

# Student-Centered and Teacher-Centered Classroom Management: A Case Study of Three Elementary Teachers

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## ABSTRACT

The major purpose of this case study was to document the classroom management beliefs and practices of three teachers reputed to implement student-centered instruction and to examine the relationship between their instructional and managerial approaches. More specifically, do teachers who use student-centered instruction also implement student-centered management? Results indicate that, although all three teachers used an eclectic approach, two teachers tended to be more student-centered while one was more teacher-centered with respect to classroom management. All three teachers' approaches also reflected the principles of "good classroom management" derived from studies conducted in the 1960's and 1970's in traditional transmission classrooms. Results also indicate that the teachers did think about the relationship between instruction and classroom management, but not in terms of using student-centered management to support their student-centered instruction. Rather, they thought about what management strategies were necessary to successfully implement a particular lesson.

## INTRODUCTION

For years, people's understanding of classroom management was rooted in behavioral theories of teaching and learning. The primary emphasis for classroom management in a behavioral model is the use of techniques that bring students' behavior under stimulus control (Brophy, 1999). These behavioral approaches to classroom management are consistent with a "traditional" or transmission approach to instruction. Over the last decade, however, views on good instruction have shifted. Educators are now encouraged to implement an instructional approach based on constructivist principles of learning (Brophy, 1999; Dollard and Christensen, 1996).

In contrast to traditional instruction, this student-centered approach focuses on meaning making, inquiry and authentic activity. The instructional goal in student-centered classrooms, based on constructivist principles of learning, is to create a learning environment where knowledge is co-constructed by the teacher and students rather than transmit-

ted directly by the teacher. Brophy (1999) explains that in these classrooms students are expected to "strive to make sense of what they are learning by relating it to prior knowledge and by discussing it with others" (p. 49). The class acts as "a learning community that constructs shared understanding" (Brophy, 1999, p. 49).

To complement this shift in instructional approach, some school reformers and researchers propose a shift in classroom management approach. For example, Rogers and Freiberg (1999) suggest that such a shift requires teachers to adopt a person-centered, rather than a teacher-centered, orientation toward classroom management, which features shared leadership, community building, and a balance between the needs of teachers and students. Brophy (2006) argues that "a management system that orients students toward passivity and compliance with rigid rules undercuts the potential effects of an instructional system that is designed to emphasize active learning, higher order thinking, and the social construction of knowledge" (p. 40). Similarly, McCaslin and Good (1992, 1998) warn that efforts to promote constructivist learning and teaching have "created an oxymoron: a curriculum that urges problem solving and critical thinking and a management system that requires compliance and narrow obedience" (1992, p. 12).

Despite the concerns of educators about a potential mismatch between instruction and management, from a theoretical point of view, it seems reasonable to expect that teachers would actually strive to match their instructional and managerial approaches. Teachers who are committed to student-centered instruction, presumably base their instructional decisions on a basic set of assumptions about the way children learn and what they need in the classroom. For example, if such teachers believe that children need to be active participants in the learning process, engage in critical thinking and participate in the problem-solving process, it seems logical to expect them to choose classroom management strategies such as conflict resolution and peer mediation that foster the same skills.

Unfortunately, there have been very few studies of the management practices used by teachers implementing constructivist or student-centered instruction. This lack of empirical data, argues Martin (2004), "has left educators with-

TABLE 1

*Discipline Comparison in Teacher-Centered and Person-Centered Classrooms*

Teacher-Centered	Person-Centered
Teacher is the sole leader	Leadership is shared
Management is a form of oversight	Management is a form of guidance
Teacher takes responsibility for all the paperwork and organization	Students are facilitators for the operations of the classroom
Discipline comes from the teacher	Discipline comes from the self
A few students are the teacher's helpers	All students have the opportunity to become an integral part of the management of the classroom
Teacher makes the rules and posts them for all students	Rules are developed by the teacher and students in the form of a constitution or compact
Consequences are fixed for all students	Consequences reflect individual differences
Rewards are mostly extrinsic	Rewards are mostly intrinsic
Students are allowed limited responsibilities	Students share in classroom responsibilities
Few members of the community enter the classroom	Partnerships are formed with business and community groups to enrich and broaden the learning opportunities for students

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out clear direction and understandings of what knowledge and practices teachers utilize in creating and managing socially complex learning environments” (p. 406). The present study was an effort to address this need. Specifically, I sought to document the classroom management beliefs and practices of three teachers reputed to implement student-centered instruction and to examine the relationship between their instruction and managerial approaches.

### *Teacher-Centered and Student-Centered Classroom Management*

Classroom management is a multi-faceted concept that includes the organization of the physical environment, the establishment of rules and routines, the development of effective relationships, and the prevention of and response to misbehavior. Some researchers suggest that it is helpful to view classroom management beliefs and practices on a continuum from teacher-centered to student-centered. For example, Willower (1975) found that educators vary along a continuum of beliefs about the way children learn to behave and conceptualized this as one's pupil-control ideology. At one end of the continuum is the custodial (teacher-centered) educator and at the other end is the humanistic (student-centered) educator. The extremes in the continuum of beliefs are described in the following way:

a) The educator with a custodial orientation is likely

to be highly controlling, employing punitive sanctions, moralistic perceptions, highly impersonal relationships with students, attitudes of general mistrust and a major focus on the maintenance of order.

b) The educator with a more humanistic orientation is likely to maintain a classroom climate in which active interaction and communication, close personal relationships with students, mutual respect, positive attitudes, and flexibility of rules, as well as student self-discipline, self-determination and independence are fostered (Willower, Eidell, & Hoy, 1967).

