

The Pennsylvania State University

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College of Education

**ENTRENCHMENT OF  
CLASSROOM MANAGEMENT BELIEFS  
IN WORLD LANGUAGES EDUCATION STUDENTS**

A Thesis in

Curriculum & Instruction

by

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## Abstract

Classroom management is the framework around which any lesson is planned and by which any lesson is implemented. Yet our understanding of how teachers develop an understanding of classroom management is limited. Furthermore, our understanding of what, if any, role their teacher education courses played in the development and mastery of that understanding is extremely limited. The author observed eleven world language education students in their first field experience and analyzed the reflective writing of two of the participants to seek insight into the development of their ideas about and implementation of classroom management. A grounded theory emerged in alignment with Levin & Nolan's (2010) notions about classroom management beliefs and practices of education students. Participants emerged from the experience with their initial ideas about classroom management further entrenched in their beliefs and practices, despite receiving detailed written supervisor comments which occasionally conflicted with some of those beliefs. Classroom management "skills" acquired were largely empirical in nature and lacked the kind of generalizability to new situations required to lower the cognitive and affective load of the education students in novel situations. According to sociocultural theory, this indicates a need for a different kind of mediation of students, or at the very least, a more conceptual, scientific presentation of classroom management theory to the WLED students. This raises the question of what kind(s) of instructional interventions could mediate the WLED students to develop more abstract and generalizable notions of classroom management so as to substantially increase the feelings of success of WLED students in their role as teacher and provide more effective instruction, resulting in more effective development of L2 skills on the part of their students.

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## Chapter 1: Introduction

It is the end of the semester in which this group of World Languages Education (WLED) students first entered the classroom. They have prepared videos for their classmates in which they show the trajectory of development for one aspect of teaching. This group, Los Embajadores, has chosen the concept of classroom management to track. As Mark<sup>1</sup> goes to play his group's video for the rest of the class, he prefaces the presentation saying, "Please don't judge us by the first few lessons! We know we were awful. It gets better." Vivian echoes, "a lot better." It is clear from their descriptions that their personal feelings of success or failure of a lesson hinged on how well students behaved that day. It is also clear that they believed they had grown in their ability to control their class and this belief framed their feelings of success for the entire teaching experience.

We know from the work of Jacob Kounin, dating back to 1970, that effective classroom managers share some common characteristics including a strong sense of what is happening in the classroom at any given time, being able to manage more than one thing at a time (e.g., a reading group, but also the class as a whole), and leading well-prepared and well-paced lessons that are characterized by an appropriate level of challenge and variety in the assignments (Brophy, 2001). These teachers are good at maximizing the time "students spend attending to lessons and engaging in assignments. They are good at preventing disruptions from occurring in the first place" (Ibid., p. 236). In the process of preparing lessons that set up students for academic success, they also prepare lessons that set up the class for the kinds of behaviors that result in an effective learning environment. In other words the "management" planning and the "lesson" planning are all part and parcel of the same thought process.

But we do not know enough about how those management skills develop, nor do we know enough about how the education of good managers is different from the education of poor managers. Although this case study will not fill in all of those gaps, it aims to lay a groundwork for future inquiry into effective ways of teaching preservice

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<sup>1</sup> All names have been changed for purposes of confidentiality.

education students how to manage their classrooms, and by proxy, how to prevent the poor outcomes of new teachers who are not effective managers: poor student achievement, poor teacher self-concepts, and new teacher burnout.

The sociocultural perspective of teacher education is that of seeing teachers as learners of teaching (Johnson, 2009). The sociocultural perspective recognizes that student teachers come to their method classes and early teaching experiences with pre-existing beliefs about what teaching is, what student behavior should be and/or will be, and what appropriate teacher responses should be. These spontaneous, or everyday, concepts are the basis for new learning in these student and teaching experiences (Vygotsky, 1986; Johnson, 2009).

In this study I examine what kinds of everyday concepts students bring to their first day in the classroom as teachers and how those concepts evolve over the course of this first experience. I look at the feedback students received on their work and how or to what degree that advice was incorporated into future lessons. Developing into a teaching professional is as much about learning the cultures of teaching as it is about learning how to present the content of the lesson, and in this study I examine what elements of that culture are being internalized by one group of world languages student teachers.

## **Chapter 2: Sociocultural Theory**

Sociocultural theory (SCT) was developed by Vygotsky and his contemporaries, including but not limited to Luria, Leont'ev, and Gal'perin (Negueruela, 2008; Wertsch, 1985). SCT recognizes the inherent interconnectedness of the cognitive and social. It rejects the idea that mind (thoughts) and brain (biological entity) are separate, and instead asserts that people overcome any separation through mediation with psychological tools (Negueruela, 2008). Some evidence to support this theory is found in the unfortunate cases of feral children. Without language and social interaction, they fail to develop in ways we think of being innately human.

Lev Vygotsky's work with children served two purposes: to assist him in his work with education and remediation, and to assist him in exploring his theory of the mind from an ontological perspective. That is, by investigating the emergence of cognitive abilities in children, he hoped to learn about the development of human cognitive functions in general. Vygotsky's work was grounded in Marxist theory and the tremendous amount of work he accomplished before his life was cut short by tuberculosis was in large part a product of the time. Revolutionary Russia included a feverish amount of activity. Vygotsky's genius inspired his followers to work as tirelessly as he did at examining educational practice and theorizing toward a general psychological theory that could direct further investigation and practice (Wertsch, 1985).

This chapter summarizes some of the most meaningful aspects of sociocultural theory and its roots in the work of Lev Vygotsky.

### **Learning and Development**

Vygotsky was very interested in tracing the development of concepts in children. This method was called the genetic method, because he was interested in trying to catch the genesis of development and trace it through various stages. In addition, he was interested in not simply describing what the child is doing or thinking, but rather in explaining "the causal dynamic basis" (Vygotsky, 1978, p. 62). That is, he wanted to be able to explain the events of development based on the activities leading them.



For Vygotsky, learning is a human activity in which we actively acquire new information or skills. Learning may further develop spontaneous concepts, but in doing so, it paves the way for the restructuring or revolutionizing of these concepts into scientific concepts. This revolution of thought is development, according to Vygotsky, and occurs “not as a steady stream of quantitative increments but in terms of fundamental qualitative transformations or ‘revolutions’ associated with changes in the psychological tools” (Wertsch, 1985, p. 79). These periods of development are not stages, as understood by Piaget or Montessori, because a person might develop rapidly in one area, but not in another, and because development is messy and unpredictable. One might have rapid development at one time and take years to develop in another way. “Development takes on a stormy, impetuous, and sometimes catastrophic character that resembles a revolutionary course of events in both rate of changes that are occurring and in the sense of the alterations that are made” (Vygotsky, 1998, 23<sup>rd</sup> paragraph). A less dramatic example was given by Vygotsky of a typical classroom scenario where a teacher might explain something six or seven times before the student suddenly grasps it. In this case, the student isn’t gradually catching on—the child’s cognitive development is not following the “trajectory” of the lessons, rather it is on its own course (Van der Veer & Valsiner, 1991).

### **The Zone of Proximal Development**

The Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD) was introduced by Vygotsky as an approach to understanding the relationship between learning and development (Palincsar, 2005). His conception of the ZPD comes partly from his work related to child development and was probably influenced by the increased interest in intelligence testing by school administrators at the time. The idea that a more accurate measurement of children’s intelligence would consist of a two-level approach—that of what they were capable of doing already and a measurement of the child’s potential—was not Vygotsky’s (Oelkers, 1997). However, the underlying optimism—that instruction within the ZPD can profoundly change outcomes, even a child’s IQ—is his (van der Veer & Valsiner, 1991)

One critical point to understand about the ZPD is that it was never intended to be conceptualized as a specifically quantifiable field (Newman and Holzman, 1993). Rather, the ZPD is the psychological activity of development. In Vygotsky's "general genetic law of cultural development," he famously states that any function in the learner's development appears "twice, or on two planes. First it appears on the social plane and then on the psychological plane. First it appears between people as an interpsychological category, and then within the child as an intrapsychological category." Vygotsky goes on to say: "Internalization transforms the process itself and changes its structure and functions. Social relations or relations among people genetically underlie all higher functions and their relationships" (Vygotsky, 1981, p. 163). In this section he clearly means social to equal interpsychological. Furthermore, he asserts here then that even when a learner may be on his or her own, such as sitting quietly in a library, the thinking that he or she does is still fundamentally social, for the organization of his or her thinking was acquired and practiced in a human social context.

Wertsch, Tul'viste, and Hagstrom (1993) assert that Vygotsky "approached concept development from the perspective of how it emerges in institutionally situated activity." They go on to say that he was particularly interested in how the instructional conversations of the classroom provided a "framework for the development of conceptual thinking" (p. 344). Development can potentially take place across different concepts simultaneously. For example, as a student listens to her teacher's explanation of the word *effect*, she may also develop her understanding of the concept of cause, and this development may involve the interpsychological language of teacher and student as well as the intrapsychological activity of the student's own private speech. "[The ZPD] is not intended as a lens for analysis. It is intended as a practice for change" (J. P. Lantolf, personal correspondence, May 9, 2011), and the ZPD "does not exist prior to the event or activity" (Meira & Lerman, 2001, p. 1). In this way, it is not a space waiting for the right actor to walk into it, but rather a psychological space that is negotiated by the actors during interaction. This is a crucial distinction, and one that pears away misunderstanding of the ZPD—the ZPD created between a child and one teacher is not the same ZPD as that created between the same child and a different teacher. The ZPD is created and

recreated with each event or activity. In fact, if either of the participants becomes disengaged and the activity of learning and teaching ceases, there is no ZPD.

## **Mediation**

In SCT, the primary means of introducing the culturally situated content of the ZPD is through mediation. Ordinarily, within SCT, we think of this mediation as being initiated by the more-experienced participant in response to a perceived need on the part of the less-experienced participant. Gibbons (2003) argues that mediation is central to the study of collaborative interactions. A WLED student, for example, may mediate between the beginning L2 learner and new L2 vocabulary introduced in a short L2 text, making the text's meaning accessible to the learner, even though that text is beyond the learner's reading level. "Such characteristics are inherent in most teacher-student relationships because in the great majority of school classrooms there is considerable linguistic and conceptual difference between teacher and students, especially when they do not share the same language, assumptions, and life experiences" (Gibbons, 2003, pp. 248-249).

In SCT the goal of instruction is to further the development of the student. Related to the World Languages education program then, the goal of the program is to mediate undergraduate education students to help them develop their understanding of second language acquisition theories and their application in real classrooms. A textbook is used to support instruction in age-appropriate teaching methods, and the instructor of that course mediates student understanding of the written materials through classroom discussions and demonstrations.

From a SCT perspective, the ideal situation is one in which the mediator has knowledge of a scientific concept (defined in the next section) and can mediate the student's understanding of that concept as well as its application. But it can also be the case that the instructors have only an experienced-based understanding of the topic and it is this understanding that is mediated. Depending on the situation, this mediation may be adequate. For example, a parent may teach a child how to change the oil on his or her car without mediating the child's understanding of the role of oil in an internal combustion engine. The parent may even teach the child to recognize certain problem signs in the oil that would necessitate taking the car to a trained mechanic. But the resulting knowledge

would have a low level of generalizability, potentially requiring relearning some of the steps when looking at a different kind of engine or an engine on a different kind of car.

### **Spontaneous Concepts and Scientific Concepts**

To understand Vygotsky's concept of cognitive development, it helps to examine the nature of concepts according to Vygotsky. He breaks conceptual understanding into two different categories: spontaneous and scientific. Spontaneous concepts are the conclusions we make on our own as we learn about the world. We draw conclusions based on our life experiences, and our personal observations and perceptions.

“Spontaneous concepts are the result of generalizations of everyday personal experience in the absence of systematic instruction. Therefore, such concepts are unsystematic, not conscious, and often wrong” (Karpov, 2003, p. 65). Vygotsky realized that many spontaneous concepts are introduced to children by adults, but in no organized manner, and without an attempt to link them to other relevant concepts (van der Veer & Valsiner, 1993).

