

DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 466 450

SP 040 864

AUTHOR Sokal, Laura; Smith, Donna G.; Mowat, Heather
TITLE Pre-Service Teachers' Attitudes toward Classroom Management
in an Alternative Certification Program.
PUB DATE 2002-04-00
NOTE 23p.; Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the American
Educational Research Association (New Orleans, LA, April
1-5, 2002).
PUB TYPE Reports - Research (143) -- Speeches/Meeting Papers (150)
EDRS PRICE MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS *Alternative Teacher Certification; *Attitude Change;
*Classroom Techniques; Elementary Secondary Education;
Foreign Countries; Higher Education; Preservice Teacher
Education; *Student Teacher Attitudes; Student Teachers;
Teacher Student Relationship
IDENTIFIERS Canada

ABSTRACT

This study investigated whether student teachers' attitudes toward classroom management would develop the same way in alternative certification (AC) teacher education programs as they would in traditional programs. Participants were 2 groups of Canadian student teachers at the end of their first or second year of a 2-year AC program. All participants had completed a baccalaureate degree prior to beginning the AC program. The participants completed the Attitudes and Beliefs in Classroom Control Inventory and a demographic inventory. Data analysis indicated that teachers in the AC program did not follow the same trajectory of classroom management attitudes as teachers in traditional teacher education programs, where attitudes do not generally change over the course of the program. Student teachers at the completion of the AC program had more interventionist attitudes about their roles in their relationships with students than did students who had completed only half of the AC program. There were no significant differences between any of the three age groups of AC preservice teachers. (Contains 59 references.) (SM)

Pre-service Teachers' Attitudes Toward Classroom Management in an Alternative Certification Program

Laura Sokal, Donna G. Smith and Heather Mowat

2002

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Pre-service Teachers' Attitudes Toward Classroom Management
in an Alternative Certification Program

Laura Sokal, Donna G. Smith and Heather Mowat

University of Winnipeg

Paper presented at the annual meetings of the American Educational Research Association, New Orleans Louisiana, April 2002.

Classroom management has been shown to be the most common concern of both pre-service and experienced teachers (Gee, 2001; Johns, MacNaughton, & Karabinus, 1989; Smith, 2000; Weinstein, 1996; Weinstein & Mignano, 1993). Furthermore, teachers who self-define their teaching experiences as failures attribute their outcomes to a lack of preparation by their teacher education programs (Britt, 1997; Goodenough, 2000). Pre-service teachers, who commonly cite student behaviours as negative aspects of their practicum placements (Killen, 1994), share this perception. According to pre-service teachers, their frustration with their inability to manage student behaviour is left unaddressed by their co-operating teachers (Goodenough, 2000; Key, 1998) as well as by their faculty advisors (Farkas, Johnson, & Duffet, 1997). These findings are cause for concern, as teachers who perceive problems with classroom management are more likely to leave the teaching profession (Goodenough, 2000; Taylor & Dale, 1971).

Research has demonstrated that effective classroom instruction in teacher education programs can alter students' views about classroom management (Hollingsworth, 1989). However, many student teachers begin their traditional

teacher education programs with well defined ideas about classroom management (Chan, 1999)-- ideas that remain unchanged during the course of their training (O'Loughlin, 1991; Tatto, 1996; Zeichner & Tabachnick, 1981). Ironically, changes occur when these teachers are hired for their first teaching positions (Celep, 1997; Laut, 1999). At this point, their attitudes usually become more authoritarian. Garrison (1972) showed that beginning teachers perceive their administrators as holding much more authoritarian attitudes than they actually do, suggesting that novice teachers may change their attitudes to conform to those they perceive to be held by their supervisors. Ironically, principals have been shown to rate authoritarian teachers as less effective in the classroom than teachers with other behaviour management orientations (Ayers, 1984).

While copious research has been conducted on the development of teacher attitudes toward classroom management in teachers attending traditional teacher education programs, less research has been conducted with students in non-traditional alternative certification programs. This issue is of interest to Canadian universities that are striving to educate enough teachers to meet the predicted teacher shortages through the development of AC programs. The prevalence of AC programs is increasing (Feistritzer, 2000), and therefore more teachers will be graduates of these programs. This teacher education pattern is evident in the United States, where two thirds of the teacher education institutions offer some type of AC program (Barry, 2001).

Do teachers' attitudes toward classroom management develop the same way in alternative certification (AC) teacher education programs as in traditional programs? The current study sought to answer this question.

