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Teachers' Experience, Control Ideology, and
Global Teacher-Efficacy as it Relates to the Dimensions
of the Classroom Systems Observation Scale

by

Evelyn A. O'Connor

A dissertation submitted to the Graduate Faculty
in Educational Psychology in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy,
The City University of New York

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Approval Page

This manuscript has been read and accepted for the Graduate Faculty in Educational Psychology in satisfaction of the dissertation requirement for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.

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Abstract

Teachers' Experience, Control Ideology, and
Global Teacher-Efficacy as it Relates to the Dimensions
of the Classroom Systems Observation Scale

by

Evelyn A. O'Connor

Advisor: Professor Marian C. Fish

This study investigated whether teachers' experience, control ideology, and sense of efficacy are related to the Cohesion, Communication, and Flexibility dimensions of the Classroom Systems Observation Scale (CSOS). Principals from 13 schools in Queens, New York identified 27 pairs of pairs of novice and experienced teachers. A 50-minute classroom observation using the CSOS was conducted for each classroom. In addition, the teachers completed the Pupil Control Ideology Form (PCI) and the Teacher Efficacy Scale (TES). Results showed that experienced teachers' classrooms were significantly more flexible than novice teachers classrooms. Hypothesized relationships between the three dimensions of the CSOS and predictor variables (PCI and TES) were not supported. This information supports the use of mentors for new classroom teachers. Furthermore, the CSOS is

an important instrument for researchers and school personnel because it can assess classroom functioning and lead to appropriate interventions. It is also important for school psychologists whose role includes teacher consultation. These measures can be used to help teachers' identify areas that when addressed will improve the learning environment. School psychologists can use this knowledge to help teachers to develop a more balanced, flexible and cohesive classroom, thus improving functioning in the classroom system, which benefits both the teacher and students.

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When I first contemplated pursuing a doctorate it seemed to be an unattainable goal. Now I can't believe it is actually a reality. As I reflect on my years as a doctoral student I realize that I would never have reached my goal without the unwavering support and encouragement of many people.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

A main focus of educational research is to investigate what variables contribute to the enhancement of learning and achievement. Students spend up to six hours a day in a school setting, while elementary students in particular spend the majority of this time in one classroom interacting with each other and the teacher; it is important that researchers understand what factors influence students' learning in this setting.

Research on learning environments has examined the influence of the classroom in relation to affective and cognitive student outcomes. Wang, Haertel and Walberg (1993) reviewed the literature on education to identify factors that may influence students' learning. Results indicate that classroom management, as well as academic and social interactions between students and teachers had a direct influence on students' learning. "Positive teacher and student social interaction contribute to students' sense of self-esteem and foster a sense of membership in the classroom and school" (Wang, Haertel & Walberg, 1993, p. 277).

Many studies on learning environments have been conducted on how students perceive their classroom

environment and its effect on them. In a review of literature on the learning environment, Fraser (1986) found a relationship between students' perceptions of the classroom environment and their attitude towards learning and academic performance. Studies on the classroom environment show that relationships exist between students' perceptions of the learning environment and their sense of responsibility to perform well in class (Wang & Walberg, 1986), their attitude and knowledge of the subject being taught in class (McRobbie & Fraser, 1993), and scores in English and math (Byrne, Hattie, & Fraser, 1986). Overall, these studies show that the classroom environment has an influence on the student socially, emotionally, and academically.

Researchers of classroom environments have mainly relied on case studies, observations, and self-report instruments to assess perceptions of teachers and students (Fraser, 1991). For instance, many instruments have been developed to assess students' and teachers' perceptions of their classroom environments such as the Learning Environment Inventory (Fraser, Anderson, & Walberg, 1982), the Classroom Environment Scale (Moos & Trickett, 1974), and My Class Inventory (Fisher & Fraser, 1981). These self-report instruments assess respondents' perceptions of the classroom environment, and thus give a subjective view

of the learning environment. Currently, the only instrument available that evaluates dimensions of the classroom environment using an outside, objective observer is the Classroom Systems Observation Scale (CSOS) (Fish & Dane, 1995). The purpose of the CSOS is to assess the functioning of the classroom from a systems perspective (Fish & Dane, 1995).

Systems theory posits that interactions and events that occur in the classroom environment influence all members. Circular causality, recurring interaction patterns among individuals, can be seen as constantly operating in the classroom environment. For example, teachers' beliefs influence their behavior which in turn influences students' beliefs and behaviors towards themselves and others, which finally influences teachers' beliefs. With this perspective in mind it is important to realize what teacher beliefs and/or characteristics influence the classroom system.

"Everything the teacher does, as well as the manner in which he does it, incites the child to respond in some way or other, and each response tends to set the child's attitude in some way or other" (Dewey, 1960, p.59). One characteristic that has been shown to influence the system of the classroom is teachers' experience. Research investigating the expert-novice paradigm has found that

differences exist between expert and novices in many fields (e.g., chess, computer science, and medicine) (Chi, Glaser, & Farr, 1988). Research has shown that teachers' experience influences many aspects of how teachers react in a classroom, such as presenting a lesson (Cleary & Groer, 1994; Livingston & Borko, 1989; Westerman, 1991), disciplining their class (Sabers, Cushing, & Berliner, 1991), and dealing with change (Cleary & Groer, 1994, Livingston & Borko, 1989; Westerman, 1991).

In addition to experience, other characteristics, such as teachers' personality or beliefs, may also have an influence on the classroom system. Teachers' control ideology is one area that may affect the classroom system. Control ideology is defined as the amount of control teachers assume they should exercise to manage their students. Teachers' control ideology has been found to affect teachers' classroom management style as well as their perceptions and interactions with students (Licata & Wildes, 1980; Rexford, Willower, & Lynch, 1972). In addition, students' perceptions of the environment as either positive and robust or negative and boring have been shown to be related to teachers' control ideology (Estep, Willower, & Licata, 1980; Lunenburg, 1991; Lunenburg & Stouten, 1983; Multhauf, Willower, & Licata, 1978).

Another important variable that has been found to influence the classroom system is a teacher's sense of efficacy. Teacher-efficacy "refers to teachers' situation-specific expectation that they can help students learn" (Ashton & Webb, 1986, p. 3). Studies have shown that variations in teachers' sense of efficacy may result in differences in classrooms. Teachers' sense of efficacy influences their interactions with students (Ashton & Webb, 1986; Barfield & Burlingame, 1974), their degree of flexibility (Gibson & Dembo, 1984), their techniques to manage students' behavior (Ashton & Webb, 1986; Saklofske, Michayluk, & Randhawa, 1988) as well as the classroom environment (Ashton & Webb, 1986).

Previous research has not investigated the effects of teacher experience, control ideology and sense of efficacy on the classroom system. As mentioned previously, the classroom environment has been shown to influence students' performance and attitudes. A main figure in the classroom is the teacher who some believe "significantly influences the psychological climate of his class" (Tonselson, 1982, p. 98). This study seeks to investigate whether teachers' experience, control ideology, and efficacy influence the level of communication, cohesion and flexibility in the classroom.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

This literature review first discusses systems theory, the basis for the theoretical perspective of the dependent variable (CSOS). It then explores the research on the three separate independent variables (teachers' experience, their control ideology, and teachers' sense of efficacy) and how each of these teacher characteristics relate to the classroom from a systems perspective.

Systems Theory

All systems have general characteristics whether it be a human system, the solar system, the family system, or the school system. General systems theory looks at the whole picture and the interaction of component parts with each other, as opposed to looking at the component parts as separate and unrelated (Becvar & Becvar, 1982; Nichols & Everett, 1986).

System theory has been used frequently when working with families. Systems theory is an approach that goes beyond looking at the interaction between two people; instead it investigates the interaction of all members and how the various relationships influence the family system. This approach effects change at the family unit, so that

each family member is affected and altered by the therapy (Minuchin, 1974; Nichols & Schwartz, 1995).

To be able to examine the interaction of the family, one must understand how it is organized, its basic structure. Structure describes established transactional patterns in which family members interact. It consists of covert rules and a hierarchical structure that controls family interactions (Minuchin, 1974; Nichols & Schwartz, 1995). In addition, the structure of the family contains subsystems. Subsystems are discrete groups that represent different aspects of the family. The family is composed of many subsystems (e.g., parents, children, gender, generation) and members may belong to various groupings (Fish & Jain, 1988; Minuchin, 1974; Nichols & Schwartz, 1995).

Equifinality, circular causality, and homeostasis are also important concepts that are essential parts that make up the framework of systems theory. "Equifinality refers to the fact that the same results can be obtained by different means and starting from different beginning points" (Nichols & Everett, 1986, p. 72). Equifinality emphasizes the importance of the current state of the family's difficulty and not the origins of it (Nichols & Schwartz, 1995). The concept equifinality is associated with circular causality. In general systems theory,

causality is considered to be circular, not linear. Circular causality is a "series of interacting loops or repeating cycles" (Nichols & Schwartz, 1995, p. 590). For example, a parent's mood can affect a child's behavior which in turn can affect the parent. A system always strives to maintain the status quo. Homeostasis refers to a system's ability to regulate itself so it maintains balance and consistency when outside influences try to exert change (Nichols & Schwartz, 1995).

Minuchin, a proponent of systems theory, expanded on the basic tenets of general systems theory to include boundaries, adaptation, and identity as important characteristics of the family. Boundaries are "invisible barriers that surround individuals and subsystems, regulating the amount of contact with others" (Nichols & Schwartz, 1995, p. 214). Boundaries must allow contact among members but at the same time allow freedom of expression without unnecessary interference. Boundaries fluctuate along a continuum ranging from rigid to diffuse. If the boundaries are too rigid then there is minimal contact with other subsystems, causing emotional isolation that is referred to as disengagement. Persons who are disengaged experience independence and autonomy while at the same time having minimal communication with or receiving little affection from others in the family.

Conversely, enmeshed families have diffuse boundaries. These families are too dependent on each other for socialization and decision making. "The boundaries of the subsystems must be firm, yet flexible enough to allow realignment when circumstances change" (Minuchin, 1974, p. 66). Most families will fall within the normal range, between the extremes of diffuse or rigid boundaries. Dysfunctional families will be at either extreme, having boundaries that are either diffuse or rigid (Minuchin, 1974; Nichols & Schwartz, 1995).