In contrast, scientific concepts are acquired in formal learning situations, and presented in a systematic way. These scientific concepts are both the goal of the learning activity, and the mediational process by which understanding occurs. Vygotsky asserted that as scientific concepts are acquired, they link to the relevant spontaneous concepts that the child already has. “The development of a spontaneous concept must have reached a certain level for the child to be able to absorb a related scientific concept . . . . In working its slow way upward, an everyday concept clears a path for the scientific concept and its downward development. It creates a series of structures necessary for the evolution of a concept's more primitive elementary aspects, which give it body and vitality. Scientific concepts grow downward through spontaneous concepts; spontaneous concepts grow upward through scientific concepts” (Vygotsky, 1986, p. 194).

In acquiring the new systematically-taught concept, the spontaneous concepts that relate are reorganized and the child's understanding of the related knowledge is transformed— misunderstandings and incorrect notions are dropped, and the spontaneous concepts that were correct are available in new ways. Where spontaneous understandings are often difficult for students to verbalize (e.g., how they know it is correct to say “*in*

November” and “*on Deepwood Drive*”), evidence of the acquisition of scientific concepts is often gathered through verbalization (explaining what the concept is and what they can or cannot do with that concept or how they can apply the concept) and concrete use. “The very activity of conceptual reflection constitutes the tool for learning and the result of the development.” (Negueruela, 2008, p. 193) Scientific concepts are “essential psychological mediators” (Ibid., p. 200), which drive development. “Psychological tools afford learners greater awareness and control of cognitive processes, which from a Vygotskian perspective is development” (Kozulin, 1998, p. 89).

The instruction of scientific concepts should be presented first in the form of precise verbal definitions and then supported with opportunities to express or use the concepts concretely (Ferriera & Lantolf, 2008). “Once acquired by students, scientific concepts begin to mediate their thinking and problem solving . . . . As a result, students’ thinking becomes much more independent of their personal experience. They become “theorists” rather than “practitioners” and develop the ability to operate at the level of formal-logical thought” (Karpov, 2003, p. 66). However, just as purely procedural knowledge (e.g., subject content or strategies) “tends to remain meaningless and nontransferable” (Ibid., p. 68), “scientific concepts play . . . a mediational role only if they are supported by students’ mastery of relevant procedures” (Ibid.). An illustration of this is the concept of classroom management. If students acquire the concept casually in their experience as students or as students of teaching, their understanding of these concepts remains disorganized and with limited or no generalizability. New teachers with such an understanding often find the management of their instruction exhausting as there is so much to monitor and such a cognitive demand as they attempt to match what is happening in their classroom with their list of situations for which they have specific classroom management “tricks” or “strategies.” In contrast, Martin (2004) points to the example of two new teachers who participated in a classroom management course as part of their teacher training. The systematic instruction they received in the course included topics as diverse as task analysis, teaching social skills, and using explicit instruction, but perhaps more importantly, included opportunities for the preservice students to reflect about their existing assumptions about “children, [the] role of the teacher as social manager, and issues of power and responsibility in the classroom as they connect to

learning and specific instructional approaches for literacy” (p. 418). In Martin’s case study, the new teachers who received systematic instruction in a classroom setting about the concepts relevant to classroom management were, over their first 2 years of teaching, able to meet the instructional goals they had set for themselves and lead their students in ways that resulted in greater student self-control and less work for the teacher. In stark contrast to these two was the new teacher who had not taken the classroom management course, and who at the end of the 2<sup>nd</sup> year, had had to abandon the more sophisticated teaching methods she had wanted to use (e.g., literature circles and a workshop approach to writing) in favor of heavily scripted whole-class instructional methods (i.e., from a textbook). She was burnt out and feeling hopeless (Martin, 2004).

Instruction of scientific concepts should involve verbal explanations on the part of the student, as it allows the instructor both the opportunity to dynamically assess where students are in the process of concept acquisition, with the goal of providing the minimal support necessary for the student to acquire an understanding of the concept, and to take advantage of “the functional role of words in the abstraction process” (van der Veer & Valsiner, 1991, p. 259). That is, as students find the words to describe their understanding of the concept, they literally organize their thoughts around the concept.

## Chapter 3: Classroom Management

One can go into any bookstore, look in the education section, and find a half-dozen books on the subject of classroom management. There are even more on effective instruction, which typically devote a chapter or more to classroom management. In searching scholarly literature, however, there is not the overabundance of literature one might expect, and most of what there is is not very recent. In the current emphasis on student achievement, classroom management is typically not presented from a theoretical or conceptual standpoint, but instead is taught empirically, based on observation and experience, often as a series of related strategies. This approach leads to a discontinuous body of knowledge about classroom management (Martin, 2004).

This is not to say that there are no theories of classroom management. There are, and I will outline one of them later in this section. But the current emphasis on improving student “achievement” favors research that breaks the activity of the classroom into individual actions which can be evaluated for their effect on student test scores (Marzano, Marzano, & Pickering, 2003). This tends to lead to a focus on accumulating “strategies” and “techniques” that have been “research tested” for their effectiveness in the classroom.

Unfortunately, while most teachers agree that instruction and effective management are important, most cannot clearly define what teaching is, much less what management is (Levin & Nolan, 2010). Just like the 8-yr-old student who can use adjectives, but cannot tell you what they are, most teachers manage without being able to verbalize their rationale for management decisions beyond frequently used classroom clichés (e.g., be their teacher, not their friend; create a positive learning environment). These clichés reflect what they have heard from other teachers and they have validity in the eyes of the educational community because often even effective classroom managers will pass them along in lieu of a real understanding of what it is they are doing that works (e.g., how does one know what constitutes a positive learning environment, and is it the same for all children?). Like native speakers of English who can use determiners flawlessly, but cannot name an example of a determiner or give a rule for their use, the classroom management knowledge most experienced teachers have is not available at a conscious level for them to pass along in any kind of systematic or generalizable way.

It is Kounin (1970) who is given credit for the first meaningful research into effective classroom managers (Brophy, 2001). He established that although effective and ineffective managers often dealt with behavior problems in the same way, effective managers did a significantly better job of keeping children engaged and on task. In other words, they did a better job of preventing behavior problems. Although Kounin's work has been elaborated upon somewhat since then, Brophy (2001) summarizes the results by pointing out that "effective management goes hand-in-hand with effective instruction and primarily involves teaching willing students what to do before the fact rather than applying "discipline" following misconduct" (p. 236).

In his description, Brophy models the prevailing discussion of classroom management as one that happens alongside of instruction, simultaneously, but distinct from it. While it is possible to make classroom decisions that are primarily "classroom management" decisions and those that are primarily "instructional" decisions, "teaching and classroom management cannot exist independently of each other" (Levin & Nolan, 2010, p. 4). In this regard, the concept of classroom management makes an ideal concept to examine in a SCT context, as it is in concordance with the dialectical nature of SCT. Classroom management and instruction can exist and be described in a dialectic as can their activity of managing and teaching. Furthermore, I suspect, for those new teachers who truly internalize the scientific concepts of classroom management, a revolution in thought occurs such that classroom management is absorbed into their practice in its natural, structuring role, and the result is a classroom in which teacher and students are free to pursue the activity of learning and teaching. However, this assertion is an opportunity for future study, and exceeds the boundaries of this particular research.

If there is less research on the activity of classroom management than expected, there is even less on how preservice education students in a teacher training program acquire classroom management skills or an understanding of the concept of classroom management. Martin writes, "We lack nuanced understandings of how teachers successfully establish and manage classroom environments that support both engaged learning and positive social interactions for 25-30 active children" (2004, p. 406).

In order to properly analyze the concept of classroom management, I will begin with a brief definition around which the related concepts of classroom management can



be organized. I have used the following concept to guide my inquiry, which is based on the work of Levin and Nolan (2010): classroom management is the framework, or principles and beliefs, within which a teacher's instruction and student development take place and around which a teacher can make instructional and behavior decisions that are consistent with one another. Or, in other words, classroom management is the framework that supports the co-constructed activity of the ZPD.

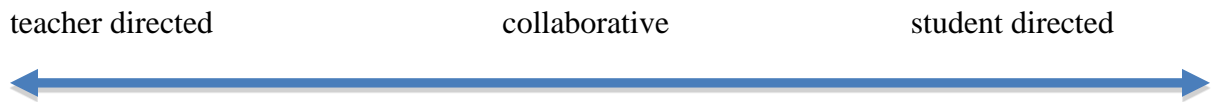
I have used Levin and Nolan's work as the basis for further conceptual development for four reasons:

1. It is founded on the notion that classroom management and instruction are inseparable.
2. It is clearly based on research that includes, but is not limited to, student achievement. It also examines the role of self-mediation and self-regulation.
3. Levin and Nolan's work is intended not to be a "cookbook" of management strategies, but rather to inform teachers to such a degree that they can make the decisions appropriate for their own classrooms. This is compatible with the SCT conceptualization of teacher training in which preservice teachers are "learners of teaching," and therefore, actively engaged in professional development that will provide them with a sense of agency and empower them to make clear and consistent decisions of integrity in their own classroom—decisions that support the educational philosophy they personally espouse.
4. It is conceptually well-organized so that the three philosophies of classroom management can be easily conveyed verbally, and that related concepts like the foundation of authority, or power base, (upon which the teacher's "right" to lead the class is premised) can be clearly justified. In short, Levin and Nolan's work can be taught systematically as scientific concepts and linked to material events in the classroom.

### **Teacher, Know Thyself**

Levin and Nolan identify three philosophies of classroom management, all three of which can lead to student achievement and a sense of self-efficacy on the part of the teacher, and any of which provide a foundation upon which new teachers can build their

classroom management decisions. These philosophies are: student-directed, collaborative, and teacher-directed. Their relationship to each other and the core concept might be visualized as follows:



I will briefly describe some of the more salient details of each of the three philosophies.

### ***Student-Directed***

The goal of the student-directed classroom is to provide students with opportunities to communicate the concepts of self-control, outcome empowerment, and fundamental rights within a relationship (Levin & Nolan, 2010). According to this philosophy, in order to achieve these goals “students must have the primary responsibility for controlling their behavior” (Ibid., p. 87).

Committing to student-directed learning does not necessarily mean that students determine what and how they will learn, rather it means that classroom management decisions are made based on what the teacher assesses students need in order to develop both academic and social concepts. For this reason, “time spent on management is viewed as time well spent on equipping students with skills that will be important to them as [adults]” (Levin & Nolan, 2010, p. 88).

Social skills are taught as explicitly as subject-area content, with individual accountability, the interdependence of individuals in a learning community, and group problem-solving emphasized. (Levin & Nolan, 2010)

Student-directed classrooms tend to utilize cooperative learning groups more often than not, which means expectations for student behavior (and self-control in general) is quite high, but teacher emotional involvement is also quite high. Because of the high demandingness<sup>2</sup> of the teacher as well as his or her high emotional

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<sup>2</sup> This term is borrowed from parenting scholarship in which parenting styles are described in terms of two dimensions: demandingness and responsiveness. Demandingness is “the degree to which parents set down rules and expectations for

responsiveness, this philosophy of classroom management is most successful in situations where the teacher and students spend enough time together to foster the close relationships that support the success of this approach.

### ***Teacher-Directed***

The goal of the teacher-directed classroom is to communicate the academic content of the course and is predicated on the notion that self-control is innate (Levin & Nolan, 2010). In contrast to the student-directed approach, time spent on classroom management is viewed as time lost “because it reduces time for teaching and learning” (Ibid., p. 93). The emphasis in the teacher-directed classroom is on the business of learning, and the achievement of the group as a whole takes precedence over individual needs.

In this approach, the teacher’s responsibility is to maintain an environment in which learning can take place. When a student chooses not to control his or her behavior, consequences are assigned by the teacher, because self-control is “viewed as a matter of will. If students want to control their own behavior, they can” (Ibid., p. 94).

Teachers who utilize this framework to structure the class and its instruction may be as emotionally involved as teachers in student-led classrooms, but the primary relationships are between the teacher and individual students—not between students and not as the teacher to the whole. The classroom of an effective teacher directed practitioner is well-organized, efficient, and focused on the academic goals the teacher has for his or her students. The teacher strives to communicate expectations clearly, offers rewards for on-task behavior and punishes misbehaviors with consequences that were outlined clearly beforehand.

