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Intrinsic vs. Extrinsic Behavior Management Approaches: Research and Teacher Perspectives

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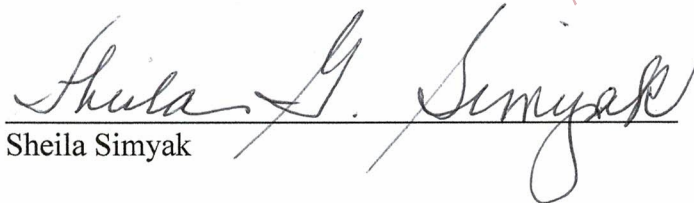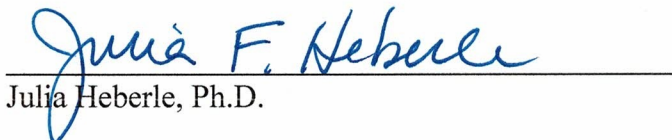
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Intrinsic vs. Extrinsic Behavior Management Approaches: Research and Teacher Perspectives

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The purpose of this study was to examine teacher perspectives about behavior management in schools. Their beliefs were analyzed to determine whether they mirror current research on best practice for behavior management, which suggests that fostering intrinsic motivation to behave is more beneficial over the long term than reliance on extrinsic rewards to influence behavior. Interviews were conducted at an elementary school where external rewards are consistently used; and at one preschool, where no external motivators are used and the goal is to teach children to be intrinsically motivated to behave. Teachers were interviewed about the behavior management approach used in their schools and their beliefs about the best way to shape behavior long-term. Analysis of the interviews showed that years of experience and the behavior approach in use at the school do not significantly influence what teachers believe is the best approach. However, teachers at the school using external rewards found their approach more effective than teachers at the school where no extrinsic motivators are used. While research shows the benefit of no external motivators for behavior and many teachers echo this sentiment, many educators utilize extrinsic rewards because they make motivating students to behavior a much easier task.

Teachers work in dynamic environments made up of diverse, unique students, all of whom have different learning styles and academic needs. Ensuring that teachers can reach each student can be difficult, especially if the teacher's classroom management is not effective. Classroom management, perhaps the most important aspect of a classroom, helps a classroom community to run smoothly and to foster positive and effective learning experiences. There are many different classroom management practices that teachers utilize. Some rely on the use of extrinsic, or external rewards and punishments for students, which involve giving or taking away something tangible to motivate students to behave in certain ways and to discourage unwanted behavior. Other approaches seek to utilize and to build upon the natural intrinsic motivation within students to succeed and to behave in ways that are beneficial to themselves and the class as a whole. Some behavior management systems combine both intrinsic and extrinsic aspects to shape student behavior. The question is, are there certain approaches that work better than others or are more beneficial to students over the long term? What are the strengths and weaknesses of intrinsic and extrinsic approaches? Finally, what determines which systems teachers use, and what are their feelings about different systems of behavior management?

The Assertive Discipline Approach, developed by Lee and Marlene Canter (Tauber, 2007), was a behavior management approach commonly used by teachers in the past. It is centered on the teacher maintaining control of the classroom at all times. The intent of the teacher always being in charge is to result in classroom order and optimum learning for students (Tauber, 2007). Contrary to the belief of many critics, teachers are not forceful or insensitive to students; rather, they have the best interest of their students in mind at all times, especially the students' rights to learn (Tauber, 2007). The rights of the teacher to teach and the students to

learn trump all else, including a classroom sense of community, something that other behavior management approaches emphasize as being important.

The most significant part of the Assertive Discipline Approach is that the teachers are assertive. An assertive teacher has clear expectations, which are positively rewarded when students comply, and attached to negative consequences when not followed (Tauber, 2007). All students know what to expect from their teacher each day because they know the positive and negative consequences that will result if they do or do not follow the classroom rules (Tauber, 2007). When the teacher maintains consistency in consequences, both positive and negative, students feel safe in their classroom environment. They know what to expect and are never left guessing what will happen. Thus, even though the teacher is in control of the classroom, they empower students to be in control of their own behaviors by making all behavioral expectations and the resulting consequences clear from the very first day of school. However, while other classroom management approaches involve students in the rule-making process to invoke a sense of community, Assertive Discipline does not; instead, it imposes already established rules on students to ensure that students behave the way the teacher wants them to behave (Tauber, 2007). Therefore, the structured, orderly nature of the Assertive Discipline classroom exists at the cost of involving children in discussion about rules, something which can be valuable in creating both a sense of community in the classroom and a deeper understanding of the purpose of the rules. Just as expectations are central to this approach, so is how the teacher presents him or herself.

Assertive Discipline teachers always present themselves in a confident and calm manner in all situations (Tauber, 2007). This allows teachers to maintain control of every situation and prevent it from spinning out of control. Teachers handle behavioral problems without yelling or pleading for the student to stop. Rather, the teacher clearly states how the student needs to

change his or her behavior to begin complying with the classroom rules, and class is interrupted as minimally as possible (Tauber, 2007). When the teacher clearly and matter-of-factly corrects student misbehavior, the student can quickly comply with the behavioral expectation without any questions over what they are to do (Tauber, 2007). If students continue not to follow the rule, then the previously-decided negative consequence will occur. When teachers demonstrate a calm attitude regardless of the situation, they do not allow a child's behavior to have a visible effect on them, thus allowing them to maintain control of the classroom. Students see that the teacher will not back down because of how they behave, thus making the behavioral expectations more stable and unable to be avoided.

In the Assertive Discipline Approach, behavior is recorded in some form, whether it be actual records, the student's name written on the board for negative behavior, or marbles added to a jar for every time the student or class as a whole meets behavioral expectations (Tauber, 2007). This concrete record keeping allows students to see where they or their class stands and what future consequences, positive or negative, will be. Positive behaviors are emphasized in the Assertive Discipline approach, even though people have criticized this system for its focus on negative behavioral consequences. Teachers either choose to reward individual students or the class as a whole (Tauber, 2007). In order to prevent praise and rewards from becoming too commonplace and therefore ineffective, teachers must choose carefully which behaviors to reward and how often to reward them (Tauber, 2007). If a teacher relies on giving rewards to shape behavior too often, then the rewards may begin to not work anymore, as they lose their value as an incentive to motivate students, and rather become an expected and normal part of the classroom rather than a treat.