Adaptation, another main component of systems theory, refers to the family adjusting to new circumstances that occur due to developmental and situational changes. According to Minuchin (1974) "the individual who lives within a family is a member of a social system to which he must adapt" (p. 9). The family must accommodate not only to the changes that are occurring in their own family, but also the outside forces in society that the family interacts with daily (Minuchin, 1974). A family that is unable to change will develop problems and not function normally (Fish & Jain, 1988). Another component, the matrix of identity, gives the child a feeling of association with the group and at the same time encourages individualism. The sense of belongingness is developed from birth and continues to grow with constant interaction

with the family group. The sense of separateness occurs through engaging in activities with different subsystems in the family as well as groups outside the family. (Fish & Jain, 1988; Minuchin, 1974).

The conditions that are found to exist in the family system can also be discovered in the classroom system (Conoley, 1987; Lightfoot, 1978). Conoley found that schools and families are functionally, structurally, and culturally similar. On a functional level, both schools and families socialize, nurture, evaluate, and discipline children. Structurally both are living, open systems, they allow the flow of information into the system, but also oppose permitting the flow of too much information from the outside environment in, so as to maintain a state of homeostasis. Furthermore, on a cultural level it is usually a woman, either the mother or the teacher, that tends to nurture, guide, and support the child.

The classroom is a complex system composed of the teacher, the students, and the transactions among them. The classroom, like the family, has a certain structure, promotes a matrix of identity, and must be adaptable to changing situations (Fish & Jain, 1988). The classroom possesses the same structural characteristics that are found in the family. A hierarchy exists; in the home it is the parents who are in control and in the classroom it is

the teacher. Similarly, overt and covert rules exist in both settings. During the first week of school, the teacher will usually state the rules of the classroom and have a listing of them posted on a wall. In addition, there are also unspoken rules, such as turn taking in discussions or when one is allowed to leave one's seat without permission (e.g., sharpening pencils or throwing away garbage).

Subsystems also exist at the classroom level. First, it should be noted that the classroom itself is a subsystem of the school. Within the classroom there exist many subsystems such as friendship cliques, ability groupings (e.g., reading, math), and groups based on gender and interests (Fish & Jain, 1988).

Circular causality and homeostasis also exist at the classroom level. Circular causality in the classroom can be demonstrated when a teacher's communication to students influences how the students behave in the classroom which in turn affects how the teacher reacts to the students. The members of the classroom are always trying to maintain homeostasis by regulating themselves because of influences from external sources (e.g. school environment). For example, when an assembly disrupts the class' daily schedule the teacher will strive to maintain regularity in

the classroom by following classroom routines and rules as much as possible.

Other family system concepts (boundaries, adaptation, and identity) can also be applied to the classroom system. Classrooms, like families, can be too enmeshed or disengaged, which is detrimental to the children's growth. In disengaged classrooms where boundaries are too rigid and there is a lack of cohesiveness, students may not receive the proper assistance in dealing with problems. The teacher may be unaware that children are having trouble, emotionally or academically, until it is too late (Fish & Jain, 1988; Nichols & Schwartz, 1995). In an enmeshed classroom there is a lack of autonomy and separateness. In this situation students will be overly dependent on the teacher and will rely on the teacher for assistance in problem solving. The students will be isolated and overprotected so that they will not mature, emotionally or socially.

Adaptation also occurs in the classroom. A teacher must be aware of what is occurring in the classroom and be flexible enough to alter his or her plans when necessary. There are times when students do not understand a particular lesson and a teacher must be able to recognize this and adapt to the needs of his or her students. Furthermore, a teacher must be aware of the students and

the emotional problems they may be experiencing and take this information into account when enforcing rules or administering punishment.

With the matrix of identity, the class helps foster a child's sense of membership along with a perception of discrete uniqueness. The child belongs to a class that has its own set of rules, routines, and space (Fish & Jain, 1988). Here the child functions as part of the group and will identify himself or herself as belonging to that particular class. For example, during recess students from the same class will usually play together, possibly even competing together as a team against other classes. Within the classroom the child is a separate individual, with special talents, abilities, and a unique and distinct personality. From a classroom systems' perspective, one wants to promote both a student's sense of belongingness and his or her separateness.

In today's schools a child experiencing difficulty in a class will be referred to the school psychologist to discover the reasons for the problem. The more traditional assessment based on a medical model assumes that the child "owns" the problem, that it is within the child. Using a systems' approach a child's problem is seen as occurring in a context and is related to continuous interaction between the child and others within the classroom environment (Fish

& Jain, 1988). "Children's symptoms are viewed as adaptive responses to the social system in which he/she is embedded" (Carlson, 1987, p. 458). Conoley (1987) suggests a more ecological perspective. To help a student one should not only use child-focused intervention but one should also include modification of the classroom environment and help make changes in the attitude or behavior of the teacher (Conoley, 1987).

Therefore, from a systems' perspective it is important that a school psychologist assess the individual within the context of the classroom. One technique to evaluate the system of the classroom is the Classroom Systems Observation Scale (CSOS) (Fish & Dane, 1995). This is an observational instrument that evaluates the interaction between all members of the classroom on three dimensions: level of flexibility, cohesion, and communication. The CSOS is based on the Circumplex Model of Marital and Family Systems (Olson, Russell, & Sprenkle, 1989) and consists of three dimensions: Cohesion, Communication, and Adaptability. Two family instruments, FACES and the Clinical Rating Scale, use these dimensions to describe family functioning (Olson, Russell, & Sprenkle, 1989). The CSOS consists of the same three dimensions, except that adaptability is referred to as flexibility. The Circumplex Model was developed to bridge the gap between research,

family systems theory and clinical practice. The model theorizes that healthy family functioning exists when cohesion and adaptability are balanced and communication is at a high level (Olson, Russell, & Sprenkle, 1989). A balanced system is considered to exist when there is equilibrium between two opposite conditions. For example, for the flexibility dimension the scores may fall between the extremes of chaotic on one end of the distribution or rigid on the other end, if the score falls in the middle on the range, in the flexible or structured area, then it is considered to be balanced.

The CSOS has been and currently is being utilized as an instrument to investigate the relationship between classrooms and teacher or student characteristics. O'Connor and Fish (1997) found that expert teachers' classrooms had a higher level of flexibility within the balanced range of functioning than novice teachers' classrooms. Recently, Ishofsky (1998) investigated the relationship between teacher self-esteem and stress, and the classroom environment. No relationship was found between the CSOS and any of the predictor variables. Stress was shown to have significant relationship to the Affiliation domain of the Classroom Environment Scale, one of the self-report measures of classroom environment. Sullivan (1996) is studying the relationship between

factors in the classroom environment and the degree of self-control and academic self-concept in children.

The classroom system has many aspects that can affect students' performance. Because the teacher plays such a pivotal role in the classroom, his/her attitudes and attributes may have a definite influence on the classroom system. The next sections of this literature review will examine teacher experience, control ideology, and teacher efficacy, three teacher characteristics that may be related to the classroom system.

Experienced vs. Novice Teachers

The differences between experts and novices have long been examined by researchers. Chi, Glaser, and Farr (1988) reviewed the literature on experts and novices in many fields (e.g., chess, computer science, and medicine) and found that within their specific domain experts have superior self-monitoring skills, are able to examine a problem qualitatively, solve problems quickly and fairly accurately, and can process large meaningful patterns within their subject area. In addition, investigations in this area have shown that experts have a more elaborate knowledge base and perceive problems on a deeper, more complex level than novices (Gallagher, 1994; Weinert, Schrader, & Helmke, 1990).

Recent research has looked at the differences that exist between expert and novice teachers. Some investigators (Carter, Cushing, Sabers, Stein, & Berliner, 1988; Sabers, Cushing, & Berliner, 1991) have examined these differences by presenting videotapes or slides of a classroom lesson to teachers and asking for their interpretations.

Carter et al. (1988) investigated six postulants' (no teacher training), and eight expert and six novice teachers' interpretations of a classroom lesson based on a series of slides. The slides consisted of lessons from two classes, one in a science and the other in math. A series of four separate tasks using the slides were administered to subjects. Tasks varied from viewing three slides for one second each to viewing a sequence of fifty slides that represented a class period. After each task, subjects responded to a structured set of questions. Results indicated that because of their experience in the classroom experts were more able than novices to comprehend and describe classroom phenomena in-depth. Experts were also more aware of what occurred in the classroom in relation to instruction and student behavior.

Similarly, a study conducted by Sabers et al. (1991) examined teachers' perceptions of events that transpired in a videotaped classroom situation. The subjects consisted

of seven expert, four advanced beginner (first year teachers) and five novice (no formal pedagogical training) teachers. A week's junior high school level science classroom periods were taped and then edited to represent one classroom activity. The classroom scene consisted of three separate tapes that were presented to subjects simultaneously on three different television screens. Each tape focused on a different group of students and thus provided a different aspect of the classroom. The experiment consisted of four tasks. The first task showed the three tapes simultaneously while sound came from only the middle television. After the first task, the subjects were asked to describe the instructional and management techniques that they observed. The second section of the experiment again showed the three tapes simultaneously but this time the sound came from all three monitors. During this task, subjects were asked to comment on what they were viewing and identify the monitor they were referring to by pushing a specific button. The third task asked subjects a series of nine questions that related to their general impressions of the students and teacher in the classroom. Finally, the last task consisted of asking subjects yes and no questions to measure their memory for details. Results indicated that experts were able to explain classroom events with more detail and insight than advanced beginners

and novices. They were able to interpret what was occurring in the classroom and offer possible solutions for problems. Also, experts had a superior ability to scan and integrate the visual and auditory information presented on the three monitors. All groups performed the same in recalling the irrelevant details of task four.

Peterson and Comeaux (1987) looked at the differences between ten experienced and ten inexperienced high school teachers' recall and analyses of problems of staged events in a social studies class. The researchers created and videotaped three classroom scenes (handing back a test, discussion, and cheating). Each subject was shown one of the scenes and then asked to describe the events that had occurred in the classroom. After completing the interview, the first scene was shown again and a second set of questions was asked to determine what the subject would do differently if he or she was the teacher. The other two scenes were then presented using the same structured interview to elicit information from the teachers. Results showed that experienced teachers scored significantly higher than novices in recall of classroom events. In addition, the experienced teachers also made significantly more statements when analyzing the problems in the classroom, which indicated a higher level of procedural knowledge.