### ***Collaborative***

In a collaborative classroom, often the teacher’s beliefs about students and education are the same as those who practice student-directed learning, but they have modified their practice to accommodate large class sizes and/or limited time with students. Secondary teachers who have six different classes, each at 38 or more students,

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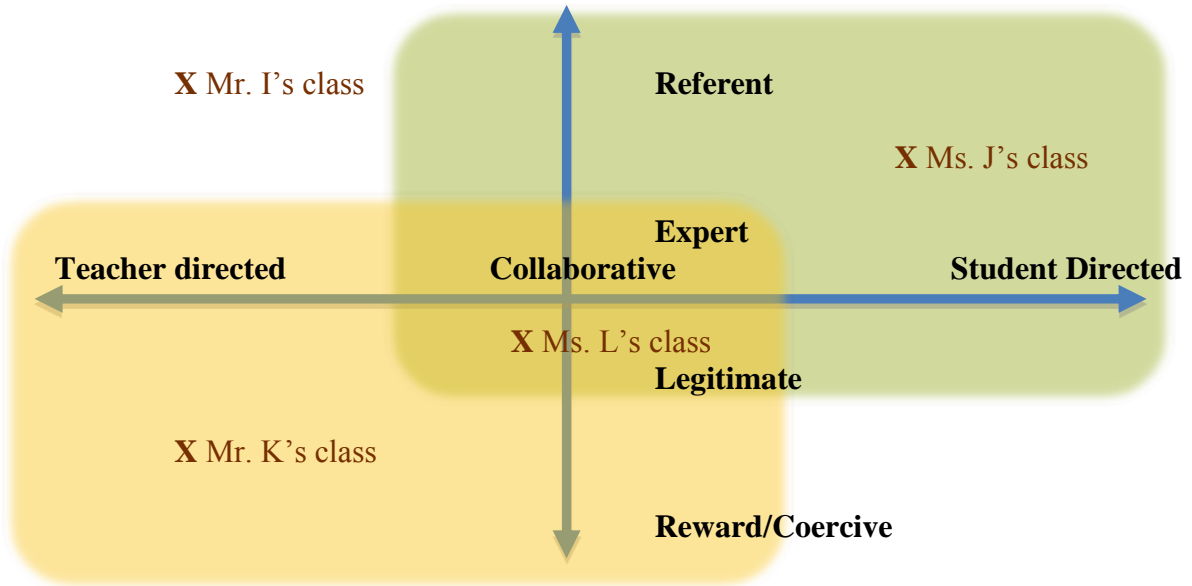
behavior and require their children to comply with them” (Arnett, 2010, p. 182). Responsiveness is sensitivity to children’s needs and the emotional love, concern, and warmth conveyed in response to those needs (Ibid.).



The power bases as conceptualized by French & Raven (1960) and discussed by Levin and Nolan (2010) are:

- Referent: This teacher cares about the student's needs, genuinely desires positive outcomes for the students in both social and academic domains, and offers corrective feedback as a way to support the student in his or her success in the future. Students may be disinclined to misbehave with this teacher out of concern for breaking the relationship bonds of trust and mutual respect.
- Expert: This teacher has earned respect and a position of authority because of his or her expertise in the subject area or as an educational professional, or both. A student might be disinclined to misbehave with this teacher out of respect, or because he or she is simply too busy engaged in challenging subject matter with this teacher to think about misbehaving.
- Legitimate: This teacher is a consummate professional who is only doing his or her job of helping students learn and achieve academically when he or she assigns logical consequences to misbehavior. This teacher recognizes his or her fundamental responsibility towards individual children, and supports students in making connections between actions and consequences. A student might be disinclined to misbehave with this teacher because he or she knows the teacher is a legitimate authority figure who would always act with the student's best interest in mind.
- Reward/Coercive: This teacher is quick to reward good behavior and to punish poor behavior with a system of signals and consequences. For example, a teacher might use a color system to track student behavior. Students who misbehave must put a different colored card in the pocket of the chart with their name on it. Students with two or more red days in a week do not get to pick a reward from the prize box at the end of the week. Students who finish out the week with three or more green days get to pick a prize and have free choice during afternoon learning stations on Friday afternoons. Pizza parties, movie parties, and wacky dress day are all possible whole-class rewards. Stickers, candy, and earning special privileges are examples of individual rewards.

A class on a given day might occupy any position on the combined grid:



In this diagram we have four possible combinations represented by their position on the grid<sup>3</sup>. Ms. J and Mr. K represent rather stable positions. Ms. J is primarily student directed in thinking and uses the referent power base effectively, while occasionally using the legitimate power base, especially in situations where she is managing a larger group that includes students she does not know well. Mr. K is primarily teacher directed in thinking and he uses a reward/coercive power base materialized in a system using color-cards to track student behavior in his second-grade classroom. Occasionally he draws on legitimate powerbases, and when leading art-based lessons, uses the expert powerbase, as he is an accomplished photographer outside of school. Ms. L. is a high-school French teacher at a school with a large enrollment and an average class size of 36 students. She leads her upper-level French students on a trip to France each summer, so space in her classes are competitive. She effectively uses both the expert and legitimate power bases in her interactions with students. Mr. I, however, is a new primary teacher with teacher-directed beliefs, at a small private school that encourages teachers to use referent power bases. Even though he is working closely with a mentor teacher to learn referent-based teaching methods including classroom meetings, peer problem-solving,

<sup>3</sup> Genders have been assigned alternating by letter. I do not mean to imply that the gender of the teacher impacts his or her management philosophy or power base.

and actively teaching students to manage their own behavior through daily and weekly goal setting, he feels frustrated by the volume of time spent on these activities and constantly feels like the curriculum is being short changed. To make matters worse, his students do not seem to be improving in self-regulation. In fact, they seem to behave worse in his company than in the company of the other teachers in this school.

Some combinations are more effective than others. In particular, the reward/coercive power base is not compatible with a student-directed philosophy, nor is the referent power base typically utilized in a teacher-directed classroom. In addition, given the important role consistency plays in effective classroom management, we will assume that classes that seem to hop around the grid are probably not acting from a place grounded in a transparent, well-developed educational philosophy, but are rather utilizing an empirical, “bag-of-tricks” approach, which is ultimately less effective. In the example above, Mr. I either needs to receive information from his mentor that would inspire within him a change in his beliefs to be more collaborative or student directed in nature, or he needs to find a new placement where he is at liberty to choose a power base that is more compatible with his existing beliefs.

### ***Classroom management as Praxis***

Now that we have situated and clarified the concept of classroom management in SCT, what material actions can student teachers take using the concept? How can an internalized concept of classroom management make a difference when faced with a behavior problem? Levin and Nolan (2010) tie the techniques of classroom management—which can include everything from lesson pace (Brophy, 2001), to seating arrangement, the grouping of students, physical proximity to students, and more—to the philosophy of the practicing teacher:

“Because every technique is based implicitly or explicitly on some belief system concerning how human beings behave and why, the classroom teacher must find prototypes of classroom management that are consistent with his beliefs and employ them under appropriate circumstances” (p. 77).

In short, teachers who are sure of the classroom management philosophy from which they operate, can choose appropriate power bases from which to act, and can develop a systematic plan for promoting positive behavior and dealing with problematic

behavior based on those understandings. Instead of needing a massive bag of tricks to get through the class day, they can evaluate appropriate responses to behavior problems based on their goals for the students.



## Chapter 4: Research Goals

When Vygotsky was explaining his inquiry into the development of everyday and scientific concepts in *Thought and Language*, he described everyday concepts as “growing upward” (from concrete to abstract) and scientific concepts as “growing downward” (from abstract to concrete). By this he means that scientific concepts are assimilated into a developing person’s understanding by means of mediation from outside or “above” the person (perhaps this metaphor is best understood when recalling that throughout the chapter, Vygotsky is describing his work with children who are in a school setting), while drawing from or building upon the existing experience and knowledge of the learner. He makes the point that for instruction to trigger a revolution of thought, it must take place within the zone of proximal development, and therefore, *some everyday concepts must be in place already*. “That is why it is essential first to bring spontaneous concepts up to a certain level of development that would guarantee that the scientific concepts are actually just above the spontaneous ones” (Vygotsky, 1986, p. 194–195). Despite the “wrongs” or inefficiencies or misunderstandings inherent in many everyday concepts, it is still those understandings that provide much of the raw material with which development of scientific concepts can begin. In the context of this study then, there is no *irrelevant* learning.

Vygotsky provides many examples of everyday concepts that support the acquisition of scientific concepts. He points out that an understanding of “historical concepts can begin to develop only when the child’s everyday concept of the past is sufficiently differentiated—when his own life and the life of those around him can be fitted into the elementary generalization “in the past and now;” his geographic and sociological concepts must grow out of the simple schema “here and elsewhere” (Vygotsky, 1986, p. 194).

In this inquiry into the development of WLED students in their first teaching experiences, I am asking what kinds of professional concepts are ripening in this experience for the WLED students? Are we seeing the appropriation of scientific concepts from the curriculum, instructors, and supervisors to student teachers? Are we seeing further sophistication in the existing everyday concepts about teaching that

students have brought with them as learning participants in classrooms? A yes to either of the latter questions would mark progress or success on the part of the participant.

In *Thought and Language*, Vygotsky refers repeatedly to the abstract concepts of flowers and the concrete concept of a rose. I have chosen a similarly open concept to trace in the student, that of classroom management. As a rose is but one of thousands of concrete ways that the abstract notion of a flower can be exemplified, there are countless ways that new teachers can practice classroom management. What I am looking for in the data collected from and about the teachers is not a specific practice, but evidence that students are either refining their understanding of classroom management at increasingly more sophisticated levels, or evidence that they are simply expanding their existing everyday concepts of classroom management to a level that will put them in proximity of these scientific concepts if those concepts are taught in the secondary methods course they will experience the following year.

## Chapter 5: Methodology

The primary goal of the study was to examine the acquisition of professional skills, specifically those related to the concept of classroom management, in a single class of WLED students, and to understand how the structure and content of the course, including individualized feedback from supervisors, may have influenced the acquisition of new knowledge or skills. To accomplish this goal, I chose a qualitative research design that integrated features of a case study and grounded theory.

A qualitative case study is built around “a single entity, a unit around which there are boundaries. The case then has a finite quality about it either in terms of time (the evolution or history of a particular program), space (the case is located in a particular place), and/or components comprising the case (number of participants, for example)” (Merriam, 2002, p. 178). “The case is a specific, complex, functioning thing” (Stake, 1995, p. 2 in Merriam, 2002, p. 178). In this study, the case is the elementary field experience at a major east coast research university as revealed in the data of two of its participants.

I also chose to operate from a place of grounded theory. Although the data could not be analyzed through constant comparison in the traditional sense, because I did not know which students had chosen to participate and which had not, the small size of this particular group of students meant that it was possible most weeks to see every student in the classroom for a half hour, even if they were not always the lead teacher while I was there. In addition, because the lack of management skills can destroy a lesson, student teachers were most likely to discuss management issues at the end of each day, so I was able to hear some of their concerns, even though no formal interviews were conducted.

It is important to note that the conceptualization of classroom management offered earlier in this paper is a result of research I did *after* the conclusion of the course and does not represent the nature or content of the classroom management instruction currently imbedded in the course. In fact, little of the information about classroom management from the course was reflected in the written reflections, lesson plans, or activities of the education students. However, the (scientific) principles of classroom management as conceptualized by Nolan & Levin both organize and make sense of the (spontaneous) thinking expressed by the WLED students.

## **Data Collection**

In this study, the data-collection process included (1) WLED student representing their initial concepts of classroom management in an open-format art project accompanied by a short written piece explaining it; (2) review of initial lesson plans and providing feedback on various elements of each lesson for students to address prior to teaching the lesson; (3) observation and video-taping of WLED students teaching students in grades 1 through 4 after school, twice a week, for 7 weeks, in either Spanish or French; (4) written feedback about their teaching provided by myself or one of three other supervisors; (5) WLED students representing their end-of-experience concept of classroom management in an open-ended model accompanied by a short written piece explaining it.

## **Research Relationships**

During the data collection phase of this project, I also functioned as one of the supervisors for the WLED student teaching field experience. All of the data collection was done according to normal assignments in the course and consent forms were collected by a student volunteer and held by a third party not involved in the research until after the course was over and grades were submitted. In this manner, I did not know which students had agreed to participate and which had not until after all data had been gathered. This ensured equal quality and quantity of feedback for all students.

