

Convergence and divergence between teachers'and students'perception of control and care in classroom settings

Citation for published version (APA):

Brekelmans, J. M. G., Brok, den, P. J., Mainhard, M. T., & Wubbels, T. (2011). Convergence and divergence between teachers'and students'perception of control and care in classroom settings. In K. Gutiérrez, & L. Larson (Eds.), *Inciting the social imagination : education research for the public good; 2011 AERA Annual meeting 08-12 April 2011, New Orleans, Louisiana* (pp. 82-82). American Educational Research Association (AERA).

Document status and date:

Published: 01/01/2011

Document Version:

Publisher's PDF, also known as Version of Record (includes final page, issue and volume numbers)

Please check the document version of this publication:

- A submitted manuscript is the version of the article upon submission and before peer-review. There can be important differences between the submitted version and the official published version of record. People interested in the research are advised to contact the author for the final version of the publication, or visit the DOI to the publisher's website.
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Convergence and divergence between teachers' and students' perceptions of control and care in classroom settings

Abstract

Education that serves the public good requires a competent and caring teacher in every classroom. Yet discussion of *how* these teacher qualities interact to influence students is often absent from conversations about effective teaching. This session offers studies that examine how competence (i.e., management of student learning) and care operate in tandem. It invites the audience to consider several essential questions: First, how do we define management and care? Second, how do these dimensions function in classroom settings? Posing these questions calls attention to the need for a theory that accounts for *how* both dimensions influence students' and teachers' classroom experiences. It also touches on whether and how these teaching dimensions can be taught.

Objectives

The practitioner literature on classroom management is often narrow and Behaviorist, focusing on rules and behavior interventions (Stough, 2006). Conversely, the literature on care is often broad and conceptual and given peripheral empirical attention (Schussler & Collins, 2006). Addressing the dichotomy between teacher management and teacher care, this session offers research that examines the role of both dimensions in student engagement and learning.

There are theoretical and empirical models for taking this configural approach. Baumrind (1989) advanced understanding of effective parenting by uniting two strands of research—one on discipline and the other on warmth—and showing how they modified the influence of parenting practice. Similarly, clinical psychology research on therapist-client relationships has shown that if an “alliance exists, then a number of [therapeutic] approaches can be successful; without...an alliance..., any approach will be less likely to work” (Grossman & McDonald, 2008, p. 187). This literature suggests that teacher-student relationships serve a foundational purpose: If the relationship is in place, then a number of instructional or management approaches should be effective. This is a provocative and testable claim, and one pursued across the session.

Overview

The session chair will make introductory remarks. Then five papers will be presented. First, Davis and colleagues explain how they used mixed methods to look at low-income, minority first graders' (n = 30) understandings of teacher management and care, and their relation to student motivation and achievement in mathematics. Findings suggest, in part, that teachers need to be aware of how actions of 'unfairness', perceived or genuine, affect their relationships with students.

Next, Brekelmans and colleagues compare how Dutch high school students and their teachers (n = 6,000) view management and care. Findings support Leary's (1975) circumplex model of interpersonal communication as a framework for understanding both teacher and student perceptions. Further, in about two-thirds of classrooms, students perceived less management and care than teachers reported.

Third, Brackett and colleagues link instruction, management and care to student conduct in 5th and 6th grade English Language Arts classrooms (n = 90 teachers; 1,675 students). They found that classrooms rated higher in emotional support had students that received more positive conduct grades; more structured classrooms had more negative conduct grades. Instructional support and conduct grades were unrelated.

The final two pieces focus on teacher education initiatives. Jennings shares initial results from a program, *Cultivating Awareness and Resilience in Education* (CARE), grounded in the idea that *teachers'* well-being and social and emotional competence are vital to their ability to manage the classroom and form caring relationships with students. Brown and colleagues share three-year impacts of the Reading, Writing, Respect and Resolution Program on urban elementary school teachers' (n = 299) reported social-emotional skills, experiences, and classroom management strategies.