Unlike other classroom management methods that allow students to either gain back privileges or lose gained privileges, classrooms in which the Assertive Discipline approach is utilized maintain any positive or negative consequences gained previously in the day, even if the student's behavior drastically changes throughout the day (Tauber, 2007). Thus, a consequence, once applied, is followed through in the thought that a student chose a specific behavior and thus must reap the consequences, good or bad, no matter what happens next (Tauber, 2007). This approach has both positives and negatives. It is positive because, again, it provides consistency to students and teaches them responsibility for their actions. They realize that every behavior they choose either results in a positive or negative consequence, and once a behavior has taken place, these consequences cannot always be changed by future behavior. However, the maintenance of consequences can be negative to students as well. For example, if a student engages in behavior contrary to expectations early in the day and receives a negative consequence, they may have to receive the consequence at a point in the day in which they have been demonstrating positive behavior, such as in the case of lost recess as a negative consequence. This can result in misattributing the consequence to the wrong behavior. However, just as students keep a negative consequence, they also have the ability to gain rewards if they change their behavior and begin making better, rule-following choices.

Though the Assertive Discipline approach is not as common used today, the reliance on systems that utilize extrinsic motivators have not disappeared. New approaches, such as the Dojo system are used widely across the country to shape student behavior. ClassDojo is a free app that teachers can download to manage student behavior and communicate with parents. The teacher gives students positive and negative points depending on their individual behavior, and these points can be projected on a screen for the whole class to see their progress (Pound, 2013).

Teachers can use the computer or other handheld devices to give and deduct points, making this system portable and able to be used in any area of the school (Pound, 2013). The app also can create behavior reports, and it allows teachers and parents to message one another to communicate about a child's behavior (Pound, 2013). Teachers spend less time rewarding and punishing student behavior, and the task of communicating with parents is made much easier. The versatility and ease of use that this system provides to teachers make it very enticing. In addition, the design of the app is visually pleasing and exciting for students because they can customize their own Dojo character. They can also view their own behavior progress in a minute-by-minute manner, allowing them to be aware of their behavior and make any necessary changes (Pound, 2013). The instantaneous manner of this program encourages students to self-regulate their own behavior so that they can gain more positive points. However, therein lies the problem of this system: what is the method of assigning and taking away points teaching children about behavior? Are students behaving out of their own intrinsic motivation, or are they behaving strictly because they want to gain more points and rewards and avoid having them taken away?

Additionally, research has proven that these kinds of behavior management approaches, which rely on the use of extrinsic rewards to motivate children's behavior, are not necessarily the most effective or the best for students. While Dojos are exciting and perhaps even fun for students, they are not enjoyable for all students. For example, if a child loses points due to some undesirable behavior and the teacher has the program projected on the screen, the whole class can see the child's points being deducted, then exposing the child to possible shame in front of his or her peers. Shame is a negative feeling that has the potential to distract the student's attention from learning and take away from a feeling of safety and community within the

classroom. Furthermore, the behavior management program itself can take away from learning, as at least some of students' attention is diverted to the app or chart where their behavior is monitored and recorded, especially if the program is projected on the screen on a consistent basis (Steel & MacDonnell, 2012). Additionally, when students are focused on gaining points or avoiding losing them, they view the purpose of a task as being to receive the reward rather than the process of completing the actual task itself, which is the most important and valuable part of instruction and learning (Lepper, Greene, & Nisbett, 1973; Steel & MacDonnell, 2012). Thus, even though programs like Dojo do not require a lot of class time to implement, they can still be a large detractor from student learning and focus in the classroom. Another potential red flag for behavior management that utilizes mostly extrinsic rewards is that these rewards can become less of a motivator over time (Steel & MacDonnell, 2012). Though the idea of behaving in certain ways in order to be given rewards can be extremely exciting and motivating initially, if used often over time, this effect will begin to lessen, making the rewards far less motivating and therefore less effective at fulfilling their entire purpose (Steel & MacDonnell, 2012). While students may find gaining points and having a cute avatar to manage these point captivating and motivating at the beginning of the year, the Dojos program and those like it may prove to only be most effective for a short period of time until the points and the rewards won by these points become less novel and therefore less of a motivating factor of student behavior. By this point, students will also lack the internal motivation to perform, as they will have lost this intrinsic drive to behave to the rewards promised for their behavior (Steel & MacDonnell, 2012). Even though extrinsic rewards systems can be flashy, appealing, and exciting to both teachers and students for many reasons, they are not without cost or caution. The teacher must be very careful in implementing these programs because they cannot only lose their effectiveness over time, but

they can also completely undermine what teachers desire to kindle within their students—the natural love of learning.

While the Assertive Discipline approach and others that rely heavily on extrinsic motivators and rewards allow teachers to run an organized, orderly classroom, critics of this approach argue that students are only complying with the classroom rules to gain a positive reward or to avoid a negative consequence. Alfie Kohn is a lead opponent of this classroom management method because he believes that students should not be motivated by external rewards or punishments, but that they should behave as a result of their internal motivations which are influenced by positive character traits.

One end of the behavior management spectrum involves teachers helping students to not only understand how to properly behave, but why they need to do so. The aim of this approach is to develop positive character traits such as honesty, respect, and responsibility in students that will exist beyond the classroom and persist for long periods of time. Because the goal is to use good and bad behavior choices to shape the development of moral thought and character traits, this approach does not rely on external rewards and punishments. Rather, the rewards are internal and come in the form of making others feel good and engaging in behavior that benefits the group as a whole. The ultimate goal and reward is for everyone to be able to learn. In fact, the character development approach sees external rewards and punishments as counteractive, as students end up engaging in or avoiding behaviors solely for the reward or punishment they will receive. These reinforcements, then, undermine students' development of character and only provide a short-term behavior outcome.