## **Participants**

The participants consisted of WLED students between the ages of 20 and 22 in their 3<sup>rd</sup> year of their preservice teacher training. In this paper I have chosen to focus on two of the participants, Ruby and Elle. I looked at these participants initially because one represented learning from the experience in a largely solo performance, and the other was part of a small group that clearly worked well together. In examining the data related to each, however, I found the theme of entrenchment more compelling. Because each participant generated over 50 separate pieces of data, which included a minimum of 7 hours of video, and because the reflections were relatively consistent, I decided to look at these two more deeply as case studies than attempt to summarize findings across the group.

Ruby taught French. The French group started out as a pair of two WLED students, but one of the participants dropped out of the program at the end of the third week of the program. From that point on, Ruby taught the entire 90 minutes by herself. Ruby taught French to a group of 7 to 12 students, depending on the week. Her group had the highest variation in student attendance, even prior to her partner's departure.

Elle taught Spanish as part of a trio working with a group of 12 to 14 students. Elle was part of The Embajadores group, which was mentioned in the introduction. Her partners were Mark and Vivian. Ruby, Elle, Mark, and Vivian were working with 2<sup>nd</sup> through 4<sup>th</sup> grade public school students.

Students in this project were taking a methods course in the morning that focused on teaching foreign languages at the elementary level (which I observed, and in which I occasionally participated in class discussions). In the afternoon they either attended a workshop-style class to prepare for the project, or they met at a local elementary school for the field experience. There were 13 teaching days in all, including a final day in which parents were invited to observe during the final 30 minutes of the class, followed by a recognition ceremony in the multi-purpose room. Although some of the participants had previous experience working with children (e.g., as a camp counselor, a swim instructor), none had formal instructional experience.

The participants were required to keep an online blog of their thoughts about their experience. In the response, they were to begin by answering any questions the supervisors had for them in that week's feedback. Then the participants could cover any thoughts or feelings they had about the two lessons they had taught that week, so long as they also covered a theme that was assigned in advance. The themes were: student interaction, use of the target language, classroom management, corrective feedback, and teaching decisions. Twice during the experience, instead of writing individually about their experience, they answered that week's question as a group and wrote a group reflection. The topics for those two weeks were classroom environment and student engagement, respectively. These group topics fell on the second and sixth week in the program.

## **Supervisors**

Four supervisors rotated through the classrooms in half-hour time slots so that the education students were almost always under observation and received feedback for any given day from multiple sources. The background of the supervisors is as follows: (1) The first supervisor, Helen, is a 3<sup>rd</sup>-year doctoral student at Penn State in the College of Education in the area of Language, Culture, and Society, under the department of Curriculum & Instruction. She has a Master's Degree in Teaching English as a Second Language and has 5 years' experience as an ESL teacher. She also taught Secondary Spanish for 5 years; (2) The second supervisor, Angela, is the upper-elementary resource specialist for the host school. She has a M.Ed. and 27 years of teaching experience encompassing grades K-5 including experience as an ESL teacher and as a reading specialist; (3) The third supervisor, Dana, is an Instructional Support teacher at the host school. She has an M.Ed in Developmental and Remedial Reading and she works primarily with Kg and First grade ELLs; (4) The fourth supervisor is myself. I have four years of experience teaching fourth-grade in areas that have a majority ESL population and 10 years of curriculum-writing experience in the educational publishing industry. At the time of this study I was in the final year of coursework for a Master of Science degree.

Supervisors typically stayed for one of the three 30 minute sections of the class period. Because the first 5–10 minutes of class usually consisted of some kind of opener or review, and the last 5–10 minutes a wrap-up of some sort, we typically were able to see most of one WLED student's activity and a transition from one activity to the next. There was no set format for the feedback. Supervisors could focus on just one aspect of the lesson or on many. Nevertheless, feedback typically focused on one of three categories—student engagement, teacher decisions, and instructional design. Much of the rest of it is a narrative of what the teacher and students were doing while we were there observing. Participants received the feedback 1 to 4 days after the related lesson was taught.

Even though we all wrote our feedback separately, without consultation, the feedback in some ways is remarkably similar. On the first day we all counseled the students not to ask so many of those questions that we do not really want students to

answer: “Who wants to play a game?” “Next we’re going to do an art project, okay?” We all praise the simple, clear rules each group produces. We tell the quiet voices to speak up and praise the strong voices as being “professional.” On that continuum of management frameworks, most of our feedback displays a teacher-directed orientation, although it varies in consistency. Much of our feedback could be described as “rules of thumb.”

This is not to say that the feedback was identical. Of the four supervisors, Helen’s feedback tended toward a questioning style in which she drew attention to a problem or potential problem she had witnessed and asked the participant to explain their reasoning at the time or to brainstorm a different way to handle the situation going forward. Of the four supervisors, she gave the least indication of her own preference for a teacher-directed or a student-directed classroom management philosophy. Where the other supervisors clearly outlined teacher-directed practices and beliefs as being the preferred place from which to make decisions (although not labeled as such), Helen’s feedback left significant room for the participant to make decisions based on his or her own beliefs about teaching, teachers, and students.

Angela was the most direct with her feedback, and when lessons did not go well or student behavior disrupted a lesson, Angela was emphatic in her message that the WLED education students must not tolerate that kind of behavior.

Dana and I provided a mix of narrative commentary on events that we saw happening in the classroom and context-imbedded advice or rules of thumb. Dana was very intentional about including commentary that recognized what the students had done well. I was more intentional about explaining the rationale behind my recommendations, although I never did so for every recommendation.

## **Video Feedback**

In addition to the video data I collected while I was actually in their classrooms, students videotaped their entire lessons for themselves and reviewed them prior to writing their reflections for that week. This video data served as a tool for students to mediate their own learning, and it was not uncommon for students to “catch” problems they had missed during the lesson. Unfortunately, time constraints did not permit students to watch these videos with a supervisor.

**Site**

Observations took place in class at the university and in the four classrooms designated for our use at a local elementary school. Students were permitted to move furniture and use the boards and classroom technology. All rooms were equipped with a large carpeted area and movable desks.



## Chapter 6: Findings

Neither Ruby nor Elle had had formal classroom management instruction prior to their methods course for this semester. As a regular part of the experience, they read a chapter about classroom management and participated in a lecture and discussion based on the contents of that chapter. In addition, they listened to a short lecture and participated in a brief discussion (30 minutes total) on managing off-task student behavior. Prior to the beginning of the program, they met with the rest of the participants at the host school and listened to Angela and Dana tell them a little about what to expect. As will be explained, few, if any, of the participants integrated Angela and Dana's practical advice from that meeting into their lesson plans. Furthermore, Ruby's and Elle's initial written reflections did not reflect any of the information they heard at that meeting. Nevertheless, these reflections did reveal some of the ideas they had about teaching, teachers, and students throughout the experience.

The course's existing textbook does not draw from a systematic, generalizable conceptualization of classroom management, but rather discusses some of the more salient issues that often arise for new world languages teachers. These include a section, among other topics, on how to manage materials when you do not have your own classroom space, how lack of planning can impact the behavior of a class, and the importance of consistency. As important as these individual ideas are, they are also representative of the lack of cohesion and central thread of purpose that characterizes classroom management instruction today.

The supervisors, myself included, were not exceptions to the general rule that even effective classroom managers are often unaware of exactly why what they do works. Rather they know what works for them, and recommend individual strategies or tips based on their personal experience of success. In fact, most teachers struggle to define classroom management, and even something as commonly discussed as a "behavior problem" can generate very different definitions among teachers (Levin & Nolan, 2010). What effective managers know is both anecdotal and not necessarily generalizable to the classrooms of teachers who may have very different educational philosophies. While all four supervisors worked conscientiously to impart useful classroom management skills and ideas to the students they were observing, there was still a lack of systematicity, a

lack of generalizability, and a definite lack of awareness on the part of each of the supervisors of the incomplete nature of our own understanding of classroom management. It was not until I began researching classroom management *theory*—in order to make sense of the data coming back from the world languages education students—that I had the language to define my own philosophy and to recognize how it had impacted the success or lack of success of various classroom management methods in my own classrooms. I was able to look back at previous years and see the experiences I had then in entirely new ways; I was able to synthesize the theory and my own experiences to create a far more robust understanding of classroom management, and to learn from those events all over again. It is this kind of revolution in thought that Vygotsky intends when he speaks of development—and it was this *development* that we could not foster in either Ruby or Elle without having experienced it ourselves.

That does not mean, however, that Ruby and Elle did not learn anything from the field experience. On the contrary, they clearly added to their knowledge base. However, it is interesting to notice what they did and did not take up from the supervisor feedback. While Ruby and Elle conscientiously answered specific supervisor questions, there is rarely uptake from the supervisor comments. That is, Ruby might comment that a supervisor had a good idea regarding how to restructure an activity to make it run more smoothly, but this idea did not show up in practice in future lessons. An example of this was in teaching the French alphabet, which I had suggested to Ruby prior to the start of the field experience. Ruby mentioned this as a good idea in her October 14 reflection based on questions the students were asking and other student behavior and stated that she was going to put it in her next lesson, but she did not and the idea was never mentioned again. In this case, Ruby recognized the idea had value, but the lack of implementation suggests that the actual practice did not “fit” in her existing beliefs about what the class needed or would benefit from, at least not without further mediation from a supervisor or seeing it successfully implemented by one of her peers.

In contrast, Ruby thought of the idea of using worksheets as a management tool on her own. Her worksheets were usually crossword puzzles or cloze sentences with a word bank based on past vocabulary lessons, which served a dual purpose of reviewing past vocabulary and keeping students who are “out” of a game occupied. Not strictly

busy work, she made the worksheets herself and so they acted as a good review targeting the specific need of her class while successfully keeping all students occupied. She mentioned their use in almost all of the remaining reflections and I observed that her class did enjoy completing them.

While I make the case in the following description and discussion of results that the WLED students did not develop systematic and generalizable concepts (scientific) from their experience, I emphasize that the everyday knowledge they accumulated is still valuable and in fact must be in place for students to make sense of and internalize any scientific theories of classroom management that they might encounter in the future.

Ordinarily in tracing the development of student understanding within the context of SCT research, the investigator will provide evidence of the development of concepts along with the mediation that was provided to foster this development. I do that where possible in each section about Ruby and Elle, but I also point out where the comments appear to be independent of the mediation that was offered.

In the following sections we will look carefully at how Ruby and Elle talk about the activity of the classroom and what might have changed over time.

### **Ruby: Teacher Directed**

Ruby had taught gymnastics to younger children and spent two summers as a gymnastics instructor and counselor at a camp for children ages 5-15. However, she appeared to be uncommitted to her major in the beginning. She returned to school over a week after classes had begun, arrived without certain required materials, failed to register for one of the two courses required for the experience, and attended sporadically at first. Initial materials submitted by her partnership, Les Pirates, were often late and incomplete. We were worried about how the pair was going to do when the workload dramatically increased at the start of the actual teaching experience and I offered to meet with the group each Friday morning before lesson plans were due to do an advance reading of the plans and to mediate their understanding of the changes we were suggesting. Ruby's partner, Susan, came to these office sessions, but Ruby had a class at that time. It was not clear how much of the conversations about the construction of a lesson were passed on to Ruby, but the overall quality of the lessons did improve. On the

first day of the program Helen and I arranged to make sure that the pair had a supervisor in the classroom at all times because we were honestly worried that they were not up to the task. However, in front of the students Ruby and Susan did well, certainly as well as any of the other groups who seemed better prepared, and in the second session later that week, all sign of nerves on the part of Ruby were gone.

Still, the pair's bumps were not over yet. The following week Susan was unable to attend the teaching experience, and ten days later, Ruby found herself the sole teacher in the class. If our assumptions about her performance had been based on the first six weeks of the semester, we might have despaired, but by the third week of the teaching experience we knew that Ruby was not only capable of handling the group on her own but also would be willing. Her reflections at the start of the project show a steady increase in self-assuredness, and by the time she was teaching on her own, they reveal a sense of herself as a teacher in a teacher-directed classroom working from a legitimate and expert power base. Three beliefs that are common to teachers who manage teacher-directed classrooms are:

- The teacher is responsible for setting and enforcing clear, appropriate rules.
- The academic curriculum is prioritized over any social curriculum.
- Organization and efficiency are prized for their role in maintaining order and in providing an environment where the power bases of rewards & punishments and/or legitimacy can be maintained.

The above themes figure prominently in Ruby's written reflections, even when the supervisors do not mention them in the mediating feedback.

