The relationship of teacher optimism to attitudes and beliefs regarding classroom management

Debra Peters Yerkes

The University of Montana

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THE RELATIONSHIP OF TEACHER OPTIMISM TO
ATTITUDES AND BELIEFS REGARDING CLASSROOM MANAGEMENT

by

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Presented in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the degree of
Doctor of Education
The University of Montana
1999

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The Relationship of Teacher Optimism to Attitudes and Beliefs Regarding Classroom Management (117 pp.)

Director: Dr. Roberta D. Evans

This study analyzed the relationship between degrees of attributional style (optimism and pessimism) and dimensions of classroom management (instructional, people-orientation, and behavioral). The sample consisted of 126 self-contained elementary (K-6) classroom teachers throughout Montana. These teachers self-reported attributional style using the Attributional Style Questionnaire (Seligman, 1984). They presented an average range of optimism with a small majority being more optimistic than pessimistic. When queried regarding their attitudes and beliefs about classroom management, the Attitudes and Beliefs of Classroom Control Inventory (Baldwin & Martin, 1992) proved the survey sample to be very similar to previously validated elementary populations. Survey respondents aligned closely on the continuum from the least controlling non-interventionist to the most controlling interventionist. Valued demographic questions included years of teaching, position permanence, and training in classroom management.

Correlational analysis resulted in a failure to reject the null hypotheses. No statistically significant relationship was found between optimism/pessimism and classroom management dimensions. Cross-tabulation produced second-level findings of interest. Confirmed by Fisher's Exact test, the relationship between highly optimistic teachers and strong instructional managers proved significant. Additionally, pessimistic teachers tended to be less controlling regarding instructional management and more controlling when dealing with people and behaviors than were optimistic teachers.

Findings from the study yielded the following major conclusions:
1. The majority of elementary teachers surveyed have positive attributional style, yet a significant number were clinically depressed.
2. The predominant instructional management approach of the sample fell at the upper end of the continuum between interactionalist and interventionist.
3. People management scores appeared to exhibit a strong interactionalist approach.
4. Behavior management scores also appeared mid-range, representing an interactionalist approach.
5. Extremes of optimism and pessimism confirmed that greater control was exhibited by the optimist in the instructional management dimension while the corresponding pessimistic group scored more interactionalist in this dimension. In both the people and behavior dimensions, optimists were more interactionalist and pessimists tended toward greater controlling attitudes and beliefs. This finding is confirmed by the responses from the most hopeful respondents.
6. The longer a teacher remains at a grade level, the more controlling are his/her attitudes and beliefs regarding both instructional management and student behavior.
Dedication

This work is dedicated to my family, Tom, Tracy, and Peter, whose encouragement and confidence made everything possible. Together your love bolstered me.
Acknowledgments

Special acknowledgment is made to Dr. Roberta Evans, Chairman of my committee, for her decade of inspiration. Complimented by the ever-present support of Dr. Janet Thomson, these two women have mentored me and proved exemplar models of the professional educator. Dr. John Lundt, Dr. Dean Sorenson, Dr. Cathy Jenni, Dr. Gerald Evans, Dr. Mary Sheehy Moe, and Dr. Merle Farrier also deserve special thanks for their time, energy, and assistance given freely in the completion of this work.

Without the support of my cohort members, this work would not exist. They made the difference. The Educational Leadership professors provided the vision and intellectual challenge, the Department of Education and the University built the support, and the thirteen members of Cohort I established the foundation—the core of respected peers who inspired and carried me to completion. Thank you to each of you for the three years we spent together.

My support was broad and thanks belong to my brothers and sister, the Lincoln team, the Pepsi family, and the many administrators and teachers within the district who encouraged me. Thank you to Ann Bartell, Alta Buford, Mary Ann Cosgrove and Vicki Dunham who each shared their talents to make this work possible. These friends provided the encouragement to last the length of the doctoral process and friendship never-ending.

Special thanks to my parents who inspired me through their example. Always giving, always working, always learning . . . they held high expectations and challenged us to be our best and speak from the heart.
# Table of Contents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>I. Chapter 1: Introduction</strong></td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A. Background</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B. Purpose of the Study</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C. Significance of the Study</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D. Research Questions</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F. Definition of Terms</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>G. Delimitations and Limitations</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H. Summary</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>II. Chapter 2: Review of related Literature</strong></td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A. Introduction</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B. The Attribute of Optimism</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Attributional Theory</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Optimism</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Resilience</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Learned Optimism</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C. Educational Management</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Altered Understandings</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Intensified Demands</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D. Attitudes</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E. Beliefs</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Teacher Training</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F. Management Styles</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Instructional Management</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Behavior Management</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. People Management</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>G. Current Research</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H. Summary</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>III. Chapter 3: Methodology</strong></td>
<td>43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A. Research Design</td>
<td>43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B. Research Questions</td>
<td>43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C. Population and Sample</td>
<td>44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D. Instrumentation</td>
<td>46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Attributional Style Questionnaire</td>
<td>46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Attitudes &amp; Beliefs of Classroom Control Inventory</td>
<td>48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F. Treatment of the Data</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
List of Tables

