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Attitudes of Beginner Teachers of Special Education to Classroom Management: Who's the Boss Here?

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Author Note

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Abstract

The study deals with approaches of beginner teachers from a Special Education Training Programs to classroom management and to instruction with regard to two approaches: the Humanistic approach (or Student-Centered Approach), and the Custodial approach (or Teacher-Centered Approach). Custodialism and Humanism were measured by the Pupil Control Ideology (PCI) questionnaire (Willower,1975). Analysis showed a mixed use of both approaches in classroom management practices with a tendency towards the Humanistic approach. The Custodial approach was observed as related to issues of control and attitude towards violence whereas the Humanistic approach was found to be related to student-teacher relations, belief in students' abilities and perceptions of discipline. However, approach towards instruction and teaching was observed as related in this study to the Humanistic approach. Further follow-up

research is suggested to monitor beginner teachers of Special Education after the first year/s of teaching with implications on teacher training programs, especially with regard to issues that many teachers were undecided about that concern classroom management and instruction in SE classes.

Attitudes of Beginner Teachers to Classroom Management: Who's the Boss Here?

Classroom management refers to "all the things that a teacher does to organize students, space, time and materials so that instruction in content and student learning can take place (Wong & Wong, 1998: 84). Disciplinary issues present a great concern for teachers and are sometimes antithetical to the ideals that underpin teachers when they choose this profession, such as a belief in the effect of education on society, an opportunity to inspire the lives of young learners and to contribute to their personal and intellectual growth (Noguera, 2003). Teachers in special education (SE) frameworks in particular face behavioral and emotional problems and need to develop the right classroom practices to handle them, while their main challenge is how to motivate their students to behave in socially competent ways.

In the last decade, views on good instruction have shifted and teachers were encouraged to implement constructivist principles in their teaching (Brophy, 1999). The shift from the "Transmission" approach to instruction created a mismatch between instruction and management and called for alternative classroom management strategies such as peer mediation and conflict resolution. The next chapters deal with two approaches to classroom management and to instruction in the context of SE.

The Teacher-Centered Approach (TCA) / Custodial Approach

The basis for maintaining order at schools is an implicit social contract whose basis is that in exchange for education; students are expected to obey the rules and norms of school. This works for the vast majority of students who respond with compliance to school rules and authority and can see the

benefits of education. Indeed, Pollack (1999) states that schools are considered safe places in the US. One characteristic of the TCA is teachers' reliance on extrinsic motivation to influence students' behavior, such as praise, activity or tangible rewards (Brophy and Good, 2003).

In TCA teachers exert control over students. This point is criticized by opponents of this approach who claim that in TCA compliance is valued over initiative, and passive learners over active learners (Freiberg, 1999). Similarly, instructional methods that are used in the TCA and physical design focus on the teacher, who generally stands in front of the class while the students' desks, face the teacher. In order to obtain control, a set of pre-determined defined rules, routines and punishments are used (Freiberg, 1999). This practice is based on the assumption that students do not come to class with the skills, ability or maturity of motivated, self-directed learners, so the teacher needs to control the environment and processes through which the student learns (Weimer, 2002).

Soodak (2003) contends that the use of exclusionary policies known as "zero tolerance" policies, have become increasingly prevalent in recent years in response to growing reports of school violence. In his article, Noguera (2003) claims that disciplinary practices used in schools bear similarity to the way crime is approached in society. The assumption is that safety and order can be achieved by removing "bad" individuals and, indeed, schools rely on some form of exclusion or ostracism to control the students' misbehaviors. Such strategies include reprimands, placing a child at the back of the class or in the hallway for minor misbehaviors, and suspension or expulsion for more serious infractions. A large body of research has shown that exclusion practices and labeling create a self-fulfilling prophecy and result in a cycle of antisocial behavior (Casella, 2001). Noguera (ibid) concludes that the cycle of punishment leads to an escalation and entanglement with the criminal justice system.

The Student-Centered Approach (SCA) / Humanistic Approach

The theoretical roots of SCA derive from a social-cognitive model by which the self-esteem of the individual is embedded in the social context that includes the individual, the individual's interactions

with others. This model assumes that student's motivation and behavior depends on the situation rather than on individual traits (King, 2003). Other research also indicates that learning is continuously shaped by the social context in which it occurs and by ecological perspectives (Wentzel, 2002b).

