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Getting Connected: A New Chapter for the *FATE Journal*

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As the new co-editors of the *Florida Association of Teacher Educators Journal*, we are excited to begin this issue by saying hello to all of you. We take to heart FATE's mission: to improve the effectiveness of teacher education through leadership in the development of quality programs to prepare teachers, by analyzing issues and practices relating to professional development, and by providing opportunities for personal and professional growth of Association members. The *FATE Journal*, by connecting the diverse members of the FATE community, is an ideal means for us to achieve those aims, enabling us to follow Rust's (2017) advice to join "the conversation about teacher education itself not with answers but with the questions that we should be asking and with a commitment to sharing what we learn with one another" (p. 385). We are also excited to share with you the three articles in our inaugural issue, each of which connects to the essence of FATE.

True to the scope of the journal, each article focuses on an important issue in teacher education. Pascale, Ohlson, and Lee present a multi-site case study of "Leader in Me" schools around the state of Florida, suggesting a crucial need to align teacher and student learning in order to achieve school improvement goals. Embodying FATE's mission, their work draws on quantitative and qualitative data to illustrate the promising impact of cultivating highly effective habits with far-reaching benefits for teaching and learning. Ultimately, they argue for a broader definition of accountability, encompassing school culture rather than limited to test scores. Indeed, by connecting school improvement goals to these larger aims, student achievement as traditionally defined can and does follow.

Likewise capable of transforming school culture, teacher inquiry is a powerful practice in line with FATE's mission. The action research study in this issue, authored by Diana Sanchez and Yvonne Franco, Sanchez's faculty mentor, demonstrates how when

teachers are researchers, teaching and learning improves. The authors tackle a very common problem of practice--classroom management--and walk readers through the journey of changing pedagogy and professional growth. Lessons learned are likely to resonate with fellow educators who have encountered similar challenges in their own classroom contexts. Readers will especially enjoy witnessing how Sanchez, as a practitioner researcher, engages in and reflects on the same kinds of self-regulating activities that improve her students' classroom behavior. Their growth, in other words, is very much connected to her own.

We also include in this issue a review of the new film *Teacher of the Year*, a documentary film that chronicles a year in the life of a teacher of the year. This real-life portrayal of teaching is a much-needed counterpoint to the many stereotypical fictional portrayals of teaching that abound in popular media, and we encourage all teacher educators, teachers, and anyone interested in education reform to view the film. We include this media review to serve as a model for future reviews of books and media related to education, as well as to showcase the fine work of the filmmakers.

Under our leadership, future issues will be organized thematically, so that connections among individual pieces will be more readily apparent. At all times and for any call, we encourage authors to strive to make connections beyond their contexts, such that the journal can serve as a springboard for future collaboration and a catalyst for new ideas. We thus invite teachers and teacher educators in the state to submit full-length papers to be considered for publication in our next issue: *Addressing the Political Context in Teacher Education.* In short, this call for papers focuses on the political context of teaching and teacher education and asks FATE members to see beyond the present and to imagine a different future for teacher education that is responsive to the political climate.

In closing, we invite you to make a face-to-face connection by coming to our "Meet the Editors" session at the annual meeting in Boca Raton. If, indeed, "teacher education programs across the country are in problem-solving mode" (Price-Dennis & Matthews, 2017, p. 97), we have much to learn from one another. Recognizing that "communicative spaces that improve and challenge established practices can be one important piece in the big puzzle of developing new and innovative perspectives on teacher education" (Aspfors & Valle, 2017, p. 13), we hope the *FATE Journal* will prove to be a connective and invigorating space.

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The Habits of Highly Effective Schools: Analyzing the Impact of "Leader in Me" Schools in Florida

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Abstract

This paper examines educational outcomes of students engaged in a statewide leadership development program in the state of Florida. Data from more than 25 schools representing a wide range of regional and demographic diversity are analyzed in this longitudinal multi-site embedded case study. Findings from this research point to benefits of incorporating leadership development in the classroom. Furthermore, this study provides further evidence in support of the practice of assessing gains from leadership programs over several years, as the benefits of programmatic activities in educational environments take time to fully develop. Practical significance of the findings and implications are discussed.

Introduction and Background

In the current educational context of high stakes accountability, public schools in Florida are under significant pressure to increase student achievement (Ravitch & Kohn, 2014). To meet accountability demands, schools are making considerable efforts to raise achievement in all demographic and socioeconomic subgroups, while also looking for formative assessment strategies to reach their school improvement goals. One such strategy is a strong and committed focus on teacher professional development based on both the frameworks of effective teaching and the latest information on brain development and learning styles, and aligned with content-specific active learning strategies. If adult and student learning is the "real work of the 21st Century" (Fullan, 2010), schools need to become powerful learning organizations for both youth and adults. By aligning teacher and student learning, school leaders can develop a collaborative culture and increase positive relations between students and teachers in order to promote trust, stimulate motivation, inspire commitment, and reach a common goal—all of which create a learning environment poised to produce higher learning gains for all students (Darling-Hammond, 1998).

Research affirms that student learning will not increase substantially unless students are actually in the classroom with the opportunity to learn (Chang & Romero, 2008; Jacobson, 2008). Children who are chronically absent in elementary school have the lowest performance in reading, mathematics, and general knowledge later in their academic careers (Jacobson, 2008). At the state level, these issues are exemplified. For instance, Florida schools face dramatic challenges in these areas each year as nearly 10% of the student population is absent 21 or more days (FLDOE, 2016). Furthermore, evidence from Florida schools suggests that excessive absences can lead to other problems in the classroom such as lack of student engagement (Ohlson, 2009), which is highly correlated with student achievement and the quality of student learning (Osterman, 2000). Research suggests that students have higher levels of academic performance and produce higher quality work when they are actively engaged in the curriculum (Cobb & Yackel, 1996).

The critical tie between classroom engagement and student success has paved the way for corporate leadership principles and training models originally developed for the private sector to increasingly migrate into public sector organizations. For instance, several philanthropic and educational organizations have included Dr. Stephen Covey's (1991) *7 Habits of Highly Effective People* as source material for leadership programs, higher

education leadership courses, and professional development experiences. There is some evidence that leadership programs such as Covey's can be successfully implemented in classroom settings. In 1999, A. B. Combs Elementary School in Raleigh, North Carolina, struggling to improve its culture, classroom instruction, and overall student achievement, began integrating Covey's leadership principles and training into their school policies, curriculum, and teacher professional development experiences. Key performance indicators demonstrated school improvement, and A. B. Combs received such accolades as the National Magnet School of Excellence designation, National Model School of America designation, National Title I Closing the Achievement Gap Award, and National School of Character Award.

After hearing about the success at A. B. Combs and learning more specifically about the gains related to the Covey model, other schools used this process and the resources of Franklin Covey Education to create "Leader in Me" Schools. Developed by Franklin Covey Education, "The Leader in Me" (TLIM) is a comprehensive, school-wide process of professional development including teachers, administrators, and support personnel. TLIM starts with a core, three-year process to train faculty in the elements contained in the leadership text, Stephen Covey's *7 Habits of Highly Effective People*. The staff participates in various professional development opportunities focused on infusing leadership throughout the school policies and practices and creating a culture where leadership for all is encouraged and supported. From there, the school community learns the most effective ways to integrate leadership throughout classroom teaching and learning. The leadership-infused curriculum prompts students to solve and analyze relevant problems, collaborate with peers, and engage in projects that offer students authentic, hands-on experiences. Examples of past projects include student-led leadership speeches given during Leadership Day celebrations, LEGO Robotics demonstrations showing how animals adapt to their environments, applying Rube Goldberg's engineering design to learn core curricular objectives, and learning about business principles through simulating a community storefront within the classrooms.

