bigge, & Schermis, 1999). When a student reaches out to his or her psychological environment, what they encounter is primarily the teacher's responsibility. Educators need to be mindful of the powerful influence they have over what students will experience. The psychological environment created by the mindful educator can help students learn how to be members of a community, learn how to care about others, and to be cared about. To grow in a critical sense means developing a sense of caring to think respectfully and to be mindful that we each exist in relation with other human beings (Dewey, 1972). A caring classroom community would allow ample opportunity to bring caring into the experiences of students. Feeling connected to a community builds the foundation of caring which is set in relations: "...the recognition of and longing for relatedness" (Noddings, 1984, p. 6). The building of this



type of community depends largely on the teacher, who knows and understands the students' behaviors in the psychological environment, the classroom. A teacher's intellectual and moral sensibility fuels the classroom community. Their sensitivity and social consciousness helps them to know how to meaningfully connect with other people and to foster those same connections among the students. Empathy, intuition, and thoughtfulness are personality traits that contribute to the sensitivity that is needed for a teacher to effectively transfer his or her classroom into a caring community (Hansen, 1998). The teacher provides a model for students in the creation of a classroom community. "What we are teaches the child more than what we say, so we must be what we want our children to become" (Childre, 1996, p.11). In order to support their developing skills in caring, teachers must show themselves as one caring (Noddings, 1992). Showing themselves as one-caring implies establishing a relation with students and engaging in cooperative practices with them. In this way, besides learning math or science, students are learning how to be one-caring. "The capacity to care may be dependent on adequate experience in being cared-for" (Noddings, 1992).

Creating this type of environment relies on a committed teacher who listens to students, validates their opinions and ideas, and believes in their capabilities. The teacher who makes these efforts creates real connections with students and the strong student-teacher alliances that are necessary in establishing a caring learning community.

## **Classroom Management - Effective Practices**

**Why is classroom management important?**

In a classroom, conflict is inevitable, and one of a teacher's functions is to deal with such conflicts. *The First Days of School* by Harry & Rosemary Wong presents classroom management as one of the three major elements of being an effective teacher. The other two are teaching for lesson mastery and practicing positive expectations. Some break effective teaching into two major skills: instruction and management (Curwin & Mendler. 1998; Evertson, Emmer. Sanford & Clements, 1983; Patterson, 2009). A teacher cannot be effective without being able to deal with inevitable conflicts. A teacher may be very knowledgeable about the material *and* qualified at instruction without being skilled in classroom management. The effectiveness of good instruction is lessened by poor quality classroom management skills. Students will not absorb as much material. and instruction will take longer (Colvin, Flannery, Sugai, & Monegan J. 2009). In the words of Dreikurs and Cassel. "discipline is the fulcrum of education. Without discipline both teacher and pupil become unbalanced and very little learning takes place." (1972. p19).

### **What is successful classroom management?**

Classroom management has been defined as "the provisions and procedures necessary to establish and maintain an environment in which instruction and learning may occur" (Hofmeister& Lubke, 1990,p. 162). Notice that this definition says nothing about keeping the classroom quiet. The goal is to guide the students "without letting them run wild or alternately stifling them" (Dreikurs & Cassel, 1972, p. 19). A classroom might be noisy while there is a lot of learning happening! When considering classroom management, it's important to consider the dynamics of the classroom. There are three groups of students in a typical classroom. About 80

percent of students "rarely break rules or violate principles", about 15 percent "break rules on a somewhat regular basis, and about 5 percent "are chronic rule breakers and generally out of control most of the time." The trick of a good management plan is to "control the 15 percent without alienating the 80 percent and without backing the 5 percent into a corner" (Curwin & Mendler, 1988, p. 28). This is called the 80-15-5 principle. Before discussing effective classroom management techniques discovered by researchers, it is practical to be aware of just how researchers measure effective management (Colvin, Flannery, Sugai, & Monegan J. 2009). Researchers typically use a combination of two elements in determining whether classroom management is successful. The most obvious is lack of inappropriate behavior in the classroom. The other is the on-task behavior of the students. The existence or non-existence of these two elements determine whether or not the student is doing what he should be doing, i.e. paying attention to the teacher, doing their work, etc.

Studies have shown that the smoothness of the transition between activities is extremely important for keeping the student on-task. (Scott, 1997; Kounin & Doyle, 1975; Colvin, Flannery, Sugai, & Monegan J. 2009). Kounin & Gump also found that the type of activity influenced the extent of the students being on task. The students were most on-task if they were doing individual work. They were fairly well on task if they had one thing to pay attention to, i.e. a teacher demonstration. However, the students were easily distracted if they needed to interact with other children, as in role-play or group work (1974). First, he found that the length of activities was also important. Fewer episodes, which lasted longer periods of time, seemed to keep the students more engrossed rather than a larger number of shorter activities. This may be

in part due to the difficulty of making smooth transitions between activities. Secondly, he found that effective teachers used the beginning period of the day to establish patterns for the rest of the day. One common way of doing this is to go through, and perhaps post the schedule for the day and explain what is expected of the students for the day. Lastly, he found that effective managers expressed a greater amount of positive emotional feelings toward the students (1997).