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Table 1</td>
<td>Educational Preparation of Respondents</td>
<td>54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Table 2</td>
<td>Classroom Teaching Experience</td>
<td>55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Table 3</td>
<td>Grade Level Frequencies</td>
<td>56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Table 4</td>
<td>Position Permanence</td>
<td>57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Table 5</td>
<td>Classroom Management Training</td>
<td>58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Table 6</td>
<td>Explanatory Style As Determined by ASQ</td>
<td>59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Table 7</td>
<td>Means and Standard Deviations of the ASQ by High/Low Group and for the Total Sample</td>
<td>61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Table 8</td>
<td>Management Attitudes and Beliefs--Validation Means and Standard Deviations of the Three Dimensional ABCC</td>
<td>63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Table 9</td>
<td>Management Attitudes and Beliefs--High/Low Means and Standard Deviations of the Three Dimensional ABCC</td>
<td>64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Table 10</td>
<td>Instructional Management by ASQ Extremes</td>
<td>67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Table 11</td>
<td>People Management by ASQ Extremes</td>
<td>68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Table 12</td>
<td>Behavior Management by ASQ Extremes</td>
<td>68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Table 13</td>
<td>Management Scales by Extremes--both ASQ and Hopeful Difference</td>
<td>70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Table 14a</td>
<td>Instructional Management and ASQ--Question 75</td>
<td>72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Table 14b</td>
<td>Instructional Management and Hopefulness--Question 75</td>
<td>72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Table 15a</td>
<td>People Management and ASQ--Question 70</td>
<td>73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Table 15b</td>
<td>People Management and Hopefulness--Question 70</td>
<td>73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Table 16a</td>
<td>Behavior Management and ASQ--Question 66</td>
<td>74</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 16b: Behavior Management and Hopefulness—Question 66
Chapter One

Introduction

Background

O’Laughlin (1989) has expressed concern that teacher preparation programs fail to cause future teachers to examine their beliefs. Gerald Duffy (1998) has spoken to the dilemmas of teaching when equally important forces counteracted one another. He has offered as examples, the paradox of thinking creatively and keeping orderly classrooms; the complexity of being humane and driving learning; the confusion of developing skills and allowing authentic learning; and the realities of expecting excellence and creating frustration. "The balancing of round stones," Duffy's analogy for the complexities of modern teaching, requires that inner strength of conviction, a teacher's raison d'être. He has described the self-knowledge required to produce confidence, independence, and a sense of purpose allowing teachers to rise above the ordinary and to focus their energies despite intervening problems. Teachers who offer such self-efficacy possess the durability of attitude that is measured by persistence and an ability to withstand attack (Krosnick & Petty, 1995). They allow their optimistic spirit to move them beyond the internalization that immobilizes and thwarts growth (Seligman, 1990).

Purpose of the Study

The major purpose of this study was to investigate how a teacher's optimism relates to that teacher's attitudes and beliefs expressed about classroom management practices. This particular research explored attributional style, attitudes, and beliefs, those inner resources which may ensure effective teaching, meaningful student achievement, and a promising future.

Study of attribution models confirmed that causal thoughts or cognitions are crucial to personal decisions regarding behavior, affect, and experiences (Fosterling,
Attribution theory, as defined by Peterson and Seligman (1984), has offered a hypothetical construct for explanation of observable behaviors. These researchers have focused on the personality trait called explanatory style. Used synonymously with attribution style, explanatory style is a verbalization of the way individuals think about causes for events in their life. These causal explanations exhibit the dimensions of personalization, permanence, and pervasiveness (Seligman, 1990).

Fosterling (1988) has found most attribution models document that individuals strive to explain events in their environment in order to determine causality. Weiner (1979) has discussed motivational theory, explaining that people use attributional elements to make sense of past performance and to predict their future actions. Little, Sterling, and Farrell (1990) have concurred, finding that teacher attributions have substantial effects upon the learning that takes place in the classroom.

The notion that teacher attributes affect learner behaviors within the classroom has been demonstrated (Seligman, 1995; Deck, 1997; & Smith, 1980). Seligman's Penn Prevention Program has offered strong evidence that teachers can impact explanatory style. Seligman and fellow researchers have used a suburban Philadelphia school district to demonstrate the influence of a teacher upon a child's success or failure. The influence they examined dealt with long-term prevention of depression. Using both a cognitive and social problem-solving approach, children had been taught to study their self-talk and evaluate its accuracy. Positive attribution levels were raised after intervention consisting of a 12 week, 24 hour program.

Deck (1997) has found that a teacher's attributional style is not only related to the teacher's reports of satisfaction with the consultation relationship, but also to the success of the interventions planned during consultation. Smith (1980) has found a teacher's attributions to affect the number of daily learning opportunities presented to students,
further reinforcing the fact that personal attributes modeled by the teacher impact learning.

Kremer and Lifmann (1982) in a study of 191 elementary teachers from Northern Israel, have found that elementary teachers with an internal locus of control assigned responsibility for student achievement and classroom discipline problems to themselves rather than to others. They also found that beliefs regarding change related to the internal attitude of control.

Hall, Burley, and Villeme (1989 & 1992) have examined first year teachers in two studies and found a modest correlation between a teacher's reported use of corrective feedback and his/her perception that the cause of the student's academic failure was external. Students' success or failure was attributed more to causes internal than external to the student. In sum, Seligman (1990) has found teacher explanatory styles—the manner in which they habitually explained events— influenced the decisions they made regarding learners.

