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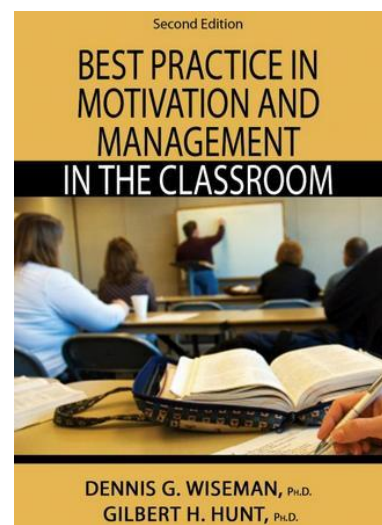
Wiseman, Dennis G. & Hunt, Gilbert H. (2008) *Best Practice in Motivation and Management in the Classroom (2nd Edition)*. Springfield, IL: Charles C. Thomas Publisher, Ltd.

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As is true for many education programs, my department offers a graduate course for teachers in *Classroom Management*. I have always struggled with suitable readings for the course, usually deciding on a course packet of articles but not quite satisfied that I do not have a suitable text with basic information. Wiseman and



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Hunt have written a book that will fill that niche when I next teach that course.

At first I was concerned that the level of the text might be too simplistic for the graduate level. However, once I began reading I realized something that we educational psychologists often forget--our education students are teachers, they are not studying to be educational psychologists. In reality, the text is written at a good level for teachers who need concise, helpful information, based on best practices research, to manage their classrooms. Of course, at an undergraduate level teachers did learn about avoiding discipline problems. Unfortunately oftentimes, once they are ensconced in an environment wherein more experienced teachers are heard "yelling" or can be observed doing "chalk and talk," they succumb to managing classrooms through discipline rather than by using the methods we so lovingly shared with them during those undergraduate classes. Thus, they come to us frustrated and wondering what to do with "those kids."

Wiseman and Hunt clearly articulate classroom management from a perspective that validates students as individuals who deserve respect from teachers as much as teachers deserve respect from students. The book deals directly with variables that truly define classroom management and provides research-based and practical methods for addressing this issue, which continues to be a concern for both novice and experienced teachers. I did not use the common comparison "novice vs. "expert" teachers, because my own experience has shown that true expert teachers do not have concerns about classroom management; they seem to have mastered the skills, techniques, and methods to maintain a productive environment. Conversely, veteran teachers have been teaching for at least several years; however, they may not have good classroom management skills. Not every veteran teacher is an expert teacher but Wiseman and Hunt's book will surely assist both novice and veteran teachers to become more expert in their praxis. But I digress...

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Gilbert H. Hunt is Dean, Spadoni College of Education, Coastal Carolina University.

In Chapter I Wiseman and Hunt begin building the foundation for their thesis about the importance of motivation by noting that motivation and management are “two sides of the same coin.” The major issue of classroom management is asserted early in the chapter, “Although problems of student behavior in schools are easily documented, the major tenet of this text does not view the management of student behavior as a stand-alone issue. Rather, problems of student behavior management must be looked at more broadly as these problems relate to student motivation and effective teaching practice” (p.5). Thus the authors begin our journey through the many variables related to good classroom management. Often our graduate students, practicing teachers, register for a course in classroom management and seem fairly excited about taking a course that will assist them in disciplining their students. I have to begin the course by noting that we will only cover discipline methods near the end of the course. The secret, I tell them, is to reflect on their teaching practices and interaction patterns first, to determine what they may be doing that does not foster a nurturing learning environment. “What?” Smirks and eye-rolling all around until we have a productive discussion on getting back to basics and the real work of teachers. At the end of the course, students say they “actually tried” some of the strategies and methods and had very positive results!

Chapter II continues the analysis of motivation by delving into the important topic of creating motivating environments. The assertion, “Knowing is one thing and doing is another” (p.43) strikes at the heart of problems with creating classrooms that are truly motivating. Motivation, as a concept and a psychological construct, is not always appreciated or understood as related to praxis. For example, in New York City, teachers are pressured (required, in some schools) to use a format on a lesson plan which includes the use of the term “Motivation,” as in, “What is your motivation for this lesson?” What the administrators want to see listed is some type of average, middle of the road statement or question that would not serve to motivate anyone, nonetheless a student with an adolescent brain and its idiosyncrasies! Once a teacher has “done” her or his