### ***Teacher Responsible for Setting and Enforcing Clear, Appropriate Rules***

Ruby frequently comments on the need to set clear, appropriate rules for the class. She identifies the teacher as the source of those rules. In the following statements from her reflections, we see that she believes that this is not so much the teacher's privilege as his or her responsibility to do so. In the beginning, she seems to imply that if the rules are good, then students will follow them:

Oct. 7

"Time management and classroom management are some things that I need to work on. It is important to make every little detail clear to the students and have set rules beforehand so that they are aware of the expectations."

The supervisors feedback related to Ruby's rules thus far were largely logistical. For example, she was advised to find a way to write the rules using larger text so that students could read them more easily. However, when students met with Angela and Dana in early September, prior to the start of the session, Angela had advised the WLED students to "take some time in the beginning to establish rules. Keep the rules short and simple. Seven rules are too many." Nevertheless, while Ruby's initial belief about the teacher's role seems to align with Angela's advice, it is more specific in its didactic approach. Angela's advice could include a role for the students in setting class rules, but Ruby's does not.

Oct. 19

"Although this week was hard for me by myself there were certain situations that I thought I dealt with well and others that could have gone differently. It was beneficial to get a lot of feedback this week and see how other people view my teaching. I need to continue to be clear with my expectations from the class. I need to make sure that the rules and directions for games and activities are clear."

By Nov. 11, the end of the program, her ideas about the rules and the role of the teacher in crafting and enforcing them have become quite detailed. Now she had come to believe that the teacher is also responsible for enforcing the rules he or she set. Ruby now supplies examples for her ideas and can explain what the benefits of acting in alignment with her beliefs would be.

Nov. 11

"I think that in the beginning our classroom was a little shaky, and it needed to be readjusted. We set the rules but we did not enforce them properly in the beginning. . . I learned that it is very important to make all rules clear to students and to make sure they know what is expected of them. I feel as time went on this became less of a problem and the students responded well to my expectations of when they needed to be quiet and listen or when they were permitted to get out of their seats etc."

In the following excerpt from the same writing, Ruby continues to talk about the kinds of procedural guidance students need from teacher. The section in bold may be representative of successful supervisor mediation. Helen and I told Ruby and Susan to include modeling of the activity or use of the skill in every lesson when we first saw the lessons. This feedback was not incorporated into the final draft of that lesson. Next Dana

and I both commented in the actual lessons that students were struggling with the task and noted that she had had to work individually with several small groups getting them started, which might have been prevented by modeling the task during the lesson. Later, she did include some modeling in lessons. In this section she summarizes her learning in a proprietary fashion: It has been internalized and so it became her idea.

“I also learned that students this age need VERY specific guidelines. They need to be told directions several times and **need to be shown how to do an activity**. They need structure and without structure they may not meet the expectations wanted.”

In the final days of the project, Ruby begins to summarize what she has learned. She says her area of greatest growth is in feeling more comfortable speaking, conducting activities, and in student and teacher interactions. Ruby recalled the early days with Susan as a time when they had rules, but did not enforce them, so when she was on her own, she adjusted the rules and the classroom environment “to how it to should be, to what met [her] expectations.” As the teacher, she feels she should be the one to assign consequences for misbehavior, but that it is also her job to make all rules clear. Ruby has added to her spontaneous concepts that modeling the directions for an activity is important, that students need structure to be successful, and that teachers need to be aware of the individual ages and skill differences of their students.

Her final visual representation (See Appendix B.) shows a large teacher figure in front of a small crowd of little student figures. The teacher is the central figure and she identifies it as being her. Students are a collective whole, and they are the responsibility of that central figure. Next to the drawing of her figure is a poster with the rules listed. The class needs written, posted rules, she says. And in this way she demonstrates that she still believes the teacher-directed classroom is best for students; that the responsible teacher in this philosophy is both the source of the wise rules and the enforcer of them; that students are the recipients of learning and that they will be happy and productive so long as the teacher is doing her job. Her description of her visual representation, completely missing from her September attempt, is one of the lengthier reflections she

has written. All of her enduring themes (i.e., the importance of the first day, that students need clear rules, and that teachers are responsible for enforcing them) are present:

Dec. 2

“The picture that I drew represents classroom management to me because it shows that the teacher is in control of their own classroom. The teacher is in charge and is the boss of their students; it is the teacher’s responsibility to establish appropriate rules from the beginning . . . It is also important that these rules are implemented immediately by the teacher to enforce the goals of their classroom. The students are to be aware of their expectations and how they are to act in class towards the teachers and to their peers.”

“Since the beginning of this field experience my perspective on classroom management has changed in realizing how important the first day of class with new students can be. We had prepared rules in our classroom and the first day established these rules, however certain things were not established or made clear that led to further problems with the management of our classroom. When I began teaching by myself I had to readjust the classroom rules and make it clear of my expectations as a teacher.”

Finally, she says she feels her classroom management has improved, too. She feels a teacher has to be flexible, have back up plans and activities. A teacher should know his or her students and structure activities that will be useful to them.

“I feel that overall I have learned a lot about classroom management by given this opportunity to have this experience, I have improved with my management skills and have become more confident as a teacher and as the person in charge of their classroom.”

### ***Prioritizing of Academic Curriculum***

In the teacher-directed classroom the only *educational* objectives are academic ones. Whether they are state standards or teacher-generated, the success of a lesson is judged primarily by whether or not students achieved the academic objectives. Ruby and Susan ran out of activities about ten minutes before the end of the day on the first day. In fact, even though all four supervisors explicitly told the WLED students to have additional back-up plans in the event that they found themselves with extra time, all of the groups ran out of activities before the end of the day. In the case of Ruby and Susan, that was the last time they failed to do so. In fact, by the end of the second week, not only did Ruby have backup plans, but she had developed a system for using the time prior to the start of class to have students finish incomplete review sheets, and by putting out their

work folders on desks ahead of time, effectively “assigning” seating without drawing students’ attention to the fact that she had done so.

There may have been fundamental differences in educational philosophy between Ruby and her partner, Susan. Although there were no signs of conflict between the two, Susan’s initial writings clearly display a referent power base and student-directed philosophy. However, analysis of Susan’s philosophy is not directly relevant to the case at hand, nor does Ruby reference it at any point, so I will not comment on it further.

When Susan missed the third session of the project and Ruby had to teach on her own for the first time, Ruby wrote in her blog that they needed a better classroom management system. She was dissatisfied with student behavior once they were “out” of a game, and came up with the idea of having French worksheets which reviewed the vocabulary ready for students to do at their desk once they exited a game. This use of worksheets as a classroom management strategy was successful when she implemented it the following week and she kept it for the remainder of the teaching experience.

Oct. 7

“When I asked the students to form a circle and play a number game with a ball it was clear as to who was grasping the new vocab and who was struggling. The kids that were out of the game were provided with a review worksheet of numbers and colors while the students still in the game were quickly able to count and practice the new subject. This was ideal for me to be able to answer questions for the kids working on the puzzle.”

By October 14<sup>th</sup>, Ruby was doing exceptionally well at integrating review and vocabulary practice into every moment of the class. Angela writes a page of feedback in which she has only positive things to say about the day.

“After the review you introduced the next lesson. You mentioned that you were going on safari in Africa. Once again, you did a good job of reinforcing previously learned material. You asked the students, “How will we get to Africa?” They responded, “En avion!” You asked in French, “How many animals do you see in the picture?” The students raised their hands and responded, “Cinq.” One child floored me when she said, “Le panthere est noir.” Wonderful!”



However, Ruby was looking for additional ways to motivate her students to stay on task for the entire 90 minutes.

Oct. 14

“I think the best thing a teacher can do is motivate their students and encourage them to stay on task. Some students need more encouragement than others and will need to be reminded of the goal to finish their work. I think in our classroom we need to make a point/star system so that all of the students are working towards the same goal every day. This way the students that struggle to stay on task will want to earn their points just like the rest of the class and will understand that if they don't behave or complete their work appropriately they will not earn the points.”

Nevertheless, Ruby does not implement the point/star system (reward/punishment power base strategy). This system was not suggested to her by a supervisor, rather one of the other teaching groups was using such a system in their classroom, and they were having some success with it. However, Ruby's actual behaviors put her more comfortably in a legitimate power base, and because she is adept at using “Teacher French,” she could also be said to be fostering an expert power base.

Oct. 19

“I then moved on with the topic of the day which was weather. The students are used to the PowerPoint presentations and are aware of their expectations. I asked questions in French about pictures on the slides and called on students who raised their hands to tell me what they saw in the picture. When introduced to the vocab they are expected to repeat together as a class the new words. I had to remind the group that when answering questions I expect them to be raising their hands and not calling out. The students like pronouncing new words and often ask me to say them a few times. I have even noticed that some students like to write down how the words sound. They really enjoy hearing the French being spoken!”

From the beginning of the fourth week, Ruby knew she would continue teaching on her own, and there was another shift in the way she approached the project. This shift was more subtle than the change between disengaged student and engaged student-teacher that occurred in the first week of the teaching experience, but at this point Ruby took full responsibility for the success of the class. While she wrote, “it's hard to keep everyone busy on your own,” it is clear that in fact, as aligns with her teacher-directed philosophy, the L2 acquisition always was her guiding objective. For this reason, she defended her decision not to make her most challenging student participate in exactly the

way she had outlined for the rest of the class because he demonstrated during the last portion of the activity that he had been paying attention enough to meet the language objective of the lesson and he had not disrupted the learning of others around him. Putting the curriculum first is in keeping with her teacher-directed philosophy and both the legitimate and expert power base.

“All of the students were working successfully on writing two sentences about what they were wearing. Evan was not on task during the writing portion of the class and when I began to ask students to share in front of the class he began to try writing. When I called on him to share he was able to say what he was wearing that day with the help of the prompt on the board.”

### ***Importance of Organization and Efficiency***

While it is true that every classroom requires of the teacher the ability to be efficient with time and organized in planning and implementing the activities, it is also true that the teacher-directed classroom is especially dependent on the teacher’s ability to manifest these skills. The rewards/punishment power base cannot be implemented without an excellent record keeping system and “withitness” to see, record, and manage the behaviors you want to reward and punish. For Ruby’s legitimate power base, she needed to be able to assign logical consequences when the rules were broken and been both consistent and fair in her use of logical consequences. Furthermore, she needed to model being on-task at all times. When Ruby found opportunities to introduce new words and to review previously introduced vocabulary, as she did in the previous section, she was also strengthening her legitimacy as the class’s teacher. The following excerpt shows Ruby noticing a moment when she was not consistent in her own behavior, and this had negative consequences for the class as a whole.

Oct. 19

“Usually when Joe and Evan are in class together I sit them at opposite tables (placing their folders on their desks). Today it just did not work out that way...but it seems to work better when they are not seated near each other in class.”

Ruby chose lessons that she believed would lead to acquisition of French, and because her students were young, chose to present that information in ways that were appealing to them. It was not uncommon for our participants to so foreground the *fun* of a lesson that the content became a bit of a footnote, but this was not true in Ruby’s

classroom. Every lesson involved either group or paired games at some point during the session, but these were review sessions after a focused instructional period in which Ruby presented the new vocabulary both visually and auditorily. This pairing was an effective combination and supervisors often commented on how engaged the students were in their learning. Ruby's students had arrived willing to learn French, and through consistent use of the language with them and through generally strong lesson design (especially after the first few weeks), Ruby kept that willingness going through the entire experience. For that reason she was successful in working from both a legitimate power base and as an expert.

In the following section, she responds to a question from Helen about working on her own. Helen asks:

Oct. 28

What do you feel are the advantages/disadvantages of being the sole teacher in the program at this point? How do you plan to deal with the things that may put you at a bit of a disadvantage?

And Ruby responds:

"I think the advantages are that I am getting a ton of great experience working by myself and getting a feel for how I am going to make things work in my future classroom. I am getting to see how to manage all aspects of the classroom, how to keep my students on task, what preparations I need to do, what works and doesn't work with my students and the age group. I think overall it is a great experience to be working by myself and will only benefit me in the future. The disadvantages are that it is twice as much work for me in the circumstances of our program, which I don't mind because I enjoy it, but it is stressful and does leave me with a lot of things to remember to do and work for myself. It is also difficult to manage the classroom myself without having done so before. I think that all of the disadvantages however can be turned around into advantages for the long run!"