Custodialism and humanism are measured by the Pupil Control Ideology form, comprised of 20 statements, each followed by a Likert scale ranging from 'strongly agree' (five points) to 'strongly disagree' (one point). A high score signifies a custodial attitude toward pupil control and a low score indicates a humanistic attitude toward control of pupils.

Similarly, Wolfgang (2001) identifies three philosophical "faces" of discipline, which include relationship-listening, confronting-contracting and rules-consequences. These three philosophical "faces" of discipline may be placed on a power continuum from minimum (student-centered) to maximum (teacher-centered) use of power by the teacher. Finally, Rogers and Freiberg (1994) consider what classroom management would look like in teacher-centered and person-centered classrooms (see Table 1). It is important

to note that although teacher-centered and student-centered classroom management can be seen as opposite ends of a continuum, it is highly unlikely that any teacher implements a teacher-centered or student-centered approach to classroom management in its purest form. Nonetheless, these lenses are useful ways of examining the dominant orientation of a classroom.

In teacher-centered classrooms, control is of primary importance and “authority is transmitted hierarchically” (Dollard & Christensen, 1996, p. 3), meaning the teacher exerts control over the students. Critics of teacher-centeredness argue that in these classrooms, compliance is valued over initiative and passive learners over active learners (Freiberg, 1999).

To help teachers maintain control over students, instructional methods that promote a focus on the teacher are frequently used, such as lectures, guided discussions, demonstrations and “cookbook” labs (Edwards, 2004). These forms of instruction lend themselves to having the teacher stand in the front of the classroom while all students work on the same task. Similarly, the physical design of the classroom often promotes a focus on the teacher and limits student activity that disrupts that focus. In other words, rooms are often organized so that desks face toward the primary focal point, the teacher (Boostrom, 1991).

In addition, teachers exert their control through a system of clearly defined rules, routines and punishments that are mandated rather than developed with the students (Freiberg, 1999). Generally, teachers identify the rules necessary for an orderly classroom and time is set aside for the teaching of these rules during the first several days of school. When students exhibit undesirable behavior, advocates of a teacher-centered approach often rely on punishments, such as reprimands, frowns, time outs and loss of special privileges (Lovitt, 1990).

Finally, in teacher-centered classrooms, teachers may rely on extrinsic motivation to influence student behavior. Here, completion of a task is seen as a prerequisite for obtaining something desirable (Chance, 1993) such as social rewards (e.g. praise), activity rewards (e.g. free time, computer time) and tangible rewards (e.g. candy and stickers).

In contrast, a constructivist teacher is interested primarily in helping the child engage problems and issues, search below the surface, try out various possible solutions or explanations and finally construct his or her own meaning (Ryan & Cooper, 2001). In these classrooms, teaching methods or strategies include reflective thinking, inquiry, exploratory discussions, role-playing, demonstrations, projects and simulation games (Edwards, 2004).

What kinds of management strategies support the instructional strategies and goals of a student-centered classroom? Since one of the primary goals is to empower stu-

dents and strengthen their sense of responsibility, proponents of student-centered classroom management suggest relinquishing hierarchical power structures and sharing control, which they claim will result in a more manageable classroom (Nichols, 1992). One way teachers may share their control with their students is to elicit student participation when generating the classroom rules. Another suggestion is to share responsibility by having students complete classroom tasks such as taking attendance or lunch count, updating the calendar or caring for a class pet. Similarly, students can be given autonomy to decide when to use the bathroom, sharpen pencils and throw out garbage.

The development of interpersonal relationships is an essential component of a student-centered approach, since positive student-teacher relationships presumably lessen the need for control and become the foundation for all interaction in the classroom (Dollard & Christensen, 1996).

Supporters of student-centered management propose that children “see their acceptable, caring behavior as vital to the maintenance of the group because they have a vested interest in the health of the group as a whole” (Bloom, Perlmutter & Burrell, 1999, p. 134). However, even in a child-centered environment, behavior problems will arise. When this happens, student-centered teachers encourage students to take increased responsibility in regulating their own behavior through conflict resolution and peer mediation programs. Emphasis is also placed on the development of students’ social skills through various strategies such as I-messages (Gordon, 1974), classroom meetings (Bloom, Perlmutter & Burrell, 1999), and community building activities.

Finally, advocates of a student-centered approach to classroom management propose that teachers minimize the use of extrinsic rewards because they may adversely affect student motivation, create reliance on the teacher and encourage appropriate behavior for the sake of a reward rather than for the good of the group (DeVries & Zan, 1994). Instead, teachers are encouraged to use strategies for enhancing a student’s intrinsic motivation, including adapting activities to students’ interests, calling attention to the instrumental value of academic activities, incorporating game-like features and providing opportunities to exercise autonomy and make choices (Brophy and Good, 2003).

## **METHODOLOGY**

### *Setting*

The study was conducted in a suburban elementary school (K–6) serving 615 students. The school is a science and technology magnet school, which means the students receive extra instruction in these areas. The student body is diverse in terms of race and ethnicity (White, 26.9%; African American, 45.3%; Hispanic, 13.0%; Asian, 14.7%; Ameri-

TABLE 2

<i>Instructional Continuum</i>	
<b>Teacher-Centered</b>	
Lecture	Teacher takes an active role and presents information to the entire class while the students' main role is to listen to the new information being provided
Recitation	The classroom interaction follows the specific pattern of teacher initiates a question, student responds and teacher evaluates the response
Drill and Practice	The teacher provides a series of independent tasks to reinforce a concept
Demonstration	The teacher helps the child's learning by showing him or her how to use materials and special tools, or how to accomplish a particular task
Discussion	Conversation designed to stimulate students to respond divergently and at higher cognitive levels to what they have been learning.
Cooperative Group	Small group work that features positive interdependence, individual accountability and collaboration skills
Guided Discovery	The teacher structures an experience or problem for students and provides a series of steps for students to follow to discover the principle, rule or generalization
Contracts	The teacher and student form a written agreement about what work will be completed and when
Role Play	Students act out real life dilemmas or decisions to solve problems
Projects	An investigation is undertaken by a student or group of students to learn more about a topic
Inquiry	An instructional strategy where the teaching begins with questions and relies on them heavily thereafter as ways to stimulate student exploration, discovery and critical thinking about subject matter
Self-assessment	The student has responsibility for evaluating his or her own work as a means of learning
<b>Student-centered</b>	

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can Indian, .001%), with nearly equal numbers of boys and girls.