At the time of this examination, more than 800 "Leader in Me" (LIM) schools implemented the model in 23 countries, with 766 of these schools located in the United States. The purpose of this research is to explore the impact of a leadership-training model in Florida schools. This longitudinal embedded multi-site case study was designed to answer

the question: How does the "Leader in Me" process impact educational outcomes in Florida schools? Twenty-five schools in Florida using resources related to the "Leader in Me" process and Franklin Covey Education were analyzed. Florida schools were selected for the case study as Florida's Sunshine Laws governing state records and data sets allow for access to comprehensive educational data. The study examined achievement data from a two-year period and provided comparative educational outcomes data between the "Leader in Me" schools and overall district and state outcomes. In addition, researchers analyzed data related to student attendance—a leading predictor of student achievement—and dropout prevention to investigate more thoroughly the impact of the model on participating schools. The final component of the research includes analysis of in-depth interviews with a sampling of participating school leaders throughout the state. Personal testimonials, artifacts, documents and policies along with best practices in pedagogy and leadership related to this model are explored.

Research Methodology

This longitudinal embedded multi-site case study explored how the "Leader in Me" (LIM) process impacted educational outcomes for 25 schools in Florida. Case study research "investigates a contemporary phenomenon in depth and within its real-life context" (Yin, 2009, p. 18). Quantitative and qualitative methods were used to examine the research data.

Data Collection

Qualitative data were collected from in-depth, semi-structured, face-to-face interviews and questionnaires administered to school leaders to examine their perceptions of the Leader in Me process. Interview questions were designed to examine program impact, ways to enhance the implementation, and outcomes associated with the Leader in Me school improvement process. For instance, teacher participants were asked what changes, if any, they saw as a result of the LIM process implementation. The full interview protocol is included in Appendix A. At the conclusion of the interview, the researcher participated in a campus tour led by the participant. The tour allowed the researcher to collect extensive field notes about the school itself and also the perception of the participant in regards to the school atmosphere. In addition to qualitative data, quantitative data obtained from the Florida Department of Education including FCAT scores, reading and math performances scores, FLDOE scores, and school grades were collected to evaluate the impact of the "Leader in Me" process for the 25 sample Florida schools.

Data Analysis

Data analysis proceeded in three stages. First, qualitative data from the interviews were transcribed and coded by the researchers via the "constant comparative method" as described by Glaser and Strauss (1967). After transcripts were read and re-read, initial codes were generated during a process known as "open coding." Next, initial codes were collapsed into more inclusive "axial" codes, and then finally into themes (Glaser & Strauss, 1967). Once themes were established, evidence from the field notes as well as collected documents was examined and compared to the established key themes. This process continued until all data had been evaluated and key themes were inclusive to the point of data saturation.

In stage two of the data analysis, mean scores were calculated for (a) FCAT scores, (b) reading and math performance, (c) FLDOE points and (d) school grades. Mean scores were compared from year 1 to year 2 to identify where gains were made. Additionally, student attendance data were examined to determine the influence of the Leader in Me process on the number of students with excessive absences (21+ days) in comparison to the district and state averages between the preceding two-year period.

In stage three of the data analysis, the themes generated from the qualitative analysis were examined in combination with the quantitative data to better understand the case. Known as "triangulation," this process describes the use of multiple data sources to corroborate findings (Patton, 1990), and is an essential component of case study research (Yin, 2009).

Validity and Reliability

Several measures were taken to ensure quality of the research. First, as described above, the researchers triangulated multiple sources of evidence to understand the case holistically and accurately. Second, once key themes were generated from interview data, these themes were submitted back to participants to allow them to confirm that the researchers' perspectives were consistent with their intent, a process known as "member checking." The researchers also took care to provide "rich, thick" description as described by Geertz (1973) in an effort to establish transparency of data and findings. Finally, external auditors were invited to review the case analysis and provide feedback. Together, these strategies confirmed the "trustworthiness" of the study (Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

Findings

The purpose of this research was to investigate how the "Leader in Me" process impacted educational outcomes in Florida schools. Findings from qualitative and quantitative data are explored in more detail here.

Qualitative Data Findings

The interview sample allowed the researchers to hear first-hand the stories and testimonials of the leaders and staff related to the LIM model implementation. The first interview question related to implementation process and curriculum connection. One of the themes that emerged from the responses denoted the sense of unity the LIM training process inspired.

Staff unity and school culture. As all staff members had participated in the training process, teachers, administrators and support staff alike began to use the 7 Habits in their day-to-day work environment. Several participants noted that the training process, although intended to impact the students directly, also created more connection and unity among the teachers, administrators and support staff by providing a common mechanism to improve the learning environment. This unity was credited with creating a more positive and supportive culture. For example, one participant noted that since the LIM implementation, their school was more actively demonstrative of student and school successes and "artifacts of exemplary work, school achievements, and staff recognition are more commonplace."

Additionally, the 7 Habits vocabulary permeated the language of the staff at the school, even before the work began with the students. For example, during a faculty professional development workshop, teachers and administrators were developing their "Begin with the End in Mind" goals for the upcoming year. Participants from another school shared how they were "Synergizing" with the school and community stakeholders to implement a new initiative.

Furthermore, evidenced by examination of the school documents, the common language of the 7 Habits was prevalent throughout a majority of the school activities, practices and policies. In many cases, the mission and vision statements at each school site included common elements related to leadership, relationship building, sharing, and self-improvement. For example, numerous schools incorporated the tagline message created by Muriel Summers and her A. B. Combs staff: *To Develop Leaders, One Child at a Time*.

In sum, the 7 Habits training was perceived to have changed school culture by facilitating a more unified learning environment by allowing school staff to support a common initiative and by providing a shared language with which to connect.

School gains—beyond the test scores. When looking beyond the test scores, participants in LIM schools identified a number of additional positive changes that had occurred over the course of LIM implementation. For example, participants noted that discipline problems have also been on the decline since the 7 Habits implementation. One participant speculated that this may be because the 7 Habits provided a framework and language to help students avoid conflicts with teachers and their peers. He shared, "Our school has always had high expectations for student behavior and choice making, but this has given students, parents, and staff a common language of leadership…powerful." In reflecting on how his school had reduced suspensions by more than 50% in one year, a teacher at South Dade expressed, "School culture has changed—our students are more polite and interested in school. They shine at high school and miss that sense of family that they have here."

In addition, participants noted that they had perceived increases in levels of empowerment and engagement among the students as a result of the LIM implementation. Specifically, one participant provided examples of students' taking ownership of their work through data notebooks, leadership days, student-led conferences, student organizations, and numerous examples of celebrations of student success. Later she elaborated, "Leadership day was one of the most amazing experiences for all who participated [staff, students and participants]. The students really got what it is all about that day, and once they tasted the success they wanted more… Students are changed when given ownership, responsibility."