Alfie Kohn, a researcher on human behavior, believes that teachers' goals should not only be academic, but that they should also teach in order to shape students into good people

(Kohn, 1991). When students learn and develop the values needed to be good people, they will grow up to be people who make positive contributions to society. Kohn states that teachers should "aim higher than producing a quiet classroom or a nondisruptive child" (1991). While many teachers use methods to manage student behavior simply to maintain control of the classroom, they can do much more to guide student behavior in ways that are much more beneficial to the students. Prosocial behavior development, though seemingly separate from academics, is very much tied into learning and academic achievement (Kohn, 1991). The interactions among students and teachers and the sense of community in the classroom affect the amount and quality of learning that takes place. When children feel safe within their classroom community, they are more able to focus on their academics. The Assertive Discipline model does not make a classroom sense of community a goal, but rather it is placed at the expense of order and teacher control.

The character development approach contrasts with behavior management systems that use external rewards and punishments. Alfie Kohn believes that children are naturally endowed with positive character traits and the desire to do good, so no rewards are needed for good behavior (Kohn, 1991). Rather, rewards have a negative effect on the natural desire to do good. Students will behave in order to receive a reward, but when the reward disappears, the behavior usually does too because there is no longer any motivation to engage in the behavior (Kohn, 1991).

Studies conducted on preschool student motivation suggested that when children expected an extrinsic reward for doing an activity that originally interested them intrinsically, their motivation to engage in the activity when the reward disappeared was significantly less. Children who did not expect a reward or receive one at all maintained their levels of intrinsic

motivation (Lepper & Greene, 1975; Lepper, Greene & Nisbett, 1973). Therefore, even when

students have intrinsic motivation for good behaviors and engagement in activities they enjoy,

the expectation of rewards can reduce this internal motivation. In fact, an activity or behavior

that a student enjoys doing out of his or her own motivation can become perceived as "work" by

that student if there are too many external rewards or pressures surrounding it (Lepper & Greene,

1975). Therefore, when a teacher relies on too many extrinsic motivators to manipulate student

behavior, they can actually squash students' natural love of learning and decrease the long-term

motivation to further one's learning and achievement.

Rewards also do not provide students with opportunities to develop their character

because their behaviors are not motivated by any values (Kohn, 1991). Students are not focused

on why they are taking part in a behavior, but are instead focused on receiving the external prize.

Rewards can also be detrimental to students' self-concepts. If a student is unable to gain a

reward and others are, the students who do not get rewarded can experience low self-esteem,

feeling badly about themselves; these negative emotions can then further decrease these students'

motivation to try, both at schoolwork and at behaving (Hall, 2009).

Punishments are counter to the development of character and empathy. They teach

students what not to do, rather than teaching students better and more appropriate choices to

make (Kohn, 1991). Punishments turn the focus onto the negative aspects of behavior without

allowing students to understand why their behavior was negative or damaging to themselves and

others (Kohn, 1991). Most importantly, punishments distract student attention away from their

actual behavior to the punishment, and this is counteractive (Kohn, 1991). Instead of the student

looking at their behavior and figuring out why it was not a good choice, they are focused on

carrying out their punishment, which has no influence on changing future instances of this

behavior or on character development. In the future, students will behave in a certain way just to avoid a punishment without understanding why the behavior is not acceptable. Therefore, just as external rewards become the motivating factor to behave positively, punishments become the motivator to avoid doing something wrong. Punishments also only enact behavioral change in the environment in which students are at risk of getting punished. In other locations where the authority figure or the rules are not present, students often engage in the behavior, as the sole reason for them to follow the rule is to avoid punishment. There is no intrinsic motivation to behave properly, as the only result of their behavior is an extrinsic reward or punishment. If students know why certain behaviors are good or bad, this information will apply to all settings in which this behavior has the potential to occur. Thus, punishments do not result in long-term or permanent behavior change in students in the way that character development does.

How, without extrinsic rewards and punishments, are teachers to go about shaping student behavior to not only establish order in the classroom, but to develop student character traits? Central to character development is helping students to view themselves positively, as a person who cares about and helps others (Kohn, 1991). When students have a positive view of self, they feel capable of carrying out behaviors that are beneficial to others. One way to build student self-image is to inspire a sense of community in the classroom by giving students responsibility in the running of the classroom. When students help to create rules classroom rules, they better understand the need and the reason for the rule's existence, rather than just being told that they need to follow the rules (Kohn, 1991). Engaging students in other classroom decisions and jobs helps students to feel responsible for the smooth running of their classroom community and helps them to realize how their behaviors positively affect others. Involvement of students empowers them by giving them some autonomy over themselves and their

environment. Another way to inspire a positive self-image in students is for the teacher to

always assume that a student's behavior is motivated by the best possible motive, and to

communicate this understanding to the student (Kohn, 1991). When a student sees that the

teacher views them as a person whose behavior is motivated by good intentions, they begin to

see themselves the same way, and they are more likely to engage in behaviors that are actually

motivated by positive values (Kohn, 1991). The result is students more often engaging in

behavior that emulates positive values that are beneficial to others. Rewards are not necessary

for manipulating behavior because the behavior is motivated intrinsically.

Students need to learn how their behavior affects others, good or bad, so that they may

begin to develop empathy. When a student does something that helps or benefits others, the

teacher should enthusiastically explain how the student has engaged in a positive behavior and

why it has benefitted others. Similarly, the teacher should not ignore negative or inappropriate

behaviors. Instead, the teacher should emotionally communicate how the student's behavior is

hurtful or inconsiderate of others (Kohn, 1991). The use of emotion in both positive and

negative behavior is important, as it demonstrates to students that all of their behaviors are

important, and they affect other people (Kohn, 1991). Unlike rewards and punishments, this

approach helps students to understand their behavior and its effect on themselves and others.

