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Four Classroom Traits of Successful Educators

Christopher B. Davison, Ball State University, IN
Sherif Attallah, Ball State University, IN
Edward Lazaros, Ball State University, IN
Silvia Sharna, Ball State University, IN

Davison, Ph.D., is an Assistant Professor in the Department of Information Systems and Operations Management; Lazaros, Ph.D., is a Professor in the Department of Information Systems and Operations Management; Attallah, Ph.D., is an Assistant Professor in the Department of Construction Management and Interior Design; Sharna is a graduate student in the Center for Information and Communication Sciences.

Abstract

A great deal can be learned from research on successful educators. These educators have some characteristics that appear to be in common. In this research article, the authors will present and discuss four classroom traits of successful educators. A review of the literature will first be presented. Following that, an analysis of the four prevalent classroom traits will be provided.

Introduction

There exists a great deal of research literature with regard to effective teaching. In this article, the research on this subject will be synthesized in order to provide a discussion on the top four classroom traits for successful educators. These are the observable (from the student and administrator perspective) characteristics displayed by successful educators while in the classroom.

Teachers have a powerful, long-lasting influence on their students. They directly influence how students learn, what they learn, how much they learn, and the ways they interact with one another and the world around them. Considering the degree of a teacher's influence, understanding what teachers should do to promote positive results in the lives of students with regard to school achievement, positive attitude toward school, interest in learning, and other desirable outcomes is important. This understanding should be based both on what experts and stakeholders think teachers should do and on what education research has shown to be significant in the preparation and practice of effective teachers.

Educators and administrators alike can utilize this research article to further professional development. As end of course surveys are likely to impact the promotion and tenure of most (if not all) university faculty, developing highly competent teaching abilities and classroom traits is important.

It is not apparent who or what arbitrates what is a successful educator. Does the teaching evaluation serve as the definitive source? Is it the supervisor's teaching evaluation or the students' evaluation, or a combination of both that serves as the litmus test? Are there other metrics such as pay, time in service, rank that decide efficacy? Having stated this issue, there does exist a great deal of iterative on the subject of classroom efficacy.

Literature review

In research on effective teaching, Polk (2006) identifies a number of traits for effective teaching. Of that list, the observable classroom traits distill down to subject matter knowledge and communications skills. The rest of Polk's study (2006) identified traits such as lifelong learning, prior academic performance as important, the authors of this research article are focusing on those observable classroom characteristics.

Personality appears to be another classroom characteristic (Cirtautienė, 2017) that impacts educators' success. While this would be closely related to communication skills, personality traits have more to do with how information is communicated than the semantics of communication itself. Personality traits measured by Cirtautienė (2017) include social boldness, tension, liveliness, and emotional stability. She found that personality traits do impact learning, student success and are observable traits within the classroom environment.

Defining an Effective Teacher

A teacher's influence is far reaching, so it is challenging to define what outcomes might show effectiveness and how those outcomes should be measured. Some researchers define teacher effectiveness in terms of student achievement. Others focus on high performance ratings from supervisors. Still others rely on comments from students, administrators and other interested stakeholders. Cruickshank and Haefele (2001) noted that good teachers at various times, have been called ideal, analytical, dutiful, competent, expert, reflective, satisfying, diversity-responsive and respected. In addition to these, many variables outside the teacher's control also affect each of potential measures of effectiveness.

Despite these complexities, effective teachers do have an extraordinary and lasting impact on the lives of students. To develop an understanding of what teachers do to cause significant student learning, researchers have begun to focus on the specific characteristics and processes used by the most effective teachers.

Cotton, Lazaros, Davison and Brewer (2016) explain that effective teaching comes with experience, or "classroom immersion" (p. 51) as well as from effective mentoring. The combination of experience and mentoring is echoed throughout much of the research literature on the subject. As Richards (2017) points out in his research on teaching English, experience is especially important when teaching skills such as language.

Mentoring is the guidance of new teachers or faculty through a combination of verbal and written feedback by more experienced faculty or administrators. Classroom observations and performance reviews are a more formalized instantiation of this process. There also exists informal ways of mentoring such as suggestions or guidance.

There exists some, albeit limited, research that explore ineffective teaching and factors that contribute to this ineffectiveness. Using a three-phase approach in interview undergraduate students, Busler, Kirk, Keeley, and Buskit (2017) researched a number of factors associated with "bad, or ineffective" (p. 331) educators. In this research, disrespect, unfair assessments, and unrealistic expectations were the top three factors identified.

The ineffective factors are an exact inverse of effective classroom traits. However, those three traits do reflect sub-optimal qualities that educators will do well to avoid.