Core elements of school reform focus on attention to meeting individual learner needs. The "Learner-Centered Psychological Principles: A Framework for School Reform and Redesign" (American Psychological Association Presidential Task Force on Psychology in Education, 1993) and its revision (APA Work Group of the Board of Educational Affairs, 1997) provide a framework for improving teacher practices that would enhance student learning and motivation. This framework includes 14 fundamental principles about learners and learning, such as attention to individual developmental differences, appreciation of student voice while setting appropriate challenges, teaching higher order thinking skills, and creating positive interpersonal relationships. They all provide an integrated perspective on classroom factors that influence learning and focus on individual learners and learning (McCombs & Whisler, 1997) and correspond to a set of teacher's beliefs and practices in which the learner is a co-creator in the teaching and learning process.

Weimer (2002) advocates a shift in power in the classroom from teacher control to shared decision-making as a necessary step towards student-centered classrooms. She claims that by doing so the teacher does not abdicate legitimate instructional responsibility, while at the same time enables student ownership, comfort, enthusiasm, and enhances awareness and responsibility for learning.

An example of an approach that focuses on the learner is SEL (Social and Emotional Learning) which teaches individuals to recognize emotions as they are being experienced, regulate them by learning appropriate ways of dealing with them in different situations (Norris, 2003). The enhancement of the emotional intelligence promotes healthy social relationships, personal well being and academic achievements (Elias, Arnold, & Hussey, 2003).

The instructional goal of this approach focuses on making of meaning, inquiry and authentic activities (Garrett, 2008). Creating a learning environment where knowledge is constructed by the teacher and by the students rather than transmitted by the teacher does this. The students strive to relate new knowledge to previously acquired knowledge by discussing it with others, thus creating a learning community (Brophy, 1999). In SCA there is great emphasis on the group as a whole and students are encouraged to "have a vested interest in the health of the group as a whole" (Bloom, Perlmutter & Burrell, 1999; 134). A constructivist teacher is interested in developing problem-solving skills, and enhancing reflective thinking, inquiry, exploratory discussions, role-playing and simulation games (Edwards, 2004). Other characteristics of SCA are teacher's reliance on student's intrinsic motivation rather than on extrinsic rewards, adapting activities to students' interests, and exercising autonomy and choice making (Brophy and Good, 2003).

The Relationship between Classroom Management and Instruction

This issue has been revisited in research. Weinstein (1998) has found that teachers perceive the concept of a "caring teacher" as maintaining positive teacher-student relationships rather than pedagogical or social issues. Farmer et al. (2006) offer a framework for supporting students with challenging behaviors in regular classrooms, called CEBM (competence enhancement behavior management). They argue that there is a strong connection between challenging students' misbehaviors and instruction, and if students find instruction engaging they are less likely to misbehave. Brophy (2006) contends that the shift in the instructional approach should be coupled with a shift in the classroom management approach towards active learning, higher order thinking, social construction of knowledge, rather than compliance and passivity. McCaslin and Good (1998) agree that having a curriculum which urges problem solving and critical thinking on the one hand and compliance and narrow obedience on the other hand creates an oxymoron. Yet, Brophy (2006) argues that even when

teachers establish learning communities in their classrooms they still need the familiar management strategies, which include clear expectations and sufficient pressure to ensure appropriate behaviors.

The SCA / Humanistic Approach in Inclusive and in SE Classrooms

Quality inclusion of special needs students requires support and access to the same experiences as others and the right to belong (Kunc, 2002). Inclusive schools seek to encourage collaboration and a learning community among teachers and students (Soodak, 2003).

Classroom management in SE classes as well as in inclusive classes requires special consideration. The match between the ecological factors of the classroom environment and child attributes are even more critical in the case of learners with special needs. Speece and Keogh (1996) claim that school contributes to long-term outcomes for children with learning disabilities who are more vulnerable to changes in instructional demands, and teachers' expectations for performance, and, in general, to school factors. Indeed, Johnson, Boyden & Pittz (2001) argue that schools most frequently punish the students with the greatest academic, social, economic and emotional needs.