The changes also were evident to community stakeholders not involved in the daily operations of partner schools. A visiting principal remarked, "These Leader in Me Schools have no discipline issues!" In another instance, a parent described the impact of the program on a student's confidence and public speaking ability:

> This program has given my child the platform to speak in front of adults and express his leadership abilities. He has no fears speaking in front of strangers to demonstrate whatever topic he was recently asked to speak

about…he actually welcomed the opportunity to do it. My husband and I were extremely proud and we love seeing the growth in our child.

Challenges of implementing a leadership program. Despite the perceived positive benefits of the LIM program, the challenges that arise when implementing the LIM leadership program constituted a third key theme that emerged from participants. For instance, many school leaders wished that they had received more support from their districts. Often these school leaders felt isolated and reported that rarely had other school or district leaders visited their schools to see the community impact in real time. Other interviewees expressed a need for more support from Franklin Covey Education in terms of training and professional development related to integrating these leadership principles into the curriculum and teaching/learning practices. In the words of one leader: "Give people more ideas about how to do it."

A third area of concern was related to leadership development in an era of high-stakes testing. Many participants felt apprehension related to their own job security if their test scores did not reflect the social and emotional gains they saw in their students. One school leader shared how they wished that they could showcase how this program is making gains in more than just student data. He expressed frustration that there are few ways to measure the gains that teachers and students have made in feeling more empowered, more engaged, and more involved in their own success and the success of the school.

Finally, there were some concerns raised about the need to know not only what was happening in their school with regard to the LIM, but also the experiences of other LIM schools to create collaboration among schools. Many emphasized the importance of sharing the impact of this process with others at the district, state and national level. One principal shared how they have seen noteworthy gains as a result of LIM, and yet, few leaders from the district have visited her school to see how this change is happening. Her words conveyed this message:

> More people need to be doing this and we need to get the word out about how this is changing the lives of children and teachers. I know that my Superintendent is busy but if we could present at conferences or in the

countless publications we receive, I know people would listen. That is how I heard about this and it has changed my school.

Quantitative Data Findings

This case study research utilized both qualitative and quantitative data (Yin, 2009). To augment the qualitative findings, researchers analyzed several quantitative data points, including (a) FCAT scores within the school, (b) FCAT comparisons between the LIM schools and the district, and (c) attendance data.

Two-year within school FCAT score gains. Examination of the data revealed the following average gains in FCAT science, reading and math scores by LIM schools over the two-year period. In year two of the program implementation, LIM schools experienced an average of 3% improvement in those reaching level 3 or higher on the FCAT science assessment. On the FCAT reading test, the LIM schools demonstrated a 4% gain in learning from year one to year two. Additionally, the lowest-achieving 25% of the student population at the LIM schools showed a 5% average reading test score increase over the two-year period. No changes were seen in (a) the percentage at level 3 or higher in reading, (b) the percentage at level 3 or higher in math, (c) the percentage at level 3 or higher in writing, (d) the percentage of lowest 25% making gains in math, or (e) the sum of all points per schools (FLDOE School Accountability Reports, 2009-2011).

Leader in Me schools comparison by district—Year One. Examination of the student outcome data reveals the differences between the Leader in Me schools and their respective districts. In 2009-2010, the LIM schools outperformed the districts in 5 of the 8 categories. On the FCAT reading test, LIM schools scored on average 3% points higher than the district non-LIM schools. Additionally, LIM schools averaged 9% points higher than non-LIM schools for those at level 3 or higher in reading. Students at LIM schools who were in the bottom 25% made gains of 3% points higher than those in the bottom 25% at non-LIM schools. In science, LIM school students showed a 4% point increase over non-LIM district schools for those at the level 3 or higher. Finally, in Math, LIM schools reported an average increase of 1% in gains of those in the bottom 25% as compared to the non-LIM district schools.

It is important to note, however, that during year one, the districts achieved a 1% higher total score than the LIM schools as the district schools scored higher than the LIM schools in Meeting the Writing Standard (5%) and Making Learning Gains in Math (13%). In comparison, one year later, the LIM schools achieved higher student outcomes scores in 6 of the 8 categories and the overall scores topped the districts' by 3%.

Leader in Me schools comparison by district—Year Two. Examination of the student outcome data reveals the differences between the Leader in Me schools and their respective districts. In the second year student outcome data, the LIM schools outperformed the districts in six of the eight categories. In reading, the LIM schools had a 9% higher rate than the non-LIM schools of students at level 3 or higher, a 6% increase over the non-LIM schools in reading gains, and a 3% higher rate of learning gains for those in the bottom 25%. In science and in math, LIM schools had a 5% higher rate of students at level 3 or higher than the district non-LIM schools. Finally, 4% more students at LIM schools met the writing standard than those at non-LIM schools during year two of the program implementation.

The data illustrate the higher rates of student achievement in the above categories in relation to each district. The LIM schools excelled in five of the eight categories in the first year and then increased that number to six of the eight categories. In addition, the overall points earned increased 4%, showing positive gains in the sum of all student outcome variables.

Attendance. The data revealed significant differences between the Leader in Me schools and the state and district averages over the two-year period of analysis. Using excessive absences (21+ days) as the variable with data retrieved from the school accountability resources from the Florida Department of Education website, the following trends were revealed.

During year one, LIM schools experienced 2.3% fewer excessive absences, which is more than 1/4 fewer excessive absences, compared to the districts. Furthermore, LIM schools experienced 3.6% fewer excessive absences, which is more than 1/3 fewer excessive absences, compared to the state. During year two, LIM schools experienced 2.8% fewer excessive absences, which is more than 1/3 fewer excessive absences, compared to the state. Additionally, LIM Schools experienced 4.3% fewer excessive absences, which is nearly 50% fewer excessive absences, compared to the state.

Overall, the data illustrate that Leader in Me schools showed an average of 27% (year 1) and 35% (year 2) fewer students with excessive absences in comparison to the school districts in the study. Even more striking is the fact that these schools had a 36% (year 1) and 45% (year 2) lower rate of excessive absences in comparison to the state average.[1] Thus, if excessive absences are one of the strongest predictors of student academic success and avoidance of at-risk behaviors, the impact related to the implementation of this process could have a lasting impact on participating schools.

Discussion

This study sought to examine how the Leader In Me leadership program impacted a sampling of Florida Schools. Taken together, the evidence suggests that the LIM program had demonstrably positive effects on school learning outcomes and school culture. The findings from this research have important implications for various stakeholders, including educational leaders and administrators, teachers, parents, and students—all who seek to enhance and improve school environments and student success.

Implications for Practice

Taken together, this data allowed the researchers to understand the successes and challenges associated with implementing the LIM model. As educational leaders seek to improve schools, programs such as the LIM model may be considered. When the LIM model is implemented in conjunction with other promising research-based practices, the positive impacts on the school may be even greater. From evaluation of this research, the following recommendations are offered to schools and districts when the goal is to maximize the positive impact of the LIM program.

Consistent leadership. This review of Florida LIM schools reaffirms consistent research findings that effective and consistent school leadership has a lasting impact on school culture and student achievement (Béteille, Kalogrides, & Loeb, 2012). Throughout this research, the power of school leadership became apparent as leaders expressed a passion for LIM work and excitement about the positive impact the LIM model has on faculty morale, student focus, and academic performance across all student groups. Since stability in leadership is a key variable in school improvement, after examining two LIM schools that

[1] Included in the district and state data are all schools, including virtual franchises, academies, and various district-based initiatives that have extremely low excessive absence rates.

had principals who had been in their roles for more than 5 years, both schools experienced gains in student achievement and improved attendance along with a reduction in discipline referrals. One principal was able to implement student-led career academies while the other held culture-building events such as a family science night. Both principals reported district support for trying new ideas and, more importantly, district patience to provide the time to see some results of their implementations.