The teacher acknowledging the student's good and bad choices demonstrates that each behavior

they choose is significant and has an effect on others, thus making the students responsible for

their own actions and fostering a sense of empathy within them. When children develop

empathy, they are better able to moderate and change future behavior to benefit themselves and

others. Though the character development model is appealing because it helps deepen student

understanding of the purpose of behaving without any kind of extrinsic motivation, many

teachers incorporate both intrinsic and extrinsic motivators and reinforcements into their classrooms, such as through the use of approaches like Responsive Classroom.

The Responsive Classroom approach is a holistic approach that aims to increase student development and achievement in all possible areas, including academics, communication, and social interactions. It acknowledges the fact that there is a relationship between social-emotional development, behavior, and academic achievement, and that development in one area affects development in the other areas. Therefore, teachers who utilize this approach strive to infuse all aspects of the classroom environment with positivity (Rimm-Kauffman, La Paro, Downer, & Pianta, 2005).

Teachers who utilize the Responsive Classroom approach place great emphasis on their classroom environment. They work towards increasing student achievement by creating a more comfortable and safe learning environment that allows students to learn most efficiently and remain engaged as much as possible (Hall, 2009). In order to create this kind of setting, the teacher strives to provide a relaxed, yet structured classroom in which each student feels like a part of the community (Hall, 2009). When students feel like an important part of their classroom environment, they are more likely to feel comfortable contributing to class discussions and participating in other classroom activities, which in turn increases quality of learning. Responsive Classroom provides students with high expectations, both academically and behaviorally. These expectations are clear, and as part of the classroom community, students work with the teacher to discuss and them and encourage their achievement of them (Hall, 2009). When teachers and students speak about expectations, students are more aware of how they are supposed to behave as well as why it is important that they behave this way. This system of developing rules combines the clear expectations of the Assertive Discipline approach with the

community aspect of the character development approach, thus giving a deeper meaning to the rules while not compromising any expectations.

When students are able to self-regulate their own behavior, they can avoid negative behavioral situations that distract them from focusing on the learning taking place. Students do not naturally know how to self-regulate their own behavior; rather, they must learn it. Teachers can help students to begin self-regulating their behavior by having discussions with them about their behavior and the feelings that are motivating it. Many teachers wait until a child is in the middle of having an emotionally-motivated meltdown to begin helping them through the situation. However, if a teacher can anticipate a child's behavior and intervene at the first sign of distress, the situation may be avoided completely, and most importantly, the child can learn to self-regulate and avoid negative feelings (Mercier, 2014). Individual students and the class as a whole all benefit from the teacher knowing each student and being aware of what triggers problem behaviors. When teachers know how to handle different behavioral situations, they can help students work through their feelings and help them return to the task at hand.

Time-outs are a tool teachers can use to help teach students how to self-regulate their own feelings and behaviors. In the past, time-outs were used as a consequence for a child misbehaving or failing to meet behavioral expectations. However, like other punishments, this practice does not prevent a negative behavior situation before it occurs, and it also does not address the underlying catalysts for the problem behavior (Mercier, 2014). A child may sit in a time-out and not understand its purpose, rendering the consequence useless, both in addressing the current behavior problem and any hope of altering misbehavior in the future. When a time-out is used as a self-regulation measure, students understand that the value in separating

themselves from the group or activity is to assist them in calming down and becoming less upset (Mercier, 2014).

Teachers are a necessary part in teaching self-regulation because they help students to recognize when they are becoming upset. The teacher's role is to observe students and recognize what triggers student behavior, and then encourage students to take a break and return when they are calmed down (Mercier, 2014). The teacher also speaks to the student to explain the behavioral triggers they noticed to help students begin to realize them on their own and remove themselves from the activity prior to the occurrence of a behavior incident (Mercier, 2014). It is also important that the teacher help students to learn how to calm themselves down so that a time-out helps the student to feel better and not stew over the problem (Mercier, 2014). Once students learn how to self-regulate their feelings, they will be able to remove themselves from problem situations and calm themselves down at times even when they may not separate themselves (Mercier, 2014). A classroom teacher who teaches the students to self-regulate will see a reduction in problem behaviors and a more efficient and positive classroom that is not focused on negative behavior consequences.

Teacher-student interactions are integral to successful behavior management. A teacher's awareness and understanding of each student's emotional needs allows them to provide the necessary support for each child and intervene in situations before a problem behavior occurs (Ponitz, Rimm-Kauffman, Grimm, & Curby, 2009). When teachers take the time to speak with students each day and find out what is going on in the their lives, the teacher can understand the students' moods and anticipate how to alter class discussion or instruction to best suit the students for the day (Hunter, 2015). When a child is upset, the teacher should not discount the student's feelings, but rather help the student to find more appropriate ways to express the

feeling or help them redirect to another activity (Wilson, n.d.). When teachers demonstrate to

students that they care about how each individual student feels, students will feel more trusting

of the teacher and feel more comfortable communicating and working through problems. If a

teacher simply assigns a consequence to a student who exhibits a poor behavior choice, the

teacher is missing an opportunity to truly connect with the student and develop a positive and

trusting relationship (Denton, 2008). Approaches like Assertive Discipline and reward systems

like Dojos do not include the teacher speaking with a student about his or her feelings. Rather,

the teacher assigns a reward or consequence to the student and the incident is finished with little

discussion. Addressing feelings, the root of behavioral problems can help to reduce them and

prevent them before they fully develop and become an issue that detracts from the learning

taking place in the classroom.

