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## ABSTRACT

Ideas regarding the nature of appropriate and inappropriate behaviors and how to control them vary among teachers and can play an important role in classroom management. The purpose of this study was to investigate the differences between the beliefs of experienced and pre-service teachers regarding classroom management. Within this study, classroom management is defined as a multi-faceted process that includes three broad dimensions: (1) the person dimension (what teachers believe about students as persons); (2) the instructional dimension; and (3) the discipline component. Data were collected from 201 subjects (53 percent pre-service teachers and 47 percent experienced teachers) via the Inventory of Classroom Management Styles (ICMS), Rotter's Internal-External Locus of Control Scale, and demographics. The ICMS represents a major revision of Tamashiro's (1980) Beliefs on Discipline Inventory, consists of 10 forced-choice items, and considers each of the 3 dimensions of classroom management. Beliefs were classified on a continuum that reflects the degree of teacher power over students. The continuum is categorized into three segments--noninterventionist, interactionalist, and interventionist. Results indicate that external preservice teachers scored significantly more noninterventionist than external experienced teachers who scored more interventionist; with respect to locus of control, experienced teachers were found to score significantly more internal than preservice teachers. (Contains 18 references.) (Author/LL)

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Beliefs Regarding Classroom Management Style: The Differences  
Between Pre-Service and Experienced Teachers

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## ABSTRACT

Ideas regarding the nature of appropriate and inappropriate behaviors and how to control them vary among teachers and can play an important role in the nature of classroom management. The purpose of this study was to investigate the differences between the beliefs of experienced and pre-service teachers regarding classroom management. Within this study, classroom management is defined as a multi-faceted process that includes three broad dimensions--person, instruction, and discipline.

Data were collected from 201 subjects (53% pre-service teachers and 47% experienced teachers) via the Inventory of Classroom Management Styles (ICMS), Rotter's I-E Locus of Control Scale, and demographics. The ICMS represents a major revision of Tamashiro's (1980) Beliefs on Discipline Inventory, consists of 10 forced-choice items, and considers each of the three dimensions of classroom management. Beliefs were classified on a continuum that reflects the degree of teacher power over students (Wolfgang & Glickman, 1980, 1986). The continuum is categorized into three segments--non-interventionist, interactionalist, and interventionist.

Data were analyzed utilizing an analysis of variance. Significant differences were found regarding a variety of variables for both total scores and subscores.

## **Beliefs Regarding Classroom Management Style: The Differences Between Pre-Service and Experienced Teachers**

For purposes of this paper, it is important to distinguish between classroom management and discipline. Although often used interchangeably by the lay person, the two terms are not synonymous. The literature generally defines classroom management as a broad, umbrella term that includes, but is not limited to, discipline concerns (Johns, MacNaughton, & Karabinus, 1989; Lemlech, 1988; Wolfe, 1988; Wolfgang & Glickman, 1980, 1986).

Creating an optimum instructional climate is no easy task. Rust (1992) reports anecdotal evidence from two first-year teachers who report high levels of stress and frustration as the result of classroom management concerns. Although discipline was reported as a primary concern, other more general aspects of classroom management were also reported as sources of frustration. Both teachers also reported a sense of shock and disillusionment with the new-found realities of the classroom.

Perhaps more distressing is Kagan's (1992) synthesis of the literature which reveals that the majority of studies indicate subjects perceive a "lack of connection" between the information provided in teacher preparation coursework and the real classroom (p. 156). Until recently teacher preparation programs focused on lesson preparation and did not consider classroom management to be a fundamental concern. While no one would negate the importance of instructional planning, perhaps educators should now begin to recognize both effective instruction and effective classroom management as two vital and intertwined components of the instructional process (Johns, MacNaughton, & Karabinus, 1989).

Within this study, classroom management is defined as a multi-faceted process that includes three broad dimensions--person, instruction, and

discipline. The person dimension includes what teachers believe about students as persons and what they do to enable pupils to develop as individuals. Dimension two, the instructional dimension, incorporates what teachers do to enable students to learn such as the establishment and maintenance of classroom routines, physical room arrangement, and the use of time. Finally, the discipline component, entails those behaviors that teachers use to set standards for behavior and to enforce those standards.

Willower, Eidell, and Hoy's classic (1967) monograph describes an ideological continuum regarding pupil control. The continuum ranges from custodial--where the main concern is the maintenance of order--to humanistic--where school is perceived as a community in which its members learn via interaction and experience (p. 5).