In contrast, when examining the data associated with a school that saw remarkable gains in the previous three years, there was a significant decrease in student outcomes when there was a change in school leadership. This particular elementary school saw decreases of 15% in their writing scores and a 62% decrease in reading scores the year after the principal was moved to a district-level position. Quite often, school leaders who help their schools produce increased gains are moved to other positions in hopes of replicating that success. Rather than moving these principals to other locations, such school leaders could become mentors and coaches to their peers in order to build district capacity for ongoing school improvement. This level of collaboration—principals developing through collaborative peer coaching—was a rarity in the study sample. In the words of one exemplar principal, "We have never had another Principal visit our school, despite having these amazing gains." Collaborative, shared learning is an underlying LIM core belief that should be a common element in long-term school improvement goals of all school districts. Developing leaders who are committed learners and who see themselves as instructional coaches of teachers creates an environment of collaboration and distributed leadership that allows the LIM process to fully develop.

Understand the importance of school culture. Along with consistent leadership, schools going through this process should create opportunities to celebrate the gains associated with enhancing their school culture. Variables such as increased attendance, increased student engagement, increased teacher retention, and increased parental involvement are not measures that impact a Florida school's grade, but they will have a long-term impact on school improvement. Quite often, gains in these areas are dismissed by school leaders, and, in some cases, this information is not even collected. Yet, these data will help stakeholders at the district, school and classroom levels understand and evaluate approaches and strategies aimed at generating significant gains in student achievement. Therefore, it is imperative that these variables be included in the data analysis

plans and school improvement policies when employing the Leader in Me process. An example of one such culture report is included and may offer insight into the culture gains experienced by a LIM school and the importance of studying such variables (see Appendix B).

Implementation with a clear focus on teaching and learning. Throughout the LIM implementation process, school communities must maintain a clear and unwavering focus on effective teaching and learning. Changes in school culture and consistent leadership are critically important. Particularly, in this era of accountability, student achievement is paramount. One key implementation strategy involves ensuring new school and classroom practices, activities, and initiatives are tied tightly to student learning. For example, a school tour allowed the researcher to discuss a school project with a 4th grader. The student shared how she used many of the 7 Habits to plan, create, present and evaluate her work in a manner that empowered and engaged her, while also meeting the required state standards.

Along with a plan for ensuring that the activities are integrated into a comprehensive curriculum, there also should be a clear formative evaluation process for ensuring the fidelity of the work—including regular data reviews to determine what, if any, gains are being made. Most schools and districts focus on the later portion—the summative test scores at the end of the year. Each and every school going through this process needs an ongoing formative evaluation process to monitor the steps towards implementation and determine whether or not they are being done properly with the desired result.

In conclusion, findings from this study suggest that programs such as The Leader in Me (TLIM) can have a positive impact when these suggested practices are implemented throughout the process. This research has illustrated numerous areas where schools and students have seen gains as a result of TLIM. Despite the evidence that LIM models can influence positive change, there are still challenges associated with implementing and maintaining the process. This study provides a solid empirical base for evaluation of TLIM. Future studies should examine the type of impact such a program can make long-term on creating a school culture that promotes successful student learning outcomes.

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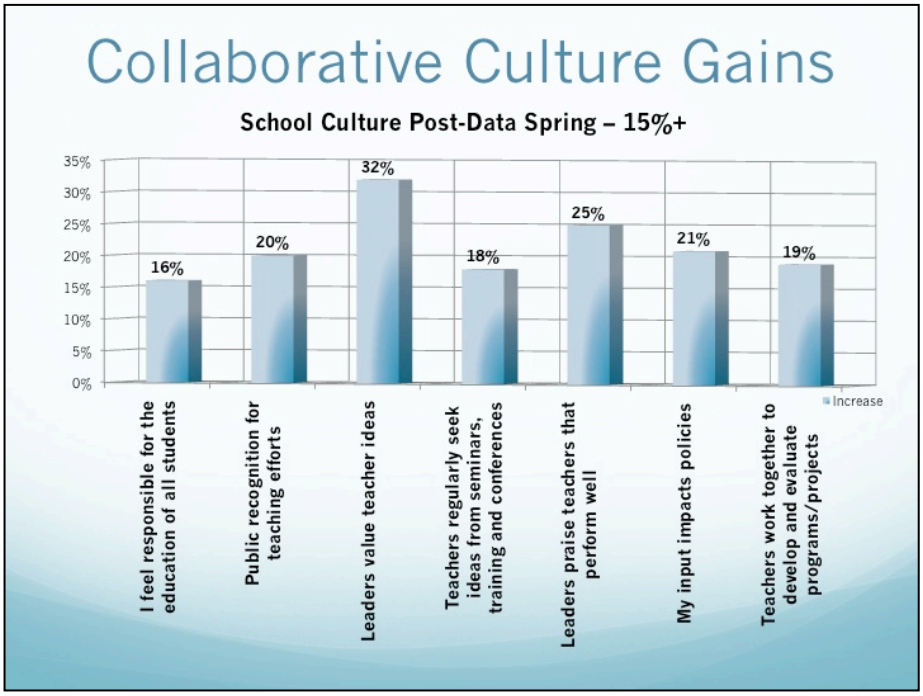
Appendix A: Interview Questions

- What was the process for implementation of the Leader in Me?
- What changes (if any) did your school see because of this?
- If you were to do this again, what would you do differently?
- What additional support would you need from the district /state /Franklin Covey to help make this process most effective?
- What are your next steps?

Appendix B: School Culture Data Report



Fostering Independence: A Teacher Inquiry Study for Facilitating the Self-Regulation of Learner Behavior

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Abstract

Cultivating a culture of independence amongst learners is a critical, yet often absent, effort in education. In public schools across the state of Florida, there are often school-wide behavioral plans in place that aim to fulfill this goal, yet these plans only scratch at the surface due to the fact that there have been few researched applications of these plans in large urban areas (McCurdy, Mannella, & Eldridge, 2003). Learners exhibiting a lack of self-control, a strong will, and a penchant for not following directions are often bombarded with consequence after consequence for their misbehavior and offered no solution or guidance. This action research study investigates the journey of a first-year teacher in discovering methods to support students to self-regulate their behavior. Strategies investigated include: ClassDojo Self-Assessment and Reflection, Commitments Check-Up Self-Assessment, Goal-Setting Steps, and Leadership Training.

Introduction

Education is continually evolving as new standards are created and old curriculum is brushed aside for the next big thing. As we drudge further into the era of standardized testing, it is evident that student learning is becoming increasingly limited. Schools have shifted the spotlight to cognitive processes, while other qualities "essential to student success" are ignored (National Council of Teachers of English's James R. Squire Office of Policy Research, 2014). Despite the emphasis on academics and core subjects, I stand firm in my belief that my job as an educator is to inspire the whole child to learn and grow. This includes supporting development of social and emotional behavior.[1]

It is a commonly held belief among novice teachers that educators are fully responsible for the behavior that takes place in the classroom and that children are to be *managed* (O'Neill & Stephenson, 2013). When misbehavior takes place, it is seen as a fault in the educator's classroom management system. As a first-year, grade one teacher, I fear children are not taught how to take ownership for their actions. Consequences take place before children even have a chance to reflect on why their behavior was not acceptable. While this may work for some, not all children will flourish in this environment, as many are not equipped with self-management and self-regulation skills. According to the National Academy of Sciences, 60% of children enter school with the cognitive skills needed to be successful, but only 40% have the social-emotional skills needed to succeed in kindergarten (Ashdown & Bernard, 2012).

