LEARNER BEHAVIOUR MANAGEMENT IN CULTURALLY DIVERSE CLASSROOMS

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Abstract

This article explores learner behaviour management practices of teachers in culturally diverse classrooms in a South African high school. The theoretical underpinnings of culturally responsive classroom management are used to describe and interpret the practices of teachers. The data for this qualitative study was collected through semi-structured interviews, analysis of pertinent documents, observation of 10 culturally diverse teachers who teach the same class of culturally diverse learners, as well as other key stakeholders. The findings reveal that learner behaviour management practices of the teachers are not culturally responsive. This is the result of factors such as lack of recognition of their own ethnocentrism and biases (as demonstrated by their unrealistic expectations, pessimistic attitudes and stereotyping perceptions); ignorance of learners' cultural backgrounds (as demonstrated by their denial and minimisation of the importance of understanding learners' cultural backgrounds, which leads to misinterpretation of the behaviour of culturally different learners); lack of commitment to building caring classroom communities; and lack of ability to apply culturally responsive classroom management strategies. The implication of these findings is that teacher education programmes need to prioritise teacher development on intercultural issues and the acquisition of intercultural competencies.

Keywords: Culturally Diverse Classrooms; Culturally Responsive; Ethnocentrism; Ethnorelativism; Learner Behaviour Management; Learner-Centred Approach

Introduction

The promulgation of the South African Schools Act (Act No. 84 of 1996) (Republic of South Africa, 1996b) in support of the Bill of Rights as enshrined in the Constitution (Act No. 108 of 1996) (Republic of South Africa, 1996a) formalised the desegregation of schools in South Africa. As a result of this major legislative change, the learner population in South African public schools came to comprise learners from diverse cultural backgrounds, with different beliefs, values and behavioural patterns. This educational reform was conceived as a vehicle to contribute to building a democratic and humane nation, enhancing social integrity, and inculcating the constitutional value of 'unity in diversity'. However research indicates that these ideals remain a challenge; in particular, learners from non-dominant groups are simply assimilated into the mainstream culture in the school, thus maintaining the existing status quo (Badat & Sayed, 2014; Jansen, 2013; Meier & Hartell, 2009; Teeger, 2015; Vandeyar, 2010; Vandeyar & Killen, 2006). Jansen (2013) is of the opinion that while

"Education policy reforms are admirable in their ideals and ambitions; … those same policies remain detached from the realities of education on the ground".

Besides the challenge of social integration as discussed above, the existence of a culturally diverse learner population in schools has had a direct impact on the traditional ways in which teachers manage the behaviour of learners in their classrooms. Although they attempt to implement alternative discipline strategies recommended by the Department of Education, most teachers feel disempowered and deprived of the ability to establish discipline (Maphosa & Shumba, 2010). South African literature on learner behaviour management reveals that the strategies employed by teachers to manage learner behaviour are generally not effective (Dhlamini, 2014; Maphosa & Shumba, 2010; Mestry & Khumalo, 2012; Segalo & Rambuda, 2018; Van Wyk, 2016); however, these studies do not pay attention to the significance of managing learner behaviour in the context of cultural diversity. Inspired by the necessity to address this gap, this study was carried out to explore the cultural responsiveness of learner behaviour management (LBM) practices of teachers in culturally diverse classrooms in South African high schools. To this end the objectives of the study were to investigate the following:

- Learner behaviour management challenges that teachers experience in culturally diverse classrooms;
- Teachers' expectations of learner behaviour;
- Teachers' understanding of their learners' cultural backgrounds;
- Strategies that teachers use to manage learner behaviour in culturally diverse classrooms;
- Teachers' commitment to promoting caring classroom communities.

The following section presents the theoretical framework for this study. Thereafter the methodology used to collect and analyse data is discussed, followed by findings of the study, discussion and conclusions.

Theoretical Framework

This article explores LBM practices of teachers through the lens of the culturally responsive classroom management (CRCM) theory developed by Weinstein, Tomlinson-Clarke and Curran (2004). This theory attempts to address the question of whether different approaches to classroom behaviour management are required when dealing with culturally diverse learners, considering that cultural clashes are likely to emerge in classrooms containing culturally diverse learners.

Underpinning the theory of CRCM "is the premise that CRCM is a frame of mind, more than a set of strategies or practices, that guides the management decisions that teachers make" (Weinstein et al., 2004). In this regard, the authors maintain that culturally responsive classroom teachers reflect on their own biases and values, and how these influence their expectations of the behaviour of learners and their interactions with them. They argue that the eventual aim of classroom management is not to attain control or compliance, but to afford all learners equitable learning opportunities. Weinstein et al. (2004) offer five components that are fundamental to CRCM: recognition of one's own ethnocentrism and biases; knowledge of learners' cultural backgrounds; understanding of the broader social, economic and political context of the education system; ability and willingness to use culturally appropriate

classroom management strategies; and commitment to building caring classroom communities. The theory of CRCM is supported by Irvine's (2003) framework of cultural synchronisation and her interpretation of 'cultural incongruence'.