The growing body of research on teacher effectiveness has reinforced the notion that characteristics and behaviors matter in teaching, in terms of student achievement as well as other desirable outcomes. Although looking across studies yields some inconsistencies in defining elements of effectiveness, careful exploration of the research, nevertheless, helps confirm which practices are most important and which require further investigation.

Classroom Traits of Effective Teachers

This is in no way a comprehensive list and is not meant to say that effective teachers will exhibit these traits only or in any combination. There is a wealth of literature supporting these successful teacher traits, both in general education and in music education.

Trait One: Professional Development

A major component of teaching is that of learning. An educator's mastery of classroom material is evident to the students. It is no surprise that when teaching is discussed, a discussion of learning is soon to follow. What is sometimes forgotten is the reciprocation that inevitably binds teaching and learning; that is, not only do teachers teach and students learn, but teachers must also learn as the students do. It is the teachers' responsibility to grow as practitioners, stay current in their field, and continually evolve as professionals. It is this professional development that is considered paramount to successful teaching.

The need for a strong professional development program is well established in research (Bauer and Berg, 2001; Bauer, Reese, & McAllister, 2003; Colwell, 1996; Dildy, 1982; Langer, 2000; Mariage & Garmon, 2003; Smith & Haack, 2000; Trimble 2003). In a recent study of factors contributing to three aspects of the teaching process, teachers ranked professional development in the top third of importance on each aspect (Bauer & Berg, 2001). Much of this professional development manifests itself as support from the teacher's employer, campus-level administration, or self-study. Continuing to develop as an instructor, with support and guidance, is necessary for improvement in student achievement (Smith & Haack, 2000; Trimble, 2003) and can be identified as a permeating factor in high-performing schools (Langer, 2000).

Colwell (1996) outlined some of the problems with traditional teacher in service programs. The negative connotations that often accompany professional development are likely the reasons for any ineffectiveness. Assumptions, such as periodic in-service being sufficient to develop new teaching methods and improve practice, teachers being able to learn by listening to a speaker, and professional development being a luxury rather than an integral part of district improvement, are all negating factors in the implementation or patronization of training programs. Colwell (1996) further offered this set of research-based, more effective assumptions: professional development should be perpetual if it is to be effective; school change is the result of external and internal organization and personal development; teachers learn in a cycle of demonstration, practice, and feedback; and development should be integrated into the job. The practice of continual professional growth can be divided into many aspects. If professional growth rests solely on bimonthly, two-hour in-service sessions after the students are dismissed early, then any training received will unlikely be reflected in student mastery.

The idea of reflective inquiry is not new, and is one of the more simple paths to self-improvement and probably one of the more easily implemented strategies. Some reflective practice behaviors include journal keeping, daily written learning logs, teacher research, and collaborative assessments (Conkling, 2003). Taking time to evaluate and adjust methods, assess students' performance, and adapt instruction to fit students' needs is professional development. Realizing that a lesson "could have gone better if . . ." is reflective in nature. Conkling (2003) found that preservice music teachers preferred reflective study in groups, as a social activity, especially when guided by the thought processes and decision making of an expert. Simply having a strong network of friends and colleagues with whom to participate in professional dialogue seems to provide a beneficial component to one's professional life.

Another descriptor of the successful educator is that of lifelong learner (Henry, 2001; Langer, 2000; Smith & Haack, 2000; Southall, 2003). Lifelong learning consists of the entire lifespan, from birth to death, and all skill learning in between. The need for lifelong development is evident because change is constant, especially in volatile areas such as technology, and any improvement in personal quality will bring an improvement in students' performance (Smith & Haack, 2000). Langer (2000) identified six traits of teachers in high performing schools—schools that were beating the odds with no apparent advantage over low-performing schools in the study. One recurring theme in the high-performing teachers' lives was a deep respect for lifelong learning. Educators must stay current in their field with ever-changing methods, ideas, and of course, content knowledge.

The standard, more easily recognized in-service training sessions are not likely to disappear from the professional development landscape. This leaves us not with the question of “Should we have traditional training?” but rather with “What should we be training on?” or “How should we train?” Some believe that training to achieve personal as well as institutional goals is necessary for a fulfilling career (Smith & Haack, 2000). There is also a push to combine the theories and inquiries of the professoriate with the actual utilization of those methods in the classroom (Henry, 2001; Mariage & Garmon, 2003). It seems that this would also provide the perfect opportunity to unite all aspects of professional development mentioned thus far, in that teachers learn as university students in a collaborative fashion, implement the current theories and methods, provide feedback once in the classroom, and perhaps continue into a university teaching capacity while staying active in the schools.