### *Teacher Participants*

I used principal recommendation and self-report to identify teacher participants. Both measures were based on an instructional continuum adapted from Rogers and Freiberg (1994), which lists various instructional strategies ranging from teacher-centered to student-centered (see Table 2). Thus, for the purpose of this study, a student-centered teacher was defined as a teacher who implements instructional strategies designed to foster active engagement and experiential learning.

It is clear that this is a limited definition of student-centered instruction. For example, McCombs and Whisler (1997) discuss learner-centered education in terms of a "per-

spective that couples a focus on individual learners (their heredity, experiences, perspectives, backgrounds, talents, interests, capacities, and needs) with a focus on learning (the best available knowledge about learning and how it occurs and about teaching practices that are most effective in promoting the highest levels of motivation, learning, and achievement for all learners)." Nonetheless, given the current climate of schools, with its emphasis on testing and outcomes, the more limited definition seemed to be a realistic and reasonable way of identifying teachers.

After explaining the purpose of the study to the school's principal, I gave her the instructional continuum (see Table 2) and asked her to generate a list of teachers who were known to implement instructional strategies clustered toward the student-centered end of the instructional continuum. Next, teachers who had indicated a willingness to

participate were each given the same instructional continuum and asked to rank each instructional strategy from most reflective to least reflective of their teaching. Three teachers whose names appeared on the principal's list and who also reported that they primarily used student-centered strategies were identified and invited to participate. All agreed. The three teachers selected included Bethany, Raquel and Mike. Bethany, a white, twenty-nine year old female with seven years of teaching experience has twenty-five children in her class. Mike, a white thirty-eight year old male, switched to a teaching career after spending five years in retail management. He entered the teaching field as an alternate route teacher and has since completed his Masters degree in education. Mike is in his twelfth year of teaching and has twenty students. Raquel, a white, forty-eight year old female has twenty-three years of teaching experience and has been a third grade teacher at the selected school for eight years. She also has teaching experience at a local corporate Kindergarten and private preschool through first grade center. She has twenty-three students in her third grade classroom.

### *Data Collection*

Initially, all teachers completed the Pupil Control Ideology (see Appendix A). In addition, I conducted three interviews with each teacher, one prior to observations, one stimulus recall (during the observation period) and one after all the observations were completed. The first interview focused on general questions about the teacher's instructional and managerial approach; whereas, the second interview and the stimulus recall interviews focused on critical incidents that arose during the observations (see Appendix B and C). All three interviews followed a semi-structured format and were tape-recorded and transcribed. Finally, I also conducted four observations in each class over an eight-week period; each observation lasted approximately an hour and a half. For each observation, I adopted the role of a non-participant observer, recording in narrative form details of the teacher's instructional strategies and students' responses, as well as key areas of classroom management (e.g., physical design, rules and routines, community building). Artifacts (e.g., posters stating class rules) were also observed and recorded during the observations.

### *Data Analysis*

The categories used to code the teachers' instructional practices were the strategies listed on the instructional continuum (see Table 2). The categories used to code management beliefs and practices were drawn from Weinstein, Tomlinson-Clarke and Curran's (2003) characterization of classroom management. These categories included physical design, rules/routines, community building/relationships, motivation and discipline. Within each category, each strat-

egy was coded as either teacher-centered or student-centered. This determination was based on the way the strategy was generally described in the literature on classroom management.

Although this dichotomous categorization certainly oversimplifies the complexities of classroom management, some strategies can clearly be categorized as teacher-centered or student-centered. For example, teaching the skills of conflict resolution or peer mediation is undoubtedly student-centered, whereas good behavior incentive charts and teacher-generated rules are teacher-centered. On the other hand, there are certain strategies that defy such categorization (e.g. proximity, verbal commands, "the look"). During the data analysis phase, I focused on strategies that I could confidently code as either teacher-centered or student-centered, a process that enabled me to account for the majority of data collected and capture the dominant orientation of each classroom.

As the data were coded and patterns emerged, these patterns were critically challenged, and negative instances or disconfirming evidence were incorporated, if necessary (Marshall & Rossman, 1999). Once the patterns were identified, they were described, and an explanation demonstrating the plausibility of the explanation was offered.

Since the study is a multiple case study, both within-case and cross-case analyses were used. To ensure reliability and validity, data from interviews, observations and artifacts were triangulated. Member checking was also used after each individual case study was written and the teacher's comments were incorporated when necessary. I completed all the coding, analysis, reliability and validity checks; however, on several occasions I met with other researchers to share the data and the coding procedure. At those meetings, any points of confusion were discussed and clarified.

## **RESULTS**

### *Bethany: First Grade*

Bethany's PCI score (37/100) was much closer to the humanistic or student-centered end of the continuum (20/100) than the custodial or teacher-centered end of the continuum (100/100). Nonetheless, despite her PCI score and her frequent use of student-centered instruction, I observed Bethany using a wide variety of managerial strategies.

