THE SELECTION PROCESS

OF CLASSROOM

MANAGEMENT

THEORIES

By

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PREFACE

When I received a bachelors degree in 1985, there was no desire to continue my education and pursue a masters degree. The opportunity to move into school administration presented itself last year and I was given the position of Dean of Students until the completion of my masters degree. Unsure that I wanted to return to school, I enrolled in three courses, one of which was with Dr. Susan Breck. One of the best decisions I made was asking Dr. Breck to be my academic advisor. Her commitment to excellence, patience, support, and guidance made it possible for me to succeed. With sincere gratitude, I wish to thank Dr. Breck, Dr. Leah Engelhardt, and Dr. John Steinbrink for participating as members of my committee.

I apologize to my wife Tammy, my son Tyler, and my daughter Tara for the many nights, weekends, and other time that was taken from them to pursue this degree. They never questioned or complained when I was unable to be there. Their love and support was the driving force that allowed me to complete the degree that I once thought was not possible.

Finally, I want to thank my wife's parents, Glenn and Lucy Cook, for their support. They realize the importance and benefits of an education and have provided all their children with encouragement and support to pursue higher education. I am proud to call them family and honored to know my children have them as grandparents.

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Studies have verified that students learn more in a well-managed classroom than in a poorly managed one (Railsback, 1992). Poor classroom management in our schools interferes with student learning and erodes teachers' morale (Wynne & Ryan, 1993). The intent in having a well-managed classroom is neither to receive high evaluations from the administration nor to maintain one's sanity but rather to produce a climate where learning can take place (Phelps, 1991). Classrooms are crowded and busy places in which groups of students who vary in interests and abilities must be organized and directed in ways that maximize work involvement and minimize disruptions (Doyle, 1990). Any classroom has the potential of developing problems. Whether the class develops its full potential depends primarily on how it is managed (Jones, 1987). It is assumed that teachers have a responsibility to get and maintain control of their classrooms (Kohn, 1996). As classroom managers, they are encouraged to focus on a student's behavior and attempt to alter those they deem inappropriate.

The sources of school discipline problems are many and varied (Canter & Canter, 1976). Home, society, and school all play an important role. Educators contend that problems in school stem from children's experiences at home or in society at large (Jones, 1976). Schools must, however, take some responsibility for these problems. Some home and social problems carry over into the schools, but many difficulties are created through various school practices and conditions (Edwards, 1993).

Classroom management is the business of enforcing classroom standards and building patterns of cooperation in order to maximize learning and minimize disruptions

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(Jones, 1987). To have classroom management is to have students learn to obey adult directions not to do wrong things, not to strike another child in school, or ruin the environment of the classroom through disruptive behavior (Wynne & Ryan, 1993). The way in which a classroom is managed will govern to a large extent the amount of time that is spent "off-task" (Jones, 1987).

Classroom management has been the bastard child of education--a topic nobody wants to own (Jones, 1987). Administrators want teachers to take care of it, teachers want administrators to take care of it, and the universities ignore it as though the study of it would ruin their humanistic credentials. However, classroom management is the key to learning in the classroom. Railsback (1992) verified that students learn more in a well-managed classroom than in a poorly managed one. Viewing classroom management as separate from education has often led us toward repressive measures to re-establish order rather than to provide positive educational approaches to classroom management that educators know will work (Edwards, 1993).

Statement of the Problem

Research findings reveal a strong relationship between discipline problems and a teacher's knowledge and use of effective management skills (Strother, 1985). In other words, the more teachers know, the fewer classroom management problems they have. A study by Emmer, Everston, Sanford, Clements, and Worsham (1982) indicated that well-managed classrooms were those which had high levels of student cooperation,

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student success, and student task involvement. Today's research of classroom management moves away from a focus on controlling students' behavior and looks instead at teacher actions to create, implement, and maintain a classroom environment that supports learning (Evertson & Harris, 1992).

As a Dean of Students responsible for school discipline in a small southwestern state, I receive several referrals each day from teachers. The number of students referred to the office each day varies from teacher to teacher. After noticing the referrals were occurring during different class periods from the same teachers, I began to speculate that the number of referrals had more to do with the teacher's ability to manage the classroom than with the students that were assigned to them. Therefore, I assume that teachers that have the fewest office referrals are better classroom managers. My assumption is that the better managers are more knowledgeable about classroom management theories and can better articulate their classroom management theory. In order to test this assumption, I interviewed five teachers with the fewest office referrals and five teachers with the most office referrals. To determine if the teachers could articulate their classroom management theory, I selected four classroom management theories with which I am most familiar and did a content analysis on the interviews to determine the extent to which teachers were able to articulate their classroom management theory.

The teachers selected to participate in this study were based on the number of office referrals from the lowest number of referrals to the highest number. The number of office referrals could be influenced by effective classroom management, teacher personality, and the individual differences of students. Therefore, each teacher was asked a series of questions to aid the identification of the classroom management theory. This

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study has two purposes: (1) Can the teacher articulate the classroom management theory, and (2) Do the teachers that are better able to articulate a classroom management theory have fewer office referrals?

Summary

Management problems are the most common difficulties a teacher will experience in the classroom. Many of these problems are the result of social and family problems, but school policies and procedures, sometimes a teacher's own management style, contribute to the problem (Edwards, 1993). In order to successfully manage a classroom, teachers need to determine for themselves the management approach they believe to be the most appropriate and then master its use.

Various features of classrooms make them difficult places to manage without essential classroom management skills. At any time, a multitude of potential disruptions can develop that may interfere with teaching and obstruct students' learning (Edwards, 1993). Recent studies show that effective teachers create positive environments for learning by using management skills to organize time, space, materials, auxiliary personnel, and students (Strother, 1985). If teachers make a study of classroom management, they will be much better prepared to deal with problems and help students learn.