Whatever the method of in-service training, it must be continually supported, not offered as a one-shot deal that is expected to be used and developed from that day forward. Bauer, Reese, and McAllister (2003) found that although an intense training session involving technology in music classrooms did cause knowledge and utilization of technology to increase, after nine to ten months the knowledge remained, but its level of utilization had sharply fallen. This may suggest the strong need for follow-up training and support from the campus or district level, because the application of the knowledge and not the knowledge itself may provide the best gains. There is also evidence that schools tend to provide poor learning environments for teachers (Mariage & Garmon, 2003). It is for this reason that perhaps instruction for teachers cannot be most effectively applied in the classical sense, such as lectures or seminars, and should be sought out in other areas.

Professional communities, associations, and memberships in organizations provide another avenue for development. Langer (2000) found that teachers of high-performing schools highly valued their participation in professional communities, be it personal communication with friends or colleagues or professional memberships in organizations. However, in Bauer and Berg’s study (2001), teachers ranked memberships in professional organizations as not being important in their teaching. This suggests a need for professional organizations to reevaluate their role in the development and training of their constituency.

An often-overlooked fact is that teachers serve by example. A teacher’s passion for teaching and learning does not go unnoticed by students. By continuing to seek out learning opportunities, teachers continue to serve as models of what a learner should be (Southall, 2003). Can teachers righteously chide students for complaining about attending class when they themselves complain about going to class? Teachers must also be sure to make students aware that they are using what they have learned (Langer, 2000). Students will be pleasantly surprised to hear a teacher say, “I attended a class during my trip last week and here is something I learned.”

Professional development has proven itself to be an effective way to continue to evolve as a professional and capable practitioner in the field of education. Although there are numerous studies detailing professional development’s positive impact on student achievement, there is little to say exactly what components or specific methods may offer the best gains.

Trait Two: Communication

Communication is at the heart of a quality classroom environment (Levy, Wubbels & Brekelmans, 1992; Shockley, 1982).

Clarity in oral and written communication

Of the many behaviors and characteristics that can be used to define effective communication, clarity is a word that often appears. Clarity in itself is a construct that has many constituent parts and has been defined in a number of ways, making its usage problematic. Some examples of research in the area of teacher clarity address the teacher’s ability to be expressive, structure information, provide scaffolding at a linear pace, elaborate, and draw on knowledge and metaphor to relate difficult concepts (Sidelinger & McCroskey, 1997).

Clarity is also difficult to judge because teachers are usually only deemed to be clear when the material is understood by students, leaving some to wonder if clarity is a function of teaching or simply a function of the students' level of understanding. Sidelinger and McCroskey (1997) also found that more assertive and responsive teachers highly correlated with good oral communication skills and therefore were deemed clear by the students. Although oral clarity in this case was the defining factor, clear written communication is only a complement. When oral and written clarity are paired together, they may help to enhance student learning.

Two main populations, (i.e., students and peers), can judge clarity in information delivery. Administrators doing yearly evaluations and researchers conducting studies from an administration viewpoint usually serve as the peer group. This is problematic, given that the opinions and rubrics that each of the populations use are not constructed in the same metric. Although some studies have suggested that adolescents and adults may often globally agree that a teacher communicates the lesson effectively (Madsen, 2003), students and administrators differ wildly in their evaluations (Krueger, 1997). Krueger's 1997 study had students and administrators rank order a list of thirty-seven teacher behaviors and attributes that they felt were fundamental to effective communication of the material. Although administrators and students agreed on a few generic behaviors, such as "getting the point across clearly" and "giving directions clearly," other items of importance differed to a large degree. Students ranked "knowledge of subject matter" third, whereas administrators placed this item nineteenth and ranked "listening to others without frequent interruption" third (Krueger, 1997). Although it is of no surprise that students and administrators will differ on certain aspects of teacher effectiveness, the greatest factor of import here is that outcomes of studies can be affected by changing the lens through which researchers are looking.

Verbal and non-verbal communication

Along with oral and written communication types exists another dichotomy of communication: verbal and nonverbal. Although studies exist on nonverbal communication in the music classroom, such as that of Hamann, Lineburgh, and Paul (1998) in which the ability of music teachers to communicate nonverbally with their students showed enhanced teaching effectiveness, studies have generally focused on the verbal communicative skills of music teachers (Shockley, 1982), specifically those of positive/negative verbal communicative styles (Goolsby, 1997; Yarbrough, Price & Hendel, 1994). Yarbrough, Price, and Hendel (1994) found that students preferred patterns of instruction or lessons in which positive, approving verbal communications were used as opposed to negative ones. Although this is not a startling discovery, it does contrast with the more disapproving tone found in many classrooms today. Yarbrough, Price and Hendel's (1994) study suggested that positive feedback and communicative styles would better function to create a good classroom environment, especially with younger age groups. Goolsby (1997) studied these positive aspects of reinforcing verbal behaviors and found that whereas expert teachers used less verbal instruction in the classroom as opposed to novice teachers, what verbal communications they did use contained more positive overtones. If expert teachers, who are usually deemed as more effective, use more positive verbal communication than do novice teachers, it could be that the different communicative styles play an important role in the imparting of information to students.

