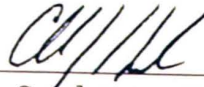# EDUCATION PHILOSOPHY AND DISCIPLINE REFERRALS

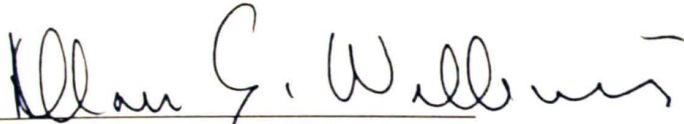## JACQUELINE J. JONES

To the Graduate Committee:

I am submitting herewith a field study written by Jacqueline J. Jones entitled "Education Philosophy and Discipline Referrals."

I have examined the final copy of this field study for form and content and recommend that it be accepted in partial fulfillment of the requirement for the degree of Education Specialist, with a major in Administration and Supervision.

_____

Dr. Carlette Hardin
Major Professor

We have read this field study
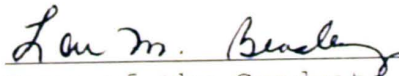and recommend its acceptance:

_____

Dr. Allan S. Williams

_____

Dr. Susan Simms

Accepted for the Committee,

_____

Dean of the Graduate School

Education Philosophy and Discipline Referrals

A Field Study

Presented to the

Graduate and Research Council of

Austin Peay State University

In Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree

Educational Specialist

Jacqueline J. Jones

July 2002

DEDICATION

This project is dedicated to my parents, Monk and Erith Jones, and my daughters, Jessica and Kitty, for their never-ending support, encouragement, love, and belief in me. Thank you. I love you.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

ABSTRACT

The management of students' behavior is a reflection of a teacher's philosophy, education, length of teaching experience, and school policy. These four factors may influence whether a teacher sends a student to the office with a discipline referral for a misbehavior or if the teacher deals with the problem in the classroom. This research was conducted to analyze and compare teacher's philosophy and classroom management style with the number of discipline referrals. The study asked fourth and fifth grade teachers to answer questions about philosophy, education, length of teaching experience, and school policy. The survey was completed by 103 fourth and fifth grade teachers from seventeen elementary schools in one school system. There was no significant difference between the number of discipline referrals of teachers based on their philosophy, education, length of teaching experience, or school policy.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Violence is in the daily headlines and newscasts. Aggression is promoted in the movies. Confrontational behavior is played out by sports figures. Schools have witnessed an increase in violent behavior. As a result, it is not surprising when students challenge a teacher's authority through behavior which disrupts the teaching and learning environment. The teacher is primarily responsible for order in the classroom and must decide how and when to intervene to restore order. A disruptive action by a student may result in an office discipline referral being written by the teacher. Depending on the severity or frequency of the behavior, a student may be suspended from school. Suspensions not only interrupt the student's learning but also lead to greater levels of disruption (Neilsen, 1979).

Public opinion polls consistently identify discipline as a serious school problem and is perhaps the greatest cause of concern for educators (Stickel, Satchwell, & Meyer, 1991). Because of discipline problems, administrators have begun evaluating programs of classroom management especially since it has the greatest effect on student learning (Cummings, 2000). Classroom management includes two major structures (a) instruction and (b) discipline. The goal of school administrators is to promote learning while maintaining a safe school in an environment that prevents disruptive behavior.

Office discipline referrals are one source to aid in assessing, monitoring, and planning for a safe school. The

information a school collects on an office discipline referral may be of substantial value as administrators plan for improvement. These discipline referrals are more than a record of student behavior. They not only reveal the consistency and quality of the discipline systems within the school but also document whether interventions result in positive changes (Sprague, Sugai, Horner, & Walker, 1999).

Classroom management is a reflection of a teacher's philosophy. This philosophy determines the discipline method and type of instruction used in the classroom by the teacher. Identifying this philosophy could be critical to the prevention of anti-social behavior of students. Since teachers usually use an office discipline referral to document a student's misbehavior in the classroom, tracking these referrals may be beneficial in assessing the discipline needs and in monitoring the effects of reform efforts (Sugai, Sprague, Horner, & Walker, 2000).

Statement of the Problem

The management of students' behavior is a reflection of a teacher's philosophy, education, length of teaching experience, and school policy. These four factors may influence whether a teacher sends a student to the office with a discipline referral for a misbehavior or if the teacher deals with the problem in the classroom.