It seems that effective managers are those who have positive attitudes and behaviors, understand the characteristics of students, plan well for lessons, provide a receptive classroom environment, use a variety of teaching techniques and materials,

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evaluate learning and teaching, and employ a variety of management strategies as needed. These teachers feel positive about teaching and have a rapport with students that encourages self-discipline and good behavior. This, in turn, promotes academic achievement and contributes to the overall development of young adolescents (Reed, 1991).

CHAPTER II

Review of the Literature

This review of the literature examines four management theories used in school systems within the United States and includes the four management theories devised from those researchers most recently recognized in the field. These classroom management theories were selected based on their familiarity to the researcher. The classroom management theories include Assertive Discipline by Lee Canter, Positive Classroom Discipline by Fredric Jones, Control Theory by William Glasser, and Logical Consequences by Rudolf Dreikurs. These four classroom management theories were chosen because of the amount of literature available and my familiarity with these theories. If my experiences are representative of my school community, then teachers will be aware of them also. These theories have been used during in-service training and workshops and are those with which I am most familiar.

Education has progressed through many changes. Prior to the late 1960s the emphasis in dealing with student behavior was on discipline. The little training teachers received was focused on what to do after students misbehaved (Reese, 1951). During the late 1960s and early 1970s, the emphasis in psychology shifted to personal growth and awareness. Teachers were urged to concentrate on understanding students' problems, helping students better understand themselves, and assisting them in working cooperatively with adults to develop more productive behaviors (Jones, 1986).

Beginning in the mid-1970s, most in-service aimed at helping teachers cope with disruptive student behavior focused on behavior-modification techniques. Behavioral

techniques are based on the premise that individual behavior is influenced by what occurs immediately before and after the action or response (Downing, Moran, Myles, & Ormsbee, 1991). Teachers were taught to ignore inappropriate behavior while reinforcing appropriate behavior, write contracts with students, and use time-out procedures (Jones, 1986). How one approaches the matter of student behavior and achievement depends on one's current role and one's educational training and employment history. Too often classroom management has been forced into existing courses, with students receiving only the briefest introduction to a series of models or a focus on one approach.

This review of the literature examines four management theories used in school systems within the United States. These four theories have been used during in-service training and workshops. These theories provide a broad spectrum of classroom management. The four classroom management theories examined provide a foundation for the study. The theories allow conclusions to be drawn based on the teacher interviews and classroom observations. These four management theories provide data to classify each teacher into one of the four theories used in this study. The four theories and teacher interviews provide data to determine if the teacher could articulate their classroom management theory and if the teachers that had the fewest office referrals could better articulate the classroom management theory. Relevant literature is reported as it is related to each classroom management theory. This review includes the four management theories devised from those researchers and theorists most recently recognized in the field. The management theories include Assertive Discipline by Lee Canter, Positive Classroom Discipline by Fredric H. Jones, Control Theory by William Glasser, and Logical Consequences by Rudolf Dreikurs.

Assertive discipline by Lee Canter emphasizes punishing unacceptable behaviors and providing reinforcement for behaviors that are acceptable to teachers (Canter & Canter, 1976). It is designed to provide educators the competence and confidence necessary to assert their influence and deal effectively with the discipline problems in today's schools. Assertive teachers were defined as "those who clearly and firmly express their wants and feelings and are prepared to back their words up with appropriate actions". In other words, they "say what they mean and mean what they say". According to Canter (1976), competencies teachers must master to allow them to deal effectively with classroom behavior are:

1. teachers must know specific behaviors they need the students to engage in and these behaviors must be communicated to the students;

2. teachers must know how to systematically respond to the disruptive behavior of students. Teachers must provide a negative consequence every time students disrupt and the consequences need to be included in a systematic plan;

3. teachers must know how to systematically respond to the appropriate behavior of students. Teachers must provide consistent praise or other meaningful reinforcement when their students behave appropriately; and

4. teachers must know how to work cooperatively with the principal and parents of problem students. Teachers must establish and share their discipline plan with both the principal and parents.

Within the framework of assertive discipline, classroom instruction does not stop. The student's name is written on the board followed by a series of checks, with consequences becoming more severe with each check, and instruction is not interrupted.

One criticism of this particular theory is that the latest edition of the Assertive Discipline manual contains a bit of perfumetory talk about helping students to develop "responsibility" and "self-esteem," but even the most cursory exposure to the program makes it clear that the overriding goal is to get students to do whatever they are told without question (Kohn, 1996). This mater-of-fact demand for mindless obedience follows quite naturally from the premise that all problems are the student's fault.

Positive Classroom Discipline

The second management theory is positive classroom discipline by Fredric H. Jones. This theory is centered on "limit-setting". Limit-setting is interpersonal skills by which teachers convey to their classes that they mean business. It is the teacher's physical demeanor and emotional tone that convey to all students that this teacher's rules are for real. Limit-setting is rule enforcement. It goes beyond telling the class what the rules will be and it trains the class to follow them (Jones, 1987). Limit-setting is compared to gambling. Once the game has begun, the student has the option of "raising" the teacher through his/her decision to continue the game or end the game and return to on-task behavior.

All situations that require teacher-student interaction direct the teacher to remain

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positive. Through training, teachers learn how to physically respond to disruptions with minimum use of verbiage. This management plan stresses the importance of having a plan that will accommodate a large group instead of an individual plan for each student in class.

The management plan must also be economical--practical, simple, easy to use--and reduce the teacher's workload. Any plan that does not represent savings in time and energy over the long run is either too expensive, too much trouble, or too failure-prone. The plan calls for a classroom structure that allows for maximum teacher access. The classroom must allow the teacher to move freely around the room and provide good physical proximity for lectures, group discussions, and seat work (Jones, 1987). This arrangement can be done in several different ways, but the arrangement usually depends on classroom size, desk size, and number of students.