Another method used to examine expert-novice differences was to observe a lesson, take extensive notes and/or tape the lesson, and question teachers about their lesson both before and after they teach. Leinhardt (1989) analyzed the math lessons of four expert and two novice (student-teachers) teachers. The researcher videotaped two math lessons for each teacher and conducted interviews with the teachers before and after each lesson. The transcripts of the interviews and lessons were examined for instances of instructional action, evaluation of student understanding, and a logical flow of the lesson. The results indicated that experts in comparison to novices had richer, more detailed lesson plans that connected with past lessons and evaluated student understanding. In addition, experts' instructional actions and subject knowledge were significantly better than novices. Experts' lessons were more flexible, elaborate, and cohesive than novices' lessons. In contrast, novices had difficulty presenting their lessons in a connected and meaningful way, possibly due to lack of experience and a well developed schema for the lessons.

Livingston and Borko (1989) investigated the differences between three student teachers and their cooperating teachers' planning, teaching, and reflection in relation to a lesson. Two sets of teachers taught at the

secondary level and the other set taught at the elementary level. The researchers conducted observations for a week, an hour observation per day at the elementary level and two periods a day at the secondary level. The subjects were questioned prior to the observation about their lesson planning and again after the observation for their thoughts on the lesson. The researchers took notes on the observation regarding class activities and routines, and teacher strategy use. The authors found that differences between expert and novices existed in planning, teaching, and reflecting on a lesson. Experts tended to have extensive mental plans instead of written notes for the lessons they were to teach. During class instruction, experts were flexible, and were able to connect students' questions to the lesson. Experts were more concerned that students understood the information presented in the lessons. In contrast, novices spent more time preparing how to present the lesson and were more concerned about their teaching effectiveness over student understanding. Furthermore, when students asked novice teachers questions, these teachers were unable to remain on topic and connect the students' questions to the current lesson.

Westerman (1991) compared the differences in thinking and decision making ability of five student teachers and their cooperating teachers. This study consisted of four

phases. The first phase questioned the teachers about their lesson planning process. During the second phase a lesson taught by the teacher was videotaped by the researcher. Immediately after the taping, the teachers viewed the videotaped lesson and stopped the tape when they remembered making a decision in the lesson. At this point, the teacher discussed with the researcher his or her thinking process for the decision made during the lesson. The third phase consisted of a series of questions intended to solicit teachers' reflective thinking about the lesson. During the final phase that occurred a few months later, teachers were shown the videotape of their lesson this time without sound. During the presentation of the video the teacher would inform the researcher about the events that were occurring during the lesson. This research also found differences between experts and novices. Experts' main focus was on student learning. The expert teachers planned their lessons from the perspective of their students. Furthermore, they monitored their students' progress and adapted the lesson when necessary. The expert teachers' lessons were detailed and comprehensive. Experts also used techniques such as advanced organizers and connecting the present lesson to past lessons and other subject areas. Experts used voice commands and body language to maintain discipline and student attention. On the other hand,

novices focused primarily on teaching without deviating from their original lesson plans. Novices were unaware of students' understanding of the material and did not connect the lesson to students' prior knowledge. When a student was being disruptive, the novice first ignored the behavior and then interrupted the lesson to punish the child.

In 1994, Cleary and Groer looked at the difference between expert and novice teachers' interactive decisions during a lesson. The subjects consisted of nine expert and ten novice (student teachers) health teachers. A lesson of each teacher was videotaped and immediately afterwards the video was played for the teacher. The teachers were instructed to stop the tape any time they could recall what they were thinking. The investigators then inquired about the teachers' thinking using a structured set of questions. The results showed that experts used more interactive decisions and were concerned with students' understanding of the material. Experts also used students' questions and responses to guide discussion. Both novices and experts were concerned about the content of their lessons. Novices, unlike experts, did not pick up on students' cues nor did they deviate from their lesson plans.

Taken as a whole, these results indicate that when presenting lessons, novices tend to be more structured and less flexible than experts. Novices spend more time

focusing on lesson content and discipline, and less time reacting to and altering their plans to meet the needs of their students. O'Connor and Fish (1997) compared the classroom environments of ten experts and ten novice teachers on the CSOS. Results showed that expert teachers had a significantly higher level of flexibility within the balanced range of functioning than novices. No significant differences between expert and novice teachers on the cohesion or communication dimensions of the CSOS were found. Therefore, no differences between experience and the cohesion and communication dimensions of the CSOS should be found in the present study.

"Teaching is a complex act requiring the moment-by-moment adjustment of plans to fit continually changing and uncertain conditions" (Lampert & Clark, 1990, p. 21). In order to be flexible, a teacher must be aware of the many aspects and changes that occur in the classroom. Because expert teachers are more sensitive to the performance cues from students than novices (Borko & Shavelson, 1990), they will be able to adapt the lesson so that the students will understand. If a teacher is adapting a lesson to meet students' concerns and needs, this should help the student learn the information. Therefore, flexibility is an important skill for teachers to acquire. Even though the majority of studies have examined differences between

expert and novice teachers, similar findings should be found between experienced and novice teachers.

Pupil Control Ideology

"Because of their legitimate position of authority, teachers hold the most potential power in the classroom for executing leadership" (Schmuck & Schmuck, 1988, p. 121). Willower, Eidell, and Hoy (1967, 1973) developed the Pupil Control Ideology (PCI) form to determine the level of control teachers believe they should exert on their class. The PCI was created based on the researchers previous work examining how a school was similar to a social system. In addition, the PCI scale's ideology continuum was adapted from a scale that evaluated the control ideology of mental hospital staff toward their patients. Although Willower et al. used this continuum, they altered the meaning of custodial and humanistic orientations to reflect the control ideology of teachers toward their students. Custodial teachers are rigid and authoritarian. These teachers direct students' behavior, expect orders to be obeyed without question, and do not take the time to understand why students act the way they do. Furthermore, they do not maintain or seek out an interpersonal relationship with their students. In contrast, humanistic teachers are more authoritative and flexible. They will

seek positive relations with their students and include them in the decision making process. They also exhibit trust and mutual respect for their students. In addition, they seek to understand the reasons for their students' behavior.

Research has shown that teachers' attitudes and beliefs influence students' perceptions of their teacher and their classroom. Multhauf, Willower, and Licata (1978) investigated how teachers' pupil control ideology and behavior affect students' perceptions of the classroom environment. The subjects consisted of 33 teachers and 803 students from grades four through six. The students completed the Robustness Semantic Differential (RSD) Scale to determine the robustness or drama of the classroom environment. In addition, these subjects were also administered the Pupil Control Behavior (PCB) to measure students' perception of their teacher's level of control. The teachers completed the PCI. Results showed that a relationship existed between students' perceptions of a humanistic oriented teacher and a high level of classroom robustness.

Similarly, in a follow-up study, Estep, Willower, and Licata (1980) looked at the relationship between 88 secondary school teachers' control ideology and behavior, and students' perceptions of the classroom environment.

The PCI Form was administered to teachers, and the PCB and RSD were given to their respective students to complete. Results showed that teachers who display humanistic ideology and behavior had students who perceived the classroom environment as highly robust. The researchers speculate that "robust classrooms are simply active and interesting places that do not require strict control" (p. 159).

Lunenburg (1991) also examined teacher control ideology and behavior to students' perception of classroom robustness. The PCI was administered to 104 teachers. One classroom for each teacher was randomly selected and students from these classes completed the PCB and RSD. Results showed that humanistic teachers, as measured by the teachers' perceptions and their students' rating of their control behavior, were significantly related to a students' perception that the classroom was robust or dramatic. Students of humanistic teachers reported that their classroom environment was more interesting and challenging, while students of custodial teachers described their classrooms as boring and meaningless.

Licata and Wildes (1980) selected six classrooms in a small high school. The classroom teachers filled out the PCI and their students completed the PCB and the RSD. Results showed that teachers that had low robust classes

had scores that indicated custodial ideology and behavior, whereas high robust classes had teachers who had humanistic ideologies. Furthermore, these researchers conducted observations in four classes: two classes with high robustness and humanistic teachers and two classes with low robustness and custodial teachers. The same three observers sat in on all four classes and wrote their impressions of what they observed in the classroom. Custodial teachers' low robust classrooms were viewed as formal, teacher dominated, with little student movement or interaction with each other or the teacher. In addition, rules in these classrooms were rigidly enforced with no exceptions. In contrast, the humanistic teachers' high robust classrooms were seen as more informal, with a flexible classroom structure. Teachers were seen as confident, empathetic, and having a sense of humor. These teachers were flexible in enforcing rules, encouraged interaction among students, and viewed students as trustworthy.

A study conducted by Harty and Hassan (1983) investigated the relationship between teachers' control ideology and students' perception of the classroom environment. The researchers identified 20 humanistic teachers and 20 custodial teachers from a sample of 100 Sudanese secondary science teachers who were given the PCI.

A class for each of these 40 teachers was randomly selected and administered the Classroom Environment Scale (CES). The only significant finding was a negative correlation between custodial teachers and the support subscale of the CES. This relationship indicated that students perceive custodial teachers to be disinterested in students' achievements and would ridicule them for incorrect responses. The researchers speculated that the reason for the lack of significant findings may be due to teachers becoming more custodial because of student demonstrations against the military government just prior to the start of this investigation.

Lunenburg and Stouten (1983) explored the relationship between teachers' control ideology and pupils' feelings about teachers based on a projective test. The sample consisted of 131 fourth through sixth grade classes. Each teacher completed the PCI and each student in each class drew a picture of their teacher. Three school psychologists used the Draw-A-Teacher technique to interpret the projected feelings of the students toward their teacher. The scale ranged from positive (e.g., acceptance and affection) to negative teacher attributes (e.g., rejection and hostility). The school psychologists obtained a .92 level of interrater agreement for all drawings. Results showed that a significant relationship

existed between teachers' custodial attitudes and students' projected feelings of rejection and hostility.

Lunenburg and Schmidt (1989) examined the relationship between teachers' pupil control ideology and behavior, and students' perceptions of school life. Two hundred and thirty-nine teachers from two elementary (grades 5-8) and four secondary schools (grades 9-12) were given the PCI to complete. A class from each of the teachers was randomly selected and administered the PCB and Quality of School Life (QSL) Scale. The QSL measures students' satisfaction with school, commitment to classwork and reactions to teachers. Humanistic teachers' control ideology and behavior were significantly related to students' positive attitude toward teachers, and a higher degree of satisfaction with school and a higher commitment to schoolwork.