When the school year started, I quickly noticed that no matter what procedures I used or what steps I took, two of my students, Sally and Drew, displayed challenging behavior problems. Most notably, I observed two trends: both students had a difficult time following directions, and both students were not able to successfully work without disturbing others. I noticed that the behavior they exhibited was preventing them from completing work and from being successful participants in our classroom environment. This problem was not only presenting itself inside of my self-contained first grade classroom, but it was a trend that was taking place at lunch, Teacher PE, Specials, and during other school-sponsored activities. Consequences were not effective and only led to increasing disrespect as students exhibited their frustration in unhealthy ways. Examples of disrespect observed in

[1] Research was conducted by Diana Sanchez, and supported by the second author Dr. Yvonne Franco. The belief stated here belongs to the first author.

the classroom included refusal to participate in class activities, unkind language towards other students, excessive talking and interruptions when others were speaking, and obscene language at times. Rather than increasing my harshness and increasing the rift between my students, I decided I needed to take action. I needed to find ways to help Sally and Drew overcome the behaviors that impeded their success.

Context

Sally and Drew are first grade students in my classroom at an inner-city school. Due to the large free and reduced lunch population, the school receives Title I funds. The school also has a large Exceptional Student Education (ESE) and English Language Learner (ELL) population and is majority Hispanic and Black in terms of demographics.

Sally is a 6-year-old Hispanic female student and Drew is a 6-year-old Black male student. Neither student receives ESE or ELL services; however, both students are part of the free lunch program due to their respective household incomes. Sally comes from a single-parent household that includes 5 other children. Her mother disclosed that they were involved in a serious traffic accident a few years back and the hospital bills were a serious financial hit. This has led to an unstable home life for Sally and her siblings, who live in a hotel. Drew comes from a similar background, as he lives with his mother and four siblings in a studio apartment. His father is not a stable figure in his life, though Drew often mentions that he cannot wait to see his father. Both Sally and Drew have mentioned in conversation that at times, they do not receive adequate food or sleep before attending school.

Literature Review

Self-regulation is defined as the metacognitive process that helps people control their behavior by thinking about their behavior and planning a course of action around it (Bruhn, McDaniel, & Kreigh, 2015). Bruhn, McDaniel, Fernando, and Troughton (2016) recommend goal-setting as a way for students with persistent behavior problems to improve their self-regulation skills. Their meta-synthesis compiled findings from 40 different studies that included behavioral goal-setting as an intervention, and they found setting prosocial goals can lead to both academic and behavioral gains for students.

When helping students with existing behavior problems, Smith, Cumming, Merrill, Pitts, and Daunic (2015) assert four steps should be taken in the classroom. These include identifying goals based on values and commitment, developing a plan for how to reach the

goal, identifying and using resources to overcome barriers, and reflecting on the plan that was used to reach the goal. Reflection in goal setting, according to Roeser and Peck (2009), creates conscious awareness in children. Awareness is the capacity for willful and conscious actions that lead to the actualization of plans and goals. This ensures that goals are a means for personal growth, caring, and moral learning amongst students. Interestingly, however, existing literature fails to specifically articulate an established set of practices or procedures that can be used in setting goals.

A review of self-monitoring interventions beyond goal setting identifies self-determination, by way of self-monitoring, as key to establishing learner independence and self- control (Bruhn, McDaniel, & Kreigh, 2015). According to Bruhn, McDaniel, and Kreigh (2015), self-determination is part of a group of related skills that lead to long-term independence. These skills include making choices, making decisions, setting goals, solving problems, advocating for the self, knowing the self, managing the self, and having self-efficacy.

To support development of self-determination skills, Bruhn, McDaniel, and Kreigh, (2015) emphasize using self-monitoring strategies that match individual student needs. They advocate for teachers to integrate technology in innovative ways, and release the responsibility to students to self-assess, rather than applying the traditional role of teacher as sole assessor. Likewise, Bruhn, Vogelgesang, Schabilion, Waller, and Fernando (2015) shed light on using technology to help students self-monitor their behavior. Using an app called SCORE IT, study participants recorded and observed themselves during reflection sessions with the teacher. The individualized nature of the sessions ensured use of differentiated strategies. In accordance, Larkin's (2001) work with students with special needs recommends teachers scaffold behavioral independence as a means for leading students' long-term success. One challenge noted throughout the literature is the lacking emphasis on students in mainstream classrooms, compared to the plethora of behavioral interventions offered for students with learning disabilities. This is a gap my study aims to fill.

Schulze (2016) believes self-management can be taught through steps including observation, assessment, and modification. To facilitate these steps, the teacher is engaged in a continuous cycle of improvement, characterized by change in practice and interventions, as students adapt and new information is revealed about them. Nakata

(2016) adds that an intuitive teacher identifies students' learning barriers throughout the process and helps them remove the barriers through self-regulatory behavior, thus ensuring success in the classroom. Workshops and small focus groups are recommended for teaching students to track their barriers and create a plan of action. This aims to encourage independent learners to enjoy regained control over their lives.

Purpose

During my undergraduate education, it was reiterated that classroom management would be my biggest weakness as a first-year teacher. When the year started off and my students, Sally and Drew, became a frequent point of distraction in the class, I blamed myself because it was my first year and I knew that I was going to struggle. I tested procedures, rewards, and consequences to no avail. As the year progressed and other students responded well to my management strategies, I noticed that classroom management was difficult not because of intentional misbehavior from my students, but because of their genuine lack of self-control. This inability to self-regulate their behavior appeared to impede their learning, as well as the environment other students needed to be successful. The felt challenge led me to wonder 1) In what ways can I support my students to self-regulate their behavior? and 2) What interventions can I employ to transition students toward self-regulation? As a result of these questions, I hope to further ignite discussion regarding strategies for supporting the development of self-regulation skills among learners in the classroom.

It is important to me as a teacher to learn ways to support students in managing their behavior so that they may achieve their full potential. Most significantly, this investigation will allow me to learn strategies for supporting my future learners. Since I plan to continue working in schools, I know knowledge I gain from this study will continue to serve me in my work. Individuals potentially interested in this study include teachers seeking strategies for teaching self-regulation and those challenged by student behaviors in their classrooms.

Procedures

The following sections describe the methods, techniques, and data sources that guided my action research study of students' self-regulation.

Strategy 1: Dojo Self-Assessment and Reflection

Bruhn, Vogelsang, Schabilion, Waller, and Fernando (2015) inspired me to encourage my students to self-assess their actions using an online web tool. The selected

tool is called 'Class Dojo.' It was used at two points in the day to help students become more aware of their actions. Students would continue about their regular day, and at two intervals they stopped to reflect on whether or not to give themselves a point, depending on how they viewed their behavior. I kept track of their behavior as well, alongside their assessment. The self-assessment took place immediately after our English Language Arts block, and then again after our Math/Science block, as these were the two major components of our day. Students used accrued points to "purchase" classroom rewards of their choice, depending on point level.