Once a student begins to misbehave and the teacher decides to move-in, the process is somewhat similar to the Assertive Discipline management plan. They are similar in that the student decides how far he/she wants to go into the plan's consequences. Both plans progress from one step to the next with consequences becoming more severe with each step. The ultimate decision to end the inappropriate behavior depends on the student. In contrast, instruction never stops while correcting behavior with the Assertive Discipline plan, but with Positive Classroom Discipline instruction must stop because it is argued that learning cannot take place while there is a disruption in class (Jones, 1987).

The criticism of this particular theory is that this program is somewhat autocratic, urging teachers to lay down the law with children and coerce them into compliance (Kohn, 1996).

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Control Theory

The third management theory to be discussed is the Control Theory by William

Glasser. Glasser prefers a group learning process sometimes referred to as

cooperative-learning, but uses the label "learning-team" because it is easier for students

and teachers to understand (Glasser, 1986). Glasser believes that the current problem in

education is that at least half of all students are making little or no effort to learn, because

they do not believe that school satisfies their needs. If a student feels no sense of

belonging in school, no sense of being involved in caring and concern, that child will pay

little attention to academic subjects (Glasser, 1987). Instead the student will search for

friendship and acceptance and could become a behavioral problem in hope of attracting

attention. Glasser states that nothing will get better in education until educators and

others understand that stimulus/response theory, i.e.,human behavior is caused by external

events, is wrong. By contrast, a major idea of Control Theory is that all human behavior

is generated by what goes on inside the behaving person. For example, a person does not

stop at a traffic light because it turns red, but because that person wants to stay alive. All

that we get from the outside world is information and we choose to act on that

information in the way we believe is best for us.

Glasser (1987) believes that the need for power is the absolute core of almost all

school problems. Students will not work in a place where they have no sense of personal

importance, or power, and no one listens to them. According to Control Theory,

discipline problems do not occur in classrooms in which students' needs are satisfied. Any

school function where the students are in good order is a result of satisfied students. For

example, band teachers, drama teachers, and athletic coaches usually do not have problems with students working, paying attention, or behaving, because in those situations students are satisfied (Glasser, 1990a). Progress of each example depends on what the team members do together and success cannot be achieved without the cooperation of each member. Control Theory is based on the belief that people are internally motivated and driven by needs that are built into our biological structure (Glasser, 1990b). From birth we must struggle to survive and find some love, power, fun, and freedom. To the extent these needs are satisfied on a regular basis, it becomes possible to gain effective control of our lives. Students have plenty of motivation. The teacher's job is to facilitate the learning process. We cannot force knowledge down students' throats, even though that is what the public is asking teachers to do. Teachers can only teach in a way that makes students want to learn and only then will students really learn.

The criticism of this particular theory is that it does not clearly define when it is appropriate for a teacher to call a situation a classroom management problem (Seeman, 1988). It is assumed that such identification is common sense. It is fact that teachers not only differ among themselves about which situations require disciplinary action or not, they themselves differ with themselves from time to time, from child to child, depending on subtle variables. It is clear that teachers are not clear on when it is appropriate to call a situation a classroom management problem, instead of letting the situation slide, or treating it as an individual education problem. This is an important shortcoming of this theory because a situation miscalled is not a classroom management problem until it is termed and treated as one.

Logical Consequences

The fourth and final management theory is Logical Consequences by Rudolf Dreikurs. The term logical consequences came from the need to describe activities that cannot strictly be categorized as natural consequences. Logical consequence is defined as situations where the consequence is arranged by the parent or other adult. Natural consequence is defined as solely the result of the child's own acts (Dreikurs & Cassel, 1974). Dreikurs describes the immediate family as the most important of early influences. He believes that the attitudes displayed by the mother and father are passed on and reflected by the children. Another influence Dreikurs feels is important is the inner environment. It is what the child experiences in his/her own body and the physical abilities and prenatal development. For example, a child born with a deformed hand might have a different attitude and view the world differently if he/she had been born without such defect (Dreikurs & Cassel, 1974).

Dreikurs believes that although parents may treat their children in similar ways, each child's position is different from the others and this creates a different perception of himself and the world around him which is different from that of the other siblings. The oldest child will be the oldest and is the sole recipient of parental attention until the next sibling comes along. The second child has always had an older and usually stronger sibling and may attempt to overtake his position. The second child becomes the middle child when the third sibling is born, and notices that the older child usually assumes the position of responsibility, the youngest child is the baby, and often feels squeezed out. He/She may begin to feel that he/she does not have the rights of the oldest child or the

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privileges of the youngest. The youngest child may have the easiest time of all and either remains the baby throughout life or outdoes all the others (Dreikurs and Grey, 1968). Each position presents a different perspective for each child and affects his/her attitude and perception of life.

To deal effectively with misbehavior, adults must be acquainted with its purpose and how the child uses it for his/her own benefit. To deal more effectively with children in situations, adults must vary their responses. Dreikurs and Cassel (1974) have identified four goals that underlie misbehavior as: (1) attention-getting, (2) struggle for power, (3) revenge, and (4) using disability as an excuse. Attention-getting is the most common goal for most children and can be observed at some time in all children. This type of behavior is typically identified as a disrupting behavior which is not always the case, although most disturbances are the child's desire to get adults to pay attention to them. A struggle for power usually ensues when a parent or teacher attempts to stop a behavior. The child tries to control the situation rather than seek attention. The adult who allows himself/herself to get into an argument with a child is playing into the child's hands. Once the battle has been joined, the child has already won (Dreikurs & Cassel, 1974). Children who are motivated by revenge have given up all hope of attaining any importance through constructive activities. These children have reached a stage where they believe everyone is against them and the only way to receive attention is to reciprocate against adults for the way they feel they have been treated. Using disability as an excuse is the most extreme form of discouragement. These children have given up all effort in their area of inadequacy and want to be left alone so their deficiency is not as obvious (Dreikurs & Cassel, 1974).