The school system involved in this study has reported, for the past three years, to its State Department of Education, an increase in office discipline referrals especially in the category of violent behavior. The administrators of this school system need to evaluate

classroom management programs and discipline policies to reverse this apparent trend.

Importance of the Problem

Identification of the education philosophy, teaching style, and discipline methods of teachers who establish and maintain safe and positive environments which allow them to teach and all students to learn can be valuable to the educational community.

Research Question

Does a teacher's philosophy of education have a significant impact on the number of discipline referrals made by that teacher?

Hypothesis

(1) There will be no significant difference between the number of discipline referrals when grouped by teacher's philosophy.

(2) There will be no significant difference in the number of discipline referrals based on the years of teaching experience.

(3) There will be no significant difference in the number of discipline referrals based on the education level of the teachers.

(4) There will be no significant difference in the number of discipline referrals based on school policy.

Definitions of Terms

The following terms are used throughout this study. The definitions are provided for a better understanding of their use.

1. <u>discipline referral</u> – a written document forwarded to the principal's office which documents an event in which a student engaged in a behavior that violated a rule or social norm in the school

2. <u>constructivist philosophy</u> – a philosophy of teaching which emphasizes the creation of active learning environments which permit critical thinking, discovery, and collaboration that engage students solving real-life problems, collaborating on group projects, writing articles or stories, developing models or diagrams, journaling, and investigating solutions to research questions (Howard, McGee, Schwartz, & Purcell, 2000); rules of discipline are established cooperatively by students and teachers (Brooks & Brooks, 1993)

3. <u>traditionalist philosophy</u> – a philosophy of teaching which views not only the teacher as the source of knowledge and students as passive receptacles of this knowledge but also learning as receiving information from the teacher and textbooks which help students encounter facts and learn well-defined concepts; rules of discipline are constructed and enforced by the teacher (Brooks & Brooks, 1993)

4. <u>undetermined philosophy</u> – philosophy could not be identified as either constructivist or traditionalist based on the responses to the survey

5. <u>combination discipline policy</u> – participants indicated more than one choice of discipline policies such as a combination of both school policy and an adopted plan or any other composite of choices

The following suppositions apply to this study:

1.   The teachers who will complete a survey for this study teach fourth or fifth grade in a school system and will volunteer to participate.

2.   The surveys will be administered and scored in a consistent and an objective method.

Limitations

Several limiting factors exist in the study. One is that only teachers from a small geographical area will be surveyed and not all the population will respond to the survey. Another limitation lies in the unique manner in which schools and teachers define and apply referral procedures. The same student behavior may cause different responses from different teachers in different schools.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Classroom management and discipline problems are issues which educators must face daily. Teachers must self evaluate to determine their values and philosophy in order to be effective in their approach to these issues. They must decide on a teaching style and discipline method which suits them and promotes learning and safety in the classroom. The teacher's primary management responsibility is to establish and maintain a learning environment for students rather than to monitor and punish misbehavior. The traditional philosophy and constructivist philosophy were considered in this study.

Traditional Philosophy

The traditionalists' academic view is that students are like empty buckets into which information is poured by the teacher. Instruction is subject-centered or teacher-centered where curriculum relies heavily on textbooks and workbooks with emphasis on basic skills and in which students work independently. Teachers generally behave in a morally instructive manner, disseminating information to students. Assessment occurs almost entirely through testing where the teachers seek the correct answer to validate student learning (Brooks and Brooks, 1993).

Baines and Stanley (2000) state that the traditional teacher uses memorization of facts such as the multiplication tables, dates of historical events, poetry, or scientific formulas as part of the lessons. Children who face challenges in learning, behavior, and/or social and emotional

development have more difficulty mastering academic skills (Harris and Graham, 1996). Therefore, it is argued that these children benefit from the more extensive, structured, and explicit instruction found in the traditionalist's approach. Harris and Graham (1996) say special needs children need teachers who use traditional teaching methods to provide "explicit focused, and, at times, isolated instruction to the extent needed (p.27)."