This report will begin with a description of the continuum of teacher orientations toward classroom management. Next, past research linking classroom management attitudes to AC programs will be explored, followed by a discussion of the rates at which AC teachers leave the profession. Finally, we will discuss the findings of the current project with regard to the development of teacher attitudes over the course of an AC program and place the findings within the current literature on classroom management attitudes.

Classroom Management Attitudes

Attitudes toward classroom management can be classified into three broad categories (Glickman & Tamashiro, 1980; Wolfgang, 1995). These categories represent a continuum from high teacher control to low teacher control (see Figure 1). While teachers may demonstrate characteristics of each category in different situations, they are likely to use one approach more often than others (Wolfgang, 1995).

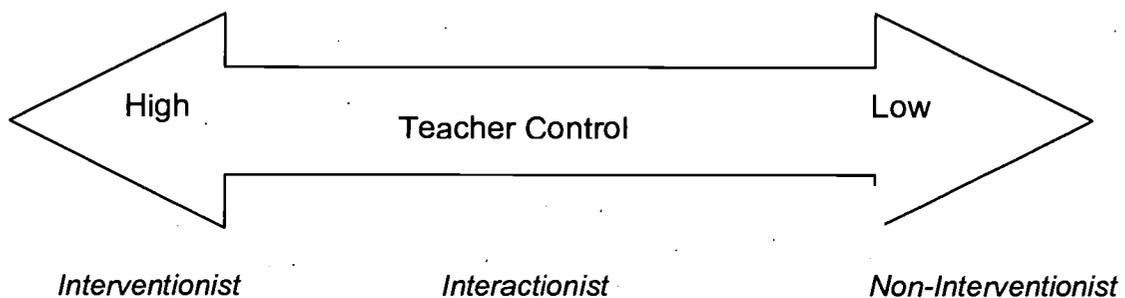


Figure 1. Continuum of Teacher Attitudes Towards Classroom Management

Low teacher control is characteristic of *non-interventionist* models of classroom management, which include Ginott's Congruent Communication (1972) and Gordon's Teacher Effectiveness Training (1974). Underlying this approach is the belief that children have innate needs that require expression. This approach focuses on what an individual child does to modify his or her own environment. Research has shown that student teachers are more likely to fall within this category than experienced teachers (Martin & Baldwin, 1993; Swanson, O'Connor, & Conney, 1990). Interestingly, Laut (1999) showed that co-operating teachers are also more likely to fall within this category.

Moderate levels of teacher control are indicative of an *interactionist* model of classroom management. Theories such as Glasser's Control Theory (1986) and Albert's Co-operative Discipline (1989) fall into this classification. This approach balances the individual child's effects on his/her environment with the environment's effects on the individual. Research has shown that many pre-service teachers adopt this orientation and believe that teaching is a partnership based on equality (Hollingsworth, 1989) and friendship (Chan, 1999) between teachers and students.

Interventionist models like those developed by Canter (1992) and Jones (1987) demonstrate high levels of teacher control. The focus in this approach is the environment's effects on the individual, and its proposed management strategies tend to represent behaviourist ideals. Martin & Baldwin (1993) demonstrated that experienced teachers are more likely to fall within this

category. Alternately, Laut (1999) showed that it is novice teachers rather than those with many years of experience who fall within this category. This approach is teacher-centered, and teachers falling within this orientation are more concerned about what others perceive of their teaching than are teachers falling within the other two orientations (Adams & Marstray, 1981).

Classroom Management Attitudes and Alternative Certification Programs

Teacher's attitudes about classroom management have been of interest for some time. Recently, Nancy Martin and her colleagues developed the Attitudes and Beliefs on Classroom Control (ABCC)(Martin, Yin & Baldwin, 1998) to look at differences in teacher attitudes based on sex (Martin & Yin, 1997), rural or urban location (Martin, 1997), age (Martin & Shoho, 2000) and teacher education program (Martin & Shoho, 1999; 2000).

Martin and Shoho's studies of types of programs were aimed at investigating the classroom management attitudes of teachers educated in an alternative certification (AC) program as compared with those educated in traditional teacher education programs. According to Martin and Shoho (1999), AC programs are defined in one of three main ways 1) graduate study in education, 2) a small amount of professional teacher education before classroom teaching, or 3) commencement of teaching without teacher education.

Of these courses of study, the latter two have brought most criticism due to their lack of teacher education (Tell, 2001). Citing research that shows that teacher education is a necessary aspect of quality instruction (Martin, & Shoho, 1999; Barry, 2001), some researchers claim that AC teachers have more

difficulty learning to teach than do traditionally trained teachers (Barry, 2001; Shen, 1997). Other researchers (Finn & Madigan, 2001) posit that due to a lack of consensus on effective teaching practices and a paucity of research suggesting that the students of AC teachers have different outcomes than those of traditionally trained teachers, negative views of these programs are unfounded.