Asking open-ended questions is a way for the teacher to help stretch student thought,

both academically and socially. When a teacher asks students questions that require more than a

one-word answer, students are forced to critically think and provide an in-depth answer. Not

only is this beneficial to engaging students on a deeper level academically, but it can also help

them become more self-aware of their own feelings and behaviors (Denton, 2008). A teacher's

probing question can help a student to realize what triggers his or her anger, or it can prepare

students to behave properly by engaging them in thought about appropriate behavior for a

situation. Responsive Classroom teachers lead students in short discussions about rules prior to

taking part in an activity or going to a different area of the school. The teacher poses questions

that cause students to think about specific positive and appropriate behaviors to engage in

("Rules", 2010). Rather than focusing on consequences if rules are not followed, these

discussions are positive. Through encouraging students to brainstorm positive, beneficial

behaviors prior to an activity or transition, the teacher empowers students to take responsibility for their own actions ("Rules", 2010). If students do not know how to behave in a certain situation, they will after a rules talk, as behavioral expectations and their purposes are made clear. Students are given autonomy over their own actions.

In order to help teach students to gain better control over their own actions and also to develop empathy for others, Responsive Classroom suggests the use of logical consequences. Logical consequences help the student learn to solve the problem they have created from their misbehavior. Unlike punishments, which take the attention away from and are often completely unrelated to the actual problem behavior, logical consequences are directly related to the negative behavior ("Punishment," 1998). For example, if a child knocks down a tower that another child was building, making the child sit outside on the playground is a punishment that is unrelated to the offense. On the contrary, a logical consequence would be having the child help the other child rebuild the block tower. In doing this rebuilding, the student would become more aware of the negative effect of their actions and how it has made another person feel. Over time, these logical consequences will help a child to develop responsibility for one's own actions and a sense of empathy over the feelings of others. Rather than not repeating this behavior in order to avoid something undesirable, through logical consequences, the student is empowered and motivated to do better in the future ("Punishment," 1998). Punishment applies and external punishment to bring about change in behavior, while logical consequences fosters the intrinsic motivation to behave and improve.

Another major benefit of using logical consequences instead of punishment is that they are much more beneficial to the misbehaving child's own self-esteem and sense of safety in the classroom ("Punishment," 1998). When a student is punished, they are often made to feel

embarrassed or shameful because of their actions. The student may even internalize the

punishment as a problem with him or her rather than the misbehavior ("Punishment," 1998).

Additionally, in taking part in the punishment, the student does not have the opportunity to make

amends for the misbehavior or improve the situation in any way. With logical consequences,

taking part in the consequence empowers the student to improve one's situation by fixing the

problem or learning from mistakes ("Punishment," 1998). Additionally, through developing the

logical consequence, the teacher demonstrates that she cares about the child and how he or she

behaves ("Punishment," 1998). This transfers to the student, who learns that his or her behaviors

have an effect on others and are not acceptable. Logical consequences not only make more sense

because they are related to the problem behavior, but they also are much more meaningful for

students because they teach children that their actions are important and affect others.

Though the reliance on solely extrinsic rewards to motivate student behavior can be risky

and overall ineffective, their use along with intrinsic rewards can be beneficial to students. For

example, extrinsic rewards for certain behaviors can serve as a way to engage students in tasks

that they are not naturally intrinsically interested in (Shiller & O'Flynn, 2008). The extrinsic

reward which initially probes the student to do something can become intrinsic motivation as

students discover that they enjoy a task or begin to master it (Shiller & O'Flynn, 2008; Steel &

MacDonnell, 2012). In this case, the extrinsic reward is responsible for developing a natural

interest which may never have existed otherwise. Additionally, rewards that are based on

performance rather than just participation have been proven to be more effective long-term

(Shiller & O'Flynn, 2008). These kinds of rewards may bolster intrinsic motivation that already

exists rather than take away from it, as participation and rewards for simply engaging in a certain

behavior do (Shiller & O'Flynn, 2008). For example, if a student receives a sticker for a perfect

score on a test, he or she is already excited and proud about doing his or her best and succeeding in learning, a feeling that the sticker merely builds upon. The sticker does not remove the intrinsic motivation to learn and try hard on future tests because the student also experiences the intrinsic satisfaction of doing well as a result of his or her effort. Therefore, when extrinsic rewards and motivators are chosen carefully and incorporated appropriately alongside intrinsic rewards, students may benefit more than they would if they were given either external or internal rewards alone. Even though extrinsic rewards can extinguish intrinsic motivation when relied on too heavily, carefully using extrinsic rewards to bolster intrinsic ones can have positive, long-lasting impacts on students' behavior, both inside and outside the classroom environment.

In order for any behavior management approach to work, it must encourage students to want to behave. Thus, in order to encourage intrinsic motivation to learn and behave in students, they must have the desire to do so. A student is motivated when they are interested in what they are learning, which is often demonstrated by the student remaining focused on a single task or activity for a substantial amount of time (Carlton, 2003). If a child is engaged in something that is interesting and challenging, then problem behaviors will be less because the child will be focused on something meaningful rather than facing boredom or the opportunity to engage in negative actions. Teachers can thus have an influence on student motivation by creating engaging and exciting learning environments where the child is excited to learn and be a contributing member to the learning community by exhibiting beneficial behaviors. A child will be more motivated to behave when they feel that they have the control over they are behaving (Carlton & Winsler, 1998). If a teacher does not micromanage but instead supports a child in controlling and evaluating his or her behavior, then the child learns to take control of his or her own actions, thus bolstering responsibility and the reward the child feels from regulating how he

or she acts. Teachers can have a great influence on inspiring the desire to learn and behave simply because one enjoys doing so. If a child learns to gain pleasure from engaging in behaviors that positively contribute to the learning community, then they will repeat these and similar behaviors consistently over a long period of time. Through creating fun, safe, engaging learning environments, students will feel supported to strive to do their best and behave in ways that contribute to their own learning and that of others.