"Teachers bring to school their own set of cultural and personal characteristics that influence their work. This includes their beliefs, attitudes, behaviours, ethnicity, ... Many … students …, by contrast, have a different set of cultural and personal characteristics. When teachers and students bring varying, and often conflicting, cultural experiences to the classroom, there is a possibility of cultural discontinuity … When teachers and students are out of sync, they clash and confront each other both consciously and unconsciously. (Irvine, 2003)".

Irvine's (2003) interpretation of cultural incongruence, like Weinstein et al.'s (2004) theory of CRCM, emphasises the possible cultural disconnect between teachers and learners in culturally diverse classrooms, and the behavioural implications thereof, and urges teachers to be culturally responsive and interculturally competent. In support of CRCM, Milner and Tenore (2010) argue that cultural responsiveness is about "equity in practice", which implies that behaviour management approaches for culturally diverse learners are not necessarily the same across the board; instead, the intervention required for successful behaviour management with one learner may be reasonably different from the intervention required for another learner, and in this way cultural responsiveness repudiates a "one-size-fits-all approach" (Milner & Tenore, 2010).

Research Methodology

A qualitative case study design was used to investigate LBM practices of teachers in culturally diverse classrooms; data was collected primarily through non-participative classroom observation, semi-structured interviews and document analysis. Purposive sampling was used to select one school with a culturally diverse learner population and culturally diverse teaching staff in the Tshwane South District within the Gauteng Department of Education, South Africa. Purposive sampling was further used to select one class in the school with the most culturally diverse learners, which is also taught by culturally diverse teachers.

The selected school is a former model C school[i], which – like many such schools which were attended by whites only before the desegregation of the schooling system – experienced 'white flight' as more African learners gained entry. As a result of the influx of African learners into this school and the gradual disappearance of white learners, African learners came to constitute a higher percentage (86.4%) than other ethnic and cultural groups, while the majority of teachers are still white. The selected class is described as Grade 9B, consisting of thirty-three learners from diverse ethnic and cultural backgrounds (African, coloured, Indian and white learners from South Africa; Africans learners from countries outside South Africa; as well as Argentinian, Cuban and Portuguese learners). The majority of the learners were African South Africans.

While the initial intention was to observe one culturally diverse class that is taught by ten teachers, the sample was expanded (through snowball sampling) to observe another class to broaden our perspective. Thus, two more teachers from other cultural backgrounds (i.e. a Zimbabwean teacher and an Indian teacher) were observed teaching a different group of learners (Grade 9D), and were subsequently interviewed. The Discipline Officer, who focuses solely on learner behaviour management, was also included as an additional participant.

Table 1 summarises the participants in this study in terms of their ethnic and cultural diversity. The names used to identify participants are pseudonyms to preserve confidentiality.

Table 1: Summary of Participants in the Study

Participant	**Ethnic Group and Nationality**
Grade 9B Class Teachers	
Ms Van Rooyen	White (SA)
Ms Rossouw	White (SA)
Ms Visagie	White (SA)
Ms Pienaar	White (SA)
Mr Potgieter	White (SA)
Ms Kunonga	African (Zimbabwean)
Mr Atta	African (Ghanaian)
Mr Nkosi	African (SA)
Ms Kunene	African (SA)
Ms Mbatha	African (SA)
Grade 9D Class Teachers	
Mr Naagesh	Indian (SA)
Mr Moyo	African (Zimbabwean)
Discipline Office	
Discipline Officer	White (SA)

Direct observation was conducted continuously for 15 days of the initial 10 teachers (i.e. 15 observations per teacher). The two additional teachers were occasionally observed, as well as the sessions held between the Discipline Officer and learners who were referred to her office for discipline-related issues. All the participants in Table 1 were interviewed. Each interview lasted 90 minutes and was audio-recorded and then transcribed. The inductive analysis approach was used to investigate general themes that emerged from the data and to reach conclusions.

Research Findings

Analysis of participant responses to the interview questions, direct observations and relevant documents revealed the following five major themes (each of which is presented in turn below): Learner behaviour management challenges experienced by teachers; teachers' expectations of learner behaviour; teachers' understanding of

learners' cultural backgrounds; strategies used by teachers to manage learner behaviour; teachers' commitment to promote caring classroom communities.