Furthermore, various authors suggest contrary views on AC teacher retention, an important concern since many of these programs were created to address teacher shortages. For example, in a recent edition of Educational Leadership three articles discuss teacher attrition. Finn and Madigan (2001) cite research (Klagholz, 2000) suggesting that AC teachers have a lower attrition rate than traditionally trained teachers. The next article in the journal is by Barnett Barry (2001), who states that 60 percent of AC graduates leave the profession within three years, whereas only 30 percent of traditionally trained teachers do so and 10 to 15 percent of teachers from extended five-year programs do so. The next article, by Carol Tell (2001), suggests that Teach for America AC graduates have low attrition while KIPP (Knowledge is Power Program) program graduates either leave the inner city neighborhoods in which they were trained to teach or else leave teaching altogether.

This lack of consensus suggests that all AC programs are not the same and that each type must be looked at distinctly. Since the term *alternative certification program* has been used to describe a variety of program types (Berry, 2001), generalizations about their effectiveness must be viewed with

caution. In order to make sense of the emerging contradictory findings regarding AC programs and their success, it is necessary to clearly describe the AC program being studied (Barry, 2001) so that the findings can be meaningfully placed within the context of the broader literature on similar AC programs.

Martin and Shoho (1999; 2000) conducted research comparing AC and traditionally educated teachers. The AC program in these studies involved participants who held at least a Bachelor degree and were working full time as teachers. The AC teacher education program itself involved 25 hours of teacher shadowing, teacher observation and classroom instruction. Course content paralleled that of the traditional teacher education program at the same institution. In one study (1999), Martin and Shoho found the two groups differed on only one of the three ABCC subscales (instructional management) with AC teachers demonstrating more interventionist attitudes. In the other study (2000), they added traditionally educated student teachers to their sample. They found that the groups differed on two subscales (people management and behaviour management) and that AC teachers and traditionally trained teachers were similar to each other in that both groups were more interventionist than student teachers in a traditional program. Martin and Shoho (2000) and Chan (1999) suggest that differences in attitudes may be a result of AC teachers and traditionally trained teachers being older than traditionally trained student teachers. Chan (1999) further suggests that having completed their education in a teachable subject area allows AC student teachers greater confidence in their

content knowledge of their teachable subjects, an observation that may contribute confidence in other dimensions of teaching.

The first goal of the current study was to examine the attitudes toward classroom management of two groups of teachers associated with the same two-year alternative certification program at a Canadian University in order to illuminate any potential differences. The groups are: 1) student teachers at the end of their first year in the AC program, 2) student teachers at the end of their second year in the two-year AC program. Sampling AC teachers at various points in their teaching training allowed examination of the developmental trajectory of attitudes in this type of program, rather than simply comparing attitudes among members of various program types. That is, the current project was able to detect differences in students at various points in the programs rather than simply comparing graduates from a variety of programs.

The second goal was to examine the claim that age can be used to explain differences in classroom management attitudes. Although some of the people enrolled in this study's AC program are older than the students in the traditional program and have also participated in other careers and in child rearing, others in the AC program enrolled directly after a three-year degree program in a teachable subject area. Thus, these students graduate from the two-year AC program and their prior three-year baccalaureate program in the same amount of time as students enrolled in the traditional five-year teacher education program. In effect, some of these students are the same age as those students who enrolled in the five-year traditional teacher education program

directly out of high school. By collecting data about the ages of the participants, potential age differences within the AC group can be examined.

A final analysis was exploratory in nature and investigated the relationship between parenthood and attitudes toward classroom management. Martin and Shoho (2000) suggested this question as a fruitful area for future research.

Method

Participants included male (n= 12) and female (n= 26) students enrolled in the same AC program. All students had completed a baccalaureate degree prior to beginning the AC program. When surveyed, twenty-three of the students had completed their first year in the two-year program and fifteen had completed the entire two-year program but had not yet begun their teaching careers. Twenty of the students were in their 20's, eleven were in their 30's and seven were in their 40's. Seventeen of the students were parents and twenty-one were not. All students were of mid socio-economic status.