Does a teaching professional's personal explanatory style (optimistic or pessimistic) relate to the type of classroom management choices made for children? Lortie (in Fullan & Stiegelbauer, 1991) conducted research in 1975 analyzing what teachers do and think, concluding that, "One of the predominant feelings that characterize the psychological state of teachers and teaching was uncertainty—teachers are not sure whether they have made any difference at all" (p. 121).

Reminiscing on who has impacted his education, Csikszentmihalyi (1997) spoke of those teachers who taught with conviction, conveying a sense of value in their work. Teachers who have been capable of transmitting meaning rather than simply disseminating information are illustrative of this professional ideal. Teaching offers opportunity for profound influence and a teacher's framework of thinking impacts the quality of his/her teaching (Hargreaves, 1995). This study has offered an opportunity to explore the
connection between a teacher's explanatory style and the decisions they make regarding classroom management.

**Significance of the Study**

Martin Seligman's (1990) study of depression has shed light on the attitude of optimism and one's ability to conquer learned helplessness--the natural response to believing that what you do makes no difference. Seligman has provided a context for the study of optimism as it relates to the emotional health of teachers. In addition, there has been evidence that knowledge and beliefs have a powerful impact on teacher practice and deserve consideration when developing teacher learning opportunities (Guskey & Passaro, 1993; Pajares, 1992; Richardson, Anders, Tidwell, & Lloyd, 1991).

Observing teacher efficacy, Guskey and Passaro (1993) have found the internal versus external distinction to be similar to locus-of-control measures of causal attribution. In a study of 342 teachers (283 experienced, 59 pre-service), the internal factors have reflected a perspective that is positive and optimistic, within a teacher's personal influence versus those outside the classroom or external factors. These researchers have found the distinctions made by the teachers related to the potential influence they and all teachers can make.

Pajares (1992) has distinguished between belief, as based on evaluation and judgment, and knowledge, as based upon objective fact. Educator beliefs about their own efficacy, the nature of knowledge, causes of teacher or student performance, self-confidence, and beliefs regarding particular subjects all combine, and when clearly conceptualized, Pajares has said they offer the single most important construct in educational research.

In work determining the relationship between teachers' beliefs about the teaching of reading comprehension and their classroom practice, Richardson et al. (1991) have
found predictions about teaching practices based on the belief interviews of 39 teachers, to be related to practices observed in their classroom.

Fullan and Stiegelbauer (1991) have claimed, "For both stability and change, the mental health and attitudes of teachers are absolutely crucial to success" (p. 117). Fullan has further argued that growth in education requires that teachers understand both self and others. Examination of attributional style could complement self-knowledge, whether that knowledge style is optimistic or pessimistic by nature.

Optimism has been defined as an emotionally intelligent attitude, one which provides a person with the strength to persist throughout life (Goleman, 1995). Optimistic managers have done better on performance measures, including decision-making and interpersonal tasks according to research by Straw & Bassade (1993). The influence of optimism on education has just begun to be studied and the field demands more work (Coleman & Willower, 1996).

The research undertaken herein, has focused on the optimism displayed by teachers. Is the optimistic teacher especially adept at preparing students for the challenges of the twenty-first century? Studying the classroom management mode used by optimistic and pessimistic teachers could provide important insight into this matter. Classroom management styles have been described as operating on a theoretical continuum of control from interventionist to non-interventionist (Wolfgang & Glickman, 1980). New knowledge gained about attribute influence on management styles could offer impact preparation for teaching, staff development, personnel practices, and increased student motivation.

Research Questions

Elementary teacher optimism levels were assessed, as were the teacher's attitudes and beliefs regarding classroom management, but the central research question was:
Is there a relationship between an elementary teacher's level of optimism and the manner in which he/she makes classroom management decisions?

This question has been measured through two instruments. In both cases, direct communication with the authors has been effective in securing permission for use. The Attributional Style Questionnaire (Peterson et al., 1982) measured the subjects' optimism through assessing explanatory style. The measurement of classroom management decisions has come from a survey by Martin and Baldwin (1992), the Attitudes and Beliefs of Classroom Control Inventory. These researchers present a broad spectrum view of classroom management, suggesting that management decisions include more than the traditional discipline or behavior management. They have included the additional subsets of instructional management and people management as essential for the actual understanding of classroom decision making.

After responding to the situational scenarios of the Attributional Style Questionnaire, teachers ranked their attitudes and beliefs with the Attitudes and Beliefs of Classroom Control Inventory. The three categories of this survey--instructional management, behavior management, and people management--have driven the research hypotheses which include:

**H₁**: There will be a statistically significant relationship between a teacher's score of attribution and a teacher's self-assessed attitudes and beliefs regarding classroom management:

(a) as reported regarding instructional management techniques.
(b) as reported regarding behavior management style.
(c) as reported regarding people management skills.

**H₀**: There will be no statistically significant relationship between a teacher's score of attribution and a teacher's self-assessed attitude and beliefs regarding classroom management:

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(a) as reported regarding instructional management techniques.
(b) as reported regarding behavior management style.
(c) as reported regarding people management skills.

These research questions, hypotheses, and the demographic information gathered have been used to generate the needed information regarding teacher optimism and the potential impact on students.

**Definition of Terms**

For the purposes of this study, the following definitions will be used:

**Attitude.** According to Fishbein and Ajzen, a "learned predisposition to respond in a consistently favorable or unfavorable manner with respect to a given object" (as cited in Hendrickx, 1998, p. 6).