Discussant remarks will be given by Andrew Martin.

Significance

Focusing on the structure and function of management and care helps to define the very foundation of teaching professionalism. Moreover, it offers the opportunity to view research on teaching, and teacher education, through a more holistic empirical and theoretical lens.

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Abstracts for Individual Papers

Exploring the Nature of Teacher Warmth and Demand in Early Teacher-Child Relationships

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In 1975, Judith Kleinfeld published an article in which she argued that, when working with ethnic minority students, “it is the teacher’s interpersonal style, not his ethnic-group membership that is critical to success” (p. 304). Using a hybrid of Kleinfeld’s framework, this study explored warmth and demand in relationships between 30 low-income, minority first-grade students and their teachers in public charter schools. It examined four questions:

1. How do students understand teacher warmth?
2. How do students understand teacher demand?
3. How do students' rating of teacher warmth and demand relate to their perceptions of their teachers' expectations, demands, and behaviors during mathematics activities?
4. How do students' ratings of teacher warmth and demand predict their mathematics motivation and achievement?

Mixed methodology data were used. A 30-minute structured interview protocol was administered one-on-one and used a combination of open-ended questions, ratings of teacher closeness and influence, and Likert-style questions about math motivation, perception of teacher expectations, press, and value of math. Mathematics motivation was selected to address continuing achievement gaps in mathematics in the United States. Analysis of the data began with open-coding of the interview with four subsequent passes through the data for emergent and a priori themes. Multiple regression analyses examined the relationships among young children's ratings of warmth and demand, and their motivation and achievement (teacher rated) in mathematics. Findings suggest most children had emerging understandings of one or both concepts. Thus, there appears to be a great deal of malleability in terms of how young students come to think about their relationships with their teachers. Findings also suggest that children used subtle cues to identify the quality of their relationship with their teacher including: calling on students, enthusiasm, physical proximity, word choice, and motivation strategies. Finally, findings suggest teachers need to become more knowledgeable about how actions of 'unfairness', perceived or genuine, affect their relationships with their students. The authors discuss implications for pre-service teacher education including how to help pre-service teachers develop more complex understandings of "care" and "closeness", and allowing opportunities to explore strategies for creating shared psychological space in the classroom.

Convergence and Divergence Between Students' and Teachers' Perceptions of Control and Care in Classroom Settings

Mieke Brekelmans,¹ Perry den Brok,² Tim Mainhard,¹ & Theo Wubbels¹
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Research investigating both teachers' and students' perceptions of teacher control of classroom learning and demonstrations of care for students is relatively scarce, despite its importance for explaining teaching-learning processes and the preparation of teachers. Seeking to understand similarity and differences in teacher and student perspectives of these two dimensions, the authors of this study focus on three questions:

1. The meaning of control and care: are there differences between students and teachers?

2. To what extent and in what way(s) do students and teachers differ in their perceptions of control and care in classroom settings?
3. To what extent and in what way(s) are differences in perceptions related to the level of control and care in classroom settings?

Grounded in decades of research drawing from Leary's (1975) interpersonal theory, the authors adopted a circumplex model assuming that all interpersonal perceptions are based on two dimensions: Control and Care (den Brok, Brekelmans & Wubbels, 2006). In this model, the control dimension describes the extent to which a particular teacher is in control of what happens in class; the care dimension describes the emotional distance or closeness between teacher and class. The authors predicted that teachers and students would have similar conceptual structures (as tested by multilevel/multigroup factor analyses) and that students would perceive less control and care than would teachers. These hypotheses were tested by analyzing questionnaire data obtained from more than 6,000 teachers and their classes in Dutch secondary education. Both parties completed the Quality of Teacher Interactions, a widely used and valid survey instrument (den Brok et al., 2006). Results of multilevel regression analyses supported the authors' hypotheses. The basic assumptions of the circumplex model apply to both teacher and student perceptions. In about two third of the classes students perceived less control and care than teachers reported.