The debate over the best way to manage student behavior in a way that is effective and enduring may never be over, as there exists support for both sides of the argument, and research is constantly being added to and redefining what is considered best practice. Approaches, like Responsive Classroom, that incorporate both intrinsic and extrinsic motivators, reinforcers, and rewards may persist as best practice because they are holistic, giving them more depth. The days of the teacher being the sole authority and imposing rewards and punishments upon students are over; the twenty-first century embraces including children in their own education and behavior management in a way that empowers them and allows them to become more responsible for their own behavior. Behavior management methods and programs will surely evolve as new technologies and research come about and as schools and teachers find more effective ways to bring about desired classroom behavior. Behavior management approaches have shifted from the past to be more positive and beneficial to students for a lifetime. Do the approaches schools and teachers use match the research, and what are these educators' perspectives on these current approaches?

Methods

Participants

Participants in this study were 10 teachers from two schools in Eastern Pennsylvania: one elementary school, Kindergarten through fourth grade; and one private preschool, infants through school age. Participants were recruited for the study through an email asking for their participation. All of the participants were female. Their number of years experience teaching ranged from 2 to 23 years ($M = 13.8$, $SD = 2.128$). Five of the participants were from the elementary school, with number of years experience ranging from 9 to 20 years ($M = 15.6$, $SD = 2.694$) and five were from the private preschool, with number of years experience ranging from 2 to 23 years ($M = 12$, $SD = 3.391$).

Materials

A 12-question interview was used to conduct this study (See Appendix). Questions on the interview asked teachers about the behavior management approach used at their school, how it is implemented, and the rewards and consequences associated with it. Additionally, the interview asked teachers what they perceived to be the strengths and weaknesses of the approach as well as whether they found the system to be effective and how they would improve it. The interview asked teachers if they implement anything different or additional in their own classrooms. Finally, the interview asked teachers about long-term behavior, both those of their school's behavior approach and their own personal beliefs about the best way to shape student behavior over the long-term. The last question of the interview asked teachers how long they have been teachers.

Design and Procedure

Interviews were conducted on an individual basis in a face-to-face manner. Teachers were contacted via email, and interview times were scheduled. At the time of the interview, teachers were given an informed consent form (See Appendix). Following the interview, teachers were fully debriefed about the purpose of the interview (See Appendix).

Results

A two-tailed, independent t-test was conducted to determine whether the number of years experience of the teachers differed between the two schools. There is no significant difference between the number of years experience of the teachers at the elementary school (M =15.6, SD =6.025) and the teachers at the private preschool (M =12, SD =7.582), t (8) =0.430, ns. The number of years experience did not account for differences in responses between the teachers at the two schools.

A two-tailed, independent t-test was conducted to determine whether there was a difference between whether the teachers believed their school's behavior management approach was effective or not. Teacher responses were coded as "1" if they said that they thought their school's behavior management system was effective and "2" if they said they did not believe their school's behavior management approach was effective. There was a significant difference between the teacher-perceived effectiveness of school behavior management approach between the elementary school (M =1, SD =0) and the private preschool (M =1.8, SD =0.447), t (8) =-4, p < 0.01. The teachers at the elementary school find their behavior management approach to be more effective than the teachers at the private preschool find their approach to be effective.

Discussion

The behavior management approach implemented at the elementary school was referred to by multiple teachers as a school-wide positive behavior plan which is implemented across the whole school district and recognized by the state of Pennsylvania. This behavior management system uses many different motivators. A major one is a clip chart used to track student positive and negative behavior. If students reach the top of the clip chart by the end of the school day, they earn a tally, and after a student achieves a certain number of tallies, they get a star put on their clip. After achieving a determined number of stars, the student may trade in their clip for a sliver, gold, or rainbow clip. In addition to the tallies, stars, and different clips, students also receive cub club coupons, which are awarded for reaching the top of the clip chart a certain number or times or for other exemplary behavior. These coupons can be entered into different raffle boxes to earn prizes, out of which a few coupons are chosen each month, rewarding the chosen students with the prizes. In addition to these individual incentives, there are also class-wide and school-wide incentives to behave.

Each month, there is a golden awards assembly, during which classes receive awards for best behavior in the different special areas and other predetermined categories. School-wide, there is a paper thermometer in the hallway by the cafeteria. The cub club coupons earned by the whole school are counted and charted on this thermometer. When the school reaches the predetermined number of coupons, then the whole school receives some kind of reward like extra recess or watching a movie.

The consequence for not meeting behavioral expectations under this behavior management approach is that students have to move their clip down on the clip chart. If students reach the bottommost square on the clip chart, then they must visit the principal's office, where

they will complete a behavior note that states what they were doing wrong, how it affected

others, and what they will do next time to prevent the same thing from happening again. A copy

of the note is given to the teacher, and the note is sent home to be signed by parents and return to

school.

Many of the teachers I interviewed had additional behavior management strategies in

their own classrooms. Some teachers gave out tickets based on the square of the clip chart that

students ended up on at the finish of the school day. These tickets can then be turned in for

different classroom prizes or cub club coupons. Some teachers implemented class-wide systems

in which table groups or the whole class earned rewards for good behavior both in and out of the

classroom. Once a certain number is achieved, the whole class celebrates in some way. One

teacher I interviewed mentioned that she thinks there are too many different systems in use to

monitor behavior, so she does not use anything additional in her room besides the clip chart,

though she does hand out positive behavior notes and give lots of verbal praise to her students to

encourage them to behave and make them aware of when they are engaged in positive behavior.

The teachers named various strengths of this behavior management approach, the most

common response being that this approach is highly motivating for most students, and it is

consistent, implemented in the classroom and in special areas. If students switch classrooms for

certain subjects, then the system is still in effect and transfers across all environments. The

prizes are motivating because students have the choice of putting their cub club coupons into the

prize box that interests them, and the prizes are rotated so that the rewards remain motivating and

exciting. Another strength cited by multiple teachers interviewed was this approach is very

positive, mostly focusing on positive behaviors and highlighting individual students, entire

classes, and the whole school. If students are clipped down, they always have the potential to move back up and be recognized for their positive behaviors, not just the negative ones.

