Teacher efficacy regarding behaviour management and the social learning environment
Crossing preservice teachers and pupils' perceptions

Malika S. Bapst and Philippe A. Genoud

hep/ haute école pédagogique vaud

UNI FR UNIVERSITÉ DE FRIBOURG UNIVERSITÄT FREIBURG

Introduction

A **healthy social learning environment** can be seen as a goal for teachers to reach through behaviour management. By regulating the dynamics of the classroom, the teacher helps create a safe environment in which students can feel comfortable enough to make errors, thus promoting a climate that supports the development of learning goals (Theis et al., 2019).

However, **behaviour management** is known to be one of the biggest challenges faced by beginner teachers, in particular. Difficulties in this field can induce negative emotions and dissatisfaction towards students (Harmsen et al., 2018), thus weakening self-efficacy beliefs (Petiot et al., 2015). Recent studies (*e.g.* Dessibourg, 2020) have shown that addressing behaviour management during teacher training through self-efficacy beliefs could be an effective way to support pre-service teachers in this field.

These **self-efficacy beliefs** are important because they are directly related to job (dis)satisfaction and can be predictors of a teacher's intent of leaving the profession (Aldridge & Fraser, 2016; Kamanzi et al., 2017). While these self-efficacy beliefs are a good predictor of teacher behaviour (Brown et al., 2015), they are also very responsive to contexts (Zimmerman, 2000), in particular to the quality of classroom interactions (Miller et al., 2017).

Therefore, it seems interesting to examine the extent to which the social learning environment of the classroom – observed from a multidimensional perspective – provides a reference in assessing one's classroom management skills. This leads us to our main research question which will be explored from the students' and the preservice teachers' point of views:

> Do preservice teachers and students take the social learning environment into account in the same way when positioning themselves on behaviour management efficacy?

Methods

Data was collected in a teacher training institution in the canton of Fribourg, in Switzerland.

All teachers in their last year of training participated in the study. They had all been working with their students for a four-month period.

Data measuring teacher (self-)efficacy and the learning environment in the classroom perceived by the teachers and their pupils were collected.

Sample
Our sample includes 37 middle school preservice teachers and their 837 pupils.

Online questionnaire for teachers
The teacher questionnaire is made of three parts. The first part is three demographic questions.

The second part includes an adapted version of the Scale of teacher self-efficacy regarding behaviour management in the classroom for teachers (Dessibourg, 2018), comprising of 11 items that cover various representative aspects of classroom management (α=.89).

The third part is a scale entitled Classroom learning environment (Genoud, 2012). It is made up of 43 items divided into 7 dimensions.

Dimension	Item example	α
Class cohesion	There is a strong friendship between my students.*	.85
Teacher proximity	I feel close to my students.	.44
Rules and organisation	The instructions I give to the students are always clear.	.44
Innovation	I often suggest new activities.	.62
Difficulty	Classwork is difficult for some of my students.	.39
Task orientation and implication	My students are happy to ask questions during my lessons.	.69

*Questionnaire items were freely translated from French

Paper questionnaire for pupils
The student questionnaire – adapted from the teacher questionnaire – has two parts measuring the learning environment of the classroom and the perception of teacher efficacy. The dimensions are similar to the version offered to preservice teachers so that a comparison can be made.

Results

Table 1 shows the correlations tested separately in the data collected from preservice teachers and their students. On the teacher side, only class cohesion is related to self-efficacy, while on the student side, most dimensions show moderate to strong correlations (all coefficients are significant due to the sample size).

Table 1: *Correlations between teacher efficacy regarding behaviour management perception and the social learning environment*

Social learning environment	Teachers	Students
Class cohesion	.38*	.40**
Teacher proximity	.19	.49**
Rules and organisation	.28	.48**
Innovation	.26	.34**
Difficulty	-.20	-.22**
Task orientation and implication	.03	.39**

*$p < 0.05$; **$p < 0.01$

The weakest correlations concern two dimensions (innovation and difficulty) that are more concerned with content and instructional aspects than with behaviour management practices. In contrast, the dimensions (relational and organisational aspects) on which successful classroom management has a greater impact correlate more strongly.

Discussion

Preservice teachers and their students' beliefs regarding behaviour management correlate differently with their perceptions of the social learning environment. Indeed, while students rely heavily on their perception of the environment (especially relational and organisational aspects) to determine whether their teacher is implementing effective classroom behaviour management (34% of the variance is jointly explained by the dimensions measured), teachers do not really seem to take into account the quality of the environment in their self-assessment.

At first glance, this may seem inconsistent with a recent study showing that contextual variables influence behaviour management practices (Massé, et al., 2020), and the fact that teachers should take the quality of the environment into account when considering their competence. However, our sample consists of preservice teachers; meaning they are practicing in their mentors' classrooms. Given their status as learners, it is therefore understandable that preservice teachers disregard the social learning environment and base their self-assessment mainly on the feedback of the experienced teachers who supervise them.

For their part, students perceive that classroom management has an impact on the environment and therefore expect that a teacher who is efficient in this area will be able to create a healthy relationship with appropriate rules and class organisation.

It would be interesting to consider longitudinal research to examine when young teachers change their benchmarks for self-assessment of behaviour management skills.

References

Aldridge, J. M., Fraser, B. J. (2016). Teachers' views of their school climate and its relationship with teacher self-efficacy and job satisfaction. *Learning Environment Research, 19*, 291–307.

Brown, A.L., Lee, J. & Collins, D. (2015) Does student teaching matter? Investigating pre-service teachers' sense of efficacy and preparedness. *Teaching education, 26*(1), 77-93.

Dessibourg, M. S. (2018). Sentiment d'efficacité personnelle en gestion des comportements, élaboration et validation d'une échelle de mesure. *Revue Suisse des Sciences de l'Education, 40*(3), 697-724.

Genoud, P. (2012). *Climat social de la classe (pour enseignant·e)*. Université de Fribourg, Fribourg, Suisse.

Harmsen, R., Helms-Lorenz, M., Maulana, R., & van Veen, K. (2018). The relationship between beginning teachers' stress causes, stress responses, teaching behaviour and attrition. *Teachers and teaching, 24*(6), 626-643.

Kamanzi, P. C., Barroso Da Costa, C., Ndinga P. (2017). Désengagement professionnel des enseignants canadiens: de la vocation à la disillusion. Une analyse à partir d'une modélisation par équations structurelles. *Mc Jill Journal of Education, 52*(1), 15-33.

Massé, L., Nadeau, M.-F., Gaudreau, N., Verret, C., Lagacé-Leblanc, J., Bernier, V. (2020). Facteurs influençant la fréquence d'utilisation de pratiques de gestion des comportements difficiles au secondaire. *Revue canadienne des sciences du comportement, 51*(1), 67-77.

Miller, A. D., Ramirez, E. M., Murdock, T. B. (2017). The influence of teachers' self-efficacy on perceptions: Perceived teacher competence and respect and student effort and achievement. *Teaching and Teacher Education, 64*, 260-269.

Petiot, O., Visioli, J., & Desbiens, J.-F. (2015). Perceptions d'enseignants du secondaire concernant leurs inducteurs émotionnels en situation de classe. *Revue française de pédagogie, 193*(4), 41-56.

Theis, D., Sauerwein, M., & Fischer, N. (2020). Perceived quality of instruction: The relationship among indicators of students' basic needs, mastery goals, and academic achievement. *British Journal of Educational Psychology, 90*, 176-192.

Zimmerman, B. J. (2000). Self-efficacy: An essential move to learn. *Contemporary Educational Psychology, 25*, 82-91.