The traditionalist approach to discipline is one in which the rules are constructed and enforced by the teacher and the students must obey. This strategy is designed primarily as a reactive method of discipline. It is assumed that students are not able to maintain self-control. Therefore, punishment is administered by the teacher to offending students. If the punishment is ineffective, more severe punishment is imposed. At the first infraction of a rule, students write their name on the board and add a check for each additional offense. Punishment is applied according to an established plan as posted in the classroom. Consistency is an important element to this traditional approach of discipline (Freiberg, 1999 and Brooks & Brooks, 1993).

The Assertive Discipline Plan fits well with the traditional philosophy of teachers. Lee Canter subtitles one of his books on Assertive Discipline as A Take Charge Approach for Today's Educator (Canter and Canter, 1976). The first line on page 2 in this book reads, "You, the teacher, must be able to get your needs met in the classroom." He continues that teachers must influence the behavior of the

children in order to get their needs met. The goal of Assertive Discipline is to help teachers increase their influence in their classroom by being more assertive. These assertive teachers establish parameters of what they expect from the children. These parameters of the teachers' "wants" and the "consequences" serve to maximize the potential influence they can have on the children and their behavior. Therefore, assertive teachers are ones who clearly and firmly express their wants and feelings to the children and are prepared to back up their words with actions. Canter (1976) suggests teachers display not only their wants in the classroom but also consequences for behavior which violate the wants of the teacher. In the traditional teacher-centered classroom, the teacher is in control all the time while students sit and wait for instructions (Freiberg, 1999).

Teachers must be ready to follow through with the punishment if the student does not comply with the demand statement. Typical punishments used by the traditionalist teacher would be:

1. Isolation, also known as time-out, in which the student is placed in an area of the room away from the other students. Length of time varies with age of the child.
2. Loss of a privilege such as free time or other preferred desirable class activities.
3. Staying after school in a designated area under the supervision of an adult.
4. Being sent to the principal's office for suspension from school, expulsion, or referral to other professionals.
5. Conferences with parents for punishments to be administered at home.

6. Sending the student to another classroom for isolation.
7. Video tape the student to be viewed in a conference with the student, parents, teacher, and administrator. (Edwards, 1997)

Besides punishments, Canter (1976) advocates a system of positive consequences for those students who comply to the teacher's requests. He suggests personal attention from the teacher, positive notes or telephone calls to parents, special privileges, and material rewards (such as toys, books, pencils, candy, etc.). A balance of both rewards and punishments must be achieved for the traditionalist method of discipline to be effective.

Constructivist Philosophy

In the constructivist classroom, students construct their own knowledge by using their prior knowledge and experiences to build their own frames of thinking. Harris and Pressley (1991) state that the teacher gives support sufficient for the child to carry out the strategy. Guidance diminishes as competence increases until the student becomes self-supporting. Bevevino, Dengel, and Adams (1999) contend this method promotes critical thinking in students and encourages them to internalize major concepts in an active, non-threatening manner. Instruction is student-centered using a learning cycle where the teacher creates a problematic situation that is personally meaningful to students. The students construct hypotheses and then reach consensus on solutions. The students discuss and debate proposed solutions, analyze and compare to historical and

societal issues, and then decide on the best solution which is mutually beneficial and workable.

In a constructivist classroom, the teacher must relinquish control and interact with the students in a shared leadership type of power. Olsen (1999) comments that the teacher seeks the students' points of view to understand their present conceptions in a way that students feel free to discuss and reflect on their learning. The teacher allows the students to form groups, decide on the issue to be studied, and select the activities. Then the teacher gives the directions to set up the problematic situation while nurturing divergent solutions and encouraging reflection by students during the process. In this way students are viewed as thinkers and their thoughts and opinions are highly valued. Baines and Stanley (2000) state that students in this type of class feel they belong to a community of learners who are actively engaged in their learning. As a result, each student's experiences and interactions are unique.

In the constructivist classroom, activities rely on resources and manipulative materials which allow students to assume control over their own learning and to be less dependent on the teacher. Students work primarily in groups and develop projects to learn about the subject, make connections, pursue logical thought processes, and recognize individual values, attitudes, and personal beliefs. Brandt (1997) stresses the constructivist approach is time consuming but teachers who use it believe it to be highly effective in promoting critical thinking and the assimilation of new information into knowledge.