Learner Behaviour Management Challenges

The participants indicated a variety of challenges that they experience in culturally diverse classrooms, including learners' lack of work ethic; learners' sense of entitlement; learners acting up; lack of parental involvement and support; and difficulty in maintaining order in a multicultural classroom.

The majority of teachers reported that the main challenge that they experience with learners is their lack of work ethic.

"What do you do if they don't work, because this is my biggest problem… (Ms Rossouw)".

The learners' lack of work and the resultant clashes between some teachers and some learners became evident during observation. The white teacher had instructed a Rwandan learner to sit on the floor during the Geography period until she received a response from the mother to a letter concerning her daughter's lack of work ethic.

The learners' sense of entitlement was mentioned by some teachers, and by the Discipline Officer, as the major LBM challenge they face;

"So I said, leave the classroom now… Two minutes later...; he came in again into the classroom. Why're you coming, who invited you? 'I must learn I've paid school fees'… (Mr Atta)".

"I think the biggest challenge for us is we are living with a generation of entitlement… (Discipline Officer)".

It is interesting that the teacher of Ghanaian heritage (Mr Atta) found the African South African learners' bold/assertive way of speaking to be culturally questionable; he said the way these learners express themselves is 'not allowed' in other 'systems' he knows. While several participants raised their concerns about the culture of rights, the perception of another teacher was that the culture of rights needs to be promoted, but together with an emphasis on the responsibility aspect that should accompany it:

"We have basic human rights and those children also really have rights, but I think we have not taught our children the responsibilities that go with those rights… (Ms Kunonga)"

Instances of learners 'acting up' or demonstrating indifference to their teachers were commonly reported by teachers:

"When I said to the learner (African South African) who did not do her work: "You have a zero", *she replied: "That's okay, Mam can give me a zero" ... I was not expecting that response.* (Ms Van Rooyen)".

"I've given her (Rwandan learner) hard copies and she would throw it away, and then she would just sit … (Ms Rossouw)".

Follow-up discussions with the teachers revealed as problematic the fact that some of them did not make time to follow up with learners who demonstrated unexpected behaviour. Such attempts would help to understand where such behaviour emanates from, as well as the life worlds of these learners, the challenges they face and how these challenges affect their behaviour. Teachers just viewed such behaviour as inappropriate and it ended there.

On the other hand, those teachers who did take the time to follow up with such learners, came to understand the issues better or differently, as was demonstrated in the instance of the Rwandan learner. While her problem was perceived by the white teacher as lack of a work ethic, the African teacher perceived that the learner's problem was psychological as well as cultural, in the sense that the learner seemed to lack a sense of belonging:

"That's not … a discipline issue. I think it has to do with a psychological issue … And I think learners have a tendency of looking down on each other. (Ms Kunene)".

Thus, there may have been more to the learner's behaviour than simply the lack of a work ethic. If teachers do not delve deeper to uncover the source of learners' behaviour which they perceive as inappropriate, they may interpret such behaviour as wilful, while there may be other underlying factors.

The lack of parental involvement and support was cited by some teachers as a prominent challenge that they experience:

"One of our challenges… is parents not coming back to you … (Ms Rossouw)".

Another challenge stated emphatically by some teachers was the difficulty in keeping order in a multi-cultural environment:

"I just cast my eyes. I don't talk…. They believe you are challenging them. "…Why are you looking at me alone? That's unfair". "The way of reprimanding may not be acceptable. But in my culture, it is acceptable…; I can raise my voice… The learner will say no, we are not fighting. (Mr Moyo)".

The above quotation reveals a cultural disconnect between learners and their teacher. It suggests that sometimes the teacher's way of reprimanding may not be acceptable to learners; they might interpret it as intimidation, whereas in the teachers' culture it is acceptable. The same applies to the teacher raising his voice, which may be interpreted by the learner as 'fighting'.

Beside the challenge of maintaining order that relates to cultural disconnects and misinterpretation of each other's intent or actions, much of teachers' time was spent reacting to the lack of anticipated quietness.

White teachers seemed to be more repressive in this regard, and also seemed frustrated by learners talking to each other at end of a period and when they had just entered the classroom:

"Please do not speak to each other … You are really very annoying … you are just not aware how annoying you are ... You are not hooligans, are you? (Mr Potgieter)". Since challenges in human interactions are often caused by differences in people's expectations, the next theme addresses teachers' expectations of learner behaviour.