Other studies have shown a relationship between teachers' control ideology and their behavior in the classroom. Dobson, Goldenber, and Elsom (1972) administered the PCI to 260 elementary school teachers. The researchers chose ten teachers who scored the highest on humanistic ideology and ten teachers who scored the highest on custodial ideology. Three 20 minute observations were conducted using the Flanders Interaction Analysis Scale. Custodial teachers were found to lecture

more, giving their opinions about procedures and content more than humanistic teachers, which suggests that these teachers strive for conformity, control, and compliance. Humanistic teachers had a significantly higher score than custodial teachers for accepting and developing student ideas as well as allowing pupil initiated verbal interaction.

Rexford, Willower, and Lynch (1972) conducted a study to determine if a relationship existed between teachers' verbal behavior in the classroom and their control ideology. From a sample of 131 teachers who completed the PCI, the 12 most custodial and the 12 most humanistic teachers were chosen to determine if a difference in classroom verbal behavior existed based on teachers' ideology. Three 40 minute observations were conducted for each class. The observer used the Flanders Interaction Analysis System to measure teachers' verbal behavior in the classroom. The results found that custodial teachers displayed significantly more direct verbal behavior (e.g., lecturing, criticizing pupils), while humanistic teachers displayed significantly more indirect verbal behavior (e.g., asking questions, using pupils ideas). In addition, humanistic teachers praised and encouraged their students and accepted their students' ideas more than custodial teachers. In contrast, custodial teachers spent more time

in the classroom lecturing to students than humanistic teachers.

Results of these studies show that teachers' control ideology influences students' perception of their teacher, as well as students' views of the classroom and school environment. Students favor a teacher with a humanistic ideology over one that has a custodial ideology. Research has shown that humanistic teachers' classes are seen as more interesting and active, where students' communications are encouraged. These teachers are viewed as more flexible, accepting, and responsive. In contrast, custodial teachers' classrooms were considered boring, with rigid teacher control and little interaction from students. Classrooms with humanistic teachers appear to have a more positive learning environment.

Teacher-Efficacy

Bandura (1995) defines perceived self-efficacy as "beliefs in one's capabilities to organize and execute the courses of action required to manage prospective situations" (p. 2). According to Bandura (1995, 1997) four factors influence self-efficacy: enactive mastery experience, vicarious experience, verbal persuasion, and physiological and affective states. Enactive mastery is a person's actual experience performing a task. Success will

increase self-efficacy while failure will decrease it. Efficacy beliefs are also influenced by vicarious experience which consists of making comparison judgments based on the performance of others on a similar task. The third factor to influence one's sense of efficacy is verbal or social persuasion. A person's sense of efficacy is influenced by the positive encouragement of significant others. Finally, the somatic information from physiological and affective states can be interpreted by a person and influence his/her efficacy. If a person is feeling tense, stressed, or is experiencing a negative mood, this may negatively influence a person's efficacy, therefore the person may feel incompetent and incapable of performing a task. In addition, Bandura (1997) states that outcome and efficacy expectations play a role in efficacy. A person's judgment that a specific behavior will lead to a certain consequence is referred to as outcome expectation. Efficacy expectations involve a person's belief that one is capable of performing at a certain level.

Efficacy beliefs are related to many different areas of functioning. Most people may view themselves as capable of performing well in one area, but not another area. In school classrooms the teachers' belief about their teaching ability will affect how they teach and interact with their students. "The task of creating environments conducive to

learning rests heavily on the talents and self-efficacy of teachers. Evidence indicates that classroom atmospheres are partly determined by teachers' beliefs in their instructional efficacy" (Bandura, 1995, p. 19). Teacher efficacy is defined as "the extent to which teachers believe their efforts will have a positive effect on student achievement" (Ross, 1995, p. 228). Dembo and Gibson (1985) found that teacher efficacy consisted of two separate components: personal teaching efficacy and teaching efficacy. Personal teaching efficacy is the belief one can perform the behavior required to achieve a specific goal. Teaching efficacy is the belief one can achieve a specific outcome despite external environmental influences (e.g., home environment). Together, personal teaching efficacy and teaching efficacy factors create a total teacher efficacy score. Gibson and Dembo (1984) based their two factor theory of teacher-efficacy on Bandura's efficacy and outcome expectations. Woolfolk and Hoy (1990) found that teaching efficacy is not the same as Bandura's outcome expectation. While outcome expectations involve one's judgment of the outcome of an action, teaching efficacy refers to one's belief about one's capability to execute an action. Because teaching efficacy relates to how one teaches, and not to the effects of his/her teaching, it cannot be considered the same as

Bandura's outcome expectation. Although this is a theoretical difference between Bandura, and Gibson and Dembo, this study will only address the global teacher efficacy score.

Gibson and Dembo (1984) examined the differences between the classroom behavior of four teachers who had high confidence in their teaching ability and four teachers with low confidence in their teaching ability. Teacher-efficacy was measured using the Teacher Efficacy Scale (TES) created by the researchers. Observational measures were used to look at teachers' use of time, and question and answer feedback in the classroom. Results showed that high-efficacy teachers used more questioning to help direct students' correct responses while low-efficacy teachers would give the correct answer or ask another student. In addition, low-efficacy teachers criticized incorrect responses significantly more than high-efficacy teachers. The researchers also found that low-efficacy teachers disliked interference in their routines and became unsettled, whereas high self-efficacy teachers welcomed this change and accepted it more easily. Although the sample for this study was small it does give some indication that efficacy influences teachers' behavior.

A study conducted by Saklofske, Michayluk, and Randhawa (1988) investigated the relationship between

teachers' beliefs about the effectiveness of their teaching ability and their classroom behaviors. Eighty-seven student-teachers were asked to complete the TES to determine their level of personal teaching efficacy and teaching efficacy. Ratings of eight behaviors of the student-teachers were obtained from their supervising teachers. Results showed that a high level of personal teaching efficacy was significantly related to good questioning styles and classroom management behaviors.

Barfield and Burlingame (1974) compared 275 teachers' efficacy with their pupil control ideology. Teachers' control ideology was measured by the PCI. Teacher efficacy scores were based on a five item instrument that measured a "person's sense of powerlessness to change their situation" (Barfield & Burlingame, 1974, p. 8). Results showed that teachers with low efficacy had a significantly higher custodial orientation than teachers with an average or high level of efficacy. As mentioned previously, teachers with a custodial orientation are usually more rigid, and less warm and interactive with their students.

Ashton and Webb (1986) conducted two studies to investigate the effect of teacher efficacy (the belief that one can effect students' learning) in the classroom. The first study consisted of an ethnographic interview with the teacher and ten hours of observations in each classroom.

High self-efficacy teachers were found to have warm, friendly relationships with students and did not feel threatened that students would usurp their authority. In contrast, low self-efficacy teachers were distrustful of students and used a lot of discipline to control students because they viewed the classroom in terms of "conflict." In addition, low self-efficacy teachers used embarrassment and isolation to manage students' behavior in the classroom. In the second study, Ashton and Webb (1986) conducted three systematic observations of 48 teachers over a two-month period. The researchers used the Climate and Control System to evaluate the emotional climate and influence of teacher control on students, the Teacher Practices Observation Record to describe teachers' instructional behavior, and Research for Better Schools Engagement Rate Form to measure the students' time on task. Results showed that teachers who had lower efficacy beliefs had a tendency to be more controlling of students' behavior and had more discipline problems in the classroom, while teachers with a higher efficacy were less controlling and tended to have a warm classroom environment.

Only a limited amount of research has been conducted to examine teachers' sense of efficacy about their teaching ability and its influence on the classroom environment and its members. Research has shown that low efficacy teachers

are more controlling and rigid than high efficacy teachers. In addition, high efficacy teachers had more warm and encouraging relationships with students than low efficacy teachers. In summary, the research that has been done so far indicates that low teacher efficacy tends to have a more negative impact on the students and the classroom system.

Summary

This literature review has examined research on three different teacher characteristics (experience, control ideology, and efficacy) and their influence on the classroom environment. Researchers have examined the effects of various classroom variables on learning and achievement at two levels, the student as an individual and as part of the classroom system. Burden and Fraser (1993) state that the impetus has moved from studying individual characteristics such as intelligence to a more systemic approach to explain the learning process.

This study evaluates the classroom using a systems perspective. Systems theory has previously been applied to families, but only recently has been used to evaluate the environment of classrooms. Previous research on learning environment has primarily looked at how members perceive characteristics of others in the classroom. Conversely,

systems theory investigates the interaction among members of a group and the affect that these group members have on each other as well as their affect on the basic nature of the group itself. In addition, most of the studies examining the learning environment have utilized self-report measures to evaluate students' and teachers' perceptions of the classroom environment, which only gives a subjective view of the classroom system. In this study, the CSOS will be utilized to evaluate the classroom system from an objective observer who is not a member of the classroom. The classroom system has many elements that can influence students' performance.

One important variable that may influence the classroom system is the experience of the teacher. Recent research has looked at the differences that exist between expert and novice teachers. Results of the research have shown experts were more capable than novices of comprehending and describing classroom phenomena in-depth (Carter, Cushing, Sabers, Stein, & Berliner, 1988; Sabers, Cushing, & Berliner, 1991). In addition, these studies have found that experts used students' questions and responses to guide discussion (Cleary & Groer, 1994; Livingston & Borko, 1989; Westerman, 1991), were more flexible and improvised more on lessons (Livingston & Borko, 1989; Westerman, 1991), used more interactive

decisions (Cleary & Groer, 1994), and were able to interpret students' behavior (Carter et al., 1988; Sabers et al., 1991). In contrast, novices were unresponsive to students' needs during a lesson (Livingston & Borko, 1989; Westerman, 1991), did not deviate from their lesson plans (Cleary & Groer, 1994; Westerman, 1991) and were more concerned about discipline (Sabers et al., 1991). Results from these studies show that expert and novice teachers react differently to their students and the way they present a lesson. Most of the research that examined differences in teachers based on experience have not investigated the effects of these differences on the system of the classroom. A pilot study conducted by O'Connor and Fish (1997) was the only study to investigate the relationship between the classroom system and teachers' experience. The current study will attempt to replicate the previous pilot study using a larger sample. Therefore, this study should find a significant difference between expert and novice teachers on the flexibility dimension, but not on the cohesion and communication dimensions of the CSOS.