Airasian and Walsh (1997) believe constructivism requires significant changes in the classroom which will not be easy. "Teachers will have to learn to guide, not tell; to create environments in which students can make their own meanings, not be handed them by the teacher; to accept diversity in constructions, not search for the one "right" answer; to modify prior notions of "right" and "wrong," not stick to rigid standards and criteria; to create a safe, free, responsive environment that encourages disclosure of student constructions, not a closed, judgmental system (p. 448)." They also expound that students "will have to think for themselves, not wait for the teacher to tell them what to think; to proceed with less focus and direction from the teacher, not to wait for explicit teacher directions; to express their own ideas clearly in their own words, not to answer restricted-response questions; to revisit and revise constructions, not to move immediately on to the next concept or idea (p. 448)."

Olsen (1999) asserts "constructivist principles promote increased student thinking and they promote increased student autonomy in the classroom. Constructivism promotes increased social interaction and discussion in the classroom, both between teacher and students and between students and students (p. 4)."

Kohn (1996) argued the constructivist classroom is "one in which the process matters at least as much as the product. The wrestling with dilemmas, the clash of ideas, the need to take others' needs into account--these are ultimately more meaningful than any list of rules or guidelines that may

ultimately result (p. 74)." Children become thinkers by making up their own minds about whether something makes sense. "The ultimate reason to give children a say is that it can help them to make their own good decisions, to grow into ethical and compassionate people (p.83)."

D'Amico (1980) and Battistoni (1985) agree that when children are given the opportunity to be involved in the making of and enforcing of school rules, the problem of disruption will lessen and self-confidence will increase. Students have rights and needs which should be taken seriously. They ought to have some say about what happens to them. Letting students make decisions about their learning activities and class management allows them to feel worthy and that their needs are of value. Kaba (2000) reports that students who have a significant role in decision-making have shown an improvement in behavior and a more positive attitude toward school.

Kohn (1996) suggests using the format of a class meeting for discussions of issues important to the students. These issues may include "making decisions, planning activities, or reflecting values and needs (p. 88)." Through these class-meeting discussions, each student begins to have a sense of value and respect. The students matter to one another and to the teacher. The classroom becomes a community, a place in which students feel cared about and are encouraged to care about each other. Kohn (1996) says to use this sense of community to deal with problems or better, yet, to prevent their occurrence by invoking the community's ideas and support. When misbehavior occurs, ask how the community can

help. Look at misbehavior as an opportunity to teach. Kohn (1996) gives the following steps to solve the problems of behavior.

1. Develop a caring relationship of trust and respect between students and teacher in which all are comfortable to speak their minds;
2. Cultivate skills of listening carefully, remaining calm, making suggestions, and look at the other's point of view;
3. Determine why the misbehavior happened;
4. Use the class meeting or individual conference to seek how the community can help solve the problem;
5. Encourage the student to think of ways to make restitution such as "restore, replace, repair, clean-up, or apologize"; (p. 127)
6. Follow-up with a conversation with the student about restitution, solution to the problem, how things worked out, and reflect on the fairness of the process.

In a constructivist classroom, students have ownership of the rules and regulations which govern that class. The students discuss ideas with each other based on their past experiences and knowledge. Through these discussions, students are exposed to a diversity of backgrounds and other's perspectives. Students are more able to work together to solve problems and influence each other. This process helps to develop social character and moral values and students will assume responsibility for their actions and consequences. Students develop their own behavioral controls based on acceptance of each individual and mutual respect. This helps determine a social order so that the classroom

becomes a learning environment. In this environment, students make the connection between learning and life. This successfully managed classroom is one in which students achieve academic competencies, exhibit desirable social skills, develop increased self-respect, and move toward greater independence (Long, Biggs, and Hinson, 1999).

Harris and Graham, (1996) believe constructivism is the key to increased justice and democracy in the world. Kamil, Clark, & Dominick (1994) contend that "thirteen years of constructivist education would lead to less crowding in our prisons, help to control the federal deficit and drug problems, and solve many human and societal problems (p. 677)."

METHODOLOGY

This research was conducted to analyze and compare teachers' philosophy and classroom management style with the number of discipline referrals. The methods and procedures used to obtain the information will be explained in this chapter.

Description of the Subjects

A survey was administered to licensed fourth and fifth grade teachers in Clarksville-Montgomery County School System during the spring of the year 2002. The subjects were selected based upon their willingness to participate in the study. All surveys were completed anonymously.