Push to study communication

Along with the mentioned forms of communication, there has been a recent push to study communication styles. Recent studies suggest that effective teachers, between knowing their subject matter and managing their classrooms, teach with energy and enthusiasm (Hamann, Lineburgh, & Paul, 1998; Madsen, 2003), and use a high level of teacher intensity (Madsen, Standley, & Cassidy, 1989). Teacher intensity refers to a global level of enthusiasm and other behaviors, such as maintenance of eye contact, closeness to students, voice use, and gestures and expressions (Madsen, Standley, & Cassidy, 1989). Perhaps the importance of an enthusiastic delivery is best summed in two studies where students and adults ranked a teacher as more effective and interesting when the information was delivered in an enthusiastic manner, regardless of whether the lesson content was good or poor (Hamann, Baker, McAllister, & Bauer, 2000; Madsen, 2003). In Madsen's study (2003), students ranked the enthusiastic teacher higher even when the content was inaccurate, suggesting that an enthusiastic delivery can have a great effect on student attention and perceptions. What the research fails to show in this area is how teacher intensity and enthusiasm might be linked to increased student performance. Although increased

student attention and enjoyment of a lesson are positive outcomes of this style of delivery, any actual gains in student achievement have yet to be demonstrated.

Communication skill or ability is a trait shared by all, but it has been difficult to define concretely and problematic to study. The current literature suggests that there is evidence enough to warrant some basic communicative training in preservice teacher programs. The study performed by Levy, Wubbels, and Brekelmans (1992) suggests that the difference between teachers' self-conception of their communication skills and how their students view them is a valid argument for the use of student feedback in the reflective process. Madsen, Standley, and Cassidy (1989) found that teacher intensity was both readily recognizable by teacher trainees and a reproducible behavior in those trainees. Communication abilities do not remain static; they change throughout the educator's career, implying that stages of communication styles can be studied, identified, and manipulated (Brekelmans, Holvast, & Tartwijk, 1992). Hamann, Lineburgh, and Paul (1998) found that teacher effectiveness and communication skill are closely related to basic social skills and development, and a test battery, such as the Social Skills Inventory, could be used to identify weaknesses in a student teacher's communicative skills and target areas for improvement.

Managing and responding to student behavior

One of the most important organizational skills an effective teacher possesses is the ability to prevent negative behavior. Studies indicate that the majority of behavior problems occur because students do not know or do not follow routines and procedures (Stronge, 2018). The most effective teachers have optimistic attitudes about teaching and about students. They see the glass as half full (look on the positive side of every situation), make themselves available to students, communicate with students about their progress, give praise and recognition. They have strategies to help students act positively toward one another (Walker, 2008). Praising students, reinforcing positive behaviors and establishing trust within the classroom builds respectful relationship between teachers and students. Disciplinary actions are rare in environments where teachers and students respect and trust each other.

One key to minimizing discipline problems is classroom management skills. Effective teachers manage and attend to the needs of all students within the class. Unfortunately, classroom observation reports reveal that most teachers direct their attention and instruction more frequently to some students and ignore others. This type of teacher behavior increases the likelihood of student misbehavior. On the other hand, effective classroom managers are able to recognize cues from students and decide if a pre-determined procedure or routine should be able to handle the behaviors. If no routines was established in advance, the teacher quickly adapts to handle the situation with little or no disruption to the other students.

Another key to preventing negative behavior is the relationship between the teacher and the student. Part of building relationships with student hinges on trust. Tschannen-Moran (2000) explained the importance of trust in this way: "Without trust, students' energy is diverted toward self-protection and away from learning" (p. 4). Although a teacher may have rules established in the classroom, if students do not trust the consistency and fairness with which rules are applied, then the rules become ineffective and the teacher loses credibility, as well as the ability to manage student behavior.

Setting clear expectations

Teachers who set and reinforce clear expectations for student behavior have more success in classroom control and fewer discipline problems than those who fail to do so. Teachers realize that setting high expectations for academic performance (Covino & Iwanicki, 1996). High expectations for student behavior spill over into other areas of teacher effectiveness, such as responsiveness to individual student performance when planning instruction (Fuchs, Fuchs, & Phillips, 1994).