Herman and Tramontana, in their research on Head Start children found results relating to the effectiveness of establishing expectations through instruction and the effectiveness of reinforcement. They found that "the combination of instruction and reinforcement is much more effective than either one of these alone" (Herman & Tramontana, 1971, p. 113). Basically, this means that establishing expectations and reinforcing the students when expectations are or are not met is the best way to achieve the "target behaviors." While this research did not specifically address rules and their consequences, it seems that there is enough of a parallel to conclude that having rules and consequences are an effective practice.

### **Prevention/Intervention**

Classroom management seems to be made up of two parts: prevention and intervention (Patterson, 2009; Morrissey, Bohanon, Fenning, 2010; Wong, Wong, 1998). When trying to prevent problems, consider the question "What can be done to prevent problems?" When intervening, ask yourself: "What can be done when misbehavior occurs to solve the problem without making it worse?" The most popular preventative measure is establishing rules and consequences. Hofmeister and Lubke give an example of a rule as a preventative measure in *Research into Practice* (1990, p. 164). "Rules should have a strong preventative role. For example, if a teacher constantly

reprimands students for playing with objects on their desks and sets no rules related to what should be on the desk for a specific activity, he or she has failed to make use of a simple preventative option - the use of a set of rules to guide the effective use of desk space in school and in future work places." Probably the most common intervention measure is to enforce a rule when it is broken by applying a consequence. Our goal as managers should be to try to do as much in the way of prevention as possible. As the old saying goes, "an ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure. " (Benjamin Franklin)

### **What is successful classroom management?**

Kounin's publication of 1970 reporting his study of 80 first and second grade classrooms was the groundbreaker for beginning research on classroom management. He found five major characteristics of good managers, as listed below (Kounin, 1970; Morrissey, Bohanon, Fenning. 2010; Wong, Wong. 1998).

- Teacher is aware of what is happening in the classroom at all times
- Teacher maintains a smooth flow of activities without delays and avoids interruptions
- Teacher maintains the attention of the whole class by trying to keep the students alert and interested and by not focusing too long on a single student
- Teacher is able to deal with several things simultaneously
- Teacher provides students with varied and challenging tasks

Kounin found that one way good managers maintained a smooth flow of activities was to give firm, quiet reprimands; these kind of reprimands allow the focus to remain on instruction. He also found that the firm, quiet reprimands were more effective than

angry and punitive ones (Kounin, 1970). "Influenced heavily by the previous work of Kounin," Jere Brophy and Carolyn Evertson followed up with a five-year study on teacher effectiveness in second and third grade classrooms (1976, p. 51). One of the focuses of the study was effective classroom management. A large portion of the research results reinforced the findings of Kounin. Similarly to Kounin's fifth major finding. Brophy and Evertson learned that more effective managers individualized the students work more often, which resulted in the students working consistently with fewer interruptions. They likewise found that monitoring, Kounin's first major finding, was important. They further learned that effective teachers often stationed themselves in places where monitoring would be easy. Finally, Brophy and Evertson found that maintaining a smooth flow of activities (Kounin's second major finding) was also important. Specifically, they found that keeping transitions short and delivering reprimands in a calm, controlled manner were effective (Patterson, 2009; Morrissey, Bohanon, Fenning. 2010; Wong, Wong. 1998). They learned the importance of intervening quickly, before escalation was possible (Brophy & Evertson, 1976). Brophy and Evertson learned that the existence of rules makes for a better managed classroom. They also found that the number of rules is significant. If a teacher has too many rules, the rules tend to be "overly specific and essentially meaningless" (Brophy & Evertson, 1976, p. 58). The more effective teachers explained the rules well at the beginning of the school year and had a class discussion on the reasons behind the rules (Patterson, 2009; Morrissey, Bohanon, Fenning. 2010; Wong, Wong. 1998; Colvin, Flannery, Sugai, & Monegan 2009). Discussing the rules with the class seems to have the effect of helping the students to understand the rules,

as well as to remember them (Brophy & Evertson, 1976). Brophy and Evertson also learned that teachers relied on students to manage themselves! When students needed help with an assignment, some effective managers set up a system where the students ask a classmate first. Effective managers also established something for students to do when they completed their work. Students were expected to go to a learning center in the room, or play a prepared game *independently* upon completing work. Both techniques are time savers for teachers (Brophy & Evertson, 1976). Finally, Brophy and Evertson found that there is a strong relationship between student learning gains and good management. In their words, "The reasons seem obvious: teachers who have few discipline problems therefore have most of their time available for teaching and are more likely to teach successfully compared to teachers who spend significant amounts of time fighting for attention or trying to deal with severe disruptions and discipline problems" (1976, p. 54). The work of Evertson and Brophy in the area of management didn't end with this long study!