Research Instruments

The survey instrument used for this study is an author-designed questionnaire and a demographic survey. The questionnaire consists of seven pairs of statements related to classroom management styles based on traditional philosophy or constructivist philosophy. The format required the participants to mark the statement in the pair which more closely describes their discipline program. These statements have come from two sources, Brooks and Brooks (1993) and Marlowe and Page (1998). A majority of five descriptors determined the teacher's philosophy of either traditionalist or constructivist about discipline. Surveys in which participants answered with either three or four descriptors did not qualify as strong evidence of either philosophy and was labeled as undetermined.

The demographic survey was composed of questions relating to years of teaching experience, education level, school policy, and number of discipline referrals. None of the surveys required the subject's name or school. The information from the survey is considered in the evaluation of this study and how it relates to teacher's philosophy and classroom management style. The survey also asked participants to identify how discipline referrals are dictated. The choices were by local school policy, an adopted discipline plan (such as Assertive or COMP), or by teacher's judgment.

The questionnaire was administered to six teachers who do not teach fourth or fifth grade. Their instruction was to read the survey for confusing terms or statements which may need to be clarified. No major problems were found early in the study.

Procedures

Permission to administer the survey was first obtained from Austin Peay's Institutional Research Board. The examiner then requested permission from Clarksville-Montgomery County School System to use fourth and fifth grade teachers in the spring of 2002 as volunteer subjects to participate in this research. Once permission was granted, the examiner sent a brief letter explaining the research and its purpose to the principal of each elementary school. The fourth and fifth grade teachers also received the same letter to explain the study along with the questionnaire. Each participant was asked to complete the survey for collecting data for the study. All subjects were given an option to participate or

not. There was no penalty for those who chose not to participate. Each subject received written instructions. Once subjects completed the requested information, the survey was placed in an envelope and sent to the examiner through the school system's in-house mail service.

To tabulate the data for analysis, the returned surveys were analyzed to determine the mean scores and standard deviation of subjects' responses. The statistical analysis using ANOVA was used to determine the difference between philosophies, teaching experience, school policy, and the number of discipline referrals. ANOVA was used because the study used multiple independent variables in a complex design (Howard, 1985).

ANALYSIS OF DATA

The primary purpose of this study was to determine if there was a difference between the number of discipline referrals teachers write and their philosophy of classroom management of either traditionalist or constructivist. The number of discipline referrals is the constant variable throughout this study. Additional goals sought a difference between the number of discipline referrals and the teacher's years of teaching experience, the education level, and the school's discipline policy. The study asked the fourth and fifth grade teachers to answer questions using the survey described in chapter three. The survey was completed by 103 of 160, 68%, fourth and fifth grade teachers from seventeen elementary schools.

Table 1 displays the categories of discipline referrals with the number and percentage of participants within each group. The section of 0-3 discipline referrals has the largest number, 73, and percentage, 71, of the responses to the survey.

Table 1. Number and Percent of Teachers Participating

# of Dis. Referrals	Number	Percent
0-3	73	71
4-6	19	18
7-10	7	7
11-15	3	3
16-20	1	1
20+	0	0
Total	103	100

Analysis of the philosophy indicators revealed 71% of the teachers surveyed wrote 0-3 discipline referrals for the first semester of the 2001-2002 school year. Of the teachers in this group, 38% are constructivist, 6% are traditionalist, and 27% are undetermined. Eighteen percent of the teachers in the study wrote 4-6 discipline referrals during the same time period. Eight percent were determined as constructivist, 3% were traditionalist, and 7% were undetermined. Teachers who wrote more than six discipline referrals totaled 11%. There is no significant difference between the number of discipline referrals of teachers based on their philosophy.

Table 2.   Percent of Participants by Philosophy.

# of Dis.Referrals	Constructivist	Traditionalist	Undetermined	Total
0-3	38	6	27	71
4-6	8	3	7	18
7-10	3	0	4	7
11-15	0	0	3	3
16-20	1	0	0	1
20+	0	0	0	0
Total	50	9	41	100

Analysis of variance is .376 for number of referrals by philosophy and is not significant at the .05 level.

The demographic descriptors seeking a difference results in a finding of no significant difference in the number of discipline referrals based on the years of teaching experience, teacher's education level, or school policy.