Besides experience, teachers' beliefs and personality may also influence the classroom system. One characteristic that may affect the classroom system is a teacher's control ideology. Willower, Eidell, and Hoy

(1973) developed the Pupil Control Ideology (PCI) form to determine the level of control teachers believe they should exercise to manage their class. The scale ranges on a continuum from a custodial to a humanistic orientation. Custodial teachers are rigid, control students' behavior, expect orders to be obeyed and do not maintain warm interpersonal relationships with their students. Conversely, humanistic teachers respect their students, allow them a voice in decision making, are more flexible, and develop warm relations with their students. Research has shown that students of humanistic teachers perceive the classroom environment as more robust and dramatic (Estep, Willower, & Licata, 1980), and have a positive attitude toward the school and teacher (Lunenburg & Schmidt, 1989; Lunenburg & Stouten, 1983). All the studies that have used the PCI have either asked the students their perceptions of the teacher or have had an outside observer rate how the teacher interacts with the students. Because systems theory looks at how members' interactions influence each other as well as the class as a whole, it takes a look at an area that has not been examined previously with the PCI.

Teacher-efficacy is another important variable that has been found to influence events and people in the classroom. Gibson and Dembo (1984) created the Teacher Efficacy Scale (TES) to measure the degree teachers' believe they can

control the classroom environment and influence students' learning. According to Bandura (1995) "those who have low assurance in their instructional efficacy generate negative classroom environments that are likely to undermine students' sense of efficacy and cognitive development" (p. 20). Research has shown that teachers with a low sense of efficacy use authoritarian methods and embarrassment to control students' behavior (Ashton & Webb, 1986; Barfield & Burlingame, 1974; Woolfolk & Hoy, 1990), believe they are unable to influence low-achieving students' learning (Ashton & Webb, 1986), criticize students' incorrect responses (Gibson & Dembo, 1984), and view the classroom as a conflict situation (Ashton & Webb, 1986). In contrast, Ashton & Webb (1986) found that teachers with a higher level of self-efficacy believe they can exert influence on students' cognitive development, display an authoritative classroom management style, and demonstrate a warm, caring, and friendly relationship with students. Investigations with the TES have utilized scales and observations that have examined how the teacher performs in the classroom and reacts to his or her students. Using the systems perspective, this study will evaluate the influence of teachers' efficacy on the classroom as unit with all members being a contributing and vital part of this system.

The purpose of this study is to investigate whether

teachers' experience, control ideology, and sense of efficacy are related to the cohesion, flexibility, and communication dimensions of the CSOS at an elementary school level. This information will be useful to help teachers and other school personnel determine possible causes for an unbalanced classroom environment and design appropriate interventions to help improve the classroom system. Research on learning environments has found that a relationship exists between students' affective and cognitive outcomes and their perceptions of the classroom environment (Fraser, 1986). Therefore, helping to improve the classroom system will benefit the students on a cognitive, social, and emotional level. In addition, the knowledge acquired from this study will add to the information gathered about systems theory as it relates to the classroom. This study seeks to answer the following questions: (1) Does a teacher's experience influence the communications between all the members of the classroom? (2) Do experienced teachers have a more flexible classroom than novice teachers? (3) Will teachers' experience affect the degree of cohesiveness in the classroom? (4) Will a teacher with a humanistic ideology have a more flexible classroom than one with a custodial ideology? (5) Does teachers' control ideology influence the degree of cohesiveness found in a classroom? (6) Will a teacher with

high self-efficacy for teaching maintain a more flexible classroom environment than a teacher with low efficacy for teaching? (7) Will a teacher with high self-efficacy for teaching maintain a more cohesive classroom environment than a teacher with low efficacy for teaching? (8) What teacher characteristics may influence the level of communication between teachers and students?

Based on the findings of previous research, the following hypotheses are proposed:

1. Classrooms with experienced teachers will obtain a score on the Flexibility dimension of the CSOS that reflects a more balanced flexibility score than classrooms with novice teachers.
2. No differences will be found between classrooms of experienced and novices on the Communication and Cohesion dimensions of the CSOS.
3. Teachers who have a higher humanistic orientation on the PCI will obtain a score on both the Cohesion and Flexibility dimensions of the CSOS that reflects a more balanced range.
4. Teachers who have a higher humanistic orientation on the PCI will obtain a higher score on the Communication dimension on the CSOS.
5. Teachers with a high sense of teaching efficacy will obtain a score on both the Cohesion and Flexibility

dimensions of the CSOS than teachers with a low sense of teaching efficacy that reflects a more balanced range.

6. Teachers with a high sense of teaching efficacy will obtain a higher score on the Communication dimension of the CSOS than teachers with a low sense of teaching efficacy.

CHAPTER III

METHODS

Participants

The researcher obtained the names of principals through family, friends, principals the researcher contacted, and students and colleagues at a public college where the researcher is employed. Two of the principals that were contacted were former teachers and coworkers of the researcher. The researcher called and spoke with twenty principals from schools located in New York City. A brief description of the study was given to the principals during the phone call. From the initial call, one principal refused to participate, four principals were willing to participate but had no novice teachers, and the other fifteen principals asked the researcher to meet with them so they could get a more in-depth explanation of the research. After the meeting, the principals contacted the teachers (sending a letter to their classroom or speaking with them individually) to determine whether they would be interested in participating in the study. Thirteen of the fifteen schools had novice teachers who agreed to participate in the study. Three of the principals asked the researcher to speak with each teacher and briefly explain the research. The original sample was composed of 30 pairs of novice and experienced elementary school teachers from 13 schools in Queens County

in New York City. These schools have a student body that is multiethnic and multiracial, and are located in low to middle socioeconomic areas. Three novice/experienced teacher pairs were eliminated from the sample because they did not meet the novice or experienced teacher criteria, leaving 27 pairs. One pair that was eliminated had a novice teacher who had two years of previous teaching experience at a preschool. The second pair that was eliminated had a novice teacher who had a year of experience teaching at a private school. The third pair that was eliminated had a novice teacher who was a reading specialist and was not the primary classroom teacher.

The schools consisted of six private and seven public schools. Five of the six private schools were parochial (Catholic). The classes consisted of 52 general education classes and 2 special education classes. Teachers who had less than one full year of teaching experience were considered novices. For every novice teacher who agreed to participate in the study, the principal was asked to nominate an experienced teacher. Teachers who displayed exceptional teaching ability as per principal nomination, had five years or more teaching experience, and had one or more years experience at their present grade level were considered experienced teachers. The average number of years of teaching experience for experienced teachers was 16, with a range from 5 to 39 years. Table 1 (novice

teachers) and Table 2 (experienced teachers) present demographic information for the teachers. A composite for each teacher is provided in Appendices A & B.

Table 1

Demographic Variables of Novice Teachers

| Grade | Public Schools | Private Schools | Total |
|--------|----------------|-----------------|-------|
| K, K/1 | 5 | 2 | 7 |
| 1 | 6 | 0 | 6 |
| 2 | 2 | 1 | 3 |
| 3 | 1 | 1 | 2 |
| 4 | 2 | 1 | 3 |
| 5 | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| 6 | 0 | 3 | 3 |
| Total | 17 | 10 | 27 |

Table 2

Demographic Variables of Experienced Teachers

| Grade | Public Schools | Private Schools | Total |
|-------|----------------|-----------------|-------|
| K | 4 | 0 | 4 |
| 1 | 6 | 3 | 9 |
| 2 | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| 3 | 3 | 2 | 5 |
| 4 | 2 | 0 | 2 |
| 5 | 0 | 2 | 2 |
| 6 | 1 | 1 | 2 |
| Total | 17 | 10 | 27 |

Measures

The Classroom Systems Observation Scale (CSOS) (Fish & Dane, 1995) is a 47 item observational instrument that is used to determine the level of Flexibility, Cohesion, and Communication evident in an elementary school classroom (See Appendix C for sample items from scale). Flexibility is determined by the level of adaptability of the teacher and students in the classroom. The level of Cohesion in the classroom is defined as the emotional bonding and supportiveness among the students as well as between the teacher and the students. Both the Flexibility and

Cohesion dimensions of the scale are curvilinear, where the outer two levels represent unbalanced functioning, and the two mid-levels represent balanced functioning. The four levels of flexibility are: rigid (very low), structured or flexible (moderate), and chaotic (very high). Cohesion also has four levels which are: disengaged (very low), separated or connected (moderate), and enmeshed (very high). The Communication dimension reflects the exchange of thoughts, feelings, and ideas in the classroom. The Communication dimension is linear, ranging from low to high. Each observation should be conducted for a period of 45 minutes.

The interrater reliability for the three dimensions is: Cohesion ($r = .83$), Flexibility ($r = .89$), and Communication ($r = .61$). In addition, the test-retest reliability for the 3 dimensions: Cohesion ($r = .64$), Flexibility ($r = .44$) and Communication ($r = .54$) are moderate (Ishofsky, Fish, & Sullivan, 1995). The test-retest observations for the CSOS took place at a two week interval. The CSOS has also been shown to have adequate construct validity (Berkson, Berger, Fish, & Dane, 1995).

Interrater reliability for the three dimensions for this study was conducted by the author and a graduate student for 20% of the observations. Cohesion ($r = .80$) was significant at the $p < .01$ level, and Flexibility ($r = .63$) and

Communication ($r = .68$) were significant at the $p < .05$ level. Both researchers went through the six hour training session for the CSOS. The first two hours of the training consisted of reading and reviewing the CSOS manual and relevant literature on Systems theory and the Circumplex Model. The next two hours consisted of training by an expert using videotaped classroom situations. The trainees each scored two videotaped classroom situations and after each observation the expert discussed the scoring with the trainees. The third step of the training process consisted of at least two practice observations in classrooms with an expert to obtain interrater reliability. The researchers obtained an interrater reliability score of .80 with an expert prior to the collection of data.