Multiple teachers said that this behavior management system is not motivating for a few students, and it is difficult to do anything about these students because there are not many consequences that are associated with this approach. Some teachers take away minutes from recess if students go below the red square on the clip chart, but beyond recess and receiving behavior notes, there is not much else to implementing response to negative behaviors. For the students who do not respond to the clip chart, individual behavior plans are implemented, many of which include using a personal clip chart to monitor progress and provide additional rewards for reaching individualized goals. Some teachers said that they did not like that this approach is public, and that students get clipped up and down in front of others. Though student names are not written on the clothespins, their classroom identification number is, and the students learn each other's numbers quickly, which can lead to negative attention for some students. This attention is undesirable and does not have a positive impact on the student and his or her behavior. Just as a student may experience feelings of shame with the use of programs like ClassDojo, being clipped down in front of peers can draw a student's attention away from learning and amending their behavior, turning the focus onto his or her negative feelings of shame or embarrassment, feelings which do not foster feelings of safety. Another weakness that some teachers talked about was that this behavior management system relies on motivating students through the use of extrinsic motivators and rewards, not intrinsic ones. These teachers fear that while this approach is effective at getting students to behave and follow expectations, they may only be doing so in order to gain the rewards and prizes and not because they are internally driven to do so and engage in positive behaviors that benefit others.

I have spent time in this school, and I have observed students engaging in behaviors with the reasoning that if they do so, they will be allowed to clip up. I have even heard students ask the teacher if they can clip up after doing something they deem good or helpful. In these cases, it appears as though the sole reason for the students engaging in positive behaviors is to benefit themselves with an external reward, not for the internal satisfaction or to benefit others or the class as a whole.

When asked what they believed the long-term goals of this school-wide positive behavior plan are, teachers responded by saying that the goal was to increase positive behaviors and decrease negative ones and the prevalence of behavior notes given out in the school. Multiple teachers said that while this system uses external motivators, the goal is for students to become more self-aware of their own behavior, thus becoming more responsible for themselves. Also, use of this approach will hopefully teach students to intrinsically want to behave and to do their best both in and out of the classroom, transferring the external benefits received through this behavior management approach to being a good citizen in the real world.

The behavior approach at the private preschool contrasts the one used by the elementary school because it does not allow teachers to use any kind of extrinsic motivators to influence student behavior. Rather, a character development curriculum is in place to teach children important character traits that will also teach them why it is important to act on these traits and follow expectations. Teachers indicated that the long-term goal of this behavior management approach are for students to be self-motivated to behave and to understand the value of doing the right thing, both to themselves and to others. In order to achieve this goal, teachers are to model positive and prosocial behavior for the children to follow. Every morning during circle time, teachers go over the school's rules and talk about them, modeling and giving scenarios in which

these rules would apply. Each classroom has a set of puppets, each of which is associated with a specific character trait. The puppets are used to help teach the traits and reinforce the rules throughout the day. If students are breaking one of the rules, the teacher is supposed to use the associated puppet to help the child understand what they are doing wrong and how they can fix the problem to follow the rule.

Because punishments are not used with this behavior approach, the major strategy used to correct unacceptable behavior mentioned by teachers during the interviews was redirection. If a student is breaking one of the rules or is doing something that hurts others, the teacher redirects the student to another activity or helps them to change their behavior to an acceptable one. Another way of preventing problem behaviors mentioned by teachers was stopping the behavior before it starts. The teacher must always be aware of all students as well as what causes problem behaviors and then redirect or stop the situation before it turns into the undesired behavior.

Almost all of the teachers interviewed expressed some degree of frustration with this behavior management strategy. They shared that they find that many of the young three and four year old students are not yet motivated internally, so many of the students do not have any motivation to follow the rules or behave in ways that benefit themselves and others. The result is often disruptive behaviors that prevent or halt the learning not only of themselves but also of the whole class. Many teachers see the need to incorporate some degree of external motivation in conjunction with the character education to help foster the internal motivation and good behavior through the use of external rewards and punishments. In fact, some teachers use small external motivators in their own classrooms, including stickers, stamps, or checks next to student names for positive behaviors. The teachers who use these additional motivators report that while they are small, the students are highly motivated by them, and positive behavior has increased and

negative ones have decreased. Some teachers also implement time-outs after a certain number of redirections as a consequence for negative behavior. These teachers still use the puppets and the character development curriculum to teach intrinsic motivation and the value in doing the right thing.

When asked what they believe the strengths of this approach are, teachers responded by saying that it is consistent, used in each classroom. Thus, as students develop and move up to older classrooms, the same puppets are there, the same rules are emphasized, and the same strategies to encourage behavior are used. This consistency benefits students because they know what to expect. Another strength shared by one teacher is that this approach is positive and does not rely on punishments to shape behavior. This teacher also shared that she likes that rewards are not relied on because when rewards are involved, students who do not receive the rewards do not feel as safe in the classroom. In a room where rewards and punishments are absent, every student is always equal and feels safe because they know the expectations and are guided by the teacher to behave in a way that makes themselves and others feel good and safe.

On the contrary, a few teachers shared that they felt that there are very few to no strengths of this behavior management approach because a lot of the students have no motivation or incentive to behave. They can behave or not behave and nothing changes either way. Also, these teachers felt that students must learn that there are consequences for their actions, and they feel that the process of redirection do not teach students this lesson.

One of the main weaknesses of this behavior management approach as described the teachers is that it is not individualized by any means. In fact, teachers are discouraged from using any kind of individual plans or strategies unless there is a major problem. Parents and management must also approve the use of these plans. As a result, the teachers share that this

behavior management technique is ineffective for many students whose needs are not met by this approach. Multiple teachers said that they believe that each child is different, especially when they are so young, so they believe students would benefit from a strategy that is more meaningful and tailored to them.