More recently, Wolfgang and Glickman (1980, 1986) conceptualized another framework to explain teacher beliefs toward discipline. Based on a combination of psychological interpretations, the continuum illustrates three approaches to classroom interaction--non-interventionists, interventionists, and interactionalists. The non-interventionist presupposes the child has an inner drive that needs to find its expression in the real world. Proponents of transactional analysis are considered non-interventionists. At the opposite end of the continuum are interventionists--those who emphasize what the outer environment (of people and objects) does to the human organism to cause it to develop in its particular way. Traditional behavior modification provides the foundation for this school of thought. Midway between these two extremes, interactionalists focus on what the individual does to modify the external environment as well as what the environment does to shape him or her. Alfred Adler, Rudolf Dreikurs, and William Glasser are considered to be interactionalists. The assumption is that teachers believe and act according to

all three models of discipline, but one usually predominates in beliefs and actions (Wolfgang & Glickman, 1980; 1986).

Research suggests that less experienced teachers differ from and are influenced by those with more experience regarding their attitudes pertaining to discipline. Etheridge, James, and Bryant (1981) report that, immediately prior to the student teaching experience, a significant difference was determined between the beliefs of student teachers and their supervising teachers regarding discipline. However, at the conclusion of the student teaching experience, student teacher beliefs appeared to become more interventionist in nature and the differences between the two groups were no longer statistically significant.

Similarly, more recent research indicates that beginning teachers' attitudes shift and become more pessimistic and controlling (Hoy & Woolfolk, 1990; Mcneely & Mertz, 1990). Swanson, O'Connor, and Cooney (1990) report that novice teachers tend to respond in ways that are less directive and obtrusive than their experienced counterparts. "New" teachers appeared to be patient, share responsibility, and interact with students. More experienced teachers, however, tended to react in a manner that could be classified as more interventionist in nature--insisting on appropriate behavior, using time-out procedures, punishing students, etc. (Swanson, O'Connor, and Cooney, 1990).

The facets of classroom management may, in turn, vary as a function of locus of control orientation (Hartman & Fuqua, 1983; Rotter, 1966; Taylor, 1982). Based on social learning theory, the concept posits that individuals differ in the degree to which they attribute reinforcements to their own actions (internality) or to other forces such as luck, chance, fate, or powerful others (externality) (Rotter, 1966, 1975).

Rotter's classic (1966) article synthesizes much of the research in the area of locus of control and reports that: 1. External individuals are less likely to expect future success than internals since internals perceive success to be the result of their own skill and efforts; 2. Internals are likely to (a.) be more alert to those aspects of the environment which provide useful information for future behavior, (b.) take steps to improve the environmental condition, (c.) place greater value on skill or achievement reinforcements and be generally more concerned with his or her ability, and (d.) be resistive to subtle attempts of influence.

Although a large body of research exists on the subject of discipline, little has been done regarding the broader concept of classroom management. The purpose of this study was to investigate the differences between the beliefs of experienced and pre-service teachers regarding classroom management. Two hypotheses were tested. First, it was hypothesized that pre-service teachers would score significantly more non-interventionist than experienced teachers and that there would be a significant interaction effect between locus of control, classroom management style and years of teaching experience. Second, researchers hypothesized that experienced teachers would score significantly more internal on the I-E Locus of Control Scale.

### Methodology

#### Participants

College students enrolled at a mid-sized university in the south were drawn from sections of education courses. There were 201 participants; 53% were pre-service teachers and 47% experienced teachers. The subject pool was composed primarily of females (86.4%; 13.6% males). The mean age of participants was 31.49 (experienced teachers:  $M = 35.73$ ; pre-service teachers:  $M = 27.77$ ). The majority (95.5%) of the subject pool was white; 3.5%, black, 1%

other. Those certified or expecting certification at the elementary level accounted for 59% of participants.

### Instruments

Data were collected via the Inventory of Classroom Management Styles (ICMS), Rotter's Internal-External (I-E) Locus of Control Scale, and demographics. The ICMS represents a major revision of Tamashiro's Beliefs on Discipline Inventory (BDI) (Wolfgang & Glickman, 1980, 1986).

Because the BDI pertains only to teacher beliefs regarding discipline rather than the more broad subject of classroom management, it was considered too narrow in focus for this study. In addition to the discipline dimension, the ICMS includes the instructional and person dimensions of classroom management. The ICMS consists of 10 forced-choice items, and classifies each of the three dimensions of classroom management on a continuum categorized into three segments--non-interventionist, interactionalist, and interventionist (Wolfgang & Glickman, 1980, 1986). Scores on the ICMS range from 10 (most non-interventionist) to 30 (most interventionist); scores approaching the mid-point of 20 are indicative of interactionalist ideology. Validity studies are currently in progress.

The Rotter's I-E Locus of Control Scale consists of 23 forced choice items plus six filler items. Robinson and Shaver (1973) report that the scale is used most often with college students. Internal items are paired with external items. One point is given for each external response. Scores range from zero (most internal) to 23 (most external). Internal reliability estimates range from .65 to .79 (Rotter, 1966).