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Dreikurs and Cassel (1974) include in their book a need to replace the traditional autocratic approach of motivating children with stimulation from within. Today's children have become our equals in their ability to decide for themselves instead of surrendering to a superior power (Dreikurs & Loren, 1968). When parents and teachers collide with a child, they usually proceed by either fighting or giving in. If they fight, they violate respect for the child, and if they give in, they neglect respect for themselves. Dreikurs' formula for the proper attitude toward children is to treat them with kindness and with firmness.

Kindness expresses respect for the child and firmness evokes respect from the child (Dreikurs, Grunwald, & Pepper, 1971). Logical consequences are said by various writers to differ from punishment in any of three basic ways: They are (1) motivated by a desire to instruct, (2) reasonable and respectful in their application, and (3) related to the act of the wrongdoer.

The criticism of this particular theory is that apparently the possibility never occurred to Dreikurs that a struggle to come out on top might be initiated by an adult, or that the child's need for power may reflect the objective situation of powerlessness that students usually face (Kohn, 1996). The characteristics of quest for attention, power, revenge, and use of disability as an excuse reflect a rather dark view of children. Control Theory makes an attempt to transfer the efficacy possible in a one-on-one therapeutic situation to a classroom group situation (Seeman, 1988). This approach takes a long time for such growth of rational awareness and self-control. Often teachers do not have the time or the ability to work that closely with the individual disrupter.

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Summary

When examining several school improvement projects, several researchers included an orderly and purposeful school climate as a criterion (Stedman, 1988). Teachers in many effective schools were not particularly concerned with management; good management simply was the result of the school's organization and positive learning environments. Effective schools were described as happy places, as providing encouragement and no accepting teacher unkindness, as having no written rules, and as taking a more relaxed approach to management. Although there are many management theories, the management theories used in this review are most familiar to this researcher as a representative of the school community. Similarities between each of the four management theories include: (1) remain calm, (2) do not engage in discussion, (3) keep a low voice tone, (4) follow through, (5) be consistent, and (6) have a plan. If lessons are paced properly, appropriate instructional techniques are used, the physical environment of the classroom is organized, and classroom routines are established that help students avoid wasting time, learning can be made more efficient and profitable (Edwards, 1993). According to the literature, there are many things to consider when choosing a management theory and the management theory used must be completely understood and must be in agreement with the teacher's personal attitudes. Although it is difficult to advocate one theory over the other, it is in the best interest of teachers and parents to have a management plan in place.

CHAPTER III

Methodology

Today's research of classroom management moves away from a focus on controlling students' behavior and looks instead at teacher actions to create, implement, and maintain a classroom environment that supports learning (Evertson & Harris, 1992). This study was designed to examine a specific group of teachers' abilities to articulate their classroom management theories. Research findings reveal a strong relationship between discipline problems and a teacher's knowledge and use of effective management skills (Strother, 1985). The analysis of data answers the two study questions: (1) Can the teacher articulate the classroom management theory? and (2) Do the teachers who are able to articulate their classroom management theory have fewer office referrals?

Subject Selection

The teachers chosen to participate in this study were purposefully selected based on the total number of office referrals of disruptive behavior. These referrals range from minor to very serious offenses (see Appendix A). No attempt was made to analyze the types of referrals; all referrals were counted when selecting teachers for this study.

Those chosen for this study included the five teachers with the most office referrals and the five teachers with the fewest office referrals out of 55 teachers in the building.

The number of office referrals made by individual teachers during a period from August 1996 to April 1997 range from 0 to 104. Each teacher agreed to participate in the study and signed a consent form prior to the interview (see Appendix B).

The teachers used in this study were divided into two groups. The teachers with the fewest office referrals are identified as Group A and the teachers with the most office referrals are identified as Group B. The teachers range in experience from 3 years to 37 years and educational levels range from a B.S. with no other course work completed to an M.S.

Data Collection

Each teacher was interviewed once and asked a series of questions about classroom management. The interviews were recorded and each tape was transcribed following the interview. The interview questions were composed to provoke each subject into describing as much detail as possible about the classroom management theory used (see Appendix C). During the interview, each question was asked with no prompting or attempts to provide definition from the interviewer in order to insure that the responses were entirely the teacher's own.

Data Analysis

The data were analyzed using content analysis. Content analysis is a method of drawing inferences from a passage, or in this study the transcribed interview, using specific identified content categories. According to Woodrum, the special potential of content analysis is its explicit linkage of qualitative symbol usage with quantitative data (1984, p. 2). For this study, the researcher was able to take a qualitative interview, and using content analysis, compile quantitative data to determine if the teachers with the fewest office referrals were better able to articulate their classroom management theory as evidenced by more often using language during their interview that could be directly attributed to one of four classroom management theories or one "in common" category.

When using content analysis, the categories need to be defined with sufficient specificity to insure they may be reliably and validly applied. For this study, five content categories were developed by the researcher, one for each of the four classroom management theories used in this study and one for attributes held in common by all four of the theories. These characteristics are as follows:

Category 1:   Assertive Discipline - Lee Canter

Attributes

- The student's name is written on the board followed by a series of checks, with consequences becoming more severe with each check.

- Instruction does not stop when a student is disruptive.

- A logical system of conditioning and reinforcement with rules set up exclusively by the teacher with clear rewards and punishments.

Category 2:   Positive Classroom Discipline (PCD) - Fred Jones

Attributes

- PCD goes beyond telling the class what the rules will be and it trains the class to follow them.

- All situations require the teacher to remain positive.

- PCD stresses the importance of having a plan that will accommodate a large group instead of an individual plan for each student in class.

- Requires a classroom structure that allows for maximum teacher access.

- Instruction must stop while there is a disruption in the classroom.

Category 3:   Control Theory - William Glasser

Attributes

- The student must feel a sense of belonging, a sense of being involved, and caring and concerned in order to have success in the classroom.