By the end of the program, Ruby has learned that some of the unpredictability she encountered during the days when Susan was unexpectedly absent are normal elements of a busy classroom and that those skills and personality traits she drew on to respond to the uncertainty are the same skills and personality traits she needs to continue to develop in her roles as a teacher. In her teacher's bag of tricks she has learned to "over plan" and to use the activities previously prepared but not utilized to review vocabulary at a later time.

In the following section, Ruby reflects back on the entire experience to describe what she has learned about being organized and flexible.

Nov. 11

“I’ve learned a lot of things through this experience, but I would definitely say that I’ve learned that it is impossible to prepare for everything that goes on in the classroom and you have to be flexible. It is important as a teacher to always have a backup plan or activities that you can use to fill extra time or give to students who finish early. The more you get to know your students the more you will be able to prepare for how they will react to certain lessons and which lessons specifically relate to different students. If an activity doesn’t go as planned or the students are not meeting expectations we have to take that as a learning experience and test different methods to see what works. . . It was easy to turn the activities that we previously hadn’t gotten to into review activities for the next class. I found this helpful and the kids enjoyed the fun review games . . . I definitely found it easier as time went on to be more flexible and make decisions for things that were unplanned.”

### **Elle: Student Directed**

Elle began class enthusiastic about teaching Spanish. When the class was asked why they wanted to teach Spanish, the answers tended to be either that they liked the language and so teaching seemed like a reasonable career choice, or that they wanted to teach or work with children, and teaching the L2 would be a meaningful way to do that. Elle wanted to work with children.

Elle had volunteered to teach 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> graders Spanish at the same elementary school she had attended. She had worked with them on basic Spanish skills, but the experience had been a bittersweet one. Each week she had been responsible for planning a 30-minute lesson and managing the group of 10 to 17 students on her own, but she felt unprepared, especially with the 6<sup>th</sup>-grade girls, whose behavior rapidly deteriorated. This experience figures prominently in a later reflection, so we will look at how she contrasts her field experience during this semester with the earlier, far less structured, experience in the subsection about shared behavior goals.

Elle’s initial writings reveal beliefs about teachers, learners, and teaching that are congruent with a student-directed philosophy of teaching. Three beliefs that are common to teachers who manage student-directed classrooms are:

- The teacher balances social/affective needs of students with their academic needs. Curriculum is meant to help students develop in both areas.

- The entire class is responsible for the classroom environment, so behavior goals are developed jointly and managed jointly, with the teacher acting as the more knowledgeable expert.
- The character traits of sensitivity and flexibility are prized. Teachers act primarily from an expert and/or referent power base.

The above themes figure prominently in Elle's written reflections, even when the supervisors do not mention them in the mediating feedback.

### ***Balancing of Social/Affective Needs with Academic Needs***

Elle begins the experience concerned with her student's affective needs and their effect on their academic needs. She subscribes to Krashen's notion of the affective filter and feels that as the teacher she needs to be conscious of choosing activities which would be motivating, increase opportunities for students to build self-confidence in their use of the target language, and avoid anxiety about language production. In her initial writing about classroom management (See Appendix A.) Elle talks about her desire to promote students' social development, and in the process, their academic development. These are joint goals, equal in value for her:

Sept. 24

"I know that, personally, my classroom will have a zero tolerance policy for laughing at others. Getting students to speak out and try Spanish verbally can be difficult. Anything that may impede their willingness, thus activate an affective filter, like other students' laughing at them, will not be tolerated."

In the following excerpt, Elle shares her beliefs about the relationship between well-planned lessons and student motivation. She clearly believes that if she offers quality lessons, students will feel compelled to engage and interact appropriately. This reflects Elle's belief in the validity of the expert power base.

Oct. 5

"I will be sure to enforce the rules and will reprimand equally so that students know what is accepted and what is expected. There is no reason that these students should not be able to behave very well for an hour and a half in our class. We make our lessons interesting, and are continuing to make them more and more interesting as we see what our students need and how they learn, so there is no reason they should not be enjoying their time with

us, and if they are enjoying their time, they will be eager to learn and engage, and they will follow the rules.”

The group had implemented a points system, although Elle did not really understand it herself. She was not sure when to give points and when to take them away and remarked that she was inconsistent with using it. She liked a practice of giving two warnings to students before taking away a point. This seemed more fair to Elle than the previous policy of taking away points when students acted up the first time, and she perceived it as being better received by the class. It was apparent to the supervisors that the WLED students in Elle’s group had not thought the points system through prior to implementing it. I observed the group explaining the system to the class (they would start each day with ten points, when students misbehaved the class would lose a point. The number of points at the end of the day would be added and when the class reached a certain number of points (I did not happen to record what that value was), the class would earn a party to celebrate. When a student asked, “What happens when we get to zero points?” Elle and her group were stumped. Elle said that nothing would happen and then quickly moved on. So I questioned the group again in my comments about what would happen when the group got to zero points for the day, but the question was not answered in the group reflection that week. Another student had asked if they could earn back points, and Elle, who was explaining the system to students, looked surprised. They clearly hadn’t considered that possibility. At the time Elle told the group that they could not earn back points. The class was disappointed. When speaking later with the group, both Helen and I encouraged the group to reconsider that position, but we did not explicitly tell the group to go research point systems online. Consequently, although the point system was revised to allow students to earn points back, and further tweaked later to permit teachers to give warnings before deducting points, the point system seemed to remain inconsistently administered, and all three members of the group appeared reluctant to take points away except as a last resort.

This lack of comfort with the points system is what Levin and Nolan (2010) predicted would happen when a teacher’s power base (points system = reward/punishment) was not aligned with his or her educational philosophy. In contrast to the points system, Elle tells in great detail about a time when she needed to stop calling

on a student who was consistently the first to raise her hand and typically the only one to get called on. In an effort to get other students participating, she bypassed the student for a few questions. In response, the student began to pout and stopped raising her hand or participating. So as soon as she got a chance, Elle pulled the girl aside and explained the reason behind her decision to call on other students for a bit. Although the girl's demeanor only improved slightly, Elle was satisfied with the exchange because she knew she was right to have made the decision to include others and knew she was right to have explained herself to the girl. She believed in her decisions and did not second guess them, but noted with satisfaction that the girl was her old self again by the next lesson.

Oct. 14

“This week I encountered a particularly interesting issue and I feel I need to share it here. One of our students, one who is always participating and is showing a real grasp on language, was raising her hand for every question I asked, as were most of her classmates. In an attempt to call on the students who often do not participate but that day were really involved, I did not call on her right away. Seeming discouraged, she quit raising her hand entirely. In fact, her smile sank and she was resting her head on the table; something that is highly unlike her. We moved to the popcorn game and her attitude remained. When we returned back to the table and Matt began his lesson, she was still “pouting”. I went over to her and I said “I noticed that whenever I did not call on you, you quit raising your hand. I want you to know that I did not call on you because I wanted to give everyone a turn. I had to be fair. I don't want you to be upset, but rather I would like to see you start to participate again. You're a wonderful student and I know you know many of the answers, so raise your hand.” She shook her head as if it was not Spanish class that had upset her. I reminded her that if she was upset about anything at all, she could talk to me and I would listen. I left it at that.

She still seemed to be upset and I did worry about her, but I knew that I had given her the opportunity to come to me if she wanted to share with me what was bothering her. The next class she came in happier than ever and when I asked her “Como estas hoy?” she replied “Estoy feliz”, and I felt a lot better about the whole issue. I learned that it is important to be open and honest with your students (to a certain extent, obviously). But I had noticed that something I did, or did not do, had upset her, and I understood that she may have taken it the wrong way and interpreted my not calling on her as my not liking her. I felt the need to explain to her and give her the opportunity to talk to me about anything that might be bothering her. I think that students, even students as young as ours, appreciate that.”

In this case Elle had acted in accordance with both her educational philosophy and her preferred power base. Although Angela had taken her to task that week for giving directions without having all eyes on her and for taking the group on a bathroom break only ten minutes into the lesson (after the opening activity, but prior to beginning stations), Elle's reflections are positive. She feels like she is making progress. At the end of the field experience, Elle is still concerned with the interplay between students' social and affective development and their academic performance. She continues to stress that there is a relationship between the two and that teachers have a responsibility to be aware of students' needs in each area:

Nov. 11

“Another difficulty I encountered is when students feel as though they cannot complete a task. This was a common case with one particular student. I have learned that in a situation like this, the student needs endless amounts of encouragement and praise. I told him every time that he . . . was able to do it and that I knew that he knew how. I would help him by prompting and giving clues, and when he would get the answer, I would praise, praise, praise! He loved the praise and felt very accomplishment [sic]. Feelings of ability and motivation are the underlying factors of effort, so establishing these positive feelings in students will lead to better learning.”

Elle was convinced from the beginning of the importance and effectiveness of peer interaction with the language. She was already convinced that asking each student at the start of class, “¿Como estás?” and then listening for the answer would yield both relationship benefits and language benefits. In her final reflection on classroom management (See Appendix B for the complete visual and text.) these dual objectives have equal merit, and time spent explaining her response to behavior that disrupts the learning experience of some or all of the students is time well spent.

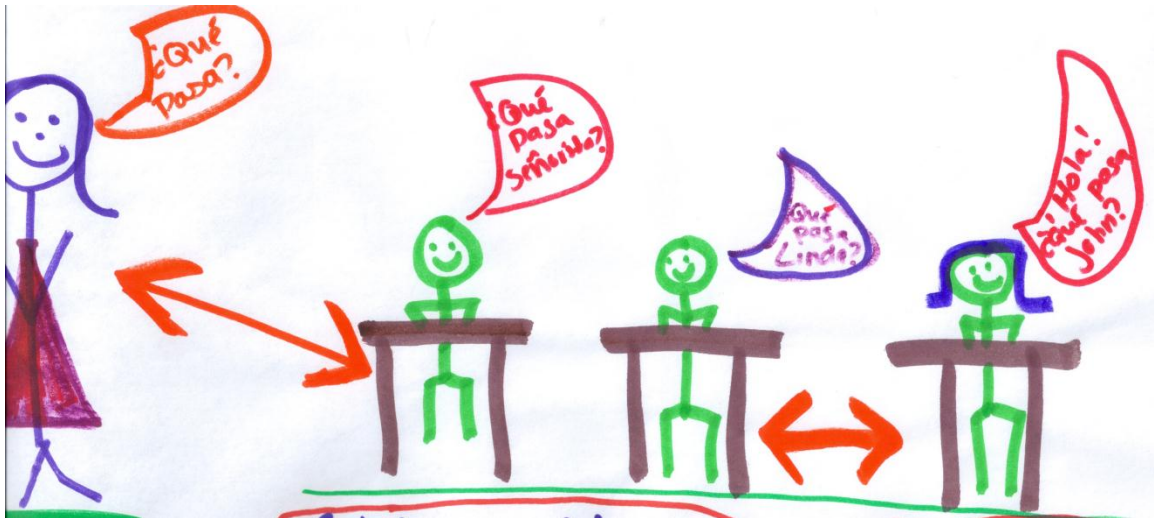
Dec. 2

“Though seemingly simple, my diagram represents a rather complex idea of classroom management. My main theory on classroom management is that in order to gain respect, one must earn it and must do so by giving it. Students should like their teacher, and for this reason respect their teacher. If students can sense that a teacher is real – that he or she truly cares and truly values their students and their students' education – then they will respect them for the mere fact that they value them as a person.”



### *Teacher and Students Are Equally Responsible for Shared Behavioral Goals*

Elle began the experience believing that the key relationships in a classroom are not just between individual students and his or her teacher, but between students as well. She indicates this relationship in her initial classroom management drawing:



In the writing that accompanied this art, she reveals that she feels rules are important but not at the expense of students' affective needs. Her initial writing and drawing about classroom management also indicates that she has certain ideas about behavior in the classroom. (See the complete assignment in Appendix A.) Students should raise their hands to speak and they should not tease their peers. A teacher's role is to enforce rules, but the rules should genuinely come from the classroom community as a whole. Teachers should praise good behavior and ignore misbehavior. Above all, all members of the classroom community should show one another respect. Because respect is in place, students will listen when they should listen, not call out, and not interrupt either the teacher or their peers. Prior to entering the classroom, Elle already uses language consistent with a referent power base, although she has not learned those terms and so does not name these ideas as such. Her ideas also seem to align well with either the collaborative or student-directed philosophy. The only idea which seems out of place is the concept of teacher-as-enforcer. Elle comes back to this in her final reflection and we will revisit it then, too.