Pupil Control Ideology Form (PCI) (Willower, Eidell, & Hoy, 1967, 1973) consists of 20 statements, such as "Being friendly with pupils often leads them to become too familiar" (See Appendix D for more sample items from scale). Response to each item is along a five point Likert scale from strongly agree to strongly disagree. This instrument places teacher control beliefs along a continuum, ranging from custodial to humanistic orientation. Higher scores on the PCI indicate a more custodial orientation, whereas lower scores on the PCI indicate a more humanistic orientation. Teachers who score in the custodial range are considered to be very controlling,

pessimistic, mistrustful, and use punitive measures to control students' behavior. In addition, these teachers maintain detached relationships with students and their communications to students consist mostly of commands to be obeyed without question. Conversely, teachers who have a humanistically-oriented perspective are positive, friendly, respectful, promote open communications, and are flexible in status and rules. Furthermore, they encourage interactions with others, decision making, and learning through experience.

Willower, Eidell and Hoy (1967) reported split-half reliabilities of .91 (Pearson) and .95 (corrected Spearman-Brown). Using the same techniques with a new data set, Willower, Eidell, and Hoy (1973) obtained .83 reliability using the Pearson formula and .91 with the Spearman-Brown formula. Validity was obtained by comparing principals' judgments of certain teachers' pupil control ideology with the teachers' own perceptions (Willower, Eidell, & Hoy, 1967; 1973).

Teacher Efficacy Scale (TES) (Gibson & Dembo, 1984) originally consisted of 30 items in a six point Likert scale ranging from strongly disagree to strongly agree classroom (See Appendix E for sample items from scale). Higher scores on the TES indicate a high sense of teaching efficacy, while lower scores indicate a low sense of teaching efficacy.

Gibson and Dembo's (1984) construct validation study resulted in the identification of two independent dimensions: teaching efficacy (TE) and personal teaching efficacy (PTE). The revised scale consists of a total of 16 items, nine items comprise personal teaching efficacy and seven items comprise teacher efficacy. Personal teaching efficacy represents the belief that one is competent and able to bring about student learning. Teaching efficacy is the extent a teacher believes he/she can influence students' learning despite external influences such as family background and environmental conditions. The internal consistency reliability for the two dimensions and the total 16 item scale are: personal teaching efficacy ($r = .78$), teaching efficacy ($r = .75$), and the total scale ($r = .79$).

Procedures

Consent was obtained from principals to conduct research in their schools. The principals identified novice and experienced teachers in their schools using the criteria described above. After the principals nominated the teachers, the identified teachers were informed about the study and their consent to be observed was obtained (See Appendix F for teacher consent letter).

One 50-minute classroom observation using the Classroom Systems Observation Scale was conducted by the researcher for each teacher. To reduce the amount of variability, all

observations occurred in the morning prior to lunch. In addition, because different lessons entail different amounts of activity and interaction, only lessons in Language Arts or Reading were observed to control for variability. In all instances, the researcher sat in the back of the classroom to observe and record results. After the observation, the teachers were given the Pupil Control Ideology Form and Teacher Efficacy Scale to complete. The teachers were asked to complete and mail the surveys to the researcher in a stamped, self-addressed envelope. If the surveys were not returned within a two week period, the researcher sent a copy of the surveys along with a letter requesting them to return the surveys. All questionnaires were coded for identification purposes. Ninety-three percent of the surveys were returned.

Design

A correlational design was used in this study. The independent variables are teacher experience, teachers' pupil control ideology, and teacher-efficacy and the dependent measures are Cohesion, Flexibility and Communication dimensions of the CSOS. Three analyses have been conducted in the study. The first analysis investigated the relationship among the three independent variables (teachers' experience, control ideology, and teaching efficacy) and the Cohesion dimension of the CSOS. The second

analysis investigated the relationship between the three independent variables (teachers' experience, control ideology, and teaching efficacy) and the Flexibility dimension of the CSOS. The third analysis investigated the relationship between the three independent variables (teachers' experience, control ideology, and teaching efficacy) and the Communication dimension of the CSOS.

CHAPTER IV

RESULTS

Statistical Analyses

Multiple regression analyses were used to determine the relationship between the predictor variables of teacher experience, pupil control ideology, and teacher-efficacy and the outcome measure the Classroom Systems Observation Scale. More specifically, three regression analyses were performed where predictor variables are teacher experience, pupil control ideology, and teacher-efficacy and the outcome measures are Cohesion, Flexibility and Communication. The means and standard deviations of all measures are presented in Table 3.

Coding

The following coding scheme was used for the categorical variable (experience): novice teachers (1) and expert teachers (2). Pupil Control Ideology and Teacher Efficacy are continuous variables. Pupil Control Ideology ranges on a scale from 20-100. To obtain a total score for each teacher on the Teacher Efficacy scale, the Teaching Efficacy dimension score is subtracted from the Personal Teaching Efficacy dimension score (Gibson & Dembo, 1984). These scores can range from -33 to 47.

Table 3

Means and Standard Deviations for CSOS, PCI, and TES

| <u>Measures</u> | <u>Means</u> | <u>SD</u> | <u>Possible Range of Scores</u> |
|---|--------------|-----------|---------------------------------|
| Cohesion Dimension (<u>CSOS</u>) | 2.24 | .26 | 1 to 4 |
| Flexibility Dimension (<u>CSOS</u>) | 1.98 | .24 | 1 to 4 |
| Communication Dimension (<u>CSOS</u>) | 3.73 | .49 | 1 to 6 |
| <u>PCI</u> | 52.94 | 7.64 | 20 to 100 |
| <u>TES</u> | 14.54 | 6.85 | -33 to 47 |

Note: PCI= Pupil Control Ideology Form, TES= Teacher Efficacy Scale, n=50 (26 Novice teachers & 24 Experienced teachers)
CSOS= Classroom Systems Observation Scale, n=54 (27 Novice teachers & 27 Experienced teachers)

Teachers' Experience

The means and standard deviations of the three dimensions of the CSOS for novice and experienced teachers are presented in Table 4. The results of the t-test indicate that experienced teachers' classrooms are more flexible than novice teachers' classrooms. Although there is a small difference between the means of experienced and novice teachers' flexibility scores, this can still be considered a meaningful difference because of the restriction of range in scores.

Hypothesis 1 stated that classrooms with experienced teachers will obtain a score that reflects a more balanced

flexibility score than classrooms with novice teachers on the Flexibility dimension of the CSOS. The results of the multiple regression for Hypothesis 1 are presented in Table 5. As predicted experienced teachers were found to have a more balanced flexibility score than novice teachers.

Table 4

Means and Standard Deviations for Teacher Experience

| <u>Dimensions of CSOS</u> | <u>NT</u> Mean | <u>SD</u> | <u>ET</u> Mean | <u>SD</u> | <u>t</u> | <u>Range of Scores for Data</u> |
|---------------------------|-------------------|-----------|-------------------|-----------|----------|---------------------------------|
| Cohesion | 2.22 | .28 | 2.26 | .24 | -.554 | 1.61 - 2.67 |
| Flexibility | 1.91 | .25 | 2.05 | .21 | -2.264* | 1.17 - 2.57 |
| Communication | 3.65 | .47 | 3.81 | .49 | -1.250 | 2.79 - 4.62 |

* $p < .05$

Note: NT= Novice Teacher

ET= Experienced Teacher

Subjects = 27 Novice teachers (less than one year teaching) & 27 Experienced teachers (5 or more years teaching)

The second hypothesis predicted that no differences would be found between classrooms of experienced and novice teachers on the Communication and Cohesion dimensions of the CSOS. As indicated by the regression weights and their significance levels, no difference was found between experienced and novice teachers' classrooms on the Communication and Cohesion dimensions of the CSOS (See Tables

6 & 7). These results support Hypothesis 2.

Table 5

Results of Multiple Regression for Flexibility

| <u>Variable Entered</u> | <u>B</u> | <u>t</u> | <u>p</u> |
|-------------------------|----------|----------|----------|
| Experience | .314 | 2.178 | .035* |
| <u>PCI</u> | -.116 | -.798 | .429 |
| <u>TES</u> | -.037 | -.270 | .788 |

p <.05*

Note: PCI= Pupil Control Ideology Form
TES= Teacher Efficacy Scale
n=50 (26 Novice teachers & 24 Experienced teachers)

Table 6

Results of Multiple Regression for Cohesion

| <u>Variable Entered</u> | <u>B</u> | <u>t</u> | <u>p</u> |
|-------------------------|----------|----------|----------|
| Experience | .035 | .231 | .818 |
| <u>PCI</u> | -.066 | -.432 | .668 |
| <u>TES</u> | -.167 | -1.140 | .260 |

Note: PCI= Pupil Control Ideology Form
TES= Teacher Efficacy Scale
n=50 (26 Novice teachers & 24 Experienced teachers)

Table 7

Results of Multiple Regression for Communication

| <u>Variable Entered</u> | <u>B</u> | <u>t</u> | <u>p</u> |
|-------------------------|----------|----------|----------|
| Experience | .086 | .570 | .572 |
| <u>PCI</u> | -.110 | -.722 | .474 |
| <u>TES</u> | -.164 | -1.124 | .267 |

Note: PCI= Pupil Control Ideology Form
TES= Teacher Efficacy Scale
n=50 (26 Novice teachers & 24 Experienced teachers)

Teachers' Control Ideology

Hypothesis 3 stated that teachers who have a higher humanistic orientation on the PCI will obtain a score that reflects a more balanced range on the Cohesion and Flexibility dimensions of the CSOS. The results were not significant, as indicated by the regression weights and their significance levels also located on Tables 5 and 6. These results did not support Hypothesis 3. Hypothesis 4 predicted that teachers who have a higher humanistic orientation on the PCI will obtain a higher score on the Communication dimension on the CSOS. This was shown not to be statistically significant. These results presented in Table 7 were not significant, therefore, Hypothesis 4 was not supported. The results of Hypotheses 3 and 4 indicate

that there is no relationship between the dimensions of the CSOS and teachers' control ideology.

Teachers' Efficacy Beliefs

The multiple regression for Hypothesis 5 stated that teachers with a high sense of teaching efficacy will obtain a score that reflects a more balanced range on the Cohesion and Flexibility dimensions of the CSOS than teachers with a low sense of teaching efficacy. No significant results were found. These results are also presented in Tables 5 and 6. The sixth hypothesis predicted that teachers with a high sense of teaching efficacy will obtain a higher score on the Communication dimension of the CSOS than teachers with a low sense of teaching efficacy. Analysis for Hypothesis 6 was also shown not to be statistically significant as indicated by the statistics presented on Table 7. Results for Hypotheses 5 and 6 indicate that there is no relationship between the dimensions of the CSOS and level of teachers' sense of efficacy. These results do not support either hypothesis.