- Students' needs must be satisfied. Students are searching for love, power, fun, and freedom. When these needs are met, students will gain effective control of their lives.

- The teacher's role is one that encounters the disruptive child by pointing out the misbehavior and firmly directs the correct behavior.

- A child is shown the irresponsibility of the misbehavior in the context of a social contract that requires each individual to heed others' needs and rights.

- Students are asked to evaluate the quality of their work and improve upon it.

Category 4:   Logical Consequences - Rudolf Dreikurs

Attributes

- The attitudes of the parents are passed on and reflected by the student.

- The four goals underlie misbehavior: (1) attention-getting, (2) struggle for

  power, (3) revenge, and (4) using disability as an excuse.

- Children are motivated with stimulation from within.

- The teacher should promote behaviors that will enable the child and society to get

  along and function well.

- Student is shown the logical consequences of his or her actions through

  diagnosing antisocial behavior.

Category 5:   Attributes Common To ALL Management Theories.

Attributes

- Supportive classroom environment

- Remaining calm

- Following through

- Being consistent in the application

- Treating children with kindness and firmness

- Having a management plan

Each interview was analyzed using these categories and characteristics. When, in

the researcher's opinion, a statement from the interview fit into one of the five categories,

it was marked. Each marked statement was then totaled. Each teacher was then identified

as "fitting" into one of the four classroom management theories according to the number

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of comments made during the interview. Teachers who identified a particular classroom management theory during the interview as their mode of management were not necessarily identified in that category unless the majority of their responses contained characteristics of that theory. Teachers who were unable to identify or articulate their classroom management theory were categorized into one of the four theories based on the majority of statements characteristic of one of the theories mentioned during the interview process. The ten teachers were then ranked according to the total number of times they articulated a characteristic of a classroom management theory. The five teachers with the fewest mentioned characteristics and the teachers with the most mentioned characteristics were then grouped together and compared with the groupings for number of office referrals. The groups remained consistent. Those five teachers with the fewest office referrals were better able to articulate a classroom management theory as evidenced by the total number of statements in their interviews.

Summary

Ten teachers, having the five highest and five lowest office referrals during the academic year 1996-97, were asked in an interview to describe their classroom management theory. Using content analysis, the interviews were transcribed and examined for specific, predetermined characteristics to determine how often the individual teachers articulated a concept of classroom management that could be placed in one of four classroom management theories or in a general classification. These statements were

totaled to determine if the teachers with the fewest office referrals were most often able to

articulate specific characteristics indicating awareness of their own classroom management

system.

CHAPTER IV

Results

The teachers selected to participate in this study were chosen from a population of 55 teachers. The student population of the school had an average daily attendance of 976 with 2,252 office referrals from August 1996 to May 1997 (see Appendix A). The ten teachers used in this study were selected based on number of office referrals from August 1996 to April 1997. Five teachers with the most office referrals and five teachers with the fewest office referrals were selected. For the purpose of this study, the teachers were divided into two groups. The teachers with the fewest office referrals are identified as Group A. The teachers with the most office referrals are identified as Group B.

The data were analyzed by using the information to determine if the classroom teacher could articulate the classroom management theory used and if the teachers who had the fewest office referrals were better able to articulate their classroom management theory. Every teacher has a theory (Kohn, 1996). Even the educator who cares only about practical strategies, whose instruction of thought is "Hey, whatever works," is operating under a set of assumptions about human nature, about children, about that child sitting over there, about why that child did what she did just now. These assumptions color everything that happens in classrooms, from the texts that are assigned to the texture of casual interactions with students. This researcher placed the teacher under one of the four classroom management theories used in this study based on the collected data during the interview. If a subject described two or more characteristics listed under one of the four classroom management theories used in this study, these characteristics were used to

categorize the subject into one of the theories. In addition to the four classroom management theories, an "All" category was added which includes attributes common to all four management theories (see Appendix D). The following data summary includes the name of the classroom management theory assigned to each teacher, the comments used by the teacher to assign a management theory or All category, and the attributes for each comment are identified. The questions used during the interview are listed in Appendix C.

Teacher A1 has 12 years teaching experience with a B.S. and M.S. from Oklahoma State University and teaches eighth and ninth grade Science. He has taught in his current position for eight years and at the university level four years. Teacher A1 did not refer any students to the office during the 1996-97 school year. He mentioned three attributes of Control Theory by William Glasser and two attributes of the All category. Teacher A1 made the following comments:

- "The whole principle of getting kids to learn is everything from what is being presented, to how they are behaving, and the interactions that are going on at their level." - Control Theory (teacher's role)

- "I would like to see kids develop a little more respect for themselves which lends to the responsibility factor." - Control Theory (a social contract)

- "We like to share and have open discussions because kids learn better when they talk to each other, more so than at times when they talk to a teacher. For whatever reasons, when working with a peer they tend to open up a little bit more." - Control Theory (sense of being involved)

- "If I can improve my instructional format in that fashion, the flow of the class should go better, the environment of the class should work better." - All category (have a plan)

- "The one I tend to hold to is proper classroom learning environment which encompasses a tremendous amount of values and variables. The environment must be very conducive to learning and it works now for me." - All category (supportive classroom environment)

Teacher A2 has 37 years teaching experience with a M.S. from Oklahoma State University. He teaches eighth and ninth grade History and has taught in the same classroom with the same school district for 27 years. Teacher A2 is classified under Control Theory by William Glasser. He mentioned three attributes of Control Theory, one attribute of Positive Classroom Discipline, and three attributes of the All category. The following are Teacher A2's comments:

- "With a lot of kids you will get more work out of them with praise everyday they walk into the room." - Control Theory (sense of belonging)

- "I set high expectations and reinforce to the students that they can do it. Tell them they did a good job and next time they will take it to the next step." - Control Theory (evaluate their work)