Teachers' Expectations of Learner Behaviour

Teachers' expectations of learner behaviour were explored in order to understand teachers' recognition of their own ethnocentrism and biases about learner behaviour. The findings reveal that most white teachers expect learners to react quickly and positively to instructions, and to be quiet at all times. However, most of the learners were not able to meet these expectations, with some of the teachers expressing pessimism that learners would ever meet their expectations:

"I expect learners to be quiet at all times, to listen to instructions and to immediately respond as instructed. (Ms Rossouw)".

"It will never happen. I have made peace with that … (Ms Van Rooyen)".

While most teachers emphasised learner compliance with teachers' instructions as a common expectation, very few teachers mentioned expectations of self-discipline and intrinsic motivation among learners. One such example was:

"I expect learners to have the will to learn, to be intrinsically motivated in the sense of knowing the value of coming to school. (Mr Moyo)".

There was an indication that teachers' expectations are often unrealistic. The Discipline Officer's response to the question of expectations of learner behaviour clarifies that learners actually did not meet the required 'standard' of behaviour:

"My expectations seem to be much higher than the outcome. We assume that they would know what is expected, what is the standard, the normal behaviour … My standards sometimes are extremely high because of the way I was raised myself in a very disciplined home. (Discipline Officer)".

The Discipline Officer's response suggests that the standard that she expects from learners matches that of her own cultural background. It suggests further that her view of learners' behaviour in this regard is ethnocentric[ii]. She used terms/phrases such as "*normal behaviour*"; "*noise levels… too high for the school*"; *"… standard of this institution".*

With reference to the issue of noise levels, one of the white teachers strongly linked the noise level to African culture:

"African learners, you will see as they walk in and … they're talking so loud. And I asked them why? But Mam, this is how we are … (Ms Visagie)".

Interestingly, one of the African teachers agreed that African learners tend to raise the pitch of their voices when speaking to each other:

"And it's been part of our culture to say that the louder you are, it means the more in control you are, the more knowledgeable you are, the more confident you are … (Ms Kunonga)".

Participants seldom mentioned the notion of linking their expectations to their worldviews, but one of the teachers shared the following observation:

"Predominantly, …obviously I'm not saying this as like, a law, that it applies in every case – people that have a European heritage have been brought up with, if you want Z you must do Y and X. That, plus that, plus that, will give you this – it's like a formula in mathematics or physics … This is the worldview that many of our teachers come from. Our learners don't come from the same worldview. The worldview that many of our learners have is, I'm living life but I'm not really in charge … life happens. The truth is a mixture of both … and so, how do we perhaps bridge or synchronise those worldviews? (Mr Naagesh)".

As divergent worldviews are likely to spring from different cultural backgrounds, the issue of how teachers understand learners' cultural backgrounds and the importance of such understanding is discussed in the following section.

Understanding Learners' Cultural Backgrounds

"While some teachers acknowledged that understanding learners' cultural background is important, others clearly stated that it is not. *Knowledge of learner cultural background is quite important – this can be used as a bridge to connect with learners* (Mr Naagesh)".

"It's not important, as I view them as a group (Ms Van Rooyen)".

Some of the teachers declared that they do notice existing cultural differences among learners, but they did not know how to handle such differences:

"I see the difference, but I don't know how to handle these differences (Ms Rossouw)".

It also became apparent that cultural differences between learners and their teachers manifest in their different communication styles, especially regarding eye contact.

"Some of them don't look you in the eyes … we were brought up that if we look in the eyes it shows that you are actually listening to that person and that you are involved in the conversation. (Ms Pienaar)".

However, in African culture, keeping eye contact might be interpreted as challenging authority:

"Looking into the teacher's eyes when talking to the teacher, it's like you are challenging authority … (Ms Kunonga)".

The analysis of documents obtained from one of the teachers confirmed this cultural misunderstanding. One blue slip (demerit slip) indicated that a punitive measure was taken by a white teacher against an African learner who, when reprimanded, did not look at the teacher. This infraction was marked on the blue slip as 'insolence'. The teacher confirmed that she had interpreted the learner's action as being disrespectful and rude.

Further examples that relate to differences in communication styles involve body language and the way young people in African cultures hand a paper, a book or anything else to an adult:

"Some African learners put the left hand on the wrist of the right hand when handing the book to the teacher and some of them use two hands simultaneously, which is an expression of respect. That is my culture … I view giving with one hand as a sign of disrespect, and this is what all coloured learners and others do … (Mr Moyo)".

Overall, the evidence obtained from participants' responses and perceptions about learners' behavioural differences in relation to their cultural backgrounds affirms the importance of understanding learners' cultural backgrounds, including their communication styles and norms of interpersonal communication. Clearly, the same yardstick should not be used to measure the behaviour of learners who come from diverse cultural backgrounds.