I have worked in this preschool for over two years, and I have observed the difficulty of teaching young children to behave without the use of any kind of external motivator. I find it especially difficult with two and three year olds, who are learning to control their emotions and also learning to interact with children around them. I am also not sure that children this young fully understand what it means to be responsible and respectful, which results in misbehavior. However, I realize that it is so valuable to teach children from a young age to treat themselves and others in a respectful way and also why it is important to follow rules. I think that when implemented fully and consistently, utilizing the puppets and the character development curriculum, students will learn why it is important to exhibit these character traits and how to do so. When supported by teachers who care about the students, I personally believe that using the character development approach to teach behavior will lead to young children becoming intrinsically motivated to behave and self-aware of how their own actions affect themselves and others. However, I do believe that all children are different and have unique needs especially at the young age when development is happening quickly and at different rates for each child, so some students do need additional support beyond this approach in order to help them monitor their own behavior.

Though number of years teaching and the school behavior management system both had no significant influence on teacher perspectives about the best way to influence behavior on a long-term basis, the results of the interview indicate that the teachers at the two different schools

viewed their school's behavior management approach differently. Teachers at the elementary school, who use a behavior management approach that utilize extrinsic rewards, find their behavior management approach to be effective in general. On the contrary, from the sample of teachers interviewed at the private preschool, where extrinsic reinforcements are not used, only one of the five teachers said that they think this approach is effective. Although the research indicates that there are vast benefits to building intrinsic motivation in students and relying less or not at all on external rewards, it appears that this approach is less favorable in the classroom setting. Teachers at the preschool indicated that they believed that some kind of rewards or consequences should be used in conjunction with the character education in order to be the most effective. Similarly, while some teachers at the elementary school indicated that building intrinsic motivation in students is the best way to influence behavior over the long-term, they still found the extrinsic motivators of their current behavior system to be effective for the vast majority of their students.

Being someone who has spent time in both of these school settings, I can attest that it is definitely easier to manage behavior in the elementary school where many different external reinforcements are used to manage behavior. More can be given and taken away from the child to influence him or her to keep engaging in good behavior or to stop unfavorable behavior. On the contrary, at the preschool, if a child is not behaving, it is much harder to influence him or her to stop the undesired behavior because there is nothing to gain or lose if the behavior continues, especially if the student has not yet developed empathy.

There are limitations of this study that could have affected the results. First, only ten teachers were interviewed for the study, and they came from only two schools. This is a small sample that cannot be generalized to the whole population of teachers in the state or country, as

there is much diversity in schools, teachers, and behavior management approaches. Another

limitation posed by the small sample size is that the number of years experience More data

points would provide a more representative picture of number of years experience, and there is

the potential that there could be significant differences in perspectives between teachers who

have been teaching a long time and those that have not. The small number of data points in my

study may just not have showed this potential significance.

Future directions for this study would involve interviewing teachers at many more

schools which utilize different behavior management strategies. Looking at a larger body of

teachers and other behavior approaches would provide a broader and more representative scope

of the current practices in use to manage student behavior in the classroom. Another factor to

consider would be to look at level of education in addition to number of years experience.

Perhaps teachers who have masters or even doctorate degrees may have different perspectives on

behavior.

After doing research and conducting interviews of teachers at schools where the approach

to behavior management are completely different, I have developed my own perspective on

effective behavior management. While I have observed and gained teacher insight that using

extrinsic rewards and punishments to motivate students to behave is indeed motivating and easier

for the teacher or school to influence student behavior, I do not think that means it is the best

approach. It may be more difficult to bring about compliance with behavior expectations when

relying on student intrinsic motivation to drive behavior, but I think it is more meaningful

because students learn to be responsible for their own actions, aware of their own behavior, and

empathetic towards those around them for its own merit, not because they will gain or lose

something depending on how they behave.

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Appendix

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

1. Does your school/school district implement a school-wide behavior management approach? If so, which approach is implemented?

2. Is your school's behavior management system based on any specific research/theories?

3. Does the implementation of this behavior management approach give students rewards for certain behaviors? If so, what rewards are given?

4. Are there any kinds of consequences for incorrect behaviors or failure to meet behavioral expectations?

5. Do you find this approach effective in influencing students to meet behavioral expectations? Why or why not?

6. What are the strengths of your school's behavior management approach?

7. What are any weaknesses of your school's behavior management system? How would you improve this system to make it more effective?

8. What materials do you use to implement your school's behavior management system?

9. Do you implement a different/additional behavior management system in your own classroom? If so, please describe how you manage behavior in your classroom.

10. What are the long-term goals of your management system?

11. What do you believe is the best way to shape student behavior to meet behavior expectations over the long term?

12. How long have you been a teacher?

INFORMED CONSENT FORM

The interview in which you are about to participate is research being conducted by Cara Gulick, a student in the Early Childhood Education and Psychology Departments of Albright College. To ensure that participants are treated fairly and ethically, the Institutional Review Board of Albright College has thoroughly reviewed and approved this interview.

In this interview, you will be asked to answer questions and give your perspectives about behavior management approaches used in your school and/or your classroom and your beliefs about the best ways to manage behavior and motivate students to meet behavioral expectations in the classroom.

Your anonymity in will be guaranteed in my presentation of the information of this study. Data will be reported anonymously and in group form only. At the conclusion of the study, you may obtain a copy of the results by contacting the experimenter at 610-487-5499 or by sending an e-mail to cara.gulick001@albright.edu.

Please understand that your participation in this research is completely voluntary. You may withdraw from this study at any time without punishment, and all the data that you have contributed will be removed. Thank you for contributing to this study.

By signing this form, I acknowledge that I have been informed of and understand my rights and what I am expected to do for this study. I freely consent to participate.

_____   _____

Print Name   Signature

DEBRIEFING

Thank you for participating!

The current research examines the use of intrinsic and extrinsic rewards in the classroom to shape student behaviors, both short- and long-term, as well as why schools/teachers utilize them, and what educators think about these different approaches.

If you have any questions about this study or would like a copy of the results upon completion, please contact the researcher: Cara Gulick   (email: cara.gulick001@albright.edu).