Sept. 24

“Students are respectful to their teachers. They listen quietly, follow the rules, do not speak out or interrupt, and most importantly, they show respect to others . . . Teachers include the students in creating the rules. In this way, the students feel as though they had input and are being heard. If they feel that they had a say in how the classroom should and will run, they will be more likely to follow those rules and to strive to maintain that safe, happy environment. Furthermore, teachers must enforce the rules.

Firstly, I will use the “teacher look”. A facial expression can make a world of difference. This way, class is not interrupted but a clear message of disapproval is sent. If the student continues to “Act up”, I would ask him out loud to please remember our rules and remind him that everyone must follow them. I suppose that if this continued, some sort of discipline system could be used, but more importantly, we must be sure to praise good behavior and try to ignore misbehavior.”

By the end of the experience, Elle was sure that her greatest area of growth in the classroom was in classroom management. She recalls an experience she had while volunteering with some 6th grade girls from the elementary school she had attended.

“I taught a Spanish class in my one elementary school last semester and I had not mastered classroom management from that experience . . . In my one particular 6th grade group, the girls had entire control over the classroom. They would start arguments with other students every day . . . I think because I knew some of them I was afraid to be strict. I let a lot slide. Coming into this, I was very afraid the same thing would happen, but I really did grow a lot in that area. I understand that you can still gain students’ respect while enforcing the rules. . . . Being able to enforce the rules while showing students that you love them and enjoy them so much is key.”

Elle’s ideas about teachers, teaching, and students in the classroom have changed in subtle ways during the program. Even though most of the feedback she receives from supervisors is largely teacher-directed in nature, and often given from a legitimate power base, Elle has become more firmly student-directed in approach and operates even more confidently from a referent power base. You will recall that the beliefs Elle had about teachers as rule makers and rule enforcers (legitimate power base) were the area of least alignment with what was otherwise a collection of beliefs in alignment with student-directed/expert and referent decision making. By the end of the experience, Elle has brought this area into closer agreement with the rest of her beliefs:

Dec. 2

When I began teaching I thought that teachers should set the rules, enforce the rules, and “control” their students so they could drill in the lesson for the day. Over time, I have come to value much more deeply the students and their ideas and feelings . . . . Students should be active participants in their education and the rules that govern the classroom . . . Mutual respect is the ultimate goal of the classroom.”

Elle has not really moved so far as she thinks. In her first written reflection she had mused, “It is important to take the time to answer their questions because obviously they are questions that have a lot of meaning to them.” In this quote she reveals that students are worthy of her respect as not recipients of the curriculum, but rather participants in the learning community, co-constructors of meaning.

### ***Importance of Sensitivity and Flexibility***

If organization is a key character trait of the teacher who manages a teacher-directed classroom, then sensitivity is its pair in the student-directed classroom. Because the two power bases most effective in the student-directed classroom are the referent and the expert power bases, the teacher with a student-directed philosophy must show sensitivity towards the needs of his or her students and sensitivity in meeting them. For the referent power base to be successful, students must like the teacher as a person and believe that she or he in turn cares for them individually. The expert teacher must communicate not only a broad and deep understanding of the content, but he or she must be watchful for the developing understandings of his or her students and present lessons in ways that reflect that understanding. The expert teacher is an expert, yes, but not a distant, uncaring one. Part mentor, part inspiration, the expert teacher challenges students to do their best work, and does so in ways that reflect sensitivity to each student’s interests and abilities.

In Elle’s first individual reflection from the experience, she produces the equivalent of four single-spaced pages of writing on her blog as she strives to make sense of the initial experiences. She wonders about the proper way to reprimand inappropriate behavior, she admits whispering makes her uncomfortable because she wants to permit it in order to allow for students to support each other in acquiring the language, but she

worries that it could just as well signal teasing or a bullying, which she should put a stop to.

Oct. 7

“Perhaps more importantly is how I do reprimand inappropriate behavior, which is something I am still working on. It seems as though it is easier for me to notice and reprimand behavior that causes a lot of noise than inappropriate behaviors that go on silently (but still disrupt and distract). It is important for teachers, myself especially, to be extra in-tune with every single thing that is happening around the classroom. Secrets that are being shared “behind my back” may be words of bullying, for example, and while very quiet, they are still a major issue. When the class gets chatty, I compare it to a “cloud of noise;” it is very hard to decipher who is saying what and which conversations are scaffolding and which are perhaps insults. My approach to handling these issues falls into the category of teacher-student interaction: how will I handle these issues with my students? Or a better question is, how will I comfortably and confidently handle these issues with my students by talking or communicating to them? Aside from correcting behavior that is very loud and disruptive, I tend to be very passive. I need to be sure to reprimand consistently. . . . When it comes to teacher-student interaction in the department of giving commands, such as “I want you to trade seats,” I need to be sure to provide explanation for the command. A simple “Abby, I see that you are having a hard time paying attention when you are sitting next to Becca. I have asked you girls 2 times now to stop chatting and to pay attention, and because you cannot follow those directions, I am going to have Abby and Carlie trade seats. Thank you very much, Carlie.”

Elle knows what to do in a situation where a game got out of hand and became in fact a little dangerous. In this situation she acted immediately to change the rules of the game to promote a safer and also more effective practice of the language.

Oct. 7

“I noticed that the students were just slapping every word until they got the right word. Not only was this dangerous, (as the flailing fly swatter could potentially hit someone in the face) but it was also very un-beneficial and un-educational. Students were not being forced to look at the words, analyze them and think about their meanings. So I created a rule where students could only swat once. This made them look over the words and think about them! It did do what I wanted it to do! Although when felt pressured by time, they would make a quick decision based on, perhaps, guessing, but this new rule to the game made it a much more effective learning experience. Also, I had the students start behind a certain line and not cross it until they were ready to swat. I only did this to keep them from being in close proximity with one another with flailing fly swatters. This new rule combined with the “one swat only” rule did create a safer environment.”

But her desire to take into account her new students' affective needs as well as their cognitive needs is stymied by a lack of experience and in part because the program is not well designed for a student-directed classroom. She has insufficient time for the kind of community building and support in self-regulation that is needed for this approach. In addition because none of the supervisors teach from a student-directed philosophy, she does not receive feedback that tells her what to do in these situations.

Oct. 7

“In future classes, I will pay extra close attention to what is going on right before my eyes. I will make it a point to zone [sic] in on what types of conversations students are having during time when they are able to chat while they work, such as when they are working on things while everyone is arriving, or while they are allowed to work in pairs. I must do this so I can get a grip on any issues that may just be starting, such as conflict between certain students or highly inappropriate conversation topics. It is not too late to catch onto these things that may have been secretly happening before, but if certain things are let go much longer, it will create issues.”

Much like the teacher-directed approach, the student-directed philosophy requires flexibility on the part of the teacher to adjust to changes in student needs by changing the lesson plans or the amount of time allotted for a particular activity. In the final reflection for the field experience, Elle talks about her increased flexibility, which she expresses as a result of her increased sensitivity to student needs.

Nov. 11

“Flexibility is something I got really good at. If a lesson runs short or long, we had to be very flexible in our teachings. Many times I taught last and would be left with 17 minutes to do a lesson that was supposed to take 25. 8 minutes is a huge deal when you have activities planned. I quickly had to think of which activities to knock out and which ones were more important. A few times, on the spot, I had to change the way I would run an activity, e.g. smaller groups to go faster or less explanation or oral Spanish use from each participant. Being flexible is a must in teaching. I'm typically a person whose whole day can be thrown off by a change in plans, but with teaching, I am very different.

I have not mastered making quick and good teaching decisions, and I have a lot to learn about being flexible, but these things are acquired with experience. I know that it will not take long to master these skills in the field because when I start teaching, I will have no choice but to master them as they are issues that will occur everyday.”

## Chapter 7: Discussion

Tomasello proposes the notion of entrenchment in language acquisition. “Entrenchment characterizes the process whereby patterns become habituated through constant and successful use, thus making it difficult for something to be done in an alternative way (Tomasello, 2003, p. 300)” (Lantolf and Thorne, 2006, p. 189). This description I think lends us an excellent word to describe the processes at work in the spontaneous concepts that Ruby and Elle acquired.

For Ruby, what became entrenched was the idea that the teacher is ultimately responsible for the student’s success and their behavior, and that a well-planned lesson leads to student engagement which leads to students’ learning. Ruby asserts that the teacher must be flexible, but that means to prepare for everything, have backup plans and activities, and plan a lesson with the needs of your students in mind. It does not mean that the teacher accepts less than the best of his or her students. Ruby is an expert in French and she does her job of teaching well, which means her students are less inclined to misbehave because even the child who cannot always be on task does in fact want to learn French. Every student is clear about his or her role as a student. They trust Ruby to teach them all they want to learn about French in ways that they will also enjoy.

For Elle, what became entrenched was the idea that close personal relationships forged between students and between students and the teacher are a necessary prerequisite to teaching and learning the curriculum. She believed social/affective needs should be balanced with academic needs; teacher and students are equally responsible for shared behavioral goals, and teachers should be sensitive to the needs of their students as well as flexible about lesson outcomes. Elle believes students should not have to view their teacher as a figure of much higher power and importance. If a teacher cannot relate to her students on a personal level, they will “disrespect and devalue her.”

“One particular time, students in my small group were acting up so much that I could not even talk to them without raising my voice so they could hear. So I just stopped the activity, said, “Estudiantes!” and continued to give them a mini-lecture. I said, “Students, I love that you are enthusiastic about what we are doing, but you are really getting out of hand. I’m getting a little upset because you are not listening to me and it makes it very hard for me to talk to you when you are all yelling like this. Can we please lower our voices a little?” That was super spontaneous, but I felt the need to explain to them

why I was feeling upset and tell them why I wanted them to quiet down. Their faces were very attentive and they seemed concerned that I felt the way I did. If you talk to students like real people and explain to them what they are doing wrong and why you think it is wrong, they take that and internalize it. These students are not too young for you to talk to them like this. They are aware of what is expected of them and no one should think they cannot understand that. They know more than most give them credit for. They have an ability to understand you when you explain it to them.”

Furthermore, students have a right to ask questions and get answers and in so doing affect the curriculum of the class. “Students should be active participants in their education and the rules that govern the classroom . . . Mutual respect is the ultimate goal of the classroom.”

Ruby and Elle came into the experience thinking they did not know much about teaching. They did not realize that sitting in classrooms for at least 12 years previous had led them to form spontaneous beliefs about what they thought was appropriate and necessary in a classroom, in the behavior of the members of the classroom, and in the goals and objectives of a classroom. These beliefs proved to be a compelling and valid basis for their teaching experience, but these ideas are not systematic, are not well organized, and they prove difficult to use to organize all of their new experiences and the new ideas from the supervisors. Consequently, only those ideas that fit clearly with what they already know and believe are integrated into their thinking, leading to entrenchment of beliefs.

However, when given a chance to address the participants, the supervisors passed on the spontaneous concepts we held ourselves: “Take them to the bathroom first.” “Try not to ask questions if you might not like the answer.” “Support each other. The lessons will go better for you all if you do.” These are separate everyday ideas that have become entrenched in us as teacher practitioners. Since we lacked a unifying theory of classroom management, we did not have one to offer.

This lack of systematicity and generalizability likely has two unintended consequences. The first is that the feedback given related to one situation is perceived by the WLED student as being only very narrowly applicable. That is, the feedback is only useful for other very similar situations. Therefore, the mediation that *was* utilized by students were for those situations that had the most potential to change a day. It happens

that some of these situations occur regularly throughout the school day. So these strategies do in fact have a measurable impact on the success of the lesson (i.e., the acquisition of the everyday or spontaneous concept *is* enough to improve the experience or success of a lesson). An example of this is the strategy of clapping out a pattern to get a class's attention prior to giving directions. Students respond by clapping the same pattern, which has the intended consequence of getting them to stop doing whatever they were doing before and focus on the teacher. After three or so different clapping patterns, the teacher has the students' undivided attention and starts speaking to the class. When Helen explains the clapping pattern to Los Embajadores, they try it and become enchanted by how quickly and easily it works. It does not even need to be explained to students, because the second through fourth graders are already familiar with it from their regular school day. The clapping pattern strategy works well and it works nearly every time the WLED students need to get the attention of the whole class.