Strategies Used by Teachers to Manage Learner Behaviour

As a result of the teachers' differing worldviews and perspectives, they employ different LBM strategies, as discussed below.

Punitive and insensitive disciplinary strategies that are often used by teachers include the use of verbal reprimands, which are often harsh; or instructing learners to step out of class, or to sit on the floor. The insensitive nature of these punitive strategies was evident in classroom observations, when teachers were rude when communicating with learners or rebuking them for behaviour that they considered inappropriate:

"We are here to teach you not to handle your nonsense … If you can't behave, pack your bags and go. (Ms Pienaar)".

"Leave the classroom and go and stand outside. (Mr Atta)".

"You will sit on the floor until your mother speaks to me. (Ms Rossouw)".

The above punitive measures seem to be more teacher-centred than learner-centred, as they were likely to afflict some learners emotionally, without ever improving undesirable behaviour.

While most teachers perceived allowing 'call response' pattern as disruptive, it was allowed by one African teacher who does not mind when learners ask questions as and when they think of them, without raising their hands.

Interventions towards inculcating a sense of responsibility – which demonstrate an integration of authority and care – were demonstrated during classroom observations of only two teachers. One of them (Mr Naagesh) was heard correcting the behaviour of a learner in the following manner "When we watch a video, we watch and we do not talk". This was an expression of disapproval that is still respectful and considerate. At the same time, the teacher indicated what appropriate behaviour would be. Another teacher corrected the behaviour of a group of learners in a similar manner: "Can we be quiet so that we can follow" (Ms Kunonga), explaining why learners had to be quiet. It is interesting that these few authoritative teachers were able to engage learners during lessons, thus capturing the attention of all learners, including the talkative ones. In most instances, these teachers did not have to reprimand learners regularly. Such strategies are not stipulated in the school's code of conduct – they come with experience and the right approach or worldview.

It is evident that while some teachers were trying to follow the prescripts of the code of conduct to manage learner behaviour in the classroom, most of them exercised their discretion. The Discipline Officer described the situation of not having a unified approach as a kind of a 'yo-yo' environment:

"Unified approaches and rules … Not this yo-yo environment where this teacher does this, this teacher doesn't. There we may do this and here we may not. Here this is fine, here we are in trouble … Because you do get teachers who feel that – but this is my classroom, this is my little kingdom and here I rule as I deem fit. Also missing the point completely of having a set of uniformity rules applying to everybody … (Discipline Officer)".

One of the teachers, who at some point mentioned that she had been a learner at this school, also mentioned deviations from the school's system and its code of conduct by other teachers' LBM practices:

"I feel that standing outside in lines…; being led in, standing behind your chair, waiting for the teacher to greet you; and when the period ends greeting your teacher and being led out quietly; those three things make life easier for a teacher … and it's a constant fight that we have between the teachers… It's tough, you cannot force someone to change their ways that they have been doing it for years. (Ms Visagie)".

While this teacher expected learners to behave in the same way she remembered as a learner in a model C school – and also as prescribed in the code of conduct – she indicated that other teachers' ways of managing learner behaviour are not compliant with the school's philosophy.

This suggests that some of the teachers' practices may depend on the kind of practices, norms and values they were exposed to in the schools they attended.

Promotion of Caring Classroom Communities

Some teachers perceive their job as only delivering content and not dealing with issues beyond instruction:

"… I don't deal with their complicated situations … we have a discipline team. I will refer them immediately … (Ms Van Rooyen)".

This teacher's refusal to deal with learners' problematic situations may suggest the lack of a sense of caring and reluctance to know about her learners' life worlds. Promoting a sense of community through collaborative learning was found to be lacking in the classrooms in this study, as teachers promote independent learning instead. When asked about collaborative learning versus individual learning, some of the teachers indicated that they avoid engaging learners in teamwork because they would make noise. This was evident in the Geography classroom, where almost a third of the class were not in possession of tablets, which were required for the lesson; nevertheless, the teacher did not want learners to share tablets or work jointly, as she feared that they might start talking to each other.

Discussion

It is evident that most teachers in this study struggle to manage the behaviour of culturally diverse learners. They experience a wide range of challenges including:

(a) *Perceived lack of learners' work ethic.* This challenge was reported largely by teachers of white Afrikaans culture (the dominant culture in the historically white school under study), as most African learners seem not to maintain the behavioural standard expected by these teachers. However, the findings established that what they perceive as unethical behaviour would not be perceived as such in the cultural environments of these learners.

(b) *Learners' Sense of Entitlement.*

Learners of the non-dominant cultures demonstrated awareness of the human right to education (when instructed to leave the classroom); the right to human dignity (when their rights were violated by teachers' insensitive and derogatory remarks); and the right to freedom of expression (when they were expected to be quiet at all times). However, these claims were perceived by teachers as learners demonstrating a sense of entitlement.