Classroom Emotional Climate and Student Conduct

Marc A. Brackett, Susan E. Rivers, Maria Reyes & Peter Salovey

Health, Emotion & Behavior Laboratory

Yale University

Students who have warm and close relationships with their teachers are less likely to misbehave and more likely to stay on task (Birch & Ladd, 1997; Hamre & Pianta, 2001). This study seeks to identify the qualities of student-teacher interactions that are related to student conduct by measuring three aspects of student-teacher interactions: emotional support (the extent to which teachers promote positive emotions and make students feel comfortable), instructional support (the extent to which teachers implement lessons that promote higher-order thinking), and

classroom organization (the extent to which teachers structure students' time). Data were collected from three separate sources: classroom observations, student ratings, and report card grades. The sample included 90 5th and 6th grade English Language Arts classrooms, with 90 teachers and 1,675 students. Classroom behavior was coded with the Classroom Assessment Scoring System (CLASS; Pianta, La Paro, & Hamre, 2008). Student ratings were assessed with the self-report Affiliation with Teacher Survey (Cook et al., 1995). Student conduct was obtained through report card grades on conduct in English Language Arts (higher conduct grades reflect more positive and less disruptive behavior). Multilevel mediation modeling (MacKinnon, 2008) examined direct effects of emotional support on conduct and the indirect effects through student rated affiliation. As expected, classrooms rated higher in emotional support had students that received higher (more positive) conduct grades whereas more structured classrooms had lower (more negative) conduct grades. Instructional support and conduct grades were unrelated. Further, results showed that only classroom emotional support predicted affiliation. Third, teacher affiliation predicted conduct grades above and beyond the observation indicators. Finally, the study found support for mediation; when teachers are emotionally supportive, students like and respect their teachers more and in turn behave more appropriately.

Improving Classroom Learning Environments by Cultivating Awareness and Resilience in Education (CARE)

Patricia Jennings, Mark T. Greenberg, Karin E. Snowberg & Michael A. Coccia
The Pennsylvania State University

Cultivating Awareness and Resilience in Education (CARE) is a teacher professional development program that focuses on promoting health, well-being, and Social and Emotional Competence (SEC). It involves the integration of awareness and reflection practices with emotions skills techniques drawn from psychological science in an effort to improve teachers' capacity to provide a supportive and engaging social and emotional context for academic learning. Based upon the Prosocial Classroom Model (Jennings & Greenberg, 2009), CARE aims to: affect teachers' overall well being including improvement in measures of burnout, depression, negative affect and increases in mindfulness, teaching efficacy, and positive affect; improve teachers' effectiveness in providing emotional, behavioral, and instructional support to

students; and improve teacher-child relationships, classroom climate, teacher efficacy and enjoyment of teaching. This paper will present preliminary findings from the first year of a 2-year development project funded by the Institute for Educational Sciences (IES). The sample consisted of two groups of teachers recruited from Harrisburg, PA who completed the four days of CARE training (total $N=29$). Subjects completed a battery of self-report measures at pre- and post-intervention and participated in a focus group at post. Pre-post questionnaire data were compared using a non-parametric alternative to the repeated measures t-test appropriate for small samples. Results suggest significant improvement at post-test for: Five Facet Mindfulness Questionnaire (Observe: $S = 192.0, p < .01, d = .66$; Describe: $S = 120.5, p < .01, d = .30$; Non-judge: $S = 68.0, p = .07, d = .28$; Non-react: $S = 136.0, p < .01, d = .47$); Time Urgency Questionnaire (Task Related Hurry: $S = -84.0, p = .01, d = .22$; General Hurry: $S = -56.5, p = .08, d = .14$); Interpersonal Mindfulness Questionnaire ($S = 110.5, p = .01, d = .2$). Results from the evaluation and focus groups indicate that teachers enjoyed the program and found it valuable in helping them manage their stress and improve their responsiveness to their students and also suggest that these changes may have contributed to improvements in students' prosocial behavior, engagement and academic performance. The preliminary data presented here suggest that CARE is a promising program to help teachers cultivate well being and SEC by teaching them about emotions and how they affect teaching and learning and by promoting mindfulness-based skills to reduce stress and promote self-awareness. Promoting well being and SEC may help teachers manage the daily stresses of teaching, more successfully establish and maintain classroom environments that are conducive to learning, and more effectively implement Social and Emotional Learning curricula. Successfully creating and maintaining classroom learning environments where students are happy and excited to learn reinforces teachers' efficacy and enjoyment of teaching, thereby preventing burnout and attrition. Promoting SEC in teacher professional development may improve teaching and, as an added benefit, promote efficacy and teachers' commitment to the profession.