**Attitude durability.** The durability of an attitude is measured by its persistence, the degree to which an attitude remains unchanged, and by its resistance, an attitude's ability to withstand attack (Krosnick & Petty, 1995).

**Attitude impact.** The impact of an attitude is twofold: (a) influencing information processing and judgments, making it more likely that certain information will come to mind or certain decisions will be rendered, and (b) guiding behavior. The stronger the attitude, the more likely it influences information processing and guides behaviors (Krosnick & Petty, 1995).

**Attitude strength.** "[T]he extent to which attitudes manifest the qualities of durability and impactfulness." The defining features include persistence, resistance, impact on information processing and judgment, and guiding behavior which co-occur in strong attitudes (Krosnick & Petty, 1995, p. 3).

**Attribute.** A hypothetical construct, a way for the theorist to explain observable behaviors (Peterson & Seligman, 1984).
**Attributional style.** The factors people attribute to their successes and failures and the explanations they make to explain outside interference. Used interchangeably with explanatory style (Seligman, 1990).

**Behavior management.** The teacher management techniques that focus on pre-planned standards for behavior and enforcement of those standards (Martin & Baldwin, 1992).

**Beliefs.** Socially constructed representational systems that people use to interpret and act upon the world (Sigel, 1985).

**Classroom management.** Multi-faceted process that includes three broad dimensions—person, instruction, and behavior (Martin & Baldwin, 1992).

**Emotional intelligence.** Salvoy describes as the set of abilities which allow oneself to persist in the face of frustrations, to include: knowing one's emotions, managing emotions, motivating oneself, recognizing emotions in others, and handling relationships (in Goleman, 1995).

**Explanatory style.** "... the manner in which you habitually explain to yourself why events happen" (Seligman, 1990, p. 15).

**Futuremes.** A future studies word used to describe the individual's distinct conception in connection with the future (Bjerstedt, 1992).

**Instructional management.** The teacher management techniques used to enable students to learn, such as the establishment and maintenance of classroom routines, physical room arrangement, and the use of time (Martin & Baldwin, 1992).

**Intelligence.** The inferred characteristic of an individual commonly thought to be his/her ability to profit from experience, acquire knowledge, think abstractly, act purposefully, or adapt to changes in the environment (Wade & Tavris, 1998).

**Learned helplessness.** "... the giving-up reaction, the quitting response that follows from the belief that whatever you do doesn't matter" (Seligman, 1990, p. 15).
**Learned optimism.** "... learning a set of skills about how to talk to yourself when you suffer a personal defeat ... to increase your control over how you think about adversity" (Seligman, 1990, p. 207-208).

**Optimism.** Positive habits of thinking reflected in explanatory style. Defining characteristics are the belief that bad events are temporary (permanence), confined to this one situation (pervasiveness), and not one's own fault (personalization) (Seligman, 1990).

**People management.** The teacher management techniques used to develop the teacher-student relationship to include what teachers believe about students as persons and what they do to enable pupils to develop as individuals (Martin & Baldwin, 1992).

**Pessimism.** The belief that your actions will be futile. Defining characteristics are the belief that bad events are long-lasting (permanence), undermine everything (pervasiveness), and are one's own fault (personalization) (Seligman, 1990).

**Resiliency.** The set of attributes that provides people with the strength and fortitude to confront the overwhelming obstacles they are bound to face in life (Sagor, 1996).

**Self-efficacy.** The belief that one has mastery over the happenings in one's life and that they are capable of meeting the challenges presented (Goleman, 1995).

**Teacher belief system.** A guide for behavior and decision making in the classroom (Speaker & Madison, 1994).

**Teacher expectations.** Inferences that teachers make about the future academic achievement of students (Cooper & Good in Cotton & Wiklund, 1989).

**Delimitations and Limitations**

This study of attributional impact on the attitudes and beliefs of teacher management was confined to the grade K-6 teacher population of the state of Montana. This population of teachers has been utilized because of (a) the all day impact elementary
teachers have on students; and (b) the varied demographics regarding personal teacher characteristics. Therefore, one delimitation has been that Montana is primarily an agricultural and rural region. In addition, the survey has only been distributed to grade K-6 classroom teachers, the majority of whom spend their time with the same group of children, therefore, making it desirable for the purposes of this study.

A random sampling of grade K-6 teachers decreases the generalizability of findings. This study will not be generalizable to all areas of teaching. In particular, assumptions cannot be made about any other educational level, i.e. middle school, high school, or college. The nurturing environment of the elementary school is the primary focus.

Sampling technique has rested in the hands of district administrators. This poses limitations if a selective process for distribution has occurred. Superintendents/principals have been asked to distribute a sample to all grade K-6 teachers in the district. This has been assumed. Another limitation has been that some questions do not directly relate to education or the classroom. Some teachers may have initially found the survey irrelevant and discarded the work, leading to possible limitations associated with selection bias. Further, as a self-analysis the survey has been subjective by its very nature; the teacher has been held responsible for all responses.