Among strategies that can be characterized as student-centered is Bethany's way of involving students in the creation of the classroom rules. Using literature as a springboard, Bethany holds a class discussion about the importance of rules and the class generates the rules together. In addition, students share responsibility for carrying out many classroom routines (e.g. the weather graph and calendar),

and they have the freedom to move around the room and complete many tasks on their own (e.g., sharpening pencils, using the restroom). Bethany also chooses to arrange the students' desks in small groups to foster relationships among students.

Bethany attempts to foster her students' capacity for self-regulation and their sense of personal responsibility by encouraging them to solve their own conflicts. This is illustrated in her approach to tattling, in which students can request her help only if there is a problem with one of the five B's (bullying, blood, broken bones, bee stings or barf). In order to provide her students with the skills to resolve their own conflicts, Bethany implements lessons on conflict resolution. During one interview, Bethany described a lesson on the "conflict escalator." She explained: "In this lesson we talk about when you are at the mall, you go up the escalator. I explain that conflicts can go up a conflict escalator. We talk about ways to keep conflict from going up the escalator." Bethany reported that on many occasions she has heard students say to one another, "You are going up the conflict escalator. You need to go back down."

In addition, Bethany conducts character education lessons. For example, early in the school year, Bethany read "The Wrinkled Heart" to the class. The story explains how people are born with a large perfect heart and as they grow, people say nice things to them, and it builds the heart up. However, as people make negative comments to them, it causes their hearts to wrinkle. As she explained this point, she put wrinkles into the paper heart. Then she explained that apologies help hearts to grow strong again, although the wrinkles never go away. Bethany opened the paper heart up, but the creases were still apparent. She explained that words were powerful and could hurt and that she did not expect any wrinkled hearts in their classroom.

With respect to discipline, Bethany was concerned with helping students learn from their mistakes. Therefore, she reported that she frequently used warnings and time outs, so students have the opportunity to reflect on their behavior and make the necessary changes. Bethany was also careful to consider the individual student before choosing a specific disciplinary intervention to avoid any negative social impact on the misbehaving student.

Finally, when Bethany designed lessons, she incorporated many student-centered strategies that enhanced students' intrinsic motivation. For example, Bethany provided students with the opportunities to exercise autonomy and make choices about what activities they wanted to do within a certain center. Some of the centers included "read the room," where students used long pointers to locate words and practiced reading them, the ABC center, where students practiced building words using magnetic letters and the listening center, where students listened to a story on tape.

In addition to these student-centered approaches, Bethany implemented managerial strategies that were more reflective of a teacher-centered orientation. For example, she often used extrinsic forms of motivation to encourage students to behave appropriately. One such incentive was the "mystery walker": When students lined up to leave the room, Bethany selected one student, but didn't tell the class who it is. If the chosen individual walked correctly in the hallway, he or she earned a piece of candy. Bethany also used a tally system where groups of students competed against one another to earn a prize for exhibiting appropriate behavior.

Bethany also implemented strategies based on the "well-established consensus principles" that emerged from classroom management research conducted during the 1960s and 1970s (Brophy, 2006, p. 37). For example, her classroom had clear expectations for behavior, as we can see from the following excerpt. In this situation, students had just come back from their daily special and were eager to begin centers. Bethany waited until all the students were settled and listening and then began a review of the rules for center time.

Bethany: "Is center time free time?"

Students: "No."

Bethany: "Are you allowed to wander around?"

Students: "No."

Bethany: "Who can demonstrate the proper way to use a pointer?" (One student is called up to demonstrate in front of the class.)

Bethany continues to explain the rationale for the expected behaviors and to stress why they were important.

Bethany: "How many warnings do you get in center time?"

Students: "One."

Bethany: "Right, and that day you will not get any center [time]. And it will be one week before you can use that particular center again. OK, good. Now we all remember the rules." (field notes, 10/20/2004)

Bethany's class also has well-learned routines or procedures for carrying out specific activities. For example, one of the most important routines is the morning arrival routine:

8:56 – As students arrive they stop just inside the doorway and find their clothespin on a chart hanging by the door. They move the clothespin with their name on it to the other side of the chart to indicate that they are present for the day. After they move their clothespin,

they move to the front of the room and read the question of the day. Then, they find their name on a pocket chart next to the question of the day and place it in the yes or no column accordingly. Next, they proceed to their lockers and unpack. Then, they place their homework in the bin and start the 'Do Now' (field notes, 10/07/04).

Another routine was the use of a timer during clean-up or transition times. Bethany set a timer and after a few seconds, the timer would beep. When students heard the beep, they began to quickly clean up and get settled. The students were so accustomed to this routine; they did not need verbal directions.

Bethany also exhibited withitness and "overlapping," two key concepts emphasized by Kounin (1970). One example of withitness is as follows:

9:17 – Bethany is seated at her desk collecting picture money. As she calls one group up at a time to hand in their money, she continually glances up. She sees that E. has finished her Do Now, placed it in the bin and is looking around the classroom (possibly unsure what to do). As Bethany is still collecting picture money, she says, "E., remember, next is reading a nonfiction book in the corner." E. nods and makes her way to the rug in the reading corner. (field notes, 10/07/04)

Bethany's ability to overlap, or to do more than one thing at a time, was apparent when she was demonstrating how the students should set up their November calendars and a student from another class appeared at the door. Without interrupting her demonstration, Bethany signaled for him to come in, read and responded to the note, which again prevented any down time and possible misbehavior.