King (2003) examined strategies for inclusive class management based on the belief that behaviors are context-related. An example of such a strategy is the Positive Behavioral Support, which was introduced to special education by the revision of IDEA 1997, and advocates that interventions should reflect understanding and respect for the student. The main intent of this strategy is to modify contexts proactively, while at the same time teach appropriate behaviors. Research shows (e.g. Braddock, 1999) that positive behavioral support has been used with considerable success particularly with students with disabilities. These findings are significant in the light of other research, which indicate that SE students perceive lower teacher expectations from them than from their regular peers and feel less challenged and honored (Platt & Olson, 1997).

King (2003) compared perceptions of SE students and regular students with regard to some SCA principles. She found that SE students perceive less than regular students that they are taught higher

order thinking (HOT) despite the documented need to develop self-regulation and HOT for special education students (Levine, 1998). No differences were detected between the two groups with regard to creating positive interpersonal relationships and classroom climate, which is the most predictive SCA of student success. Both groups reported a sense of care on teacher's part and a sense of belonging on student's part. Indeed, a sense of community and caring has emerged as an important predictor of motivation and achievement although King (2003) emphasizes that care should not be restricted to emotional or sentimental caring but to empowerment of students by providing lifelong learning skills that will eventually lead to critical thinking, academic competencies and participation in society.

The final three Learner-Centered Psychological Principles (1993, 1997) address individual differences among learners. For example, Principle 14 concerns the right of students to re-submit their assignment after teacher's feedback; Principle 12 acknowledges that learners have different strategies, approaches and capabilities for learning. In addition, the strive for collaborative learning, as reflected in Principle 11, enables individual students with special needs to participate in class activities, thus creating a sense of belonging which has a positive outcome on students (King, 2003).

With regard to the controversy around class management policies, researchers argue that by the use of 'zero tolerance' policies in inclusive settings disenfranchise the students who are most in need of emotional connectedness. Likewise, Cooley (1995) argues that there are inequities in the manner students get expelled or suspended: students with emotional or behavioral problems have been over-represented in reports of suspension or expulsion. Skiba & Peterson (2000; 340) argue that some educators' goal "may be the removal of troublesome students from mainstream educational environments".

Noguera (ibid) reports cases where teachers lose faith in misbehaving students, especially from low backgrounds: "Kids like him just can't be helped. They take up so much of my time and keep teachers from serving the needs of other children who are here to learn. This may not be the best thing

for him but right now it's the best thing for the school" (ibid: 341). The author concludes that too often schools react to the behaviors but fail to respond to the factors responsible for their problematic behavior. Recently, these inequities are handled through legal safeguards for students with disabilities, which are used to protect them from being unfairly punished. Revisions to the 1997 IDEA require schools to determine whether a misbehavior is related to the student's disability before punishing him, and also whether the student has received appropriate explanation on the basis of his IEP (Individualized Education Plan). Conversely, it is contended that it is hard to arrive at an accurate determination whether the behavior was a result of his disability (Sleeter, 1986).

Goals of study

The goal of this study is to examine the approach of beginner teachers from a Special Education (SE) Training Programs towards classroom management and instruction with regard to the Custodial/TCA versus the Humanistic/SCA approach. The study focuses on the following questions:

1. Do beginner teachers of SE express a tendency towards the Humanistic/SCA or towards the Custodial/TCA approach?
2. Do results differ between their approach to instruction and to aspects of classroom management?

Research PopulationThe research population consists of eighteen beginner teachers of SE from a Special Education Training Programs in a Teacher Education College. Their ages range from 24-29. The beginner teachers of SE are in their fourth year of college training in which they are doing their internship in SE classrooms in different schools and locations. The group consisted of one male and 17 females.

Research Tools

Custodialism and Humanism were measured by the Pupil Control Ideology (PCI) questionnaire (Willower, 1975). The questionnaire consists of 19 statements each followed by a Likert scale ranging from "strongly agree" (5 points) to "strongly disagree" (1 point) and "undecided" (3 points). Each statement represents a classroom management or instruction-related topic. Cronbach's Reliability analysis showed that statement 13 reduces the reliability and therefore it has been deleted (Alpha= 0.8 after deletion and 0.54 before deletion). The analysis of the research questions was conducted in a quantitative way and via a thematic qualitative analysis in 3 stages:

1. A mean score and S.D. for all the statements which enables to identify a tendency of the group towards the Humanistic or Custodial approach. The minimum score is 19 (represents the Humanistic approach) and the maximum score is 95 (represents the Custodial approach).
2. An examination of the Frequency Table for each statement, attempting to identify the areas (topics) in which the beginner teachers of SE expressed Humanism or Custodialism.
3. An examination of the statements that are directly related to instruction (5, 7, 8, 9) in order to identify differences between approach to instruction and to classroom management.