Involving students in establishing rules and procedures

Involving students in establishing rules and procedures at the beginning of the school year is one approach effective teachers use to ensure students recognize the importance of the students' role in the classroom. Effective teachers clearly communicate and reinforce behavioral expectations. When an expectation is not met, the educator addresses the concern, gives the student an opportunity to identify

the issue and provides sufficient examples of other choices that the student could have made. Additionally, the teacher assists students in understanding the logic behind the rules and reasonableness of the consequences for breaking the rules, as well as the rewards for following the rules. These teachers link consequences, at appropriate maturity levels, to the behavior displayed by the student (Wentzel, 2002).

For students in early grades, the explicitness of rules and routines is most important; for students in later grades, clarity of expectations is a more important factor (Cotton, 2000). Equally important as establishing behavioral expectations is the consistency that teachers show in carrying out responses to the breaking of rules. Such consistent responses and appropriate management help effective teachers achieve lower levels of off-task student behaviors in their classrooms. Effective teachers also use discipline to carefully manage the learning environment. Of the disciplinary situations that do arise, effective teachers are able to handle most of them within the classroom, without involving administrators. They realize that by reducing disciplinary problems within the classroom, they may be able to significantly increase overall student achievement. Essentially, the less classroom time spent in disciplinary actions; the more time there is for instruction. The more time there is for instruction; the more students learn.

Focusing on at-risk students

In addition to demonstrating their adeptness at classroom management and organization, effective teachers of at-risk students often emphasize creating and maintaining a positive learning environment. The teacher begins to establish this positive environment on the first day of school. The first step is to begin building positive relationships with individual students, as described in the previous chapter. Howard (2002) supports the notion that not only should the environment be positive, but it should also be family-like. This relationship establishes clear boundaries between the roles of teacher and student. Quite clearly, maintaining positive relationships with all students, and especially at-risk students, is necessary for a positive learning environment.

The students themselves see the need for orderly classrooms. In a survey of urban students, researchers found that students perceive good teachers as those who maintain control in the classroom (Corbett & Wilson, 2002). An orderly classroom means the articulation of positive expectations and the rewards and consequences associated with those expectations. Consequently, effective teachers create warm and cooperative classroom climates by developing rules and having high student involvement. Teachers and students have clearly established roles along with a caring atmosphere (Taylor, Pressley, & Pearson, 2000). When a discipline issue arises, these teachers deal with the issue in a calm and quiet manner, reminding students of appropriate behavior in inconspicuous ways (Knapp, Shields, & Turnbull, 1992). This could include a quiet whisper, a nod of the head, or a hand on the desk. They also reinforce positive behavior using tangible rewards. While these qualities are important in working with all students, it appears that they need to be emphasized in working with at-risk students. The following research summaries underscore the importance of these qualities:

- At-risk students value teachers who control the classroom and reward positive behavior (Corbett & Wilson, 2002; Pressley, Raphael, Gallagher & DiBella, 2004).
- A significant factor associated with reading achievement for African-American students includes maintaining an orderly classroom (Armor et al., 1976).
- Students in effective classrooms are aware of classroom rules and the expectations of behavior (Hamre & Pianta, 2005).
- Students who reported satisfaction with their school received fewer verbal reprimands than students who reported dissatisfaction with their school (Baker, 1999).
- Effective teachers of at-risk students have high expectations for student behavior and display and enforce classroom rules (Bridgall & Gordon, 2003; Fuchs, Fuchs & Philips, 1994; Pressley et al., 2004; Taylor, Pressley & Pearson, 2000).
- Effective teachers create positive, warm classroom climates (Taylor, Pressley & Pearson, 2000); Walker-Dalhouse, 2005; Waxman, Huang, Anderson, & Weinstein, 1997). The most effective teachers do not deliberately embarrass students. Teachers who give the highest respect, receive the highest respect. These educators respect students' privacy when returning test papers, speak to students in private concerning grades or conduct, show sensitivity to feelings and consistently avoid situations that unnecessarily embarrass students.

Focusing on high-ability students

Gifted students recognize and appreciate a teacher's organization of the classroom and learning experiences. Differentiation within the classroom is important for gifted learners (Laine & Tirri, 2016). As such, the teacher must be able to organize the classroom so that the environment is conducive to constant activity that is likely to be quite divergent in nature. Effective teachers of the gifted recognize that behavioral issues must be handled in a way that considers the social and emotional needs of high-ability learners.

Gifted students, like any other students, can be inattentive, competitive, silly, or disruptive, and may lack the social skills to deal with other students or adults in an appropriate manner (Hunt & Seney, 2001). Teachers must assist students by teaching them techniques to deal with their own behaviors, as well as by examining the possible contributing factors to students' behavior, including the appropriateness of the instructional experience for the needs of the student.