Given Bethany's use of an eclectic set of strategies, I was curious to know if she ever thought about the relationship between instruction and management, and, in particular, if she was concerned with achieving a "match" between instruction and management. Her response made it clear that she did not think in terms of a match, although she clearly thought about the managerial challenges associated with different instructional formats. Specifically, she asserted that student-centered lessons were more difficult to manage than teacher-centered lessons:

You have to think a lot more about management things when you are student-centered with your instruction. Like what happens if you are doing cooperative groups and they are fighting? What happens if you have one kid sitting there doing nothing? What happens if two kids get pulled out for ESL? Then, how are you going

to merge the groups together? It's unending, the things you need to think about when you are doing student-centered instruction. [In contrast, with teacher-centered lessons,] there is less management because they are just sitting there. What do you have to manage? Nothing. What...pulling out the overhead...woo hoo... big management! So, yes there is definitely less management. There is nothing to think about. They are just sitting there and you tell them to pull out their next textbook.

### *Raquel: Third Grade*

Raquel's PCI score (45/100) indicates that, like Bethany, she is closer to the student-centered or humanistic end of the continuum (20/100) than the custodial or teacher-centered end (100/100). I clearly saw this orientation in practice during my observations, but I also observed her use of the "consensus" strategies derived from research on effective classroom management.

In terms of student-centered approaches, Raquel worked toward the goal of empowering students and strengthening their sense of responsibility by involving the students in the creation of a code of discipline. Similarly, the students shared in classroom responsibility through the use of jobs that required them to complete several classroom routines such as the calendar, attendance and lunch count. The students also had the freedom to move about to throw out garbage, sharpen pencils and use the bathroom.

Raquel also worked hard at building relationships with her students. As she commented: "Connections with students are very important to me. I make sure I have some one-on-one time with everyone, even if it is only a little comment about how they look that day. Just something so they know that I am paying attention to them." Raquel also believes that the more students feel that you care about them, "the more they want to please you and not disappoint you and that affects classroom management." In addition, she arranges the students' desks in small groups to foster the development of relationships among students.

I frequently observed Raquel's attempts to foster these connections. For example, in the morning, Raquel made sure she greeted every student as he or she arrived in the classroom or made a quick comment to the child soon thereafter. Another example is illustrated in this excerpt:

9:04 – Raquel sits at her desk and collects and organizes picture money. One student gives Raquel a card she made for her. Raquel gives the student a hug and says (in a sweet and sincere voice), "Oh how nice. This is from your whole family. Look you even tried to make a cursive 'L'." The student smiles and begins to walk away. Raquel also says, "I'm going to hang it up." (field notes, 10/06/04).

In another example, Raquel asked one girl, “How many more days until the big wedding?” The girl had a big smile and seemed thrilled that Raquel remembered.

Raquel also believed that she needed to devote time and effort to build supportive and caring relationships among the students in her class. At the beginning of the year, Raquel used “ice breaker” and “getting to know you” activities so she could begin to foster these relationships immediately. She also arranged the students’ desks in small clusters to encourage interaction, collaboration, and peer assistance. In addition, she implemented classroom meetings and a conflict resolution program to promote students’ social problem solving skills and to empower students to deal with problems that arose.

There were many opportunities to observe the supportive and caring relationships that existed among students. For example, there were two times when a student dropped a bucket of markers. In both situations, several students immediately went to help the child who had dropped the materials, without being asked by Raquel or another student. I also observed these supportive relationships during a writing lesson. Students were required to ask a classmate to edit their paper when they were done. Any student who asked another student to edit his or her paper was told, “yes” or “sure, I’ll do that.” I was able to overhear several editing sessions. In two different situations, I heard students ask specific personal questions about the writing, not just discuss grammar mistakes. The students appeared genuinely interested in learning about their classmates.

With respect to motivation, Raquel made efforts to capitalize on students’ intrinsic motivation to learn by building on students’ interests and showing how the information being learned is relevant to their lives (Good & Brophy, 2003). For example, for a math lesson on estimating, Raquel had prepared “shopping lists” with pictures of various items that were relevant to third graders. There were small items such as school supplies (backpacks, crayons and markers) and bigger items like Nintendo and Spiderman memorabilia. During the lesson, she emphasized the fact that estimating would be used every time students went shopping, since they need to know if they have enough money. The students’ enthusiastic response to the lesson indicated that these strategies were successful.

In addition to using student-centered strategies, Raquel, like Bethany, exhibited basic managerial skills such as withitness and overlapping (Kounin, 1970). Raquel’s withitness is seen in this lesson.

11:20 – Raquel is working with one group, but as she scans the room, she sees another group a few feet away from her lying on the floor in the reading corner. She

leaves the group she is with and moves quickly over to the group and says (in a strict, confident tone), “OK show me that you are ready. I don’t want to see anyone rolling around on the floor.” Raquel makes her way back to the group she was originally working with. She takes several glances back to the group on the carpet and they appear to be on task. (field notes, 11/01/2004)

Raquel’s skill at overlapping was demonstrated during a science lesson. Raquel was in the middle of providing directions to the entire class when one student returned from the nurse’s office with a note explaining that she needed to go home because she was sick. Raquel managed to continue speaking to the class and simultaneously help the girl copy the homework assignment and pack up to go home. Raquel’s ability to overlap in this situation prevented any downtime and thus time to misbehave.

In general, Raquel implements a student-centered approach to both instruction and classroom management; yet she does not think explicitly in terms of trying to achieve consistency between these two tasks of teaching. Indeed, when I asked Raquel about this, she indicated that she does not think about using student-centered managerial strategies to support her instructional approach. As she put it: “I don’t think about it that way. Each lesson is different.” She commented further that “ultimately the management of a lesson is what decides if you are going to have a successful lesson or not, but the strategies used in each lesson are different.”