Table 3 shows the percent of discipline referrals for teacher's years of teaching experience. The category of 0-3 years experience had a total of 71% of those surveyed and 18%

had 4-6 years of experience. The remaining groupings of discipline referrals are a total of 11%. There is no significant difference between the number of discipline referrals of teachers based on their teaching experience.

Table 3. Percent of Participants by Years of Experience

# of Dis. Referrals	less 1	1>3	3>5	5>7	7>10	10>15	15+	Total
0-3	0	12	10	13	5	13	18	71
4-6	0	5	1	2	3	3	4	18
7-10	1	1	0	0	1	1	3	7
11-15	0	0	0	1	0	0	2	3
16-20	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1
20+	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total	1	18	11	17	9	17	27	100

Analysis of variance is .291 referrals by years of teaching experience and is not significant at the .05 level.

Table 4 displays the percent of discipline referrals based on education level of the teachers. Teachers who wrote 0-3 discipline referrals totaled 71% of the fourth and fifth grade teachers surveyed. Of this group, 36% have BS/BA degree, 25% have MA, while the remaining 9% hold other advanced degrees. The next group, 4-6 discipline referrals, was a total of 18% of those surveyed with 9% having BS/BA and 8% with MA. The other groupings of discipline referrals total 11% of the participants. Results show no significant difference in discipline referrals based on the education of the participants.

Table 4.   Percent of Participants by Education Level.

# of Dis. Referrals	BS/BA	MA	MA+15	MA+30	MA+45	EdS	EdS+	Total
0-3	37	25	3	0	3	0	3	71
4-6	9	8	0	0	1	0	0	18
7-10	3	3	0	1	0	0	0	7
11-15	2	1	0	0	0	0	0	3
16-20	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
20+	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total	52	37	3	1	4	0	3	100

Analysis of variance of .347 referrals by education level and is not significant at the .05 level.

Table 5 represents the number of discipline referrals based on a discipline plan either dictated by the school administration, or an adopted plan such as Assertive Discipline or COMP, or by the teacher's judgment. A fourth category comprised those participants who marked more than one response to the question.

A total of 71% wrote 0-3 discipline referrals with 11% following a school policy, 24% used an adopted plan, 18% used their own judgment, and 18% were a combination of the three. Those teachers who wrote 4-6 discipline referrals totaled 18% of the participants showing 4% followed a local school policy, 5% have a adopted plan, 5% used their own judgment, and 4% were a combination of the three. The remaining groups of referrals totaled 11%. There was no significant difference based on discipline policy.

Table 5. Percent of Participants by Discipline Policy

# Dis.Referrals	School Policy	Adopted Plan	Teacher's Judgment	Combination	Total
0-3	11	24	18	18	71
4-6	4	5	5	4	18
7-10	2	0	4	1	7
11-15	0	1	1	1	3
16-20	1	0	0	0	1
20+	0	0	0	0	0
Total	18	30	28	24	100

Analysis of variance is .309 by how discipline policy is dictated and is not significant by the .05 level.

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Summary

     This study was conducted to determine if a relationship
existed between the number of discipline referrals of
teachers and their philosophy, years of teaching experience,
education level, and school policy. The teachers' responses
were correlated using a computer statistical package, ANOVA.

     Evaluation of the survey items revealed 50% of
discipline referrals were written by constructivists, 9% were
written by traditionalists, and 41% were written by
participants whose philosophy could not be determined. The
number of discipline referrals, 0-3, totaled 71% with 38% of
these written by constructivists, 6% by traditionalists, and
27% by the undetermined group. The statistical analysis by
ANOVA determined no significant difference between discipline
referrals written and the teacher's philosophy.

     The demographic survey disclosed no significance of
difference between the number of discipline referrals and a
teacher's years of experience. Teachers with fifteen or more
years of experience wrote 27% of the discipline referrals for
the first semester of the 2001-2002 school year. These
teachers had the highest percentage, 18, in the 0-3 referrals
group.

     The number of discipline referrals and the participant's
education level showed no significant difference. The
teachers with a BS/BA degree wrote 52% of the referrals and
represented 37% of the 0-3 discipline referrals group. Those

teachers with a MA degree wrote 37% of the total referrals and 25% of the 0-3 discipline group.