Summary

The state of mind of individual teachers may impact learners, by the manner in which they explain events in their world and the decisions they make. This research has sought to investigate the relationship between attributional style and classroom management beliefs. Teachers who demonstrate optimism may react differently toward students in the classroom. If true, this study could prove important to teacher preparation programs and professional growth.
Introduction

Attributional style (optimism/pessimism) may relate to teacher attitudes and beliefs regarding classroom management decisions, and a plethora of literature has been established as the foundation for this work. This chapter contains a review of the scholarly literature regarding attribution style and optimism, followed by definition of attitude strength and belief structures in light of recommendations for futures oriented educational settings. A thorough examination of the literature relating to classroom management style follows, as it parallels recent changes in the thinking and understanding of our human capacity to learn and our capacity to function as progressive communities. Finally, current studies relating to both variables has been explicated. Connecting these philosophies, and at the core of this work, is research citing the distinct possibility of instructing teachers to think optimistically for the benefit of students.

The Attribute of Optimism

Attributional theory. As used by Peterson and Seligman (1984), an attribution is a hypothetical construct that has allowed researchers to explain observable behaviors. Concerned with the way people assign characteristics or intentions, attribution theory has focused on how people explain the behavior of themselves as well as others. Fosterling (1988) has revealed two characteristics found in most attribution models: (a) that causal thoughts or cognitions are crucial to decisions regarding behavior, affect, and experiences; and (b) that individuals strive to explain events in their environment to determine causality.
Heider (1958) first spoke of attributions from a phenomenological view. Attributions require the ability to self-study and report verbally causal beliefs regarding one's behavior, thereby establishing a "naive" or common sense psychology to happenings. Heider has postulated that these causal attributions for behavior arrange themselves along two dimensions—an internal/external dimension and a stable/unstable dimension (Deck, 1997). The locus of control dimension has examined whether the perceived outcomes were from forces within the person or outside. Internal forces have included ability and effort while external forces included task difficulty and luck. Heider has stated that the attributions people make to explain their own and other's actions were merely perceptions. Objectively, perceptions can be either correct or incorrect, regardless, because to the observer, they have been reality (Deck, 1997).

As cognitive psychology expanded, Weiner (1972, 1979) has furthered the study of attribution theory to explain achievement motivation. Agreeing with Heider, he has argued that people use these elements (ability, effort, task difficulty and luck) not only to make sense of past performance, but to predict their future achievement in similar areas. Weiner has split locus of control into internal/external and controllable/uncontrollable while still maintaining the stability/instability dimension. These three dimensions then work to influence different aspects of the individual's thoughts and future actions.

A specific attribution theory, the reformulated learned helplessness model (Peterson et al., 1982) provided focus for this research. Peterson and Seligman (1984) explain that attributes are not real things, but more hypothetical concepts. These researchers have established a model based upon personal introspection, causal explanation, and behavioral observation. Seligman (1990) expanded attributions beyond achievement into every facet of one's life. Using an attribution or "explanatory style," people can characterize their life view in either an optimistic or pessimistic perspective. Seligman has renamed the three dimensions. Internal/external has become
"personalization" and derives from whether a person views events as the fault of the individual or an outside event. The stable/unstable dimension has been named "permanence," dependent upon whether the cause of events is viewed as temporary or lasting. The dimension dealing with control has become the "pervasiveness" dimension relating the cause of something as immediate and confined to just this one situation or global and impacting all.

Researchers continued adding to attributional theory, demonstrating that attributions affect many aspects of behavior, including: academic behavior (Dweck, 1986); task selection and expectance of success (Dweck & Leggett, 1988; Valle & Frieze, 1976; Weiner et al., 1971); and persistence in the face of failure (Weiner et al.). Each of these optimistic attributions underscores the characteristics required for teaching school in modern society.

Deck (1997) and Battagliese (1992) have noted research demonstrating that a teacher's attributions affect their behaviors within the classroom. Weiner (1972) found the attribution process to be a significant determinant of learning and performance in the classroom. Smith (1980) determined a teacher's attributions to affect the number of daily learning opportunities presented to students. Investigating the relationship between a teacher's locus of control and their professional attributions, Kremer and Lifmann (1982) studied Israeli elementary teachers. They found that teachers with an internal locus of control assign responsibility for student achievement and classroom discipline problems to themselves rather than to others. Hall, Villeme, & Burley (1989) found a modest significance between at teacher's reported use of corrective feedback and their perception that the cause of the student's academic failure was external. In addition, they found with first year teachers, that as general teacher efficacy increased, reported dependence on external student-related variables decreased, thereby increasing teacher acceptance of
responsibility for student outcomes. Little et al. (1990) have found teacher attribution to have substantive effects upon the learning that takes place in the classroom.

Attribution theory has complimented cognitive psychology beliefs. Optimistically viewing the self as a work in process has offered hope that depression can decrease when an individual can chose to act upon himself/herself. The majority of this explanatory style work derives from studies of depression and its powerful impact on productivity. Seligman (1990) looks at peoples' explanations for negative events and has defined the depressogenic explanatory style as the pessimistic view of the world. Pessimism leads to learned helplessness, a state of giving up which Seligman first noted over twenty years ago in his original work with animals. Seligman and his researchers have repeatedly found that explanatory style affects achievement, motivation, mental health, and physical health. According to Seligman (1995), the basis of optimism resides in the way a person thinks about causes.