Additional Analyses

Table 8 displays an intercorrelation matrix that was calculated for the three independent variables (Experience, PCI, and TES) and the three dependent variables (Cohesion,

Flexibility and Communication dimensions of the CSOS). Results showed that there was one significant negative correlation between teachers' experience and their beliefs about pupil control ideology ($r = -.30$ $p < .05$). This shows some association between having experience and being more humanistic. Four significant positive correlations were found. Results indicate a positive correlation between teachers' experience and the flexibility dimension of the CSOS ($r = .30$ $p < .05$). Experienced teachers were found to have a more flexible classroom than novice teachers. The relationships among the dimensions of the CSOS showed moderate correlations.

Another analysis was conducted to investigate whether type of school (private or public) had any influence on the results of the study. No significant results were found (See Table 9). Next, the experienced teachers data and novice teachers data were examined separately to determine if relationships would exist for either of the samples. No statistical significance were found for either analysis.

Table 8

Intercorrelation Matrix of All Variables

| | <u>Coh</u> | <u>Flex</u> | <u>Comm</u> | <u>Exp</u> | <u>PCI</u> | <u>TES</u> | <u>PTE</u> | <u>TE</u> |
|-------------|------------|-------------|-------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|-----------|
| <u>Coh</u> | 1 | .441** | .565** | .077 | -.055 | -.155 | -.074 | .136 |
| <u>Flex</u> | | 1 | .378** | .300* | -.205 | .005 | .081 | .084 |
| <u>Comm</u> | | | 1 | .171 | -.114 | -.142 | -.048 | .146 |
| <u>Exp</u> | | | | 1 | -.300* | .089 | -.015 | -.143 |
| <u>PCI</u> | | | | | 1 | -.129 | .314* | .539** |
| <u>TES</u> | | | | | | 1 | .713** | -.605** |
| <u>PTE</u> | | | | | | | 1 | .126 |
| <u>TE</u> | | | | | | | | 1 |

**p < .01

*p < .05

Note: Coh=Cohesion, Flex=Flexibility, Comm=Communication, Exp=Experience, n=54 (27 Novice teachers & 27 Experienced teachers)
PCI=Pupil Control Ideology Form, TES=Teacher Efficacy Scale, PTE=Personal Teaching Efficacy (TES dimension), TE=Teaching Efficacy (TES dimension) n=50 (26 Novice teachers & 24 Experienced teachers)

Table 9

Differences Between Types of Schools

| Dimensions of <u>CSOS</u> | Private School Mean | <u>SD</u> | Public School Mean | <u>SD</u> | <u>t</u> |
|------------------------------|---------------------------|-----------|--------------------------|-----------|----------|
| Cohesion | 2.19 | .26 | 2.27 | .26 | -1.107 |
| Flexibility | 2.01 | .23 | 1.96 | .24 | .719 |
| Communication | 3.64 | .41 | 3.78 | .52 | -1.107 |

Note: n=20 private school classrooms
n=34 public school classrooms

Chapter V

DISCUSSION

This study investigated whether teacher characteristics influenced the classroom environment. Six hypotheses were posed to examine whether teacher experience, teachers' control ideology, and teachers' sense of efficacy would be related to the Cohesion, Flexibility, and Communication domains of the Classroom Systems Observation Scale. The results of the multiple regression analyses support two of the six hypotheses. A general discussion of the results, along with limitations of the study, educational implications and ideas for future research are presented below.

General Discussion

The findings supported the first hypothesis that experienced teachers' classrooms would be significantly more flexible than novice teachers' classrooms. This suggests that teacher experience does influence the amount of adaptability that occurs in the classroom. This corroborates findings in the literature on differences based on teachers' experience. Experienced teachers were found to be responsive to students' needs and willing to adapt their lesson when necessary (Cleary & Groer, 1994; Livingston & Borko, 1989; Westerman, 1991). The second hypothesis, that no significant

difference would be found between experienced and novice teachers' classrooms on the Communication and Cohesion dimensions of the CSOS was also supported. This suggests that experience does not affect communication among members in the classroom or their sense of belonging.

Hypothesis 3 predicted that teachers' control ideology would be related to the Cohesion and Flexibility dimension of the CSOS. This hypothesis was not supported. Interestingly, the correlations, although not significant, show that as the scores for Cohesion and Flexibility increased the PCI scores decreased. This indicates that teachers with a humanistic orientation had classrooms that were higher in the balanced range of Cohesion and Flexibility. Similarly, Hypothesis 4 predicted that pupil control ideology would be related to the Communication dimension of the CSOS. Again, this hypothesis was not supported. However, a nonsignificant negative correlation for this variable was found. This suggests that the more humanistic the teacher the higher the level of Communication in the classroom. For both these hypotheses, significant results may have occurred if the sample size was larger. In addition, this is an instrument that measures ideology. What a person says he/she will do, does not always relate to how he/she actually behaves (Lunenburg & Stouten, 1983). This may also be a reason why significant results were not obtained.

The fifth hypothesis, that teachers' with a higher level of teaching efficacy would have a classroom that would have a more balanced Cohesion and Flexibility score, was not supported. Likewise, Hypothesis 6, that teachers' with a higher level of teaching efficacy would have a higher level of Communication in the classroom, was not supported. Previous studies have found that using a total efficacy score can be misleading, because the two dimensions (teaching efficacy and personal teaching efficacy) are independent and at times related in opposite ways. By not treating these dimensions as separate the relationship between teacher efficacy and other variables may be hidden (Hoy & Woolfolk, 1993; Woolfolk & Hoy, 1990). The lack of significance found for this study could be a result of examining only the global teacher efficacy score, instead of investigating the two dimensions of teacher efficacy.

Limitations

This study was only conducted in an urban area and may not generalize to classrooms in other areas. Future research could replicate this study in schools located in rural and suburban areas. Another limitation of this study was that all the observations were conducted during a reading or language arts lesson. Different subjects (e.g., math, science, or social studies) may produce different levels of

cohesion, flexibility and communication in the classroom. O'Connor and Fish (1998) found significant results for both the Cohesion and Communication dimensions of the CSOS when the subject matter was more diverse. Furthermore, the sample of teachers that participated in the sample may have influenced the results. Each school consisted of experienced/novice teacher pairs. In a few instances, teachers who were nominated by the principal did not agree to participate. If an experienced teacher refused to participate in the study another experienced teacher was chosen by the principal. Experienced teachers who agreed to participate could have had different functioning classrooms than those experienced teachers who refused. This may have altered the findings of the study. The CSOS had only moderate test-retest reliability, and this may have affected the results. It may be interesting to reanalyze the data by adjusting for the correlation of the instruments, the results may be attenuated by the moderate reliability of the CSOS.

Educational Implications

This research can benefit many members of the school environment. Because the teacher influences both the classroom system and students' learning, it is important to understand what teacher characteristics impact the classroom environment. Investigating the effects of teachers' experience, control ideology, and sense of

efficacy on the learning environment adds to our knowledge about teaching and teachers. It is important for school personnel to have a clearer understanding of what influences the classroom system so that they can work with the teacher to help improve the classroom environment.

The results of this study have shown that experienced and novice teachers' classrooms differ in flexibility. With this perspective in mind it is important to realize that new teachers may be less flexible at first, but with experience and a developing knowledge base they may become more flexible in dealing with students in the classroom. It may be important for preservice teachers to spend more hours student teaching, and reflecting on the lessons that they teach (Livingston & Borko, 1989). In addition, this information supports the use of mentors for new teachers. The CSOS could be used by mentors to help identify areas to be strengthened for new teachers.

Furthermore, the CSOS is an important instrument for researchers and school personnel because it can assess classroom functioning and lead to appropriate interventions. For example, this is an important scale for school psychologists to use because their "primary prevention orientation implies that counseling and training teachers is as important as providing individual support and assistance to students" (Weinert, Schrader, & Helmke, 1990,

p. 164). With this information they can work with teachers to develop appropriate interventions which may improve educational practices within the classroom. A balanced, flexible and cohesive classroom, will benefit both the teacher and the students.

Suggestions for Future Research

Further research could investigate whether there is a relationship between student achievement and the three dimension of the CSOS (Cohesion, Flexibility, and Communication). There has been some research that has shown a relationship between some classroom environment factors (e.g. Cohesiveness, Order and Organization, Personalization, and Rule Clarity) and students' achievement (Byrne, Hattie, & Fraser, 1986). Another area that could be investigated is whether the three dimensions of the CSOS differ for primary (K-2) and middle elementary grades (3-6). Furthermore, the research could also investigate whether there are differences between primary and middle grade teachers on the Teacher Efficacy Scale and the Pupil Control Ideology Form. In addition, future research could investigate whether observations of different subjects (e.g., math, science, social studies, and reading) for the same teachers would produce different results on the Cohesion, Flexibility, and Communication dimensions of the CSOS.