The Longitudinal Impact of a Universal School-Based Social-Emotional and Literacy Intervention on Teachers' Affective Experiences and Classroom Practices

Joshua Brown¹, Stephanie M. Jones², Catalina Torrente³ & Lawrence Aber³

Fordham University¹, Harvard University², New York University³

This paper presents impacts of the 4Rs Program, a comprehensive, school-based social-emotional and literacy program for elementary schools, on dimensions of teachers' affective experiences and classroom practices thought to influence children's social-emotional and academic development. Experimental evidence to date suggests the 4Rs Program is effective in improving the quality of interactions related to classroom emotional and instructional climate after one-year of intervention (Brown, Jones, LaRusso & Aber, 2010), and positively altering the course of children's social-cognitive, emotional, behavioral and academic functioning after two years of intervention (Jones, Brown, & Aber, in press). This study includes approximately 299, 3rd-5th grade teachers in 18 New York City public elementary schools. Most teachers were female (89%), and slightly more than half (53%) self-reported as non-Hispanic White, 24% as Black or African-American, 15% as Hispanic, 8% as Asian, American-Indian, or Alaskan Native. Teachers averaged 34 years in age (SD=10 years), with 8 years teaching experience overall (SD=6.9), 5 at their current school (SD=5). Two-thirds of teachers had a Master's degree and a state teaching certificate; 30% reported a Bachelor's degree. Schools were pair-wise matched on 20 school-level demographic characteristics and then one school from each pair was randomly assigned to intervention (4Rs) or control conditions. Teachers' affective experiences and classroom practices were assessed via self-report surveys at fall and spring in Year 1 from 3rd grade teachers, in Year 2 from 3rd and 4th grade teachers, and in Year 3 from 3rd, 4th and 5th grade teachers. Measures include Frequency and Usefulness of Positive Strategies ($\alpha = .76-.82$) and Inappropriate Strategies ($\alpha = .69-.77$; Webster-Stratton, Reid, & Hammond, 2001); Teacher Perceptions of Role in Students' Social-Emotional Well-Being ($\alpha = .76-.83$; Ryan, Gheen, & Midgely, 1998); Teacher Burnout ($\alpha = .88-.91$; Maslach, Jackson, & Schwab, 1996); and Perceived Emotional Ability ($\alpha = .72-.87$; Brackett & Mayer, 2003). Program impacts on these five areas will be examined in the spring of each year using a series of 2-level hierarchical linear growth models with school fixed effects (Level 1 = teacher level with the spring score as the dependent variable, and the fall score and other teacher and classroom covariates as independent variables; Level 2 = school level and includes an intervention status dummy as well as the eight school pair dummies). Preliminary analyses suggest significant positive intervention effects on

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Perceived Emotional Ability (accounted for by subscales of Emotion Perception and Regulation), Burnout, and Usefulness of Positive Teaching Strategies. Analyses examining impacts after Years 2 and 3 of the intervention are currently underway and will be ready for the final presentation.

Session Participants

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