I employed "delay of gratification" by establishing different point levels that would take longer to achieve, thus encouraging patience and self-control in order to attain a greater reward. Learners made evaluation and purchasing decisions during sessions of reflection. I chose to use this method because I saw a need for students to become more aware of their actions.

Strategy 2: Commitments Check-Up Self-Assessment

Another method I used was a Daily Self-Assessment with Sally and Drew. To do this, I used a resource from the Conscious Discipline Framework, called the "Commitments Check-Up." This resource allowed me to provide students two choices they could use to tell about their day. The first choice stated, "I did it!" and featured a smiling child with a thumbs up, while the second choice stated, "OOPS! Time to Practice!" and indicated a child with their hand over their face. The simple graphics conveyed the idea that they could accomplish their goal or continue to work towards making progress; there was no option for failure. In accordance with the literature, the method ensured the students took part in their assessment (Bruhn, McDaniel, & Kreigh, 2015).

I chose this strategy as a simple way for Sally and Drew to think about their actions. By having them focus on our classroom commitments at the end of each day, they could reflect and determine what to work on the next day, thus supporting a constant cycle of reflection and learning.

Strategy 3: Goal-Setting Steps

Another strategy I implemented was based on Smith, Cumming, Merrill, Pitts, and Daunic's (2015) work on goal-setting. Their research identified four established steps to creating an effective goal: identifying the goal, developing a plan, identifying and using resources to overcome barriers, and reflecting on the plan. Using the four steps, I decided

that an intervention for my students would include goal-setting, conferencing, and revision meetings. At the beginning of my study, I led students to reflect on our classroom expectations and decide on one goal they wanted to set for themselves. Guiding questions that I asked included, "What do you think you need to work on so that everyone in our classroom feels safe and knows their learning is respected?" and "What commitment could you work on to be a better friend to everyone in our class?" Using these questions, I helped students establish one goal. Throughout this study, I consistently stopped to help students reflect on their progress. Students revised their goal, as needed, by adding steps deemed necessary to successfully reach it. Goals were posted on desks and celebrated when reached.

Sally and Drew did not understand how to set a goal, much less how to create a plan to achieve it. Therefore, I found it important to teach them how to do this. The strategy was selected to support them in developing goal setting as a potential life-skill (Nakata, 2016).

Strategy 4: Leadership Training

In accordance with Nakata's (2016) recommendations, I implemented Leadership Training. I met with Sally and Drew in the morning during bell work once a week. In addition to setting personal goals, I asked Sally and Drew to help me develop class goals so that our whole classroom could benefit from what they were learning. Sally and Drew were able to help me write classroom goals that focused on removing the barriers that were impeding our learning. I guided them to recognize negative occurrences and interactions in our environment and I encouraged them to help me come up with a plan of action that would allow our classroom to become a better place to learn. The Leadership Training served an additional purpose, since students could only attend training if they had not lost more than 2 points for behavior the previous week. This was tracked through our school-wide behavior plan.

I used Leadership Training as a strategy because I wanted to show the students they were valuable and important members of our class and that their ideas and opinions mattered. Further, I aimed to shift Sally and Drew from being passive members of our culture to being at the forefront, where they could contribute to the class positively. I hoped to show Sally and Drew that they could have a positive impact on others.

Data Collection/Analysis

Over a two-month period, I guided my students towards engaging in the different behavioral interventions. I used anecdotal notes in conjunction with a reflection journal in order to gather my observations, informal interviews with other teachers, and middle-of-day and end-of-day reflection sessions in one place.

Anecdotal notes were taken daily in my journal, consisting of my observations in class, and during reflection sessions. Informal interviews were conducted with other teachers that saw Sally and Drew. Notes documented in the journal indicated negative responses from the interviewees, regarding interactions with either Sally or Drew on that day. Other notes that I added in my reflection journal included written record of verbal student responses to Leadership Training sessions and goal-setting conference conversations. The researcher reflection journal allowed me to collect my observation notes and reflections in one place, and gave me the opportunity to summarize the day's events. In my journal, I was able to provide explanations for the other two methods of data collection and speak more deeply about my students' behavior, the strategies I was implementing, and the results that I was seeing.

I also kept track of student behavior using the school-wide Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports (PBIS) log required by our school. The point-tracking system allowed me to keep track of the time of day misbehavior occurred, and helped me document the type of behavior occurring. The tool aligned with my school district's report card behavior indicators. In addition to this, I downloaded data provided by the Class Dojo online tool, as it allowed me to monitor the date and time students earned positive behavior points.

As I sifted through data and analyzed the information, I began to find themes that transcended the occurrences of misbehavior. I coded the data and looked for patterns in my researcher reflection journal. Students' moods upon arrival to school were highlighted daily but analyzed weekly (green: positive, yellow: unsure, orange: negative). The type of activity that students were involved in was marked and circled ("I" for independent activity, "P" for partner work, and "WG" for whole group instruction). Behaviors that were present were coded in different colors daily, and then again weekly. Sample coding included, "disturbing others while working" (pink), "off task/not following directions" (blue), "non-participation" (purple), and "other" (orange).

I analyzed the data in the Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports (PBIS) log by examining the markings that Sally and Drew had in their weekly tracker and highlighting them using the color-coding system that I used for the reflection journal. I entered this data weekly in a graph, in an effort to locate themes and trends.

I also analyzed the Class Dojo online tool data by printing out a log of the points that my students were earning daily and entering the data into a graph. I did this to find trends in behavior and to locate if student misbehavior was happening equally during the day or if it was mostly in the morning or afternoon.

Findings

My analysis resulted in four major themes, each of which I describe below.

Caring Relationships Encourage Trust and Openness

As the study progressed, I found that at first, students were not responding to interventions. I had to surpass the stage where students were hesitant to meet with me because they initially thought that they were getting a consequence or were being punished. Before any progress could be made, I had to establish an atmosphere of care. This atmosphere of care included showing students that I was genuinely interested in their well-being, their lives outside of school, and their feelings. In my researcher reflection blog, I noticed that during reflections, students were more willing to share the reasons that they had difficulty following directions. They might state, "I was not having a good day to begin with," or indicate their basic needs were not met, offering, "I'm hungry" or "I'm sleepy," in addition to other rationales. As time passed, I noticed that student reflections began to indicate students wanted to impress me with their behavior. Sally told me towards the middle of the study, "I want you to be proud of me and I don't think that you are so I wanna fix it." I also noticed that both students began using the phrase "I love you" frequently, a phrase that was not used in my classroom before.

During my analysis of teacher interviews, I noticed that other teachers were quick to point out that Sally and Drew were "such a problem," and that they "hold back the whole class." There were times when teachers insinuated, "the class would be better if Sally was not at this school." I felt great emotional turmoil to realize that just a month back, I had been that same type of teacher. The transformation that I underwent through this study led to my being a more caring teacher overall. I wanted the children to meet my expectations, but I wanted to guide them to getting there without reprimanding them so frequently. I found that

reflecting on my practice forced me to think about the students' perceptions of me, which was extremely difficult. I uncovered that at one point, Drew did not want to come to school, and I associated this with our dislike for each other at the beginning of the year. It will always stick with me that halfway into the study was the first time that Drew initiated a hug at the end of the day. I had hugged him before, but this was usually initiated by me. The feeling of surprise that he wanted an interaction with me will stay with me for a long time because at that point I realized I had changed his perception of me and of school, simply through my caring actions.

