

The Role of Vicarious Experiences in the Development of Pre-Service Teachers' Classroom Management Self-Efficacy Beliefs

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Abstract

The preparation of student teachers for the profession of teaching is of primary importance in any school attempting to implement curricular reform. Not only are student teachers typically more receptive to attempting new approaches, but they also often bring the most recent research-supported ideas regarding instruction into the classroom. Of these, classroom management is one of the most important classroom practices (Aloe, Amo, & Shanahan, 2014). Therefore, it is important that student teachers receive adequate preparation in their teacher education programs to equip them with the tools they need to effectively manage their classrooms, thereby paving the way for smooth curricular reforms. Because teaching cannot be acquired solely through theory, student teachers must also be active observers of and participants in the act of teaching in actual school settings. Therefore, if curricular reform is to be successful at the school level, then university-school partnerships have to be strengthened and better consolidated in order for such reform to effectively begin at the university level with future teachers. However, currently, there exist contextual challenges that are hindering strong university-school partnerships. If this continues, no curricular reform at the school level will find success. The purpose of the present study was to examine whether current university-school partnerships allow for sufficient preparation of student teachers with regards to classroom management. The research questions were: (1) What are student teachers' self-efficacy beliefs with regard to classroom management in Lebanon? and (2) To what extent are these beliefs encouraged to develop through current university-school partnerships? Quantitative data ($N = 23$) were collected through pre- and post-observation surveys, and focus group interview data were collected pre- and post-observation, as well. The constant comparison model (Miles & Huberman, 1994) was used to analyze the qualitative data, while t-tests for comparison of means were conducted with the quantitative data. While current university-school partnerships did not lead to a statistically significant difference in student teachers' classroom management self-efficacy beliefs, several themes did emerge from the focus group data indicating the need to strengthen the partnership between universities and schools in order to better prepare student teachers, a finding that is supported by previous studies, as well (Bier et al., 2012; Brouwer & Korthagen, 2005).

Keywords: Classroom management, self-efficacy beliefs, pre-service teachers, curricular reform