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**TEACHERS' USE OF CLASSROOM-BASED
MANAGEMENT STRATEGIES: A SURVEY OF NEW
ZEALAND TEACHERS**

A thesis presented in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of

Master of Educational Psychology

Massey University, Albany

New Zealand

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Candidates Statement

I certify that the thesis entitled “Teachers’ Use of Classroom-based Management Strategies” and submitted as part of the degree of Master of Educational Psychology is the result of my own work, except where otherwise acknowledged, and that this research paper (or part of the same) has not been submitted for any other degree to any other university or institution.

Signed _____

Date _____

Abstract

Behavioural problems are a constant threat to student learning and the learner environment, namely, the classroom. Researchers have identified empirically validated classroom-based strategies to support teachers to manage/deal with problem behaviours, but there has been very little research on whether these strategies are used in New Zealand (NZ) classrooms. The purpose of this present study is to fill the gap by conducting a survey of teachers' self-reported use of management strategies, to increase students' learning engagement and academic outcomes, and reduce behaviour interruptions. The present study is a partial replication and extension of a cross-cultural comparative study conducted in the United States (US) and Greece by Akin-Little, Little, and Laniti (2007) to determine the extent to which teachers' utilized research-based management strategies in their classroom. The process and methodology of the present study was similar in that it used the same questionnaire but a different sample of teachers. The replication was an opportunity to compare the US-Greek findings with the situation here in NZ. The survey questionnaire was slightly modified to cater for the New Zealand demographic, such as the racial/ethnic background of the participants and the racial/ethnic composition of the classes. Another change was made regarding the use of "corporal punishment" in the school, which was replaced with the use of "restraint," as non-violent crisis physical restraint is used as a last resort in some NZ schools/classrooms as a safety strategy to manage acting out students' extreme behaviour. The use of corporal punishment was banned in all NZ schools (including Early Childhood Centres) in 1990. Participants for this study comprised 53 practising teachers from a range of co-educational primary schools within the metropolitan area of Auckland. The survey questionnaire contained four sections which gathered information on teacher characteristics, classroom rules, classroom child-management systems, and teachers' perceptions of their role as a teacher, relative to their use of classroom-based management strategies. The results

showed that most schools used a school-wide discipline plan, and a large number of teachers developed their own classroom rules with student input. Teachers' overall reported the use of research-based management strategies (including those identified in the survey), as well as approaches appropriate to the ecology, culture/climate, and ethos of their particular school. In addition, the results showed that there was a greater emphasis on strengthening positive teacher-student relationships and proactive, preventative systems of managing behaviour, with less frequent resort to reactive-consequence based approaches. The results further indicated that over half the teachers perceived they communicated and monitored their students frequently during lessons and could attend to more than one event without undue disruption. In regard to teacher efficacy, the majority of teachers perceived that their classroom management strategies were adequate. These results have important implications for teaching practices and student learning. A comparison with teacher classroom management practices in the United State and Greece, limitations of the study, and possible further studies in this area are discussed.

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