Teachers of gifted and talented students must be able to multitask. For example, attending to one group's request to consult with a NASA expert online while remembering to check on an individual student's progress in conducting an experiment. Students may be working in groups or they perhaps working independently. The students may be collaborating formally or informally consulting one another for advice. Resources in different areas of the room must be available and organized in a manner that supports a positive learning environment. In other words, effective teachers of gifted students must be especially comfortable with the role of facilitator of learning rather than giver of knowledge. Additionally, if rules and procedures underlying this flurry of activity are not established, chaos can break out in the classroom. Effective teachers of the gifted do the following:

- Differentiate assignments and materials (Lane & Tirri, 2016).
- Maintain order through classroom organization (Dubner, 1980; Eyre et al., 2002).
- Define expectations for behavior (Nikakis, 2002) by involving students in setting rules and procedures for class norms during discussions and activities (Maddux, Samples-Lachman, & Cummings, 1985).
- Provide a rich variety of resources in the classroom (Johnsen, Haensley, Ryser, & Ford, 2002; Johnsen & Ryser, 1996; VanTassel-Baska & Little, 2003).
- Organize the classroom to encourage interaction among students (Callahan, 2001; Lee-Corbin & Denicolo, 1998).
- Manage students as they conduct research, original investigations, and independent studies (Feldhusen, 1991; Lane & Tirri, 2016).
- Recognize that inappropriate behaviors may reflect inappropriate instructional placement and use appropriate intervention techniques when behavioral issues arise (Hunt & Seney, 2001).
- Are more skilled than untrained teachers of the gifted in creating a positive classroom environment (Hansen & Feldhusen, 1994).

Trait Three: Personality

The traits of effective teachers identified thus far and skill-based in nature. That is, they can be identified, implemented, or improved, as any basic skill might be. Personality is a characteristic of all teachers, whether readily identified or not. Personality provides a conduit through which humans interact, and the process of teaching and learning is no exception. Students occasionally complain of not being compatible with their teachers or having personality conflicts. Some researchers have said that weaknesses in personality are a major cause of teacher failure (Krueger, 1972). If personality truly has an impact on the effectiveness of teaching, then it also deserves systematic study and understanding.

Personality traits, however, have shown to be more problematic in that a single definition of personality does not yet exist. Recent studies involving teaching effectiveness and personality have operationalized personality as a classification derived from a standardized personality inventory, such as the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator (Krueger, 1972; Schmidt, Lewis & Kurpius- Brock, 1991; Teachout, 2001; Wubbenhorst, 1991); a collective of individual behaviors, such as ambition, intelligence, sense of humor, or others (Erdle, Murray, & Rushton, 1985; Rohwer & Henry, 2004; Murray, Rushton, & Paunonen, 1990; Teachout, 1997); or teacher intensity or enthusiasm (Madsen, Standley, & Cassidy, 1989; Yarbrough & Madsen, 1998). Other studies have left personality as the definition in itself, letting the study's respondents define personality in their own way (Jones, 1989).

Despite the challenge of distinguishing what individual components compose personality, researchers have concluded that there is indeed a relationship between personality and effective teaching (Murray, Rushton, & Paunonen, 1990; Teachout, 2001; Yarbrough & Madsen, 1998) and between the intensity component of personality and effective teaching (Madsen, Standley, & Cassidy, 1989; Yarbrough & Madsen, 1998) and that personality may serve as a rudimentary predictor of teaching effectiveness (Krueger, 1972; Murray, Rushton, and Paunonen, 1990; Schmidt, Lewis, & Kurpius-Brock, 1991). Although a relationship implies no causation, there is substantial evidence to assume the direction of causality, should any exist, would be from personality to teaching effectiveness and not the inverse (Erdle, Murray & Rushton, 1985).

Much of the literature on personality has utilized student evaluations to explore the association between teachers' personalities and teaching effectiveness. Although in each case some association is likely to be found, Murray, Rushton, and Paunonen (1990) found differential effects where the same teacher was rated differently depending on which class he or she was teaching. They concluded that personality can drive a teacher's compatibility with certain class types. Jones's study (1989) found that personality was a stubborn trait to eradicate; a relationship between personality and teaching effectiveness was found even when students were instructed to leave personality out of their assessment. Despite the viewpoint that students cannot adequately assess teaching ability because of the confounding personality variable, (Erdle, Murray, & Rushton, 1985) there still exists an argument that personality is reflected in a person's classroom teaching behaviors, which are validly evaluated by students. In the case of music teaching, Teachout (1997) gathered preservice and experienced teachers' opinions on what constitutes effective teaching. Although personality variables were ranked highly by both groups, experienced teachers consistently ranked personality variables higher than did preservice teachers.