(c) *Learners' Indifferent Behaviour*.

In this study, most teachers often evaluate learners' behaviour through their own cultural lens and employ a one-size-fits-all approach to all cases, irrespective of the

circumstances leading to the infraction. As a result, some learners demonstrate indifferent behaviour when reprimanded.

(d) *Lack of Parental Involvement and Support.*

Parents were often not responsive to teachers' letters concerning their children's behaviour. It was, however, established that the teachers often contacted parents when their child had broken a rule, but rarely was there any attempt to know and understand the cultural background of the learner.

(e) Difficulty in Maintaining Order in a Multicultural Classroom.

Most teachers in this study seem to believe they can only teach effectively when learners behave in certain ways (as demonstrated by spending much of their time reacting to what they perceived as learners' inappropriate behaviours). It was however, established in this study that the teachers and their learners do not often share a common understanding of what constitutes appropriate behaviour.

These challenges point to teacher–learner cultural disconnects as a source of most LBM challenges that were experienced by teachers in the school under study. Following the teachers' challenges as summarised above and the cultural clashes between teachers and learners as detailed in the research findings, it appears that the LBM practices of most teachers in this study are not consistent with CRCM theory. In the sub-sections below, we analyse the teachers' LBM practices according to the five fundamental components of CRCM.

Recognition of own Ethnocentrism and Biases

Teachers do not seem to recognise their own ethnocentrism and biases. Their ethnocentrism is evident in their conviction that the ways of doing things or behaviour that they have acquired from their cultures (or families or schools that shaped them) are the desirable forms of learner behaviour. As a result, their expectations of learner behaviour – which are infused with their own cultural values – are often unrealistic and thus not met by learners who come from different cultural backgrounds.

For example, the challenges of learners not responding quickly to instructions, not meeting an expectation of quiet in the classroom at all times, as well as loudness when speaking to each other, were experienced mostly by participants from the white Afrikaans cultural background who previously attended former white-only schools. These forms of behaviour are not of major concern to the African teachers. The difference in the approaches was explained by one African teacher, who suggested that loudness in speech is a cultural attribute of Africans. This finding supports the argument by Monroe (2005) that teachers at times interpret learner behaviour as inappropriate, while the same behaviour would be interpreted as appropriate in another cultural setting.

The Discipline Officer's concession that her standards are sometimes extremely high because she was raised in a very disciplined home also explains her possible

unrealistic expectations of culturally diverse learners. Her belief that what she expects is normal behaviour demonstrates her ethnocentric worldview:

"We assume that they would know what is … the normal behaviour".

This finding confirms the assertion by Cartledge, Vincent & Robinson-Ervin (2015) that LBM approaches to orderliness in culturally diverse classrooms are not culturally impartial, as they are often based on the cultural norms of the dominant group which become institutionalised in culturally diverse schools.

Teachers' stereotyping tendencies are apparent in the findings of this study. Some of the African learners were labelled as more challenging and questioning teachers' authority, while interestingly, the open questioning from well-travelled Cuban learners was appreciated by some teachers as demonstrating their thinking ability:

"*… They've travelled internationally; … when you see me teaching you'll see them arguing with me. I've got no problem with that… Fine, because you're thinking* (Mr Naagesh)".

This finding is consistent with Weinstein et al.'s (2003) contention that teachers' practices may marginalise and alienate some learners, while privileging other learners due to stereotyping. Milner and Tenore (2010) contend that the effect of teachers on the conduct of learners is tremendous, especially when learners develop a perception that they are being marginalised. This is because when learners perceive that they are not as privileged as others may be, they could resort to 'mistaken goals'.

On the whole, evidence concerning the teachers' unmet and unrealistic expectations; teacher pessimism about learners ever meeting their expectations; and biased and stereotyping perceptions about culturally diverse learners, reveals that most of the teachers and most of the learners in this study have divergent worldviews.

Knowledge of Learners' Cultural Backgrounds

Most teachers in this study did not acknowledge the importance of knowing about learners' cultural backgrounds. These teachers are in the "denial of cultural difference" frame of mind (Bennett, 2004). This attitude confirms the existence of culture-neutral or colour-blind ideology, which is well documented in the literature (Gay, 2010; Jansen, 2004; Milner & Tenore, 2010; Vandeyar, 2010; Vandeyar & Killen, 2006). Milner and Tenore (2010) argue that while teachers hold these culture-neutral notions, they miss significant features and scopes of the identity of culturally diverse learners.