- "I try to give a student as much freedom as they can handle in a classroom and still learn." - Control Theory (needs satisfied)

- "I am familiar with Fred Jones' Positive Classroom Discipline and I really like the approach." - Positive Classroom Discipline

- "Classroom management is how the teacher and student are going to approach the task they are going to do. A teacher should approach it from the standpoint of goals to be met." - All category (have a plan)

- "Whatever it takes to be the best method for this classroom, so that we will not be interrupted and take the personality of the class you are working with." - All category (supportive classroom environment)

- "I will help them, but I don't want them to say that I gave them something." - All category (kindness and firmness)

Teacher A3 has 13 years teaching experience with a B.S. in Music Education from Oklahoma State University. She taught for two years before staying home to raise three children. She returned 15 years later and has taught with the same school district for the past 11 years. Teacher A3 is classified under Control Theory by William Glasser. She made two comments attributed to Control Theory and three comments attributed to the

All category. Teacher A3's comments include:

- "I show them the first day that I respect them and I want them to respect me and each other." - Control Theory (sense of belonging)

- "I tell them that the most important thing I have to teach them is the enthusiasm for, the excitement for, and an appreciation for music because we are developing a life long skill." - Control Theory (needs satisfied)

- "I try to get their focus right away so they can tune into what we are going to do." - All category (have a plan)

- "When you work together as a group, you have to be respectful of each other for the group to be successful." - All category (supportive classroom environment)

- "I started with the idea that I would have to be with them and interact with them the entire class period." - All category (consistent in application)

Teacher A4 has 23 years teaching experience with a B.S. in Elementary Education from Oklahoma State University. She teaches eighth grade English and has been in her present position for three years and has been with the school district for 12 years. Teacher A4 does not fit one of the four classroom management theories. She does, however, mention one attribute of Control Theory and five attributes common to the four management theories. Her comments include:

- "They trust me. They believe that I am one of a very few that is looking out for them." - Control Theory (needs satisfied)

- "My strategy is that I appear to have a plan." - All category (have a plan)

- "I let them know I have the patience of Job. I pray for patience every day." - All category (remain calm)

- "I let them know that I am going to treat them the way I want to be treated." - All category (kindness and firmness)

- "I think a major strength is that I am predictable. They know what to expect every day." - All category (consistent)

- "I realized that no matter how dirty or ugly that kid was, that someone loved them. I treat my students the way I want others to treat my kids." - All category (supportive classroom environment)

Teacher A5 has 16 years teaching experience with an additional 24 graduate hours. He is a former member of the military special forces and teachers eighth grade Earth Science. He has been in his present position for nine years. Teacher A5 is classified under Assertive Discipline by Lee Canter. He mentions three attributes of Assertive Discipline, one attribute of Positive Classroom Discipline, and two attributes of the All category. His comments include the following:

- "Every year I always start off with Assertive Discipline. I have it posted on the bulletin board and I will tell them at the beginning of the year that if their name goes up on the board, it is a warning." - Assertive Discipline (name on board)

- "I guess part of my philosophy is that I will give them a chance to behave and respect the rules and if they can't do that I have to keep my classroom running to where the others can learn." - Assertive Discipline (instruction does not stop)

- "I make the assignments and if they do not do the work, I have to make some alternative assignments until they get back on track." - Assertive Discipline (conditioning and reinforcement)

- "Other management strategies include Fred Jones. I have one of his books." - Positive Classroom Discipline

- "Classroom management is all the techniques and systems you use to have a good atmosphere, a good climate, to have safety in the classroom, to have students respect you and the rules, the way you manage discipline problems, and what you do when you have them." - All category (supportive classroom environment)

- "If it can be done in a way that is non-threatening to the student. If they will cooperate with it willingly, then it is always better to have it work like that than to force something on somebody." - All category (kindness and firmness)

Teacher B1 has 31 years of teaching experience and has been in her present

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position for 12 years. She teaches eighth grade History. Teacher B1 is not classified under any of the four classroom management theories, although she did mention three attributes common to all four management theories. Her comments include the following:

- "Classroom management is a plan, a procedure with consequences if applicable." - All category (have a plan)

- "The classroom should include consistency so that the kids know what procedure is required and then follow through with it." - All category (consistent and follow through)

Teacher B2 has 16 years teaching experience and has been in his present position for the last 12 years. He teaches eighth and ninth grade History. Teacher B2 is not classified under any of the four classroom management theories; however, he does mention one attribute of Assertive Discipline and one attribute of the All category. His comments include:

- "I write their name on the board if they are talking. The first time is one detention, then three detentions, and so on. This is something that I have come up with." - Assertive Discipline (name on board)

- "At least they know what the consequences are and they can decide." - All category (consistent)

Teacher B3 has 21 years teaching experience with a B.S. from Oklahoma State University and teaches eighth and ninth grade Science. She has taught in her present position for 16 years. Teacher B3 is classified under Positive Classroom Discipline by Fred Jones. She mentions two attributes of Positive Classroom Discipline. The attributes she mentioned include the following statements:

- "I believe you have got to be out there walking around and seeing what the students are doing. You can't stand in one place in the room, regardless of where it is, for the whole hour." - Positive Classroom Discipline (teacher access)

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- "You have to look for opportunities to pat kids on the back. They want to know that you are interested in their lives and their problems." - Positive Classroom Discipline (remain positive)

Teacher B4 has three years teaching experience with a B.S. from Oklahoma State University and teaches eighth and ninth grade Science. All three years have been with her present school district. Teacher B4 is not classified under any of the four classroom management theories. She did not mention a single attribute of the four theories or any attributes common to all theories. Teacher B4 did include the following comment:

- "I do not sit down and write out my management plan. I think mine is such a blend of so many different classroom management ideas, that I can't say that I have one that I am using."