Findings

Research question 1: "Do beginner teachers of SE express a tendency towards Humanistic/SCA or towards Custodial/TCA?"

The mean score of all the statements is $M=55.89$; $S.D=8.18$; This mean score is very close to the average score of the scale 19-95 and may indicate that the group tends to mix both approaches in classroom management.

Statement 1: "It is desirable to require pupils to sit in assigned seats during assemblies". 33% of the teachers gave the scores of 4 and 5. This indicates that a third of the teachers agree with the need for teacher's control with regard to seating arrangements in class. However, this percentage is higher than the 16.7% of the teachers who disagreed with the statement, i.e. reflecting a tendency towards the Custodial approach. It is noteworthy that 50% of the teachers were undecided about this issue.

Statement 2: "Pupils are usually not capable of solving their problems through logical reasoning": 66% of the teachers gave the scores of 1 and 2. This indicates that most teachers express belief in students' ability to solve problems, i.e. reflecting the Humanistic approach (this statement is phrased in a negative way). It is noteworthy that 33% of the teachers were undecided about this issue.

Statement 3: "Directing sarcastic remarks towards a defiant pupil is a good disciplinary technique": 89% of the teachers gave the scores of 1 and 2. This indicates that the group is very reluctant about using this method towards defiant pupils. i.e. reflecting the Humanistic approach.

Statement 4: "Beginner teachers are not likely to maintain strict enough control over their pupils": 50% of the teachers gave the scores of 1 and 2. This indicates that half of the teachers tend to believe in the ability of beginner teachers, compared to 11% who expressed disbelief. These percentages reflect a tendency towards the Humanistic approach (this statement is phrased in a negative way). It is noteworthy that 39% of the teachers were undecided about this issue.

Statement 5: "Teachers should consider the revision of their teaching methods if they are criticized by their pupils": 55% of the teachers gave the scores of 4 and 5 compared to 5.6% who gave the scores of 2. This suggests that more than half of the teachers tend to see the importance of the relationship between instructor and learners, and express willingness to listen to their needs. i.e. reflecting the Humanistic approach. It is noteworthy that 39% of the teachers were undecided about this issue.

Statement 6: "The best principals give unquestioning support to teachers in disciplining pupils": 72% of the teachers gave the scores of 4 and 5. This indicates that most teachers regard school hierarchy and disciplining pupils as important, i.e. reflecting the Custodial approach. It is noteworthy that 28% of the teachers were undecided about this issue.

Statement 7: "Pupils should not be permitted to contradict the statement of a teacher in class": 72% of the teachers gave the scores of 1 and 2; This suggests that most teachers disagree with this statement (as this statement is phrased in a negative way) and perceive it as legitimate that pupils express their opinions in class, i.e. reflecting the Humanistic approach;

Statement 8: "It is justifiable to have pupils learn many facts about a subject even if they have no immediate application": 50% of the teachers gave the scores of 4 and 5. This suggests that half of the teachers agree that general knowledge is not less important than practical knowledge, i.e. reflecting the Humanistic approach. It is noteworthy that 50% of the teachers were undecided about this issue.

Statement 9: "Too much pupil time is spent on guidance and activities and too little on academic preparation": 28% of the teachers gave the score of 2, and 11% gave the score of 4. This indicates that more teachers tend to disagree than to agree with the statement, and understand the importance of "pupil time" other than for academic purposes, i.e. reflecting the Humanistic approach. These percentages also show that 61% are undecided about this issue.

Statement 10: "Being friendly with pupils often leads them to become too familiar": 33% of the teachers gave the scores of 2 whereas 28% gave the score of 4 and 5. This suggests that a bigger group tends to disagree with this statement, indicating they believe that personal relations with pupils cannot be harmful, i.e. showing a tendency towards the Humanistic approach. It is noteworthy that 39% of the teachers were undecided about this issue.