Optimism. Goleman (1995) explained optimism as an emotionally intelligent attitude, one of a set of abilities which has helped individuals persist when confronting frustration or resistance. He has defined optimism as, "having strong expectations that, in general, things will turn out all right in life, despite setbacks and frustrations" (p. 88). As an emotional intelligence, it can be argued that optimism protects people from apathy, hopelessness, or depression during the tough situations life presents. Proof of Goleman's belief in optimism comes from work with explanatory style--one's habitual way of explaining good and bad events (Seligman, 1990).

Researchers have found explanatory style to be significantly related to depression (Peterson & Seligman, 1984; Robins, 1988), physical health (Peterson et al., 1988) and achievement (Peterson & Barrett, 1987; Schulman et al., 1991; Nolen-Hoeksema, Girgus, Seligman, 1986). Seligman (1995) has studied the differences between optimists and pessimists for over 25 years. He has defined pessimists as those who believe that bad
events will last a long time, undermine everything they do, and have been their own
fault, whereas optimists who are confronted with similar problems view the misfortune
as temporary, confined to this one situation, and not their fault. Seligman has collected
information from hundreds of studies that demonstrate pessimists give up more easily
and get depressed more often. Optimists perform better in school, at work, and in
athletic competitions. They exceed predictions on aptitude tests, are more apt to be
elected to public office, and present themselves as healthier and having a longer life
expectancy (Seligman, 1995).

Studying twins allows the exploration of optimism as a heritable trait. Using such
natural pairs, Schulman, Keith, & Seligman (1993) have substantiated the environmental
basis of optimism with research showing that explanatory style development in children
is impacted by criticism from adults (e.g., teachers), learning from mothers, timing and
reality of a child's first major trauma, and evidence of changes in explanatory style
during cognitive therapy. Looking at identical versus fraternal twins, they have found a
significantly higher concordance in explanatory style between identical twins than in
fraternal twins, suggesting there may be a genetic component. However, these
researchers have remained skeptical that optimism is directly heritable due to the
influence which success and failure have on optimism.

The belief that negative life events or outcomes are less likely to happen to us
than to others and that positive events are more likely to happen to us, has been a
cautory obstacle to the optimistic mindset (Regan, Snyder, & Kassin, 1995). These
researchers have conducted two studies investigating whether people show unrealistic
optimism only in regard to their own futures or whether they are unrealistically
optimistic for the future of any individual. Results of both studies have pointed to the
fact that unrealistic optimism is a form of self-enhancement (i.e., the tendency to view
the self more favorably than other individuals) rather than person positivity bias (i.e., the
tendency to evaluate any individual social object, not just the self, more positively than groups of individuals).

Seligman (1995) has also cautioned against unrealistic optimism, noting that if optimism clouds the ability to be realistic, it can present harm. He has stressed accurate optimism, the healthy introspection of one's thinking and reflection regarding one's role in the world. Keeping the healthy tension between optimism and realism has been managed through accurate optimism. Such optimism is influenced by the environment and serves the individual as a powerful tool for personal accomplishment. Learned optimism has been proven a tool for improving life circumstances and has complimented Polak's (in Boulding, 1985) discussion of the profound effect that optimism or pessimism has on the future itself in regard to total societies as well as in regard to individuals.

Goleman (1995) has pointed out that merely looking at the proven medical benefits of positive feelings offers reason for promoting optimism in our teachers. Positive emotions have created a subtle edge in fighting disease. Immune system strength may be weakened by depression. Pessimists have been known to neglect themselves demonstrating careless health habits. The psychologies of hopefulness and optimism have been proven beneficial to one's physical being. Goleman has demanded recognition of such strong evidence.

**Resilience.** This ability to overcome life hazards has been determined to be crucial. Recent mental health and education research has reflected a paradigm shift away from vulnerability toward overcoming aversive situations (Luthar, 1991; Rutter, 1987). Findings on resiliency have emphasized optimistic characteristics as crucial internal protective factors. Optimistic people have demonstrated better mood, higher number of helper T cells, and higher natural killer cell cytotoxicity when confronting stress (Segerstrom, Taylor, Kemeny, & Fahey, 1998). Henderson and Milstein (1996) have spoken of internal locus of control, perceptiveness, positive view of personal future, and
flexibility as contributors to internal protection against life's struggles. Individuals with an optimistic explanatory style have been found to have higher levels of expectancies, express more positive affect, have higher self-esteem, better life expectancy and achieve at higher levels of performance than people with pessimistic explanatory style (Campbell, 1986; Campbell, Chew, & Scratchley, 1991; Campbell & Martinko, 1994; Henry, Martinko, & Pierce, 1993; Peterson et al., 1988; Seligman & Schulman, 1986). Optimistic explanatory style has proven good for both psychological and physical health.

Seligman's term "learned optimism" (1990) implies that optimism can be taught through examination of explanatory style.

In like fashion, resiliency can also be taught. Resiliency research has offered empirical evidence to substantiate the hope that those experiencing risks in their lives can rebound. The challenge for educators has been to focus more on strengths than on deficits. Opportunities to develop competence, to feel empowered, and to affirm self-efficacy have developed resiliency. With the focus on what is right in a person's life, research has found triumph can emerge (Henderson & Milstein, 1996).

Learned optimism. Daniel Goleman (1995) has stated, "Optimism and hope--like helplessness and despair--can be learned" (p. 89). The premise behind Seligman's work has been that optimism can be taught, it can be impacted, and it can be altered to more positive degrees. He speaks of accurate optimism that can serve as a powerful tool (1995). Learning to think more optimistically when faced with failure provides the strength and permanent life skills necessary to ward off depression. In light of a self-scrutinizing society, Seligman (1990) has offered hope and supporting evidence that analysis of explanatory patterns has worked toward self-improvement.