Teacher B5 has 10 years teaching experience and has been in her present position for five years. She teaches ninth grade English. Teacher B5 is not classified under any of the four classroom management theories, however, she does mention two attributes listed in the All category. Her comments include:

- "If I have a plan, they accept that much better than any kind of wishy-washy system that I have seen." - All category (have a plan)

- "Everything I do works to make it a better classroom." - All category (supportive classroom environment)

Group A teachers made nine comments attributed to Control Theory, 3 comments attributed to Assertive Discipline, two comments attributed to Positive Classroom Discipline, and 15 comments attributed to the All category. Group B teachers had two comments attributed to Positive Classroom Discipline, one comment attributed to Assertive Discipline, and six comments attributed to the All category (see Appendix D).

The previous quotations used were taken directly from the transcribed notes of each interview. Some teachers provided more background information than others during

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the interview. This researcher did not in any way ask for more information regarding background or prompt the teachers for more information on any of the interview questions.

CHAPTER V

Conclusions

The teachers selected to participate in this study were based on the number of total office referrals from the lowest number of referrals to the highest number. The number of office referrals could be influenced by effective classroom management, teacher personality, and the individual differences of students. Therefore, each teacher was asked a series of questions to aid the identification of their classroom management theory. This study presents two questions: (1) Can the teacher articulate the classroom management theory used, and (2) Do the teachers that are better able to articulate a classroom management theory have fewer office referrals?

To answer the first question, four teachers in Group A, the teachers with the fewest office referrals, were able to articulate a classroom management theory used in this study based on the number of characteristics mentioned during the interview they sometimes referred to specific plans. Group A mentioned 14 characteristics of the four classroom management theories in this study (see Appendix D). Group A mentioned 15 characteristics attributed to the All category.

Group B, the teachers with the most office referrals, had one teacher that was able to articulate a classroom management theory used in this study. Group B mentioned 3 characteristics of the four classroom management theories. Group B made 6 comments attributed to the All category (see Appendix D). Five teachers used in this study were able to articulate their classroom management theories by meeting the minimum criteria established to classify a teacher under a classroom management theory.

To answer the second question, those five teachers with the fewest office referrals, Group A, were better able to articulate a classroom management theory as evidenced by the total number of attributes of the four classroom management theories mentioned in their interviews. Four teachers in Group A mentioned at least two attributes of a selected classroom management theory which meets the minimum criteria established for this study.

It is important to note that seven teachers mentioned at least two attributes listed in the All category. The All category includes attributes common to the four classroom management theories. It is assumed that these common attributes are critical to classroom management since four noted researchers mentioned these characteristics as part of their theories. All five teachers in Group A mentioned at least two attributes of the All category. Two teachers in Group B mentioned at least two attributes of the All category. As evidence of these findings, it reinforces the conclusion that the teachers in Group A were better able to articulate their classroom management theory.

It is recommended that future studies include a larger number of teachers, more precise interview questions, and a variety of school districts. It would be interesting if the conclusions drawn from this study would be consistent with a study done on a much broader base. Future studies could include placing more emphasis on the attributes common to all classroom management theories. Evidenced by the findings of this study, these attributes are an important ingredient in providing effective classroom management. A final recommendation is that local school districts, the State Department of Education, and higher education take a closer look at classroom management and incorporate more instruction and direction into the classroom for future teachers and administrators.

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Summary

This study used ten teachers, five having the highest and five the lowest number of office referrals during the 1996-97 academic school year, asking them in an interview format to describe their classroom management theory. Using content analysis, the interviews were transcribed and examined for specific, predetermined characteristics to determine how often the individual teachers articulated a concept of classroom management that could be placed in one of four classroom management theories or in a general classification. These statements were totaled to determine if the teachers with the fewest office referrals were most often able to articulate specific characteristics indicating awareness of their own classroom management system.

Management problems are the most common difficulties a teacher will experience in the classroom. Many of these problems are the result of a social and family problems, but school policies and procedures, sometimes a teacher's own management style, contribute to the problem (Edwards, 1993). In order to successfully manage a classroom, teachers need to determine for themselves the management approach they believe to be the most appropriate and then master its use. If teachers make a study of classroom management, they will be much better prepared to deal with problems and provide an environment conducive to student learning.

Limitations

This study is limited by the amount of time spent with each teacher. The time was limited to one interview that included seven questions. One interview does not represent a true picture of a teacher's classroom management theory. In addition, some courses are required and some are electives. Those that teach elective courses have the option of selecting students that are interested in their course and this could affect classroom management.

Another limitation could be the amount of education and training a teacher has received. Due to location and proximity to higher education, financial situations, or family responsibilities, some teachers could be at a disadvantage for lack of exposure to classroom management techniques.

A final limitation could be the teachers selected to participate in this study do not represent a true picture of classroom management in education. This study included only ten teachers from a small southwestern state in a building consisting of only two grades. A true representation of classroom management theories in education would consist of a much broader base of selected participants.