I also assumed 'teacher's lack of care' was why their behavior had not changed as drastically with other teachers. The negativity between Sally and Drew and the teachers remained present throughout, since I was the only one actively pursuing a bond with them through the application of strategies. The learners continued to demonstrate defiance and resistance towards other educators, and their expectations.

Reflections were Critical to Goal Setting

A huge realization, as a result of my research, was that behavioral goal-setting cycles were not effective without reflections. I noticed this because I implemented behavioral goal-setting early in the year, but failed to do anything more with it. Behavior goals were ineffective because there was no conversation about how to put plans into action in order to be successful. I noticed in my anecdotal notes that when students set a goal that remediated some of the negative behavior I was seeing, it was put into action more heavily on the days that I conferenced with them to reflect on their behavior. I noticed less coding on the days that we conferenced, simply because we were taking the time to talk about what they had learned.

Reflections during goal setting and self-assessment led students towards becoming more aware and honest with themselves about their behavior. About three-quarters of the way through my study, Drew had the opportunity to reflect on a behavior that impeded his learning, talking out of turn. During our reflection conference, he noted that he was more conscious about talking out of turn, and stated that conferencing helped him, even if he had repeated the behavior. Drew mentioned, "I like talking about how I'm doing because now if I get in trouble I know why and I can do better." This was eye-opening to me because quite honestly, I did not expect a seven-year-old to make such a realization. I was not entirely sure my strategies were going to work with such young children, but I can see that they did. Sally

mentioned soon after, “I like meeting with you! You’re so nice and you don’t get mad when we do bad things. I like that you help me.” She did not feel singled out through the interventions like I thought she might, but instead, she appreciated the attention she was receiving and believed I was helping her work on something.

As a result of the reflections, I also noticed that Sally and Drew became more honest. Towards the beginning, they were dishonest during our sessions, believing they thought they would receive a consequence or get in trouble. When I started showing them that I just wanted to talk about their behavior, they were more open, willing to share, and reflective about what they needed to fix. The hesitation to answer questions lessened over time, as the student reflections began to get longer and my role as the primary speaker decreased.

Leadership Training Encourages Students to Take Ownership in the Classroom

I believe the leadership training led to the most progress with Sally and Drew. When I involved them as contributing members of the environment, and as positive influences in the class, I was aiming to communicate that they could take on this role in the classroom if they decided to. At the beginning of my study, I realized that Sally and Drew had this idea that everyone expected them to misbehave, and they did not seem to care that there were consequences in place. Instead of sincere apologies for misbehavior, disruptions, or disrespect, I would receive a flat “I’m sorry for being bad,” as if they believed that they were truly bad people and children making choices. I would also attempt to impose consequences, only to notice that Drew did not care how many times he had to sit out of recess. Other times, they also acted like they could not control themselves or that they could not accomplish what I had asked. For instance, I recall that Sally would mention that assignments were “Too hard,” and she would exclaim “I can’t do it!” repeatedly until I would walk over. I still remember the day that I purposely gave her a picture book that was two reading levels below her ability. When she mentioned that it was too difficult and she needed my help, I knew that I was facing a different problem that had nothing to do with achievement. These behavior patterns changed when I put them in charge of selecting goals for the class. I noticed quickly that they became active participants in changing the classroom culture for the better. They shared, through reflections, that Leadership Training was “so much fun!” and that they felt like they were “doing something good for everybody else and for [the teacher].” My goal in using Leadership Training was to show students that

they could set goals and achieve them, but I ended up doing this and empowering them at the same time. Sally and Drew gained confidence that their actions were meeting expectations, stating, “I’m so proud of myself. I did it today!” They were also proud that they were helping, sharing, “I like to help because when I’m a leader it feels good.”

Leadership Training also helped improve my whole classroom, since students began overhearing the training sessions that took place during bell work. Other students began to express interest in leadership, since they felt that “It’s special to be in Leadership Training because [the teacher doesn’t] let everybody do it.” This led to other students asking to be part of Leadership Training, and the whole class implementing the skills we were learning in the group. Some students would ask Sally and Drew to tell them what they were learning about. One time, I even found half of my class sitting out at recess and talking about how they were going to help in other classes by taking on special jobs. I remember the joy I felt when I heard students, saying things like, “Let’s tell the other teachers to let us be leaders,” simply because they wanted to make a difference around the school.

Teachers Must Have Patience with Outside Factors Affecting Students

I remember when I began embarking on my quest to review literature pertinent to my teacher inquiry. Nearly every article I read filled me with such hope that the behaviors I was seeing could easily be remediated, if I just followed the steps that they had laid out. Article after article mentioned transformative approaches to managing my classroom. As I began my study, I became increasingly more aware that students were still going to be human. Because of my inquiry, I became more patient to the fact that students were still going to have days where outside factors and influences make it difficult for them to be at their best mentally. This interferes with their ability to self-regulate, especially if those outside factors include basic needs not being met. There will still be days when my students come to school tired and hungry, and on those days, patience is required of me, because their old behaviors return. I understand now. It is hard for them to focus on self-regulation and self-monitoring when their stomachs are growling or when they have to keep asking me to get water to keep themselves awake during class. In addition, feeling cranky decreases the chances they will be able to effectively work with a partner, group, or even with me. Through this study, I had to learn to be patient, firm, and understanding all at once. I noticed that when I analyzed my data for themes, it was important to look at morning mood and student reflections regarding this, because they could inform me of reasons the students were not at their best.

Implications

As a result of this study, I like who I am better as a teacher and as a person. This study opened my eyes to the reality of different home and family situations. Though I was of low socioeconomic status growing up, I am thankful that I always had two loving parents and plenty of support. Unfortunately, this is not the same for all students, and I feel that I am more aware of the variety of backgrounds that students come from now that I have done this study. Being more understanding of my students and becoming their guide to learning how to self-manage their behavior lessened my punitive role as a teacher. Completing this research has shown me how to build better relationships with my students, how to use research to guide my interactions, and how to empower my students into creating the change they wish to see in themselves.

This inquiry also impacted me to reflect on my practice. Before, I would say and do things, and I was not stopping to think about how I was being perceived or how it was affecting my relationships with my students. Reflecting helped me become more aware of what I was saying to students. I was no longer a teacher who said or did things on impulse, but one who stepped back and thought about what I was going to say next to deescalate the situation. Instead of engaging in problematic behavior, I was maintaining control and modeling the behavior that I wanted my students to display. Completing daily journal entries was so powerful because I was able to quickly figure out that the way I was reacting to negative behavior was only inviting it to come back. I have noticed that since completing my study, I have been reflecting more frequently. This has improved my practice not just on the behavioral side, but also regarding what I say when I am teaching, leading to better lessons where I am making sure I convey myself more clearly to students.

Learning all of these things about my students and about myself has prompted me to begin thinking about my next inquiry. I now wonder about how students' home lives impact them behaviorally and academically. Specifically, I wonder how I can learn about my students' lives, in order to better prepare social and emotional lessons that support their needs in the classroom. I highly anticipate investigating this future query.

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What does it take to be a "good" teacher? *Teacher of the Year*, Reviewed.