Being aware of personality characteristics is only the first step in the improvement of classroom instruction. It is what teachers do with this information that validates educational research. Knowing their own personality types allows teachers to adapt their instruction to their personal strengths (Murray, Rushton, & Paunonen, 1990; Schmidt, Lewis & Kurpius-Brock, 1991; Wubbenhorst, 1991). Students' personalities are no less important to effective teaching. Rohwer and Henry (2004) stated, "one way to address this challenge may be to provide authentic teaching environments in which students' teaching personalities can be observed and developed to meet the specific needs of students" (26, emphasis added). Wubbenhorst (1991) also advocated the awareness and constructive use of teacher and student learning styles, especially in noting the differences between the two populations. Because Wubbenhorst (1991) found that music educators often had similar Myers-Briggs personality type indicators, students of same or different types may interact differently with those educators. As previously discussed with other teacher traits, higher levels of personality agreeableness generated better-satisfied learners, even when the information presented was incorrect (Yarbrough & Madsen, 1998).

There are some inconsistencies regarding the findings of personality studies, such as in Teachout's (2001) study, where there were no significant relationships found between effective music teaching and an occupational personality inventory. The irregularity of personality studies could be attributed to the vast differences in the measurement instruments utilized, necessitating a clear operational definition of personality and how those concepts will be measured relative to each study. Nevertheless, it seems that personality is a pervasive element in the classroom, and attention as to its impact on learning outcomes is well deserved.

Trait Four: Teacher Ability and Modeling

Modeling and using representation is common in the classroom and help students understand complex phenomena (Vallverdú, 2014; Demir, Wade-Jaimes & Qureshi, 2017). Throughout history, modeling has been a prevalent and effective method of instruction (Sang, 1987) in teaching the arts as well as the sciences. A prime historical example is the passing of songs from one generation to the next through singing. Children were taught music by observing aural models and imitating. It was later that they learned the symbols and notation that accompanied the songs. Modeling instruction can be defined as alternating teacher demonstrations with student imitation (Dickey, 1992).

Modeling can be an effective technique for increasing student achievement or performance (Dickey, 1991; Madsen, 2003; Nagle, 1976; Sang, 1987), with or without accompanying verbal instruction (Rosenthal, 1984), and especially in the presence of an audio or video exemplar (Dickey, 1992; Hewitt, 2001; Linklater, 1997). Although aural representations can be produced in the mind's ear, or internally, the external model seems to be the most effective (Hewitt, 2001). When groups that had access to external models of musical performance were compared against those without aural models, those with access to external models performed significantly better (Hewitt, 2001; Linklater, 1997; Rosenthal, 1984).

Modeling has demonstrated its value, as compared to verbal instruction alone, as a valued and ubiquitous method of instruction. In studies where student achievement was evaluated in the presence or lack of a model, results showed that verbal instruction did not improve performance, even when used in conjunction with a model (Dickey, 1991; Rosenthal, 1984). Even modeling alone was at least as effective as verbal instruction alone, calling into question the excessive usage of verbal communication in teaching music (Rosenthal, 1984). Not surprisingly, Dickey (1992) found students prefer hearing good models to inappropriate ones. Furthermore, also in Dickey's (1992) study, in which students listened to recorded models that contained both models alone and models with accompanying verbal directions, 80 percent preferred the model-only recording, stating that they would rather hear more of the performance than the verbal interruptions.

Not only can models be recordings or live demonstrations of what is desired of students, they can also be representations of what not to do. Being able to demonstrate both correct and incorrect models may be equally as useful. By listening to both appropriate and inappropriate models, students can learn to make discriminations, gaining musical independence and self-diagnostic skills along the way (Dickey, 1992; Sang, 1987).

Goolsby (1996) studied instrumental music directors' use of time in their classes and found that on average, experienced teachers used modeling techniques almost twice as often as did the novice or student teachers. In addition, Goolsby (1996) stated that a negative relationship existed between the amount of instructor talking and director effectiveness.

It is possible that a relationship also exists between effective directors and the amount of modeling used, although modeling would only be one small piece of the complex construct of effectiveness. A landmark modeling study by Sang (1987) noted that music teachers, in the United States particularly, are relying more on verbal instruction to explain musical ideas rather than demonstrating them. Sang concluded that the teachers' ability to model and the degree to which the modeled behaviors were utilized in the instrumental music classroom had an impact on student performance. In light of these relationships and postulations, the sequential order or model of modeling would be: teacher modeling ability → modeling frequency → improved student performance.