There was no significant difference between the number of discipline referrals and how discipline is dictated. Teachers who followed an adopted plan wrote 30% of the referrals with 24% in the 0-3 discipline referral group. Teachers who use their own judgment wrote 28% of the referrals with 18% in the 0-3 discipline referral group. Those teachers who followed their school policy wrote the least discipline referrals, 18%, and 11% of those surveyed were in the 0-3 discipline referral group.

Conclusions

Do teachers who base their classroom management on a traditional philosophy or a constructivist philosophy write fewer school discipline referrals? Based on an analysis of the data, there is no significant difference between the number of discipline referrals of teachers and their philosophy, years of teaching experience, education level, and their school policy.

For further study, the survey instrument should be written using action words rather than feeling words to determine a philosophy the teacher is practicing rather than wanting or hoping to use. The survey instrument should also change the numbering categories of the discipline referrals to include zero referrals as a separate group and then begin the increments of 1-3, 4-6, 7-10, 11-15, 16-20, and 20+.

A closer examination of data from Table 2 of just the following two columns raises some interesting speculations.

As shown in the partial table, 50% of the participants have been determined as constructivists.

Table 6. First two columns of data from Table 2.

# of Dis.Referrals	Constructivist
0-3	38%
4-6	8%
7-10	3%
11-15	0
16-20	1%
20+	0
Total	50%

The information given by this group has been broken down further as show in Table 7. This chart indicates the percentage of constructivists according to the discipline plan they follow.

Table 7. Identified Constructivists from the Survey

School Policy Discipline Plan.........18%

Adopted Discipline Plan...............28%

Teacher's Judgment Discipline Plan....24%

Combination Discipline Plan..........30%

A total of 48% of the participants in the survey follow their school policy and an adopted discipline plan as shown in table 4. Of the constructivists, 46% also follow their school policy and an adopted discipline plan. Using a dictated school policy and a formal adopted discipline plan does not conform to the literature's descriptions of a constructivist teacher's discipline plan. The one percent of the constructivists as indicated in Table 6 who wrote 16-20 discipline referrals also followed a dictated school policy

for discipline. Only 24% of those teachers identified as constructivists indicated they follow their own judgment as a discipline plan. This information adds more confidence to a speculation that the teachers who participated in the survey responded to the discipline pairs in the way they want their classroom management to be rather than the reality of the current situation.

Recommendations

The conclusions indicate that there is no relationship between the number of discipline referrals of teachers and their philosophy, years of teaching experience, education level, and school policy. Another study is recommended to compare teachers' philosophy and implementation of that philosophy with the number of discipline referrals.

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APPENDICES

April 12, 2002

Dear Colleague,

I am a student at Austin Peay State University completing my Education Specialist Degree. As a requirement for this degree, I must conduct a field research project. My research topic concerns teachers' education philosophies and the number of office discipline referrals they write.

Your principal has granted her consent allowing me to contact you and invite you to participate in this study. You are under no obligation to participate nor is there a penalty for those who choose not to participate. No discipline referral records will be requested from your school's administration. All data will come from self-reports through the questionnaire. Once you have completed the survey, place it in the envelope I have provided, then send it through the school system courier. Please return the questionnaire by **April 23**. Do not identify yourself, so that all responses will be anonymous and confidential to the extent provided by the law.

Thank you for your participation and assistance. If you are interested in the results of the survey or have questions concerning the research, you may contact me at Ringgold Elementary School.

Sincerely,

Jacqueline J. Jones

Jacqueline J. Jones

QUESTIONNAIRE

For items 1-4, please circle the choice which best describes you.

1. Years Teaching Experience: less than 1
             1 to less than 3   3 to less than 5
             5 to less than 7   7 to less than 10
             10 to less than 15   15 and more

2. Educational Level: BS/BA   MA   MA+15   MA+30
                          MA+45   EdS.   EdS.+

3. Estimated Number of office discipline referrals during the fall
   semester of 2001:
          0-3   4-6   7-10   11-15   16-20   20+

4. Office discipline referrals are dictated by:
   a. local school policy
   b. an adopted discipline plan (such as Assertive or COMP)
   c. teacher's judgment

Please mark only one in each pair of statements which more closely matches
your discipline style.

5. _____ My discipline plan is based mostly on reacting to student
            misconduct.

   OR

   _____ My discipline plan is based mostly on prevention.

6. _____ I feel I must direct and externally control students' behavior.

   OR

   _____ I feel each student must direct and control his/her own behavior.

7. _____ I feel teachers should make the rules of behavior for students to
            follow.