The students were recruited by letter and asked to complete the Attitudes and Beliefs in Classroom Control Inventory (Martin, Yin & Baldwin, 1998) as well as a demographic inventory. The ABCC has been shown to be a valid and reliable measure of classroom management styles (Martin, Yin, & Baldwin, 1998). The survey entailed students responding to 26 statements using a four-point Likert scale. The statements related to three aspects of classroom management attitudes: Instructional management, people management, and behaviour management. Instructional management includes aspects such as structuring classroom routines and monitoring seatwork. People management

relates to aspects of the teachers' beliefs about the type of student/teacher relationship they view as appropriate. Behaviour management includes teacher behaviours aimed at preventing student misbehaviour and includes such actions as setting rules and establishing reward protocols.

Findings

A 2 (Year in program) X 3 (Age group) X 2 (Parental status) general linear model was conducted with instructional management, people management, and behaviour management scores as dependent variables. There were no significant interactions (all F 's < 2.42, all p 's > .10). The model indicated that there were significant differences between students' attitudes toward people management in the initial year and final year of the program, $F(1, 35) = 5.39$, $p = .03$. An examination of the means indicated that students who had completed the full AC program had more interventionist attitudes toward people management ($M = 2.62$) than those who had completed only the first year of the AC program ($M = 2.36$). There were no significant differences between parents and non-parents, nor between students in their 20's, 30's or 40's in any of the three aspects of classroom management attitudes measured.

Discussion

The findings of the current project are interesting in several regards. First, the current findings suggest that teachers in an AC program do not follow the same trajectory of classroom management attitudes as teachers in traditional teacher education programs, where attitudes do not generally change over the course of the program (Chan, 1999). Instead, it appears that pre-service teachers

at the completion of the AC program have more interventionist attitudes about their roles in their relationships with students than do those who have completed only half of the AC program. Furthermore, there were no significant differences found between any of the three age groups of AC pre-service teachers; attributing classroom management attitudinal differences to participants' age as suggested in previous studies (Chan, 1999; Martin & Shoho, 2000) was therefore not borne out in the current study. Potential explanation of differences as an effect of parental status was also not supported.

Findings of the current study are supported by those of Horak and Roubinek (1982). These researchers found that pre-service teachers' attitudes changed in all three of the AC programs they studied. Interestingly, while the biggest change was that student teachers' attitudes became more child-centered in the program with the least amount of student teaching experiences, they found that student teachers' attitudes became more authoritarian in the two programs with greater student teaching experience. This finding suggests that pre-service teachers' educational experiences in their student teaching placements affect their attitudes toward classroom management differently than those educational experiences in the university classroom. Chambers, Henson and Sienty (2001) found similar authoritarian attitudes in the AC teachers they studied and suggest that alternative certification teachers feel a greater need for classroom control than do their more traditionally educated counterparts.

Together, these findings strongly suggest that the differences previously found between teachers educated in AC programs and those educated in

traditional programs cannot be attributed to the differences in their age or in their parental status. Rather, the findings of the current project suggest that teachers in this AC program do not follow the same trajectory of attitude development as those teachers previously studied in traditional programs. These findings must be viewed cautiously, however, as they represent preliminary findings that require further substantiation on larger samples of participants. Despite this limitation, the current study suggests that previous research findings regarding traditionally trained teachers' attitudes toward classroom management do not apply to AC teachers. If this is the case, further research must investigate the development of classroom management attitudes in teachers in AC programs to better understand these attitudes and to better prepare these teachers for the challenges of managing a classroom.

With the recent plethora of AC programs, Chambers, Henson and Sienty (2001) suggest that instruction in these programs be tailored in ways that foster less interventionist attitudes in teachers. Horak and Roubinek (1982), however, advise caution in making changes to teacher preparation programs in light of the paucity of research suggesting that one classroom management approach is superior to others. This warning gains significance when one considers the three orientations to classroom management as a continuum. In general, the literature suggests that highly authoritarian attitudes result in poorer teachers (Ayers, 1984; Bush & Achilles, 1986). McConnell (1978) found that authoritarian teachers were rated as being less clear and as providing less opportunities for learning. Bhushan (1985) found that authoritarian teacher attitudes created fiction,

favoritism, and dissatisfaction in the classroom, which resulted in reduced learning.

What is less clear is where on the continuum the distinction between an interactionist and an interventionist orientation lies. At what point along the continuum between interactionist and interventionist orientations do the negative outcomes of an interventionist orientation become apparent? If the interactionist orientation can be viewed as a *range* of attitudes and behaviours, is movement within this range toward a more interventionist orientation truly harmful?

While it is generally agreed upon that an extreme interventionist orientation is not optimal, greater understanding of the meaning of shifts along the continuum and their potential effects on classroom outcomes needs greater attention. Only then can changes in pre-service teachers' attitudes toward classroom management during their AC programs be meaningfully interpreted.

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