Statement 11: "It is more important for pupils to learn to obey rules than that they make their own decisions": 61% of the teachers gave the scores of 1 and 2. This indicates that most of the teachers disagree with this statement and favor decision-making skills over obeying rules, i.e. reflecting the Humanistic approach.

Statement 12: "Student governments are a good "safety valve" but should not have much influence on school policy": 61% of the teachers gave the scores of 1 and 2. This suggests that most of the teachers value student council and its contribution to school policy (as this statement is phrased in a negative way), i.e. reflecting the Humanistic approach. It is noteworthy that 28% of the teachers were undecided about this issue.

Statement 14: "If a pupil uses obscene or profane language in school, it must be considered a moral offense": 78% of the teachers gave the scores of 4 and 5. This indicates that most teachers agree about how profane language should be regarded at school, i.e. reflecting the Custodial approach.

Statement 15: "If pupils are allowed to use the lavatory without getting permission, this privilege will be abused": 39% of the teachers gave the scores of 4 and 5 compared to 22% who gave the score of 2. This shows that a bigger group tends to agree about the need to be careful about granting rights to pupils because they may abuse these rights, i.e. reflecting the Custodial approach. It is noteworthy that 39% of the teachers were undecided about this issue.

Statement 16: "A few pupils are just young hoodlums and should be treated accordingly": 55% of the teachers gave the scores of 1 and 2. This suggests that more than half of the teachers disagree with labeling of and treating some pupils as hoodlums, i.e. reflecting the Humanistic approach. It is noteworthy that 28% of the teachers were undecided about this issue.

Statement 17: "It is often necessary to remind pupils that their status in school differs from that of teachers": 44% of the teachers gave the scores of 4 and 5 compared to 22% who gave the score of 1 and 2. This indicates that a bigger group recognizes that pupils are lower than teachers on school hierarchy, i.e. reflecting the Custodial approach. It is noteworthy that 33% of the teachers were undecided about this issue.

Statement 18: "A pupil who destroys school material or property should be severely punished": 83% of the teachers gave the scores of 4 and 5. This reveals that most of the teachers agree that causing damage to school property should lead to severe punishment, i.e. reflecting the Custodial approach.

Statement 19: "Pupils cannot perceive the difference between democracy and anarchy in the classroom": 50% of the teachers gave the scores of 1 and 2 compared to 33% who gave the score of 4 and 5. This indicates a tendency among the teachers to disagree with the statement, and thus express belief in pupils' ability to differentiate between democracy and anarchy, i.e. reflecting the Humanistic approach.

Statement 20: "Pupils often misbehave in order to make the teacher look bad": 50% of the teachers gave the score of 1 and 2, compared to 17% who gave the score of 4. This indicates a tendency among the teachers not to consider making the teacher look bad as a reason for pupil's misbehavior, thus expressing belief in student-teacher relationship. i.e. reflecting the Humanistic approach. It is noteworthy that 33% of the teachers were undecided about this issue.

In conclusion, the general mean score of the group reflects a tendency to mix the two approaches ($M=55.89$; $S.D=8.18$). The division of the 19 statements also shows a mixed use of both approaches with a tendency towards the Humanistic approach: 6 statements reflected the Custodial approach whereas 13 statements reflected the Humanistic approach. The highest agreement among teachers was detected

in statement 18 which concerns applying severe punishment to causing damage to school property (83%) and in statement 3 which concerns directing sarcastic remarks toward a defiant pupil as a disciplinary method (89%). It is noteworthy that in most statements (13/19) teachers expressed uncertainty and were undecided, which ranged from 28%-61%.

Research question 2: "Do results differ between approach to instruction and to aspects of classroom management"? The following statements refer to aspects of instruction. The comparison between instruction and classroom management will be incorporated in the Discussion to avoid repetitions.

Statement 5: "Teachers should consider the revision of their teaching methods if they are criticized by their pupils": as indicated above, more than half of the teachers (55%) tend to see the importance of the relationship between instructor and learners, and express willingness to listen to their needs. i.e. reflecting the Humanistic approach. However, 39% of the teachers were undecided about this issue.

Statement 7: "Pupils should not be permitted to contradict the statement of a teacher in class": as indicated above, most teachers perceive it as legitimate that pupils express their opinions in class, i.e. reflecting the Humanistic approach;

Statement 8: "It is justifiable to have pupils learn many facts about a subject even if they have no immediate application": as indicated above, half of the teachers agree that general knowledge is not less important than practical knowledge, i.e. reflecting the Humanistic approach. However, 50% of the teachers were undecided about this issue.