“motivation,” they move on to the next step on their lesson plan. Our content colleagues even require this on our students’ submitted lesson plans. My educational psychology colleagues and I are obligated to “undo” their misconception of this important concept. We remind them that motivation is ongoing throughout all interactions and instruction and that simply “doing” the motivation listed on the lesson plan is not putting into practice what experts know regarding the use of the psychological construct of motivation in classrooms. Because of the requirement for New York City lesson plans, our students often forget the true meaning and application of motivation as they take on the practices and characteristics of some not-so-wonderful classroom practitioners. Because so many students pose management problems in middle and high school classrooms, our newly-minted teachers often fall prey to veteran teachers’ admonitions to “forget what your professors say, this is the real world,” and our graduate students enter our classroom management courses somewhat jaded. When we begin the true work of discussing how to create motivating environments in our classrooms it is a true challenge to get these teachers to think beyond what has become entrenched and may not be good classroom praxis, and to reflect on best practice in classrooms. Wiseman and Hunt return teachers to these educational psychology roots; the second chapter reminds them that although they once “knew” and could say what they might do in future, hypothetical classrooms, they are now faced with the “doing,” a higher purpose and more difficult challenge.

Chapter 2 is a triumph; the authors cover the major theories of motivation, informing readers not only about the important aspects of these theories but also how they can be used both to understand students and to contribute to the creation of motivating classroom environments. Without discussing in detail research that often alienates practitioners, Wiseman and Hunt cleverly cover concepts and applications of motivation most important to teachers. From broad information, such as presenting effects of motivation on students: 1) Motivation directs behavior toward particular goals; 2) Motivation increases effort and energy expended toward these goals; 3) Motivation increases

initiation of and persistence in activities; 4) motivation enhances cognitive processing; 5) motivation determines what consequences are reinforcing; and 6) motivation leads to improved performance, through the various theories of motivation, to analyses of how the understanding and consideration of motivation impacts students and learning, the authors craft a useful guide without designing a recipe for teaching. It is exactly the type of reading that teachers will enjoy, as it will give them clear guidance for practice.

In Chapter 3, Wiseman and Hunt provide a delightful read about the various models and theories of management, both to avoid and deal with classroom management problems. The authors are thorough in covering models that have had the most impact on classroom praxis, including Kounin, Dreikurs, Ginott, and Gordon as well as the more controversial Canter & Canter and Skinnerian approaches. I felt it was a good choice for the authors to include Johnson & Johnson's approach of conflict resolution, one that is not common in discussions of classroom management. Toward the end of the chapter, the authors include a section that answers a series of questions from the various approaches including, "What happens to students who break rules?" "Is it realistically possible to reinforce the program consistently?" "What do students learn as a result of the use of the program?" "Are the principles of behavior as visible and as important as the rules?" "Do students have a say in what happens to them?" "Do teachers have discretion in implementing consequences?" "Does the plan account for the special relationship between teaching and discipline style, or does it focus exclusively on student behavior? Does it encourage teachers to examine their own potential contributions to discipline problems?" The authors pose these and other questions and respond to each from the perspective of the models/theories that have been covered previously in the chapter. As a guide and discussion-starter this information is invaluable for our classrooms as we work with teachers and teachers-in-training.

Chapter 4, with a somewhat convoluted title, *Best Practice in Teaching for Best Practice in Student Motivation and Classroom Management*, presents information on researched-based best

practice without giving detailed descriptions of studies. Rather, the authors offer succinct guidance based upon research findings and delineate variables that contribute to good practice. By elucidating specific concepts that lead to a positive classroom environment Wiseman and Hunt offer many options upon which teachers may reflect to inform their praxis. I found both the information and the format in which it is presented to be the type of material that my students prefer. The common criticism leveled against educational psychology, that there is too much theory and not enough practical application, is decisively challenged. The authors have presented the application in a way that honors the research yet presents the practical application in a way that is lucid and very teacher-friendly. I can envision creating many different class activities and projects for teachers to hone their skills by using this chapter and, of course, the entire text, in my classroom management course.

Chapters 5 and 6, *Special Problems and Concerns in Student Motivation and Classroom Management*, and *Responding to Student Motivation and Behavior Problems*, continue with both the same informative material and format that sets this text apart from so many other classroom management books. The former chapter presents specific topics for readers upon which to reflect. These topics-- bullying, zero tolerance, expulsion, exceptional students, diversity, violence, and drug abuse, allow educators to relate their own experiences in schools with the text and thoughtfully explore issues of utmost importance in today's schools. I respect the manner in which the information is presented; in their discussion of *zero tolerance*, Wiseman and Hunt present both sides of the issue, citing issues of extremism as well as the need for policies that render schools safe, welcoming environments. In their discussion of violence in schools the authors present specific instances, such as the Columbine and Virginia Tech tragedies, and contextualize them for the reader. They then offer various models and strategies of prevention, along with warning signs and predictors, maintaining the consistent mantra of the book, "Lasting solutions to problems of school violence really lie in effective measures of problem prevention, in being proactive, not in dealing with problems once they have occurred" (p. 194).