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APPENDIXES

APPENDIX A

Discipline Report

Print Date: 5/27/97
For grades 8-9
From: 8/22/97 to 5/21/97

Offense	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Ttl
Mult Offense	1	2	1	4	5	0	1	2	2	0	18
Assault	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	1	2	5
Inappr Lang	1	3	5	5	2	9	14	14	7	3	63
Class Disrupt	1	25	51	58	26	85	105	65	107	64	587
Bus Violation	0	6	12	11	6	17	13	3	7	2	77
Defiance	0	6	0	10	9	10	2	0	0	0	37
Fighting	2	10	7	7	4	8	19	7	11	5	80
Fireworks	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
Horseplay	0	2	2	0	2	7	2	3	3	0	21
Other Violation	5	29	28	33	17	62	59	58	54	29	374
Tobacco	2	4	3	6	2	3	7	9	15	5	56
Refuasl to Work	0	0	4	13	2	0	0	0	1	0	20
Discourteous	3	6	7	6	8	4	0	1	5	9	49
Uncooperative	0	1	3	0	0	4	0	0	0	0	8
Theft	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	3
Truancy	18	49	52	29	21	37	64	58	86	53	467
Weapon	0	1	1	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	4
Detention Viol	0	1	1	19	4	2	0	0	0	0	27
Tardiness	0	6	36	12	4	16	29	34	33	22	192
Vandalism	0	2	0	0	1	3	0	0	1	0	7
Harassment	0	4	1	2	1	3	1	0	2	0	14
Intimidation	0	7	3	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	12
Closed Campus	4	10	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	16
Substance Viol	0	0	1	4	0	2	0	1	1	1	10
Dress Code	0	1	2	0	0	0	1	0	4	0	8
Extortion	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Alcohol	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Bomb Threat	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Disruptive Gather	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Vehicle Viol	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Battery	0	6	7	16	6	2	2	0	1	2	42
Violent Offense	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	2
Totals	51	196	229	240	124	281	326	262	346	197	2252

CONSENT FORM

I, _____, hereby authorize or direct <u>Todd Kimrey</u> to perform the following procedure:

1. A classroom observation and the collection of data during the observation.
2. An interview following the classroom observation involving a series of questions while being recorded on tape.
3. Extreme care will be taken to maintain confidentiality of records. No names will be used and collected data will be tightly secured.
4. It may be possible to identify strengths/weaknesses of classroom management and/or exposure to other theories. Classroom management may become more effective and have a positive influence on student behavior and learning.

This is done as part of an investigation entitled <u>The Selection of Classroom Management Theories.</u>

The purpose of the procedure is.

To determine if teachers are aware of the classroom management theory being used in their classroom, how they selected their particular style, and why this theory was selected.

I understand that participation is voluntary, that there is no penalty for refusal to participate, and that I am free to withdraw my consent and participation in this project at any time without penalty after notifying the project director I may contact <u>Todd Kimrey</u> at telephone number (405)765-5467 I may also contact Gay Clarkson, IRB Executive Secretary, 305 Whitehurst, Oklahoma State University, Stillwater, OK 74078; telephone number (405)744-5700

I have read and fully understand the consent form. I sign it freely and voluntarily A copy has been given to me.

Date_____   Time _____ (a.m./p.m.)

Signed _____ (Signature of Subject)

I certify that I have personally explained all elements of this form to the subject or his/her representative before requesting the subject or his/her representative to sign it

Signed _____ (Project director)

Interview Questions

1. How do you define "clasroom management?"

2. Describe your classroom management strategy.

3. How did you choose this classroom management strategy?

4. What are the ingredients of your classroom management strategy? Structure? Strengths/Weaknesses?

5. Have you tried other classroom management strategies? If so, can you describe them?

6. Where did you learn these strategies (i.e., college courses, journals, colleagues, other)?

7. What do you consider to be the most important part of classroom management strategies?

THEORY ASSIGNMENT

Teacher	# of Office Referrals	Comments Attributed to Assertive Discipline	Comments Attributed to Control Theory	Comments Attributed to Positive Classroom Discipline	Comments Attributed to Logical Conseqes.	Comments Attributed to ALL category	Total # of Comments Attributed to any CMT	Classroom Management Theory Assigned
A1	0		3			2	5	Control Theory
A2	1		3	1		3	7	Control Theory
A3	2		2			3	5	Control Theory
A4	3		1			5	6	None
A5	8	3		1		2	6	Assertive Discipline
B1	68					3	3	None
B2	77	1				1	2	None
B3	79			2			2	Positive Classroom Discipline
B4	93						0	None
B5	104					2	2	None

OKLAHOMA STATE UNIVERSITY
INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD
HUMAN SUBJECTS REVIEW

Date: 05-20-97   IRB#: ED-97-105

Proposal Title: **THE SELECTION OF CLASSROOM MANAGEMENT THEORIES**

Principal Investigator(s):   Susan E. Breck, James Todd Kimrey

Reviewed and Processed as: Exempt

Approval Status Recommended by Reviewer(s): Approved

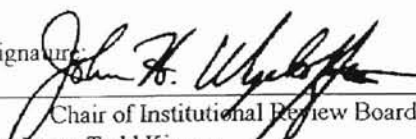===

ALL APPROVALS MAY BE SUBJECT TO REVIEW BY FULL INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD AT NEXT MEETING, AS WELL AS ARE SUBJECT TO MONITORING AT ANY TIME DURING THE APPROVAL PERIOD.
APPROVAL STATUS PERIOD VALID FOR DATA COLLECTION FOR A ONE CALENDAR YEAR PERIOD AFTER WHICH A CONTINUATION OR RENEWAL REQUEST IS REQUIRED TO BE SUBMITTED FOR BOARD APPROVAL.
ANY MODIFICATIONS TO APPROVED PROJECT MUST ALSO BE SUBMITTED FOR APPROVAL.

Comments, Modifications/Conditions for Approval or Disapproval are as follows

Signature _____   Date: June 6, 1997

Chair of Institutional Review Board
cc James Todd Kimrey

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VITA

James Todd Kimrey

Candidate for the Degree of

Master of Science

Thesis: THE SELECTION PROCESS OF CLASSROOM MANAGEMENT THEORIES

Major Field: Curriculum and Instruction

Personal Data: Born in Holdenville, Oklahoma. Son of James D. and Ruby M. Kimrey.

Education: Graduated from Wewoka High School in Wewoka, Oklahoma in May 1981; received a Bachelor of Science in Education degree from East Central University, Ada, Oklahoma, in December 1985; completed the requirements for the Master of Science degree with a major in Curriculum and Instruction Education at Oklahoma State University, Stillwater, Oklahoma, in December 1997.

Experience: Employed as an oil field support worker; employed as a supply hand with an oil field supply store; employed as a teacher and coach from 1986 to 1996; employed as an Assistant Principal in public education from 1996 to present.