Statement 9: "Too much pupil time is spent on guidance and activities and too little on academic preparation": as indicated above, more teachers tend to disagree than to agree with the statement, and understand the importance of "pupil time" other than for academic purposes, i.e. reflecting a tendency towards the Humanistic approach. However, 61% of the teachers are undecided about this issue.

Discussion

This chapter attempts to enhance understanding of beginner teachers of SE towards classroom management and instruction with regard to the Custodial/TCA approach versus the Humanistic/SCA approach. Findings indicate that the group tends to mix both approaches in classroom management ($M=55.89$; $S.D=8.18$).

- A. Approach to Classroom Management: The examination of teachers' approach to classroom management is particularly important when it concerns pupils of SE, because of their emotional and behavioral blocks to learning. The analysis of the findings reflects a mixed approach among beginner teachers of SE that will be demonstrated below.

A. 1. The custodial approach

The six statements that reflected the Custodial approach towards classroom management concern **issues of control and attitude towards violence**. For example, statement 1 reflects beginner teachers' preference to have assigned seats in class for their pupils, who allow teachers to have control over what goes on in class, and supervise how pupils are aligned to each other. This agrees with the difficulties that pupils with special needs experience with regard to changes (Speece and Keogh, 1996). Statement 15 expresses the need to be careful about granting privileges to pupils. They believe that going to the lavatory without the need to ask for permission may lead to going out of the classroom more than necessary and for other purposes. This may indicate not only that teachers need to have control on what goes on in class but also their fear of losing thereof. Statement 17 may also indicate teachers' fear of losing control by the need to constantly remind pupils "who is the boss here". Statement 6 equally reflects teachers' need to achieve full control on discipline by getting assistance from the principal. This is typical to the TCA where teachers exert control over students, the

environment and processes by using a set of pre-determined defined rules; routines and punishments are used (Freiberg, 1999; Weimer, 2002). Statements 14 and 18 reflect teachers' strict attitude towards violence at school (the former concerns verbal violence and the latter concerns physical violence). This agrees with Soodak's contention (2003) that the use of exclusionary policies known as "zero tolerance" policies have become increasingly prevalent in recent years in response to growing reports of school violence. It also agrees with Noguera (2003) in his claim that safety and order can be achieved in school as in society by removing "bad" individuals by means of exclusion.

A.2. The Humanistic approach

The nine statements that reflected the Humanistic approach towards classroom management concern the following issues:

Statements that relate to **teachers' belief in student' abilities** (statement 2, 19): beginner teachers of SE appear to believe in pupils' abilities to solve problems through logical reasoning and to differentiate between democracy and anarchy. This finding does not match Platt & Olson (1997) who claimed that SE pupils perceive less challenged by their teachers than regular pupils. Statements that relate to **student-teacher relationship** (statement 3, 10, 12, 16, 20): beginner teachers of SE appear to deny the use of sarcasm towards defiant pupils and do not believe that personal relations with pupils can be harmful. They believe that pupils' voice should be heard and disagree with labeling students who misbehave 'hoodlums'. Further, they do not perceive misbehaviors as directed towards teachers purposefully. This may be related to the fact that teachers of SE, perhaps more than other teachers, are willing to consider the factors that have led to the misbehavior and this stands in contradiction to Noguera's claims (2003). However, it reflects the attitude expressed in the revisions to the IDEA of 1997. All the above mentioned statements indicate a positive perception of student-teacher relationships. This attitude is congruent with the principles of inclusion which advocate collaboration and a learning community among teachers and students (Soodak, 2003) and with King (2003) who found no differences

between SE students and regular students in their sense of belonging and caring on teacher's part. Statements that concern **perceptions on discipline** such as 4 and 11 also reflect the Humanistic approach: beginner teachers of SE express belief in beginner teachers' ability to control their pupils and do not favor compliance over decision-making. These findings are congruent with the literature on SCA where a major perspective is placed on social-emotional growth (Elias et al., 2003), social construction of knowledge (Brophy, 2006) and emphasis on students' intrinsic motivation and development of decision-making skills (Brophy and Good, 2003). The tendency that the beginner teachers of pupils with special needs demonstrated towards the Humanistic approach contradicts Johnson, Boyden and Pittz (2001) in their claim that schools tend to punish pupils with special needs more frequently than others.