The authors begin chapter 6 by asserting the importance of teachers as reflective practitioners, with the necessary skills being developed and refined over time. The chapter itself addresses common classroom challenges related to motivation and behavior problems. They present behavior problem scenarios and address them using the Model for Reflection and Inquiry, focusing on specific strategies and the significance of being a proactive teacher, which they define as "...a teacher who has the ability to 'head off' most management problems before they occur and respond to management problems when they do occur in such a way that sets the stage for learning to continue in the future" (p. 225). Focusing on those common problems such as inattention, disruptive talking, attention-seeking, work avoidance, dishonesty, defiance and aggression, Wiseman and Hunt are careful not only to describe indicators and instances of these problems but offer possible causal analyses allowing readers to consider not only possible solutions to problems but also a context in which they are able to view their charges as complex beings rather than only as students occupying space in their classrooms.

The final chapter of this useful book offers case studies of students from primary through high school levels. Once again the authors offer the model for reflection and inquiry as a method of addressing the problems presented in the case studies. They summarize the steps in chart form for easy reference. These include 1) statement of the problem; 2) development of a hypothesis; 3) collection of relevant data; 4) analysis of data; and 5) interpretation and reporting of results, drawing conclusions and making generalizations. Moreover, prior to presenting the well-developed case studies, Wiseman and Hunt review the importance of teachers' knowledge/ abilities in key areas and present guiding questions for readers to consider in the analysis and interventions for the problems presented.

Of course, no one book can be all things to all readers. My only criticism is that the book lacked passion and could sometimes have benefited by going beyond descriptions and strategies and relating some of the issues to the reality of

childhood or adolescence. A developmental lens would have added depth to the material and allowed readers to further reflect on specific developmental issues related to classroom management. Further, a social justice perspective might have assisted teachers and other readers to reflect on schools as a place where attitudes, prejudices, and philosophies are often silently conveyed. For example, in their discussion on bullying, Wiseman and Hunt miss an opportunity to have readers reflect on social issues and the importance of viewing bullying as a human rights issue (Austin & Sciarra, 2010), perhaps rallying support for a more humane focus on the individual student as citizen in addition to viewing them as aggressor or victim.

However, I was impressed by Wiseman and Hunt's text, possibly because I am so committed to their basic premise of prevention and proactive teaching, squarely placing responsibility for classroom management and discipline issues in the hands of teachers. In my class when a teacher asserts that she/he has a "difficult" class with students who are "lazy" and pose behavior problems, my first questions to them deal with the context of the problem, the classroom environment, and their reflections on the situation. What do they know about the student as a person and what have they done in the classroom, other than assume that students will comply with their (often unexamined) expectations and pedagogical requirements and methodology? The reflective aspect of teaching and the ability of teachers to acknowledge professional strengths and weaknesses, while continuously honing teaching skills, classroom management skills, and interpersonal skills results in expert teachers or, at least, effective classroom environments in which students not only learn but thrive and are able to develop fully. I highly recommend this text and hope that readers truly come to internalize what appears to be the guiding philosophy of the book, that teachers have an important job with tremendous responsibility, extending to understanding students' needs psychologically and intellectually and that those teachers who are not only effective teachers but who become expert teachers, are those who are able to create environments that nurture and support the diverse needs of students from primary through high school grades. And, if not, there may

be students sitting silently in a classroom who hold to themselves the thoughts they are unable to convey to their teachers, as beautifully articulated by a student quoted by Wiseman and Hunt from *Discipline with Dignity* (Curwin & Mendler, 1999):

Silent Defiance

I'm the one who watched,
as you laughed;
I'm the one who listened patiently,
while you talked unceasingly;
I'm the one who sat silent,
As your shouts grew louder;
I'm the one who always came,
While your chair sat empty;
I'm the one whose dreams were hidden,
as yours were fulfilled;
I'm the one who cared,
While you butchered knowledge;
I'm the one who reasoned,
as you discussed;
I'm the one who will remember
when all of you will forget.

(By Heather Osborn, high school senior, from Curwin & Mendler, 1999, pp. 1-2)

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About the Reviewer

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