### **Rules/Consequences**

Anderson, Evertson and Brophy used the beginning of the school year to teach rules and procedures and to practice them with the students. Teachers followed through with consequences in a matter-of-fact manner and gave their students specific feedback - both positive and negative feedback (Anderson, Evertson & Emmer, 1980; Evertson & Anderson, 1979 ). Third, "teacher skills in diagnosing students' focus of attention," (Anderson, Evertson & Emmer, 1980; Patterson, 2009). Effective managers were able to monitor behavior and to recognize whether students were on task (Wong, Wong, 1998). When finding a student not on task the effective manager strives to figure

out why. If a student was in need of information, the teacher provided the information quickly. In addition to being good monitors, the teachers actually "planned the day carefully enough to make sure that monitoring could be accomplished easily" (Evertson & Anderson, 1979). In general, the effective manager strives to keep the students' attention for the entire class period (Colvin, Flannery, Sugai, & Monegan J. 2009) .

Some of the different means teachers used are listed below.

- They arranged desks so that the students faced or could easily face the point in the room where they most often focused attention.
- The teachers successfully used various 'tricks' for grabbing students' attention during lessons (moderating voice, movement, and pace).
- The teacher scheduled the day's work so that the students could begin with activities in which it was easy to focus attention and participate right away (especially when children or groups of children have difficulty 'settling in' at first). After successfully participating in an initial activity, the students could more easily slip into more demanding activities.
- The better managers clearly started and stopped activities, providing warnings before transitions, and they used other strategies to break momentum when necessary as well as to restart it (Anderson, Evertson & Emmer, 1980, p. 352).

In 1979, Brophy and McCaslin did a study on the management of grade school students, the Classroom Strategy Study. The students had various types of problem behaviors; i.e. low achievers, under-achievers, etc. They found that more effective teachers were able to come up with more detailed and more long-term strategies for



improving various problem situations. They also found that effective teachers were more willing to be personally involved in working with their students (1992).

The studies done on junior high teachers yielded concrete suggestions for effective classroom management, several of which overlap with the results from research on management in grade schools. Both junior high studies agreed that the first day of school is extremely important for establishing control for the rest of the year (Moskowitz & Hayman, 1976; Evertson & Emmer, 1982). Evertson & Emmer listed some of the important parts of the first day (1982). They found that more effective teachers:

- were better at teaching rules and procedures
- had students keep copies of the rules
- were more explicit about desired behavior
- had expectations about call outs, movement about the room, talking among students and hand-raising.

### **Range of Consequences**

In *Discipline with Dignity* suggests that a teacher should have a range of consequences. Having a range of consequences enables the teacher to choose the most appropriate consequence when enforcing a rule, while maintaining consistency at the same time (the importance of consistency is discussed later). The range of consequences for a rule can typically include a reminder, a warning, and a number of logical consequences. Consider the following example taken from *Discipline with Dignity* (Curwin, Mendler, 1988).

Rule: Homework must be turned in on time

## Range of Consequences:

- Reminder of the rule
- Warning
- Hand in homework the close of school that day.
- Stay after school to finish homework.
- A conference between teacher, student, and parent to develop an action plan for completing homework on time.

If Miss Martin has two students that didn't turn in their homework one day, she can give them different consequences, depending on her judgment. Suppose Susan has never missed an assignment before and today she does because of the confusion of her father being taken to the hospital. Miss Martin may choose to simply give her a reminder or a warning. In doing this, she has not failed to deliver a consequence. If Tom gives her an excuse, but he has already shown up without homework 10 times already, Miss Martin may decide to set up a conference (Curwin & Mendler, 1988).

In Conclusion, this literature review brings to light 4 current trends in how to impact students in the classroom; Professional Identity, Knowledge of Students, Instructional Decision Making, and Classroom Management. A teacher needs to be attentive to their own Professional Identity and how students respond. One of the most important aspects to teaching students is for a teacher to work on is getting to know their students. Once a teacher has developed their Professional Identity and has gotten to know their students then the teacher can create an environment where students will be allowed to learn best. This environment can be described as Instructional Decision

Making. And finally, teachers must complete the learning environment with proper classroom management which is consistent with the other three elements. This consistency idea is based upon respect for the individual.

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