It is also apparent that teachers often misinterpret behaviour of learners from cultural backgrounds that are different to their own. This was evident where a teacher issued a blue slip for what she interpreted as insolence, whereas according to the learner's culture, a young person is expected not to look an older person directly in the face when reprimanded. This finding confirms studies conducted by Weinstein et al.

(2004) and Skiba, Michael, Nardo & Peterson (2002), where misinterpretation of learner behaviour leading to unnecessary disciplinary referrals stemmed from instances where the behaviour of culturally different learners was interpreted subjectively. In this regard, Weinstein et al. (2004) assert that acquisition of knowledge about learners' cultural backgrounds – including their parents' expectations as regards discipline, as well as their families' cultural norms for interpersonal relationships – will enable teachers to be culturally responsive.

The dissimilarity of communication styles relating to body language also affects interaction between teachers and learners. This was evident in the accounts provided by the Zimbabwean teacher relating to his discourse style – giving a learner a stern look as a non-verbal reprimand, which the learner perceived as an unfair action; his shouting being perceived as a sign of 'fighting' by another learner; and his own perception of coloured learners who handed their books to him with only one hand as a sign of disrespect. This evidence demonstrates the importance of understanding cross-cultural communication styles in culturally diverse classrooms, as suggested in the literature (Brown, 2004; Gay, 2010, 2002; Weinstein et al., 2003, 2004).

Commitment to Building Caring Classroom Communities

A lack of sense of care was demonstrated by teachers as they perceived their job as only delivering content and not dealing with issues beyond instruction or involving learners' complicated situations. Irvine (2003) argues that while it is important for teachers to deliver content, they need to perceive teaching as a calling, be caring, be culturally sensitive, and ensure a sense of identity with their learners. As some teachers in this school treat their learners with contempt (e.g. using harsh words), many learners became unreceptive, and some developed indifferent behaviour. This outcome suggests learners' ability to discern unwarranted detachment between their teachers and themselves, and it is such disconnects that eventually determine learners' actions (Milner & Tenore, 2010).

While collaborative learning is one of the mechanisms to promote a caring classroom community, it is not encouraged in this case study. Engaging learners in teamwork is avoided because learners would make some noise; learners who did not have tablets were not allowed to share with those who had, as they would 'cause trouble' by talking to each other. We may deduce that the lack of collaborative learning is clearly a systemic and institutional barrier – a challenge in a culturally diverse learning environment that restrains promotion of classroom community and collaborative learning (Milner & Tenore, 2010; Weinstein et al. 2003, 2004) – as the school ethos emphasises quietness in classrooms.

Understanding the broader Social, Economic and Political Context

Weinstein et al. (2004) and Kumashiro (2009) as well as Casey, Lozenski and McManimon (2013) argue that discriminatory practices within broader society are often preserved and replicated in schools. A lack of social integration within classrooms was demonstrated in this case study through the traditional column

seating arrangement and lack of collaborative learning among culturally diverse learners. Thus, when learners step out of the classroom, they tend to maintain contact with members of the same ethnic, cultural and racial groups.

The requirement for learners to use electronic technology (such as tablets) for academic purposes reveals that teachers are not conscious of the economic context of the learners since some of them (from previously disadvantaged ethnic groups) do not necessarily have such resources. The study also established that the poor socio-economic conditions in which some of the culturally diverse learners find themselves are likely to cause some teachers to harbour negative perceptions about them – those learners who were perceived to be lacking a work ethic, did not bring a book, or did not have a tablet came from previously disadvantaged backgrounds. This suggests that the policies and practices of the school benefit learners from more advantaged socio-economic backgrounds.

Furthermore, the teachers' perception of learners' awareness of basic human rights as indicating a sense of entitlement reveals that some teachers are not conscious or mindful of the political context of the education system.
It remains important for teachers to help learners understand the responsibility that goes with the enjoyment of such basic human rights.

Capability and Willingness to use Culturally Appropriate LBM Strategies

Consequent to their diverse perspectives, teachers in this study employ different approaches and strategies to LBM. Most of these are more teacher-centred than learner-centred, and not culturally responsive.

Although working with parents is one of the LBM strategies prescribed in the school's code of conduct, this strategy is not used effectively. The teachers' practice of only contacting parents to report learners' transgressions, as reflected earlier, falls short of working with parents optimally to manage the behaviour of culturally diverse learners. Weinstein et al. (2003) and Sugai, O'Keeffe & Fallon (2012) suggest that since parents' views about what comprises appropriate behaviour may be different from those of the school, it is vital to include families as resources to help determine school expectations.