For those situations that happened less frequently (e.g., the single bathroom break each day), students appeared to delay implementing our advice until they had proven to themselves that there was really a problem with the way they had thought to handle it. And for those situations that appeared to be isolated incidents, such as a scuffle between two otherwise well-behaved students, there was usually no response to the feedback from the student and no implementation of the advice in future lesson plans.

The second unintended consequence of mediating WLED student learning using our own experience-based ideas about what works is that while students expressed that they had learned a lot about classroom management and felt more confident about their teaching by the end of the experience, they were still feeling uneasy about their level of preparedness for their next professional experience, which would be a more involved field experience the following fall. Elle writes in the class blog on Nov. 2:

“I wonder how long it takes for teachers to develop the ability to smoothly run an entire classroom for 24+ students and smoothly handle any issues or disruptions that may arise mid-lesson. If you are teaching a lesson to 24+ students, and one student starts balling her eyes out because her stomach hurts, how do you go about dealing with the issue while still continuing the lesson or maintaining control of the classroom? I talked to Alaska about this and she said that it comes with experience. Teachers, experienced teachers, have back up plans for everything, such as silent individual reading time, or



quiet journal writing time. Activities like these that we can tuck in our back pockets will certainly be wonderful when we need to fall back on them.”

In the above post, Elle names her concern: that an individual child’s social/emotional/physical needs might come into conflict with the academic needs of the class and she does not have the right strategy in place to cope with that particular situation. My response to her was probably typical of a more experienced teacher, but it was not particularly helpful. I said, in essence, that eventually her bag of tricks (collection of spontaneous concepts) would cover most situations. And so in the end of the paragraph, she metaphorically shakes that bag.

Out of the experience Ruby and Elle came to be more aware of the spontaneous concepts they had coming into the project, even if the idea seemed new at the time. They became comfortable with the idea of themselves as a teacher and they began to be able to communicate some of their core beliefs. They would not have used the terms I have used here to describe them, because these concepts were not part of their teacher education courses or the student-teaching project. But they could both say at the end what it was they believed to be true about students, teachers, and teaching.

## **Chapter 8: Conclusion and Recommendations**

Both students emerged with their own ideas about classroom management intact. Perhaps they found in their supervisor's comments only those ideas that supported their beliefs about who teachers are and what they are supposed to do, how they are supposed to spend their time. They found, in the spontaneous knowledge built up during the teaching experience, support for that which they already believed to be true—even if, as Elle clearly does—they feel it all as new in the moment.

What kind of intervention might produce development of classroom management concepts? I believe the first step to providing students with concepts which can be generalized and transferred to new novel experiences in the classroom is to introduce the scientific concepts discussed in this paper (i.e., educational philosophy, power bases, and their relationships) early in the course and for long enough that students have the opportunity to use the language that relates to these concepts with the mediating involvement of the University supervisors. Specifically, we could provide students with the opportunity to reflect on where they stand on that philosophical continuum and why. In this way, we help students become more aware of their existing spontaneous concepts.

Then, during the field experience itself, at least two of the supervisors should be providing students with feedback that invites constant reflection on the classroom experiences and teacher decisions students made from their personal positions. The interpsychological discussion of the classroom management theory would thus become the students, resulting eventually in the internalization of the theory. This internalization permits students to make decisions based on the private intrapsychological discussions of a teacher (i.e., “What is the right action to take in this situation based on what I believe and what my goals are as a teacher?). The field experience itself is still a logical place to practice (make material) decision-making from those concepts, as simultaneous development of the spontaneous concepts can only benefit acquisition of the scientific concepts.

In addition, Dr. Nolan and other Curriculum & Instruction faculty at the University are now offering an online version of their course during the summer. It could be instructive to see how the writing of any WLED education students who take the

classroom management course in advance write differently about their beliefs and expectations in their initial classroom management reflections.

Given the amount of energy that new teachers typically expend in acquiring on-the-job management skills, and given the likelihood of teacher burnout in those that are not successful (and attendant loss of student on-task behavior and learning), there are few teacher educators who would not want to improve this aspect of teacher education. In addition, if we believe that for students the kind of learning that develops their thinking requires effort and self-regulation on both their part and on the part of the teacher, if we believe it requires the teacher or the teacher in concert with her students to construct the “conditions for certain cognitive processes to develop,” then we must believe that to send our education students out into the world without at least a basic idea of how to make the decisions necessary to do so is to leave the job of teacher education at least partly unfinished. Given the critical role the teacher plays in the development of the minds of our children, or more to the point, the potential he or she has to play, it seems like a worthwhile task to continue to explore the questions visited in this paper and a purposeful intervention so that spontaneous ideas are not entrenched in the learner, but rather serve as the foundation for the scientific concepts that can help them reorganize what they know already about teachers, teaching, and students, and revolutionize their thinking about the nature and activity of classroom management.

## Appendix A: Initial Classroom Management Representations

Elle



Written explanation:

### How are the students behaving?

Students are respectful to their teachers. They listen quietly, follow the rules, do not speak out or interrupt, and most importantly, they show respect to others. I know that, personally, my classroom will have a zero tolerance policy for laughing at others. Getting students to speak out and try Spanish verbally can be difficult. Anything that may impede their willingness, thus activate an affective filter, like other students' laughing at them, will not be tolerated.

### What does the teacher do to encourage that behavior?

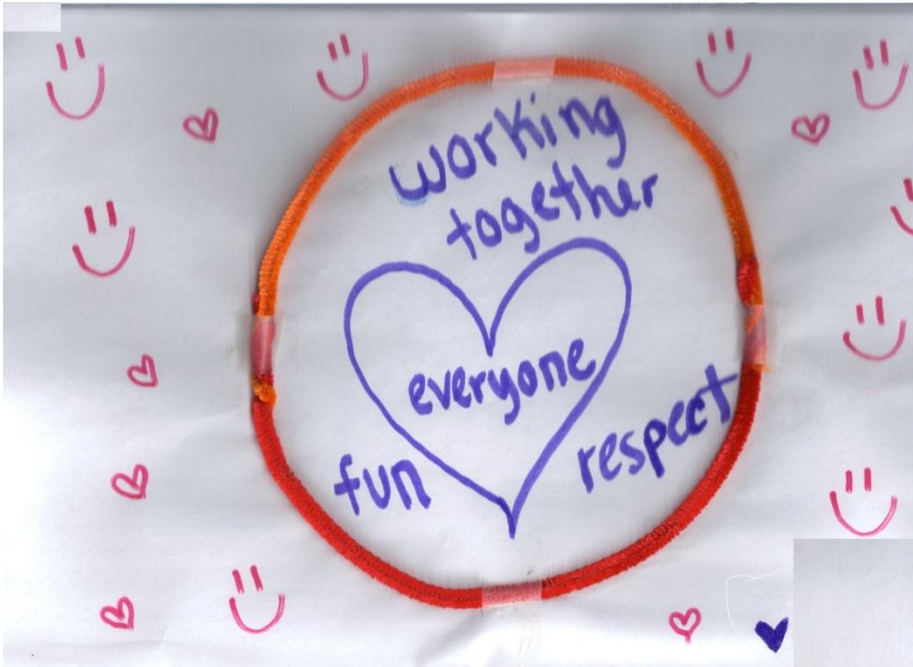
Teachers include the students in creating the rules. In this way, the students feel as though they had input and are being heard. If they feel that they had a say in how the classroom should and will run, they will be more likely to follow those rules and to strive to maintain that safe, happy environment. Furthermore, teachers must enforce the rules.

### How does this teacher interact with students who are not behaving well?

Firstly, I will use the "teacher look". A facial expression can make a world of difference. This way, class is not interrupted but a clear message of disapproval is sent. If the student continues to "Act up", I would ask him out loud to please remember our rules and remind him that everyone must follow them. I suppose that if this continued, some sort of discipline system could be used, but more importantly, we must be sure to praise good behavior and try to ignore misbehavior.

## Initial Classroom Management Representations (Cont.)

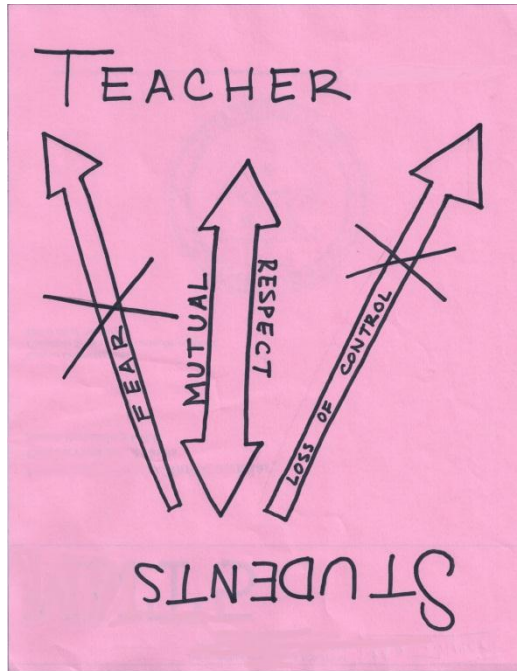
Ruby



No written explanation submitted.

## Appendix B: Final Classroom Management Representations

Elle



Written explanation:

Though seemingly simple, my diagram represents a rather complex idea of classroom management. My main theory on classroom management is that in order to gain respect, one must earn it and must do so by giving it. Students should like their teacher, and for this reason respect their teacher. If students can sense that a teacher is real – that he or she truly cares and truly values their students and their students' education – then they will respect them for the mere fact that they value them as a person. Students should not feel intimidated by a teacher, respecting them out of fear, nor should they sense weakness and feel that they can control the teacher. Respect should be mutual. The arrow labeled FEAR represents the students having to look up at the teacher as a figure of much higher power and importance. There is an X through this arrow because I disagree with the idea that students should have to view their teacher as a high, authoritative figure. The arrow labeled LOSS OF CONTROL represents students having gained control of the teacher due to a lack of respect for the teacher, perhaps stemming from the teacher's inability to relate to her students on a personal level, which would cause students to disrespect and devalue that teacher. The middle arrow, labeled MUTUAL RESPECT, represents the best way to run a classroom. The words MUTUAL and RESPECT are written this way, in a mirror-image layout, to represent the two-way street that respect must run in a classroom.

When I began teaching, I thought that teachers should set the rules, enforce the rules, and “control” their students so that they could drill in the lesson for the day. Over time, I have come to value much more deeply the students and their ideas and feelings. Students should be active participants in their education and the rules that govern their classroom. Students should be respected and should be included in creating rules and designing, or at least guiding the design of, the class activities. In this way, students will feel that they matter, that they are cared about and that they are respected. When students feel this way, they respect those who are creating these feelings. MUTUAL RESPECT is the ultimate goal of the classroom.

## Ruby



### Written explanation:

The picture that I drew represents classroom management to me because it shows that the teacher is in control of their own classroom. The teacher is in charge and is the boss of their students; it is the teacher's responsibility to establish appropriate rules from the beginning. It is important that these rules are explained thoroughly during the very first meeting of the class. It is also important that these rules are implemented immediately by the teacher to enforce the goals of their classroom. The students are to be aware of their expectations and how they are to act in class towards the teachers and to their peers. If any of these rules or expectations are made unclear students will take advantage of their freedom and the class may become out of hand. If a teacher fails to follow up on the rules they have set the students will think that they no longer have to obey these rules

and will begin to make their own rules and believe they can get away with things that are inappropriate in the classroom setting.

Since the beginning of this field experience my perspective on classroom management has changed in realizing how important the first day of class with new students can be. We had prepared rules in our classroom and the first day established these rules, however certain things were not established or made clear that led to further problems with the management of our classroom. When I began teaching by myself I had to readjust the classroom rules and make it clear of my expectations as a teacher. Students were not permitted to get out of their seats without permission or to go to the bathroom during an important lesson. Shortly after emphasizing these rules students began raising their hands to ask for permission to get out their seats and organization in the classroom appeared to be much better. The students need to be aware that the teacher is in charge and that they need to pay attention to important lessons and stay in their seats and not become a distraction to others. I have also learned that ignoring a student who misbehaves for attention can be affective, however it is important to step in when the student is disrupting the class as a whole and causing a problem that needs attention. Ignoring students that call out also seems to work as well, by calling on the student who raises their hand with the correct answer the student who calls out will model that behavior. I feel that overall I have learned a lot about classroom management by given this opportunity to have this experience, I have improved with my management skills and have become more confident as a teacher and as the person in charge of their classroom.



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