Seligman's Penn Prevention Program offers guidance toward helping children develop the skills of learned optimism. This program has resulted in positive growth during a pilot study of a small group of fifth and sixth-graders. The two main
components of this program have included the cognitive part and the social problem-solving part. A first step has entailed teaching children to monitor the things that they are saying to themselves. The second step has taught children how to deal with interpersonal conflict and solve social problems (Seligman, 1995).

Defining optimism as the expectation of favorable life outcomes and gaining the skill to use optimism for personal strength, Seligman has generated reason for emphasizing the role of optimism in educational organizations. From both the teacher and student perspective, such thinking holds power over our collective future. Connecting to high purpose and keeping an optimistic approach has enhanced student growth in robust educational institutions (Coleman & Willower, 1996).

**Educational Management**

Managing schools and classroom learning has comprised a constant series of decisions. Martin & Baldwin (1992) have connected these decisions to a teacher's attitude and belief systems, suggesting they are decisions impacting instruction, people, and behavior. When making a decision, one essentially chooses among different images of the future we envision achievable (Boulding, 1985). When a classroom teacher has made a decision, that image of the future should hopefully be dedicated to the student's best interests. Understanding the relationship between an optimistic attitude and endless classroom management decisions has been the goal of this investigation.

Ake Bjerstedt (1992) has spoken of human decisions as highly dependent on the conceptions people have about the future and about our possibilities of shaping the future. Bjerstedt's research at Lund University has focused on establishing sustainable world development and peace. At the Malmo School of Education, he has been mapping the content and character of conceptions of the future as held by children and adolescents. This search looks for the most salient features in a future-related conceptual
field and formal education's role in developing such conceptions. In discussion, Bjerstedt has challenged one to mentally attempt erasing all thoughts that have any connection forward in time, i.e., plans, intentions, goals, hopes, fears, etc. Such intellectual experimentation results in a shallow present. According to Bjerstedt, these forward-looking psychological and educational perspectives have deserved recognition for the role played at improving education and sustainable development.

Bjerstedt (1992) has developed this individual concept of the future using the future studies word futuremes. Four varying characteristics are required for healthy futuremes. They have been described as: (1) a positive emotional charging (a person's degree of optimism or pessimism), (2) an understanding of the time and space spectrum (a person's predisposition to think about what is closest versus entertaining a broad spectrum), (3) the ability to influence (a person's understanding of their degrees of freedom), (4) a vision of oneself as a player in the future (a person's decision to be active or passive). Therefore, Bjerstedt has offered the hope that teachers with healthy futuremes hold potential for assisting students develop the skills required of the future.

Boulding has complimented this thinking, claiming that making rational choice means looking further into the future than choosing passionately. Boulding (1985) has written, "... all images of the future are derived from images of the past as they exist in our memory and in our records" (p. 56). Reflection on these memories and our classroom decisions can increase the mental health and attitude of teachers and thereby can increase the health of our schools (Fullan & Stiegelbauer, 1991).

The Effective Schooling Practices Synthesis (Cotton, 1995) has reflected recent educational research literature regarding effective practice. Binding effective schools to effective teacher practice, the study has cited evidence regarding effective classroom management and organization. This management category has included a teacher's use of instructional groups for academic and affective needs, making efficient use of learning
time, establishing efficient classroom routines, and setting clear standards for classroom behavior while applying these standards fairly and consistently.

The management role of teachers has become increasingly complicated as they function in the midst of intensification and restructuring (Fullan & Steigelbauer, 1991). The demands on curriculum, standards, evaluation, and accountability have surrounded teachers. In addition, these authors have spoken of restructuring demands that promote collaborative work cultures, demand reorganization of teacher education, expect teacher leadership, propose altered schedules, heighten instructional expertise, and offer numerous other innovations. Teachers have been caught in the huge struggle between these two reform movements. Management decisions have become more complicated and strong belief systems more crucial in the teaching profession.

Management theory has begun to evidence symptoms of exposure to the new science ideas, and the same changes can be understood from the microcosm of the classroom. As organizations have begun to look at the problems within, the focus turns to relational aspects, i.e., followership, empowerment, and leader accessibility (Wheatley, 1992). Organizations have abandoned beliefs in stability and controlled change and learning to cope with disequilibrium and transformational change (Caine & Caine, 1997). This altered mindset has been driven by enlarged understandings of both brain functioning and systems thinking.

New management techniques have expressed the shift from extrinsic motivation to intrinsic, from individual focus to community, from isolated roles to meaning, and from fragmented views to vision (Wheatley, 1992). These transitions have been represented in the paradigm shift to systems thinking. Fullan and Steigelbauer (1991) have substantiated the many reasons teachers withdraw from these challenges. Citing insufficient collaborative norms, inhibitive organizational structures, overwhelming innovations, and negative psychological states as barriers to change these authors have
found educational institutions antagonistic to change. They have stressed the importance of educators who are comfortable with their sense of efficacy, striving for self-actualization, in control, motivated, and desiring change. With such managerial skills and attitudes, teachers have been confronted with the potential to help schools become true learning organizations.