If teacher modeling ability is directly related to the frequency of its usage in the classroom, and modeling frequency leads to improved student performance, then there might be a relationship between the teachers' own abilities or skills and the improvement of their students. Many have concluded that teacher ability, accuracy, or talent is related to good teaching and, therefore, improved student outcomes (Dickey, 1991; Goldhaber, and Brewer, 2000; Nagle, 1976) or the mere perception of good teaching (Madsen, 2003). If modeling has such a positive effect on student performance, especially in music, a teacher might need to work to develop the best modeling skills possible. The hierarchy previously mentioned suggests that the predecessor to the use of modeling is the ability to model. In the musical sense, it would be the teacher's performance ability on the chosen musical instrument. Nagle (1976) found that nine to twelve-year old students were more likely to emulate a highly competent teacher model than a highly competent peer model, but the same students would more readily emulate a low competency peer than a low competency teacher on the same task. If a highly skilled teacher will more readily be imitated, then it follows that a teacher should work to develop and maintain the highest possible level of skill.

In the field of education, modeling has been shown to increase student achievement in a wide variety of settings. This increase in achievement may be especially important in the field of music, where sometimes modeling a concept on one's instrument is the only way to demonstrate a concept that could

not otherwise be described verbally. Although the literature has suggested that modeling may be a useful tool and is possibly related in some way to student performance in music, there is still work to be done. For example, more focused studies are required to break modeling down into its constituent parts. Although the literature labels modeling as an effective teaching tool, correlated with student achievement, it could be that the researchers have simply measured the students' ability to imitate in the short term, rather than their actual gains in knowledge or skill. Nevertheless, modeling does seem to have value as an educational tool and is one that a musician should find very useful in everyday teaching.

While modeling is important and shown to increase student achievement, the foundation for successful modeling abilities must exist. This includes subject matter knowledge as well as effective classroom and time management skills. This is exemplified and facilitated by preparation.

Preparation of materials

Pedagogical research indicates that classroom material preparation is correlated to teacher ability and effectiveness (Stronge, 2018; Jin & Lu, 2018). The most effective teachers come to class each day prepared and ready to teach (Cotton, Lazaros, Davison & Brewer, 2016). Preparation is one indicator and classroom trait of high teacher ability. Student perception is that learning is easier in a well-prepared educator's class because these teachers are ready for the day. These educators do not waste instructional time. They start class on time and teach for the entire class period. Time flies in their classes because students are engaged in learning and less likely to fall asleep (Walker, 2008).

Conclusion and Suggestions

Schools should implement lifelong-learning initiatives that require teachers to plan, carry out, and summarize and review their professional development. When such developments are to occur outside of their chosen field, the learning must be adapted to the entire audience so that everyone receives something tangible that can be applied in their own unique teaching situations. This progression of lifelong learning can become a part of teacher evaluations and an expected component of continued employment. The same can be said for the field of music education. Although professional growth seems to be a required component of the musician's professional life cycle, not a great deal of research has shown an association between professional development and students' musical achievement.

Teacher preparation programs should focus on theories of education and how to plan lessons but should equally devote their instructional time to executing those plans. Education departments could require communications studies as a means of improving teachers' basic skill of conveying information effectively. Because teaching is a duty that wholly involves people, the study of people themselves seems warranted if teachers are to teach them. Psychology classes study important concepts, such as how people function, live, behave, and learn fluency in these concepts. Psychology appears to be an invaluable asset to teaching, yet current teacher programs usually require only one introductory course of psychology and communication.

Of the characteristics presented here, modeling probably serves as the skill that teachers do best. Schools train future music educators to be fine performers in most cases, and some schools train their teachers as vigorously as their performance students. The problem is that many future teachers do not know why they should be performers of the highest quality, because they are looking to become teachers, not performers. They must understand what a powerful tool modeling can be and implement it whenever possible. Schools should not force the college musicians to choose a performance or teacher track, but instead educate them as a performing teacher.

For the teaching musician, the disconnect seems to stem from teacher candidates entering college having only experienced the performing role of music, with very little or no formal teaching experience. The theories students are bombarded with are a necessary and valid component of teacher education, but they are often not extended to practice in the classroom and the scaffolding that should occur from one concept to the other does not materialize.

All of the characteristics discussed in this review have shown to be related to one another, or to effective teaching in some way. Effectiveness must now be redefined in light of learning outcomes. Although

research should serve as a guidepost to the preparation and praxis of teachers already in the profession, it must continue to investigate what teacher behaviors provide the best achievement possibilities for students. In light of these findings and suggestions, it seems that effective teaching is not the innate, inborn skill it was once considered. The identification and subsequent study of these variables dictate that they are indeed separable and able to be recognized by teacher and student alike.

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