#### *Mike: Fifth Grade*

Mike’s PCI score was 50/100, which, although slightly toward the student-centered end of the continuum, makes him the least student-centered or humanistic of the three teachers. Likewise, data from the interviews and observations reveal that Mike’s classroom management beliefs and practices are generally reflective of a teacher-centered approach.

Mike’s teacher-centered orientation can be seen in the fact that the classroom rules are mandated by the teacher rather than developed by the students. Mike also completes many classroom routines (e.g. lunch count and attendance) by himself, rather than sharing the responsibilities with the students. Similarly, Mike chooses a “u-shaped” arrangement for students’ desks because it promotes a focus on the teacher. He also uses several forms of extrinsic motivation such as activity rewards (center time) and social rewards (praise and compliments) to reward and encourage appropriate behavior. Mike deliberately avoids conflict resolution or peer mediation programs because he says, “they take too much time away from academic learning.”

Some of the strategies that Mike uses at first appear to reflect a student-centered orientation, but a closer exami-

nation suggests a more teacher-centered perspective. For example, Mike believes it is essential to develop strong relationships with his students. He concentrates on getting to know the students as people through writing samples such as “My Proudest Moment” and “My Favorite Memory.” He also shares personal stories about his career before he became a teacher, his two children and his time in the military. Although relationship-building is certainly a high priority in a student-centered classroom, Mike’s reason for investing effort in this area suggests a more teacher-centered orientation: “It makes students feel more connected to the teacher and then it is harder for them to misbehave.”

Similarly, in an attempt to prevent misbehavior, Mike frequently uses positive recognition. For example, after Mike gives a series of directions, he often locates a student who has quickly complied with those directions and offers a positive comment such as “F., I like the way you put your literature circle folder away and took out your math book” or “I see J. is ready, thank you.” This strategy appeared to serve as a motivation for other students to follow suit. Mike explained that he had to be careful not to overuse this strategy. He commented:

I have to gauge how many times I will have to make a positive comment to get everyone back on track. If I am going to have to say it to so many people that it is going to take too long or not seem genuine, then I am not going to use that strategy. Also if I have to repeat it too many times, then students will pick up on why I am doing it and it won’t work.

This strategy worked extremely well in terms of motivating students to follow Mike’s directions. I believe its effectiveness was due to the high regard the students had for their teacher; clearly, if Mike’s students didn’t want to please their teacher, they would not be motivated to modify their behavior. While the strategy of positive recognition reinforced the positive relationships that existed in the class and contributed to the positive learning environment, it also appeared to be an example of deliberately using praise to encourage compliance, rather than a genuine expression of appreciation.

Like Bethany and Raquel, Mike exhibited strategies that are generally accepted as good classroom management. For example, he planned for variety and challenge in academic activities (Kounin, 1970) when he structured a writing lesson so that students could choose from a variety of topics, work at their own pace and conference with a peer or the teacher. He also displayed the capacity for overlapping. During one reading lesson, when Mike was in the process of giving directions to the class, the DARE (Drug Abuse Resistance Education) police officer stopped by to resched-

ule their next meeting. Mike managed simultaneously to provide directions to the class, call the officer over to his desk and reschedule their next meeting. Mike also exhibited withitness, as seen in this math lesson:

10:42 – Mike is working with a new student. As he is talking to the new student, he looks up and scans the room. Two girls seem to be preoccupied with something in their desks. Mike quickly walks over and bends down and says something to them. The girls get back to work and Mike makes his way back to the new student. After a couple of seconds he looks at the girls again, but they are working. (field notes, 10/06/04)

Although Mike strives to implement a student-centered instructional approach, he doesn’t feel the need to complement his instructional approach with student-centered management strategies. Actually, he expressed a very different perspective when he offered the following comment: “Since my ultimate goal is to use student-centered instructional strategies, I need to be cognizant of how much time is needed to effectively implement a student-centered lesson.” Therefore, “I think any kind of teacher directed management saves time and makes it easier for more student-centered activities.”

## DISCUSSION

All three teachers in this study emphasized student-centered instruction, relying heavily on hands-on activities, small group work, projects, and discussion to engage students and encourage active participation. All three were also able to create productive, positive learning environments characterized by minimal misbehavior and supportive, respectful relationships. Undoubtedly, their student-centered instruction itself contributed to their positive learning environments; students who were participating in challenging, meaningful activities have little need or opportunity to be off-task or disruptive. Bethany noted that there are more managerial challenges with student-centered instructional formats than with teacher-centered instruction, and Doyle (2006) has made the same observation:

The amount of time teachers spend organizing and directing students, interacting with individual students, and dealing with inappropriate and disruptive behavior is related to the type of activity and the physical arrangements of the setting. Studies suggest that the greater the amount of student choice and mobility and the greater the complexity of the social scene, the greater the need for overt monitoring and managing actions by teachers. (p. 102)

Nonetheless, the potential of such activities to motivate and engage students suggested that one of the teachers' prime management tools was their instruction.

Of the three teachers, Bethany and Raquel appeared to be the most student-centered with respect to management, although neither thought in terms of trying to achieve a "match" between instruction and management. Both teachers had students create classroom rules, shared responsibility for carrying out routine classroom tasks, and provided opportunities for choice and autonomy. In addition, Bethany conducted conflict resolution and character education lessons and gave students responsibility for resolving their own conflicts. Raquel worked hard to establish positive, respectful relationships with and among students. Yet both teachers also drew from a wide repertoire of management strategies. At times, they used teacher-centered strategies (e.g., Bethany's "mystery walker"), and they enacted the basic principles for good classroom management developed from research conducted in the 1960s and 1970s—research conducted in classrooms that emphasized transmission approaches to teaching (e.g., Emmer, Evertson, and Anderson, 1980). They had clear expectations for behavior and well-established routines or procedures for specific classroom tasks. Moreover, they exhibited the critical behaviors such as withitness and overlapping identified by Kounin (1970). These results support Brophy's (2006) contention that the basic principles for good classroom management apply across instructional approaches:

Teachers seeking to establish learning communities in their classrooms will still need the familiar management strategies of articulating clear expectations, modeling or providing instruction in desired procedures, cueing students when these procedures are needed, and applying sufficient pressure to compel changes in behavior when students have failed to respond to more positive methods. However, the procedures taught to students will need to include the full set that applies in learning communities, not just the subset that applies in transmission classes (p. 37).