While most of the teachers in this study tend to use their own discretion instead of adhering to the school's code of conduct, it was established that some teachers who identify with the school's cultural ethos and had been similarly schooled, coerce learners to comply with the stipulations in the school's code of conduct; they also criticised other teachers who diverge from such stipulations. The practice of coercing all to comply without attempting to find out about their background may well be viewed as the promotion of cultural assimilation (Chisholm & Sujee, 2006; Meier & Hartell, 2009; Soudien, 2012; Vandeyar, 2010). In addition, the Discipline Officer advocated a single, overriding culture, while describing the situation as a kind of a 'yo-yo' environment without a unified approach. This practice confirms the assertion by Nkomo and Vandeyar (2009) that former model C schools have a mainstream cultural plan that influences the assimilation of non-dominant cultures.

In exercising their discretion, teachers who are more inclined to the teacher-centred approach and resort to punitive and insensitive strategies, apply such strategies irrespective of the circumstances leading to the infraction – even for infractions that they have interpreted subjectively. This one-size-fits-all approach contradicts the understanding that cultural responsiveness is about equity in practice (Milner & Tenore, 2010). Very few teachers in this study resort to learner-centred strategies – the few who do are thus able to command authority in a caring manner. They endeavour to cultivate a sense of responsibility through mutual respect between themselves and their learners, and encourage learner engagement and participation in the classroom. This approach stimulates learner interest as well as cooperation.

While one may assume that the teacher in this study who allows "call response" (Weinstein et al., 2004) pattern is culturally sensitive, he branded himself as 'culture-neutral'. This is contrary to one of the CRCM prerequisites, which requires teachers to have knowledge and understanding of learner's cultural backgrounds. Irvine (2003) maintains that when teachers disregard distinctive cultural identities of their learners, they fall short of being culturally responsive teachers. This teacher's acceptance of the call response pattern could perhaps be explained by his laissez-faire type of leadership.

Generally, the findings indicate a number of patterns of behaviour management among teachers in this school: teacher-centred strategies that include punitive and insensitive strategies; strategies that are contained in the school's code of conduct, but are still teacher-centred; use of discretion, yet most strategies are still teacher-centred with only a few teachers demonstrating learner-centred strategies, with some traces of cultural responsiveness; as well as strategies that may be (erroneously) perceived as culturally responsive when they are not. Based on the above patterns of behaviour management, it can be concluded that teachers' practices in this school are not yet culturally responsive.

A noteworthy finding is that while teachers are expected to manage the behaviour of learners in a culturally responsive manner, they stated unanimously that they have not received any formal training or development in the necessary competencies for managing behaviour of learners from culturally diverse backgrounds.

Conclusion

The study reveals that, for a number of reasons, the LBM practices of most teachers in the case study are not culturally responsive. The major impediments to teachers' practices being culturally responsive include the following: a lack of recognition of their own ethnocentrism and biases (demonstrated mainly by their unrealistic expectations, pessimistic attitudes and stereotyping perceptions); ignorance of learners' cultural backgrounds (demonstrated mainly by their denial and minimisation of the importance of understanding learners' cultural backgrounds, thus leading to misinterpretation of their behaviour); lack of commitment to building caring classroom communities (demonstrated by their lack of a sense of care and failing to encourage a sense of connectedness among learners through collaborative learning); and their limited ability and, in some cases, unwillingness to use culturally responsive strategies (demonstrated by their use of mostly teacher-centred, control-oriented

interventions to manage learner behaviour). Teachers' limited ability to utilise culturally responsive strategies seems to have been exacerbated by a lack of training and development in preparing them to handle the behaviour of culturally diverse learners.

In the main, we may conclude that the teachers' use of traditional, behaviourist, one-size-fits-all LBM practices substantially stands in the way of culturally responsive LBM. Most importantly, various systemic and institutional barriers associated with the cultural fabric of the school were identified, namely stringent restrictions on learners talking to each other, lack of commitment to building cohesive classroom communities, and the Discipline Office's insistence on a standard – but not interculturally synchronised approach to LBM. These barriers play a major role in preventing the successful implementation of national policy imperatives that are intended to promote social integration and equitable learning opportunities for all, through the desegregation of South African schools.

The findings of this study have definite implications for teachers to develop a change agent mindset, and for teacher education and development to prepare them to deal with a culturally diverse learner population. It is therefore recommended that teachers should endeavour to move from being ethnocentric to being ethnorelative[iii] by developing an inclusive outlook, accepting cultural differences, and adapting their perspective to take into account existing cultural differences in learner behaviour. Teacher education programmes should prioritise the inclusion of intercultural development and the acquisition of requisite intercultural competencies, as these aspects of teacher preparation are crucial for the appropriate management of the behaviour of learners whose cultural backgrounds are different from their own.

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