B. Approach to Instruction

The examination of teachers' approach to instruction is particularly important when it concerns pupils of SE, because of their cognitive and emotional blocks to learning. The approach to instruction is reflected in statements 5, 7, 8, and 9. In statement 5 the teachers are asked whether they should consider the revision of their teaching methods if their pupils criticize them. More than half express understanding of pupils' needs, openness and a willingness to listen to them. This attitude is expected of SE teachers and is congruent with the literature on the Humanistic approach (APA Work Group of the Board of Educational Affairs, 1997) in which the learner is a co-creator in the teaching and learning process and focus is placed on the individual learners (McCombs & Whisler, 1997). In statement 7 the teachers agree with pupils' right to contradict them in class, thus advocating freedom of thought and speech. This reflects openness towards pupils' views and encouragement of active and critical thinking. This approach accords with the principle of constructivist teaching which advocates the development of problem solving skills, and enhancement of reflective thinking, inquiry, and exploratory discussions (Edwards, 2004). It also relates to critics of TCA, which claim that compliance is valued over initiative, and passive learners over active learners (Freiberg, 1999). This attitude also encourages pupils with

special needs who suffer frequently from low self-esteem and speech problems. In statement 8, 50% of the teachers recognize the importance of acquiring general knowledge rather than restricting to practical knowledge, so that the learning process might be facilitated by the formation of a broad knowledge basis. This agrees with the SCA that encourages the integration of new knowledge to previously acquired knowledge by discussing it with others (Brophy, 1999). However, the fact that 50% of the teachers are undecided may be related to the fact that these beginner teachers of SE are still unsure to what extent the cognitive abilities of their pupils allow for world knowledge, and whether they have the ability as beginner teachers of SE to decide between the appropriateness of teaching world knowledge or practical knowledge. Finally, statement 9 relates to their perception of spending "pupil time" on guidance and activities rather than merely on academic purposes. The Frequency Table reveals that 28% of the teachers compared to 11% understand the importance of "pupil time" other than for academic purposes and do not believe that teachers should restrict themselves to transmission of knowledge. This is quite unsurprising for SE teachers who focus on emotional and social skills in their teaching such as SEL (Norris, 2003). Indeed, a constructivist teacher is interested in developing problem-solving skills, and enhancing inquiry, exploratory discussions, role-playing and simulation games (Edwards, 2004). However, the fact that the largest percentage of 61% are undecided about this issue may be accounted for by the teachers' reliance on their past experiences as learners, which makes them perceive themselves as knowledge transmitters that should not waste time on non-academic activities. Yet, as they are now becoming SE teachers they could not give the score of 4 or 5 so they "settled" for the score of 3.

B. The Relationship between Classroom Management and Instruction

The analysis shows that beginner teachers of SE appear to be in a transition phase towards the Humanistic approach in elements of teaching and instruction. However, with regard to aspects of classroom management the teachers express a mixed approach, combining the Humanistic and

Custodial approaches. The findings that concern classroom management accord in part with Brophy (2006) and McCaslin and Good (1998) who contend that the shift in the instructional approach should be coupled with a shift in the classroom management approach. Indeed, 6 of the statements advocate compliance and narrow obedience, which characterize the TCA while 9 statements express tendency towards critical thinking and problem solving which characterize the SCA. Brophy (ibid) offers an explanation to the mixed approach of teachers by arguing that even when teachers establish learning communities in their classrooms they still need the familiar management strategies, which include clear expectations and sufficient pressure to ensure appropriate behaviors.

Recommendations

This study showed clearly that beginner teachers of SE are undecided about issues of classroom management and instruction to a large extent (both the number of items and percentages). This may be explained by the fact that they need to get more tools in their "Classroom Management Kit" and feel uncertain whether the tools and strategies they possess at this initial point of their teaching are adequate and appropriate to SE classes.

Further follow-up research is suggested to monitor beginner teachers of SE after the first year of teaching and then after a number of years and to observe whether they have become more certain about their classroom strategies. This follow-up might help improve teacher training programs of SE, especially with regard to issues that many teachers were undecided about and also examine further the relationship between classroom strategies and teaching in SE classrooms.

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