Consistent with Brophy's assertion, we see Bethany teaching students the kind of behavior she expects from them at center time. As Brophy notes, classrooms informed by constructivist views of learning require students to learn new roles (e.g., participants in collaborative group work, listening carefully to peers, giving feedback, etc.), and these new roles must be taught to students along with those that are found in more traditional classrooms.

Compared to Bethany and Raquel, Mike is far more teacher-centered in his approach to management. It is im-

portant to emphasize, however, that this teacher-centered approach to management does not appear to promote the passivity and unthinking compliance that educational reformers fear. Mike's classroom atmosphere, like that of Bethany and Raquel, is positive and productive, and students appear enthusiastic and happy.

As cited earlier, Mike arranges his students' desks in a "u-shape," so that they can focus easily on the teacher. He has developed his class rules by himself, and he carries out many of the routine tasks of the classroom, rather than sharing responsibility for them with his students. Interestingly, rather than seeing this approach to management as subverting his student-centered instruction, Mike perceives his managerial practices as supporting his instruction, since it "saves time."

The difference between Mike on one hand and Bethany and Raquel on the other might be explained by a difference in their thinking about the goals of classroom management. Evertson and Weinstein (2006) contend that classroom management has two purposes—(1) the development of an orderly environment so that academic learning can take place and (2) the promotion of students' social-emotional learning. It would appear that Bethany and Raquel agree with this twofold purpose of classroom management, while Mike focuses on the first goal alone. This results in a "mismatch" and raises the following questions: Although Mike saves time, is there a cost? Are Mike's students at a disadvantage?

Certainly, one could argue that instruction and management are not separate entities and that teachers should choose strategies that will support and reinforce one another. However, it is also possible that the cost of using student-centered management (loss of academic time) outweighs its potential benefits. Given the design of the present study, it is impossible to determine if Raquel and Bethany's students are more equipped to self-regulate their behavior and solve their own problems than Mike's students. Additional studies that include student data and outcome measures are clearly needed in order to investigate the ramifications of pairing student-centered instruction with teacher-centered management.

The fact that none of the three teachers in the present study think in terms of trying to achieve a match between instruction and management is also an intriguing finding that deserves a closer look. Clearly, future research should continue to examine the way that teachers think about management (especially in relationship to instruction) and explore whether they find the managerial continuum helpful. It would also seem beneficial for pre-service and in-service programs to discuss the relationship between instruction and management and to frame both in terms of teacher-centeredness and student-centeredness.

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## Appendix A

*Pupil Control Ideology*

*DIRECTIONS: FOLLOWING ARE TWENTY STATEMENTS ABOUT SCHOOLS, TEACHERS, AND PUPILS. PLEASE INDICATE YOUR PERSONAL OPINION ABOUT EACH STATEMENT BY CIRCLING THE APPROPRIATE RESPONSE AT THE RIGHT OF THE STATEMENT.*

*S = Strongly Agree A = Agree U = Undecided D = Disagree SD = Strongly Disagree*

- |   |    |   |   |   |    |
|---|----|---|---|---|----|
| 1. It is desirable to require pupils to sit in assigned seats during assemblies                                 | SA | A | U | D | SD |
| 2. Pupils are usually not capable of solving their problems through logical reasoning.                          | SA | A | U | D | SD |
| 3. Directing sarcastic remarks toward a defiant pupil is a good disciplinary technique                          | SA | A | U | D | SD |
| 4. Beginning teachers are not likely to maintain strict enough control over their pupils                        | SA | A | U | D | SD |
| 5. Teachers should consider revision of their teaching methods if these are criticized by their pupils          | SA | A | U | D | SD |
| 6. The best principals give unquestioning support to teachers in disciplining pupils                            | SA | A | U | D | SD |
| 7. Pupils should not be permitted to contradict the statements of a teacher in class                            | SA | A | U | D | SD |
| 8. It is justifiable to have pupils learn many facts about a subject even if they have no immediate application | SA | A | U | D | SD |
| 9. Too much pupil time is spent on guidance and activities and too little on academic preparation               | SA | A | U | D | SD |
| 10. Being friendly with pupils often leads them to become too familiar  | SA | A | U | D | SD |
| 11. It is more important for pupils to learn to obey rules than that they make their own decisions              | SA | A | U | D | SD |
| 12. Student governments are a good "safety valve" but should not have much influence on school policy           | SA | A | U | D | SD |
| 13. Pupils can be trusted to work together without supervision  | SA | A | U | D | SD |
| 14. If a pupil uses obscene or profane language in school, it must be considered a moral offense                | SA | A | U | D | SD |
| 15. If pupils are allowed to use the lavatory without getting permission, this privilege will be abused         | SA | A | U | D | SD |
| 16. A few pupils are just young hoodlums and should be treated accordingly                                      | SA | A | U | D | SD |
| 17. It is often necessary to remind pupils that their status in school differs from that of teachers            | SA | A | U | D | SD |
| 18. A pupil who destroys school material or property should be severely punished                                | SA | A | U | D | SD |
| 19. Pupils cannot perceive the difference between democracy and anarchy in the classroom                        | SA | A | U | D | SD |
| 20. Pupils often misbehave in order to make the teacher look bad  | SA | A | U | D | SD |

Appendix B

Interview Protocol #1

I. Rapport Building:

1. Tell me about your experiences as a teacher.
  - a. How long have you worked in your current position?
  - b. What are your current job responsibilities (Grade level and subjects)?
  - c. In today's interview we will talk a little about instruction & classroom management. Does that sound OK?