Appendix A

Demographic Variables of Novice Teachers

| Subject | Type of School | Grade | Gender |
|---------|----------------|--------------|--------|
| 1 | Private | 3 | Female |
| 2 | Public | K | Male |
| 3 | Public | K/1 (Sp. Ed) | Female |
| 4 | Public | 2 | Female |
| 5 | Private | 6 | Female |
| 6 | Public | K | Female |
| 7 | Public | 1 | Female |
| 8 | Private | 5 | Female |
| 9 | Private | 2 | Female |
| 10 | Private | K | Female |
| 11 | Public | 4 | Female |
| 12 | Private | K | Female |
| 13 | Private | 5 | Female |
| 14 | Private | 6 | Female |
| 15 | Public | K | Female |
| 16 | Public | 1 | Female |
| 17 | Public | 3 | Female |
| 18 | Public | 1 | Female |
| 19 | Public | 1 | Female |
| 20 | Public | 2 | Female |

Appendix A (continued)

| Subject | Type of School | Grade | Gender |
|---------|----------------|-------|--------|
| 21 | Private | 6 | Female |
| 22 | Public | 5 | Female |
| 23 | Public | 1 | Female |
| 24 | Public | 1 | Female |
| 25 | Public | 4 | Female |
| 26 | Public | K | Female |
| 27 | Private | 4 | Female |

Appendix B

Demographic Variables of Experienced Teachers

| Subject | Type of School | Grade | Years of Experience | Gender |
|---------|----------------|-------|---------------------|--------|
| 1 | Private | 5 | 20 | Female |
| 2 | Public | K | 29 | Female |
| 3 | Public | 4 | 11 | Female |
| 4 | Public | 3 | 13 | Female |
| 5 | Private | 3 | 10 | Female |
| 6 | Public | K | 11 | Female |
| 7 | Public | 1 | 10 | Female |
| 8 | Private | 5 | 30 | Female |
| 9 | Private | 2 | 22 | Male |
| 10 | Private | 6 | 8 | Male |
| 11 | Public | 6 | 30 | Female |
| 12 | Private | 1 | 15 | Female |
| 13 | Private | 1 | 35 | Female |
| 14 | Private | 2 | 7 | Female |
| 15 | Public | 4 | 12 | Female |
| 16 | Public | 1 | 22 | Female |
| 17 | Public | 3 | 10 | Female |

Appendix B (continued)

| Subject | Type of School | Grade | Years of Experience | Gender |
|---------|----------------|------------|---------------------|--------|
| 18 | Public | 3 (Sp.Ed.) | 21 | Female |
| 19 | Public | 1 | 11 | Female |
| 20 | Public | 1 | 5 | Female |
| 21 | Private | 1 | 39 | Female |
| 22 | Public | K | 5 | Female |
| 23 | Public | K | 8 | Female |
| 24 | Public | 2 | 5 | Female |
| 25 | Public | 1 | 6 | Female |
| 26 | Public | 1 | 7 | Female |
| 27 | Private | 3 | 15 | Female |

Appendix C

Classroom Systems Observation Scale (Fish & Dane, 1995)

Sample Items

Classroom Cohesion

Emotional Bonding

C-1 Teacher encourages class to work as a group.

Supportiveness

C-16 Students assist other students with academic work.

Boundaries

C-17 Students share classroom space.

Classroom Flexibility

Leadership

F-4 Teacher is responsive to students' need for orientation.

Discipline

F-6 Teacher considers circumstances in enforcing consequences.

Negotiation

F-9 Decisions made through teacher-student compromise.

Classroom Communication

Listener's Skills

CO-1 Teacher listens to students without interrupting.

Self-disclosure

CO-9 Teacher speaks about friends & families with students.

Clarity

CO-10 Teacher verbal messages are clear & consistent.

Appendix D

Pupil Control Ideology Form (Willower, Eidell, & Hoy, 1967)

Sample Items

1. Pupils should not be permitted to contradict the statements of a teacher in class.
2. Too much time is spent on guidance and activities and too little on academic preparation.
3. Beginning teachers are not likely to maintain strict enough control over their pupils.
4. Pupils can be trusted to work together without supervision.

Appendix E

Teacher Efficacy Scale (Gibson & Dembo, 1984)

Sample Items

Personal Teaching Efficacy

1. When a student is having difficulty with an assignment, I am usually able to adjust it to his/her level.
2. When I really try, I can get through to the most difficult students.

Teaching Efficacy

1. The hours in my class have little influence on students compared to the influence of their home environment.
2. If students are not disciplined at home, they aren't likely to accept any discipline.

Appendix F

Teacher Consent Letter

Dear _____,

My name is Evelyn O'Connor and I am a doctoral candidate in the Educational Psychology department at the Graduate school and University Center of the City University of New York. I am currently conducting a research project entitled, "Teachers' Experience, Control Ideology, and Global Teacher Efficacy as it Relates to the Dimensions of the Classroom Systems Observation Scale." This study examines the influence teachers have on the classroom environment. This information will help educators work more effectively with students.

If you choose to participate, one 50-minute classroom observation using the Classroom Systems Observation Scale (CSOS) will be conducted. The CSOS is an observational instrument that is used to determine the level of Flexibility, Cohesion, and Communication evident in an elementary school classroom. The researcher will sit in the back of the classroom to observe and record results.

After the observation, participating teachers will be given the Pupil Control Ideology Form and Teacher Efficacy Scale to complete. The Pupil Control Ideology Form is a scale that is used to determine the level of control teachers believe they should exercise to manage their class. The Teacher Efficacy Scale measures the degree teachers' believe they can control the classroom environment and influence students' learning. These questionnaires should take no more than 15 minutes to finish.

All materials will be securely stored in a locked file cabinet for five years after which they will be destroyed.

If you wish to participate, please read and sign the statement on the consent form. If you would like more information about the study, or if you have any questions, please call me at (516) 239-2990. If you have any questions concerning your rights as a participant in this study, you can call Sponsored Research, Graduate School and University Center/CUNY as (212) 642-2059.

Thank you very much for taking the time to read and respond to this letter. Your time and cooperation are greatly appreciated.

Sincerely,

Evelyn A. O'Connor

CONSENT FORM

Title of the Study: Teachers' Experience, Control Ideology, and Global Teacher Efficacy as it Relates to the Dimensions of the Classroom Systems Observation Scale

Principal Investigator: Evelyn A. O'Connor, M.S.Ed., Doctoral Candidate, Educational Psychology Department, Graduate School and University Center of the City University of New York.

Purpose of the study: This research will investigate whether teachers' experience, control ideology, and sense of efficacy are related to the Cohesion, Communication, and Flexibility dimensions of the Classroom Systems Observation Scale. Information collected from this study will help educators work more effectively with students.

If you have any questions regarding this research, you can call Evelyn O'Connor at (516) 239-2990. If you have any questions concerning your rights as a participant in this study, you can call Sponsored Research, Graduate School and University Center/CUNY as (212) 642-2059.

Participation in this study is voluntary. You will not be affected in any way if you decide not to participate or withdraw from the study for any reason. The participants in this study will remain anonymous in that their names will not be mentioned in the final research paper.

I have read all the information that appears in this consent form. I understand my rights and I voluntarily consent to participate in this study.

Teacher's signature

Date

Researcher's signature

Date

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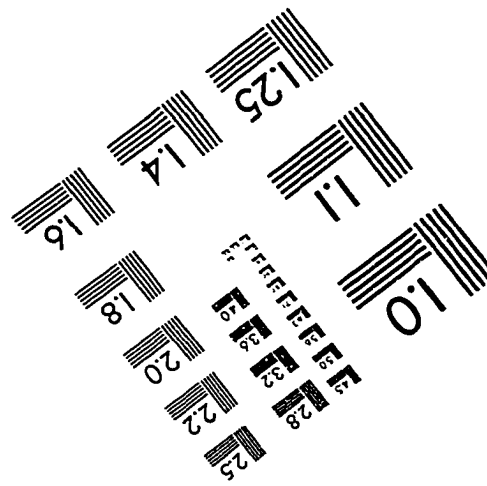
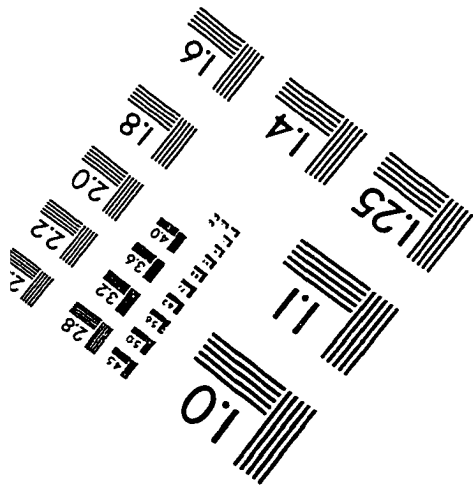
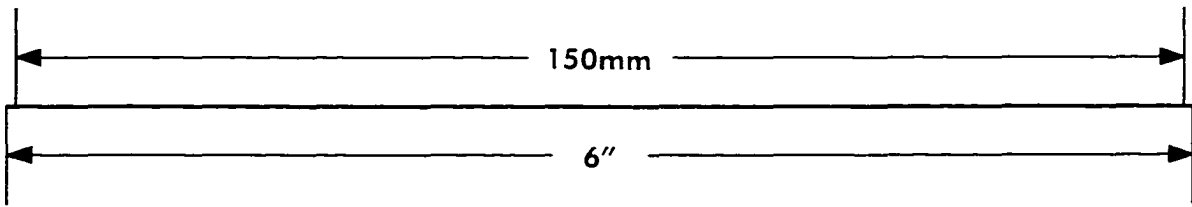
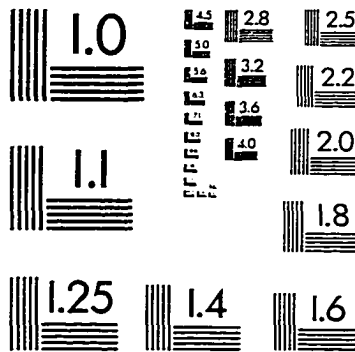
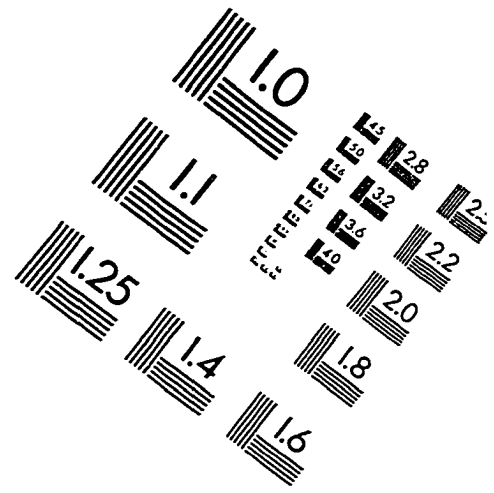
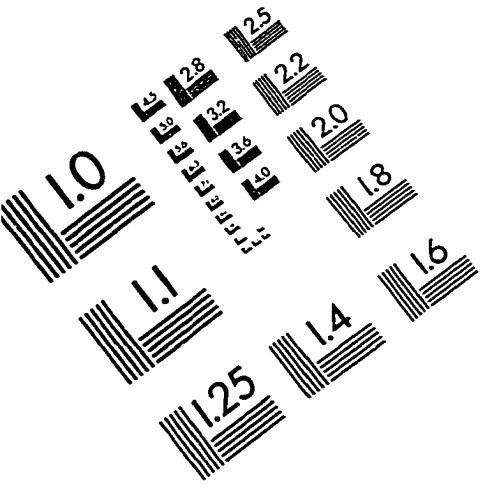
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IMAGE EVALUATION TEST TARGET (QA-3)



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