### Results

H<sub>1</sub>: Pre-service teachers will score significantly more non-interventionist than experienced teachers and there will be a significant interaction effect



between locus of control and classroom management style and years of teaching experience. The first hypothesis was tested using a 2X2 ANOVA. Scores on the I-E Locus of Control Scale and years of teaching experience were the independent variables. Scores on the ICMS served as the dependent variable. Results were significant at the .05 level ( $p < .05$ ). (See Table 1.) Post hoc analyses revealed significant differences between external, pre-service teachers ( $M = 19.57$ ) and external, experienced teachers ( $M = 21.12$ ). No significant differences were determined between those characterized by internal locus of control. The mean score for internal, pre-service teachers was  $M = 20.73$  while internal, experienced teachers averaged  $M = 20.40$ .

H<sub>2</sub>: Experienced teachers will score significantly more internal on the I-E Locus of Control Scale. The second hypothesis was tested via a one-way ANOVA. Years of teaching experience was the independent variable, while scores on the I-E Locus of Control Scale served as the dependent variable. Results were significant at the .05 level ( $p < .05$ ). (See Table 2.) The mean score for experienced teachers was  $M = 8.55$  while pre-service teachers' scores averaged  $M = 9.82$ --significantly more external.

TABLE 1  
2X2 ANOVA: ANALYSIS OF YEARS TEACHING EXPERIENCE, LOCUS OF CONTROL  
AND CLASSROOM MANAGEMENT STYLE

SOURCE	df	SS	MS	F
Internal Vs. External	1	4.635	4.635	.619
Yrs. Teaching Experience	1	11.809	11.809	1.576
Interaction Effect	1	40.960	40.960	5.466*
Between	3	59.800	19.933	
Within	187	1401.299	7.494	
Total	190	1461.099	7.690	

\*significant at  $p < .02$

TABLE 2  
1-WAY ANOVA: ANALYSIS OF YEARS TEACHING EXPERIENCE AND LOCUS OF CONTROL

SOURCE	df	SS	MS	F
Between	1	77.02	77.02	4.74*
Within	189	3070.85	16.25	
Total	190	3147.86		

\*significant at  $p < .05$

### Discussion

Results indicate that external, pre-service teachers are likely to be characterized as more non-interventionist while external, experienced teachers are likely to be more interventionist in their classroom management styles. It could be that external, experienced teachers are more interventionist because they perceive outside pressure from others such as administrators, parents, and/or other teachers to take an active, controlling approach to classroom situations. External pre-service teachers may, upon entering the field of teaching, become more interventionist in their approach again as the result of outside influences. Others may leave the classroom.

Both pre-service and experienced teachers described as internal locus of control were found to be likely to approach the classroom in a more interactionalist manner. It could be that internals perceive that their interactions with students may make a difference in the outcome of a particular situation while externals do not.

The second hypothesis discerned that experienced teachers were significantly more internal than pre-service teachers. Because experienced teachers were drawn from graduate courses in education, this may be simply mean that internals are more likely to pursue graduate education than their external counterparts. These subjects may not be representative of the general population of experienced teachers. Because ICMS validation studies are currently in progress, findings within this study may simply be the result of the nature of the instrument.

### Summary & Conclusions

In the minds of teachers, discipline is considered one of the most enduring and wide spread problems in education (Johns, MacNaughton, & Karabinus, 1989; Long & Frye, 1989; Willower, Eidell, & Hoy, 1967). Still, no aspect of the instructional process exists in a vacuum. Discipline is no exception and should be considered as an integral part of overall classroom management rather than a separate entity.

Beliefs regarding the nature of appropriate and inappropriate behaviors and how to control them vary among teachers and can play an important role in the determination of teacher behavior (Willower, Eidell, & Hoy, 1967; Wolfgang & Glickman, 1980, 1986). Wolfgang and Glickman (1980, 1986) continuum of beliefs regarding discipline ranges from non-interventionist to interventionist with interactionalists mid-way between the two extreme points.

Research has revealed significant differences between certain groups pertaining to beliefs regarding discipline, but little has been done considering the broader concept of classroom management. The purpose of this study was to investigate the differences between the beliefs of experienced and pre-service teachers regarding classroom management.

Data were collected utilizing the Inventory of Classroom Management Styles (ICMS), I-E Locus of Control Scale, and demographics. Validity studies for ICMS are currently in progress. Findings indicate that external pre-service teachers scored significantly more non-interventionist ( $M = 19.57$ ) than external experienced teachers who scored more interventionist ( $M = 21.12$ ). Regarding locus of control ( $H_2$ ), experienced teachers were found to score significantly more internal than pre-service teachers.

There can be little doubt that the novice teacher encounters a variety of new experiences in the classroom. Their beliefs regarding these experiences

and the manner in which they approach them work together to create a unique and individual style of classroom management. Efficient lesson planning and effective classroom management are both necessary in order for learning to take place. This, then, seems an area fruitful for future research.

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