III. Instruction

1. As I look around your classroom, I am wondering how you decide on the physical arrangement? Student desks? Teacher's desk?
2. Tell me how you design your schedule.
3. Can you tell me about your reading lesson today? Math? Science? Are these typical lessons for you?
4. How do you manage preparation and clean up for activities?
5. I am wondering how you deal with transitions. For example how will you transition between reading and math today?

IV. Relationships/Social Skills

1. How would you describe your classroom climate?
  - a) If community is mentioned, ask what she/he does to foster a sense of community. Do you do specific community building activities?
  - b) If response is negative, ask what they are doing to try to improve it?
2. What role do you think relationships between students play in classroom management?
3. In addition to relationships between students, let's talk about the relationship between a teacher and student. How would you characterize your relationship with your students?
4. Again, what role, if any, do you feel that student/teacher relationships play in classroom management?
5. If a new student were coming to your class, how would your students describe you to that new student?
6. Do you use techniques like conflict resolution, peer mediation or class meetings?  
If yes, do you think these techniques teach social skills and build relationships between students and student and teacher?

V. Discipline/Motivation

1. Tell me about the expectations that you have for classroom behavior?
  - a. How do you communicate those expectations to your students?
2. Do you have specific rules for your classroom? How are they established?
  - b. Are they teacher or student-generated? Why?
3. How do you respond when they don't meet those expectations?
  - a. Do you have specific consequences?
4. How do you respond when they do meet those expectations? (extrinsic vs. intrinsic rewards?)
5. How do you most typically handle discipline problems in your classroom?
6. I like to give you some scenarios and ask you how you would respond:
  - a. During a science lesson, two students begin fighting over equipment for the experiment. How would you handle the situation?
  - b. You ask your class to clear off their desk and get ready for the next activity. One student refuses to do it. How would you handle the situation?

VII. Closing Questions:

1. What advice would you give to a new teacher about classroom management?
2. What three words would you use to describe your approach to classroom management?

## Appendix C

*Interview Protocol #2*

## Introduction:

Well, now that we have finished our initial interview, four observations and a stimulus recall interview, the last thing I would like to do is a final interview. I would like to ask you some more questions about your instructional and managerial approach. Does that sound OK?

## Instruction:

1. Throughout the observations, I observed a lesson that included various instructional techniques. For example, I saw you use (Insert different techniques depending on which teacher I am interviewing. Example: direct instruction, demonstration, discussion, cooperative learning and guided discovery). Can you explain to me when you are sitting down to do your lesson plans for the week, how do you decide which instructional techniques to use?
2. (Share the instructional continuum used during interview #1) Well, if you look at this instructional continuum, it lists a variety of instructional techniques. Can you pick some of the techniques and tell me the advantages and disadvantages of that particular technique? (Make sure they comment on a few from each end. If not, point to one myself and ask about that one).
3. If you were asked to classify your instructional approach in some area of this continuum, where would you place yourself?
4. Potential Question: (If they place themselves toward the student-centered end of the continuum) Well, you just placed yourself more toward the student-centered end of the continuum. What do you feel are some of the constraints that prevent you from using more student-centered instructional techniques? What are some of the circumstances/things that facilitate your desire to use student-centered techniques? (Prompts if needed because they don't seem to understand the question – other faculty, administration, particular classes, particular subjects)

## Questions about management:

1. Throughout the observations, I saw you use a variety of classroom management techniques/strategies. For example, I saw you use (Again, insert techniques depending on which teacher is being interviewed. For example – proximity, explicitly stating a child's name, the look, and conferencing out in the hallway). Can you explain to me how you decide which strategy to use in a particular situation?
2. Similar to the instructional continuum I just shared with you, there are many people who conceptualize classroom management along a teacher-centered vs. student-centered continuum. For example, the PCI inventory that I gave you after our first interview does this. More specifically, a teacher's score on the PCI reflects the teacher's classroom management beliefs from a student/teacher-centered framework. (Draw and explain the continuum. Share their score). Do you think this score is an accurate reflection? Why or why not?
3. There appears to be a push to implement more student centered classroom management strategies. We already talked about your feelings for conflict resolution and classroom meetings, which are very student-centered, what do you think are the pros and cons of student-centered management strategies like these? What about the pros and cons of more teacher-centered management strategies?
4. What do you think might be the reasons some teachers don't use student-centered classroom management strategies? Can you think of anything that facilitates your use of student-centered management techniques? What about any things or circumstances that prevent you from using student-centered techniques?

## Questions about the relationship between the two approaches:

1. Well, we talked about your instructional approach and your classroom management approach. You seemed to articulate your beliefs about both instruction and management and what strategies you find effective and why. I am curious if you think about the relationship between instruction and management and how they work together?
2. Do you think that can work if you are teacher-centered with your instruction and student-centered with your management?
3. Well, let's say you are planning an activity in your classroom an instructional activity of some sort, do you think about management that is going to accompany that activity?
4. Do you think management differs depending on where you are on the instructional continuum? For example, does your management differ if you are doing a lecture vs. cooperative groups?
5. So, as you move toward the student-centered end of the instructional continuum, how might your management look different? Teacher-centered end?