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Teacher of the Year (Phillips & Korreck, 2017) is a documentary film that follows a year in the life of North Carolina high school social studies teacher Angie Scioli. Focusing on Angie's struggle to establish a work/life balance as she plans innovative and time-consuming activities for her students and transforms into an education activist, the film weaves her story together with notable teachers from popular film, from classics such as *Dead Poet's Society* (Weir, 1989) and *Stand and Deliver* (Menéndez, 1988) to more recent films like *Bad Teacher* (Kasdan, 2011). The film's central argument relies on these competing depictions of real and fictional teachers—indeed, the film contends that the popular media's depictions of teachers lack nuance, stripping teachers—and the complex act of teaching—down to a "simplistic dichotomy of good or bad" (The Story, n.d.). When compared to the actual life of a teacher and the degrading education legislation teachers contend with in the increasingly harsh accountability environment, those depictions fall flat.

To make this case, *Teacher of the Year* features interviews with Angie, Angie's family, friends, and co-workers, as well as footage of her classroom teaching and confessional style monologues Angie films of herself throughout the school year. Interspersed with these depictions of the "real life" of a teacher of the year are interviews with scholars and film critics who deconstruct the media images of the good and bad teacher. Drs. Mary Dalton, Robert Bulman, and Jim Trier, who have made careers out of analyzing the depictions of teachers on television and film, discuss concepts such as "leaky boundaries," or the notion that ideas espoused in popular media rarely stay within the boundaries of the media depiction itself and instead extend far beyond the text, coloring the way we think about both reality and fiction. They also discuss the hero vs. hack depiction of teachers in film. In this

dichotomy, the hero teacher, generally an untrained outsider, is able to inspire kids to an unprecedented degree, while the hack teacher is depicted as the lazy veteran teacher too unmotivated or jaded to engage and inspire. These two commentaries, one focused on the fictional depictions of teachers and one focused on the real life of a teacher, reveal that teaching is more complex, messy, and full of contradictions than any one narrative could portray.

Herein lies the only critique I can levy on the film. *Teacher of the Year* depicts the real-life story of one teacher. She is neither good nor bad, but a combination of both, revealed as a heroic teacher giving her all, grading papers on six-hour road trips, planning ambitious events for her school and her flipped classroom, and explaining to the camera that she is a "true believer…an agent in ensuring democracy." Yet, she is also depicted as burned out and breaking down. By the end of the documentary we see Angie looking at her teaching rating as determined by value added statistical modeling. She is rated in the lowest 20% of teachers in North Carolina, which makes little sense to the viewer when compared to her earlier depictions. This transition from hero to hack is meant to trouble both stereotypes, but without a larger focus on more teachers in the documentary we are left still with just *one* narrative of *one* teacher. Not all real life teachers are as good or bad as Angie at any given moment, and a variety of personalities and work ethics enter the teaching force, each of whom are inspired and motivated by different underlying forces. Again, teaching is more complex, messy, and full of contradictions than any one narrative, and this is as true when said about *Bad Teacher* as it is when said about *Teacher of the Year*.

Still, when viewed in tandem with other teaching documentaries, including *American Teacher* (Ross, 2011) or even the maligned *Waiting for Superman* (Guggenheim, 2010), and in concert with fictional films like the aforementioned *Dead Poet's Society* (Weir, 1989) or *Dangerous Minds* (Smith, 1995), the film helps bring much-needed nuance to larger issues in education. Indeed, teacher educators may find *Teacher of the Year* useful as they prepare pre-service teachers for the realities of the job, rather than the perceived realities many teacher candidates may carry with them. At a time when the common complaint from my own teacher candidates is that college never fully prepares them for the real world of teaching, perhaps documentaries that follow real teachers into the field and into their home lives can begin to mend the divide between the ivory tower and the K-12 classroom. The film is thus recommended to instructors in teacher preparation programs, pre-service teachers,

practicing teachers, and the public at large. Indeed, perhaps the sooner we as a society begin to think in more nuanced ways about the teaching profession, the sooner we will find much needed nuanced education policy.

To view this film or to learn more, visit http://www.teacheroftheyearfilm.com or contact director Rob Phillips at teacheroftheyeardocumentary@gmail.com.

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Call for Papers

The Florida Association of Teacher Educators (FATE) is an organization dedicated to improving the effectiveness of teacher education through leadership in the development of quality programs to prepare teachers, by analyzing issues and practices relating to professional development, and by providing opportunities for personal and professional growth of Association members.

The FATE Journal is a peer-reviewed publication meant to showcase the best articles on teacher education research and practice in the state of Florida. Under the co-editorship of Elizabeth Currin and Stephanie Schroeder, the journal is moving toward themed issues that connect statewide issues to the larger national, political context.

Call: Addressing the Political Context in Teacher Education

This special issue call for papers focuses on the political context of teaching and teacher education. As the country continues to adjust to a new presidential administration and the state of Florida prepares for a 2018 gubernatorial race, what is at stake for Florida's public schools? What changes are on the horizon, and how might we better prepare teachers for such changes? Taking a nod from the recent call for papers from *The New Educator,* this special issue asks potential authors to articulate and respond to the critical issues currently facing teachers and teacher educators.

Authors are encouraged to consider any of the following questions in their manuscripts, but should not feel constrained by them:

- How does the recent passage of HB7069 and the expansion of public funding for charter schools in the state impact teacher education?
- How can FATE members advocate for marginalized youth, particularly immigrant students, LGBT youth, students of color, etc.?
- What is the role of teacher education in combating political polarization, the rise of fake news, and the documented drift away from democracy in the United States?
- How do we prepare teachers who are responsive to the political climate?

We encourage manuscripts written by practicing and aspiring teachers and teacher educators. Conceptual and empirical papers are both welcome, as well as papers guided by practitioner inquiry, self-study, or historical inquiry.

Submission Timeline:
Deadline for submission: December 15, 2017 (Midnight, EST)
Anticipated publication: April 2018

General submission guidelines:
Manuscripts should be double-spaced, Times New Roman, 12-point font with one-inch margins. Manuscripts, excluding references, tables, charts, and figures, should not exceed 20 pages. All pages should be numbered. Please place tables, charts, and figures at the end of the manuscript. All manuscripts should follow APA (6th edition) format. Please do not include a running head. A 250-word abstract should be included at the beginning of your manuscript.

In addition to your blinded manuscript, please submit a separate cover page that includes the following: (1) title of the manuscript, (2) authors' names, and mailing address, institutional affiliation, and email address of the corresponding author, (3) statement that this manuscript is not under consideration nor has it been published elsewhere, and (4) brief biographical information for each author (30 words per author).

Submission process: please submit all manuscripts to FATEjournal@gmail.com by the submission deadline. If you have any questions please email the editors at FATEjournal@gmail.com. If you have questions as to whether your manuscript is appropriate to the call, please feel free to submit an up to 250-word abstract to the editors for review.

Call for Media and Book Reviews:

The FATE Journal welcomes media and book reviews related to education, broadly conceived. Reviews should be no longer than 800 words (excluding references) and include the following:

- The full reference of the work
- A brief summary of the work, including key points
- A summary of how the work is structured and how that structure helps to facilitate or impede the work's central argument
- The strengths and weaknesses of the work and how it connects to similar books, texts, or films
- For whom this work would be useful and why

General submission guidelines:
Reviews should be double-spaced, Times New Roman, 12-point font with one-inch margins. All pages should be numbered. All reviews should follow APA (6th edition) format. Please do not include a running head.

Submission process: Media and book reviews are welcomed on a rolling basis. Please submit all reviews to FATEjournal@gmail.com. If you have any questions please email the editors at FATEjournal@gmail.com.