   OR

   _____ I feel the teacher and the students should develop rules in the
            form of a classroom constitution.

8. _____ Consequences for not following the rules are based on student's
            individual differences.

   OR

   _____ Consequences for not following the rules are the same for all
            students.

9. _____ I see myself as the leader in the classroom.

   OR

   _____ I feel leadership is shared among myself and the students.

10. _____ I feel rewards should be intrinsic.

    OR

    _____ I feel rewards should be extrinsic.

11. _____ When checking students' assignments, I am most often seeking the
            correct answer.

    OR

    _____ When checking students' assignments, I am most often seeking "why"
            or "how" they developed their answer.

Board of Education   621 Gracey Avenue
931-920-7819   Fax: 931-920-9819

Curriculum & Instruction Supervisor   Sallie Keith

Clarksville, Tennessee 37040
sallie.keith@cmcss.net

March 15, 2002

Jacqueline J. Jones
524 Georgetown Road
Clarksville, TN 37043

Dear Ms. Jones:

Your research project titled "Discipline Referrals and Education Philosophy" has been approved by the research committee. The date of approval was March 15, 2002.

Now that you have approval from the research committee, you may contact the principal for approval. According to Board Policy File IFA, the principal has the final authority and responsibility for approving or disapproving research conducted in his/her building.

Please read the Research Policy and Procedures Handbook for all information concerning research in the Clarksville-Montgomery County Schools.

If you have questions, please call my office at (931) 920-7819.

Sincerely,

Sallie Keith
Curriculum and Instruction Supervisor

tr

cc: Research Committee

Austin Peay State University
Institutional Review Board

February 25, 2002

Jacqueline Jones
c/o Carlette Hardin
Education
APSU Box 4545

RE: Your application dated February 14, 2002 regarding study number 02-028: Discipline Referrals and Education Philosophy (Austin Peay State University)

Dear Ms. Jones:

Thank you for your response to requests from a prior review of your application for the new study listed above.

Congratulations! This is to confirm that your application is now fully approved. The protocol is approved through revisions. The consent letter submitted with your application is approved. You must obtain informed consent from all subjects; however, signed written consent is not required. This approval is subject to APSU Policies and Procedures governing human subjects research. You may want to review this policy which can be viewed on the APSU website at: www2.apsu.edu/www/computer/policy/2002.htm

You are granted permission to conduct your study as most recently described effective immediately. The study is subject to continuing review on or before February 13, 2003, unless closed before that date. Enclosed please find the forms for reporting a closed study and for requesting approval of continuance.

Please note that any changes to the study as approved must be promptly reported and approved. Some changes may be approved by expedited review; others require full board review. If you have any questions at all do not hesitate to contact Lou Beasley (221-6380; fax 221-6382; email beasleyl@apsu.edu) or any member of the APIRB.

Again, thank you for your cooperation with the APIRB and the human research review process. Best wishes for a successful study!

Sincerely,

Dr. Lou M. Beasley
Chair, Austin Peay Institutional Review Board

enclosure

Austin Peay State University
Graduate School
Approval of Proposed
_____Research Paper   _____Thesis   __X__Field Study

Herewith I submit this document prepared for, Jacqueline J. Jones,

411-92-3806, on behalf of the Education Department, related to Educ 6990.

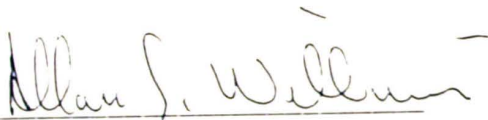I recommend that it be approved.

_____
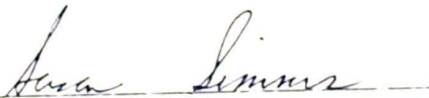Dr. Carlette Hardin
Chairperson

_____12-18-02_____
Date

We have read and approved this proposal.*

_____
Dr. Allan Williams
Second Committee Member

Approved by IRB
02/28/02 Parris R. Watt

_____
Dr. Susan Simms
Third Committee Member

Approved by COGS
02/28/02 Parris R. Wa

*Signatures are required for Theses and Field Studies ONLY.

(This form, with a copy of the TITLE PAGE of the approved proposal, should be filed in the office of the
College of Graduate Studies before the student registers for research paper (project), thesis, or field study.)