**Altered understandings.** Scientific forces regarding the nature of intelligence have been driving many of the changed management theories within education circles. The American Psychological Association's Task Force on Intelligence (1995) has addressed the continuing debate about intelligence being inherited, acquired, environmental, or some combination of these and other factors. They have found many ways to be intelligent; therefore, there exist many conceptualizations of intelligence. The standard definition of intelligence as an IQ factor has undergone tremendous change. Moving from the standard *g* factor defining the specific mental abilities and talents of general intellect, definitions have been broadened considerably. From the fifth edition of *About Psychology*, intelligence has been defined as "an inferred characteristic of an individual, usually defined as the ability to profit from experience, acquire knowledge, think abstractly, act purposefully, or adapt to changes in the environment" (Wade & Tavris, 1998).

Ample evidence has been established to demonstrate that intelligence is complex and not limited to a single entity. We have finally acknowledged that humans have unique combinations of intelligences (Gardner, 1983). Defining intelligence as, "...the human ability to solve problems or to make something that is valued in one or more cultures," Gardner (in Checkley, 1997, p. 8) has elaborated on the eighth intelligence, the naturalist intelligence. Complimenting the other seven: (1) linguistic, (2) logical-mathematical, (3) spatial, (4) bodily kinesthetic, (5) musical, (6) interpersonal, and (7) intrapersonal, these intelligences have been found in all people to varying degrees.
Rather than assuming that intelligence is something one is born with—a concept which limits capacities—the understanding of eight multiple intelligence areas has depicted minds that are as different as personalities.

Goleman (1995) in his synthesis, has established the understanding of emotional intelligence using brain and behavioral research to augment his advocacy of self-awareness, impulse control, empathy and social deftness. Arguing that strong emotional intelligence is required to compliment natural intellect, he has pointed to the complexities of defining success in life through the standard g factor or any psychometric reading.

Realization of how the brain has evolved and still functions has fueled these changes in thinking. Broadened abilities have demanded greater responsibility. Pinker's criteria for intelligence (Newell and Simon in Pinker, 1997, p. 62) has called for possessing (a) the ability to specify a goal, (b) the skills at assessing the current situation to see how it differs from the goal, and (c) the knowledge for applying a set of operations that reduce the difference. He has stated, "Intelligence, then, is the ability to attain goals in the face of obstacles by means of decisions based on rational (truth obeying) rules" (Pinker, 1997, p.62).

Intensified demands. Boulding (1985) has said, "...change is one of the most fundamental, inescapable properties of the universe. Equilibrium in a strict sense—that is, the absence of change in a system—is a figment of the human imagination" (p. 37). Change for the future has greater meaning than the simple implementation of new programs. Fullan and Steiglebaum (1991) have contended educational change demands that the entire culture of schools and the understanding of teaching as a profession change radically. Envisioning teachers in the role of continuous learners in a community of interactive professionals has provided the hope these authors hold for motivating good teachers throughout a career.
Senge (1990) has initiated a discussion of learning organizations and the need for teachers to guide exploration of new generational thinking. He claims:

Generative learning cannot be sustained in an organization if people's thinking is dominated by short-term events. If we focus on events, the best we can ever do is predict an event before it happens so that we can react optimally. But we cannot learn to create. (p. 22)

Teachers have been asked to become practitioners of generative learning, as leaders have been stressing the need for systems thinking, recognizing the connections uniting us. The successful learning organization has been seen functioning within a world of increasing interdependency and change. This is a world in which current students and teachers will be forced to function.

In the study, *Preparing Students for the 21st Century* (Uchida, Cetron, & McKenzie, 1996), conducted by the American Association of School Administrators, 55 leaders in business, education, government, and other fields, have focused on the knowledge, skills, and behaviors students will need to prepare for the new millennium. Strong communication skills and technological skills have been standard recommendations. Civility in relationships with each other and society is a more unusual recommendation. In addition, valuing honesty and integrity, have been deemed crucial by this group. In this work, futurist David Pearce Snyder, a member of the Council of 55, has offered a warning. Considering that today's students feel the future will be worse than the present, Snyder has expressed the concern that educators will have a difficult time convincing young people to practice socially constructive behaviors--including work ethic, respect for authority, and tolerance--without offering some demonstrable evidence that rewards and benefits exist. Snyder has recommended teaching the problem solving skills, optimistic approaches, and thinking processes required for difficult dilemmas.
The National Commission on Teaching and America's Future (1996) has laid out a blueprint for recruiting, preparing, and supporting the best teachers in America's schools. They have conducted their study based on three premises, the first of which states that, what teachers know and can do is the most important influence on what students' learn. Teachers need to know how to demonstrate viable, optimistic approaches to the worlds' problems. For this to happen, the commission has called for: developing serious standards for both students and teachers; reinventing teacher preparation and professional development; repairing teacher recruitment; encouraging and rewarding the best teachers; and restructuring schools for student and teacher success. Providing each student with a caring, competent, and qualified teacher has become the most important ingredient in education reform. Teacher attitudes and beliefs toward student learning and the management work required have become crucial in meeting this goal.

Attitudes

Attitudes and beliefs lay the foundation for behavior (Krosnik & Petty, 1995). Stronger attitudes have been proven more resistant to change, and therefore deserve recognition for the role attitude strength plays in school reform. Years of extensive empirical study have been dedicated to understanding the attributes of attitudes and the resultant attitude strength. Krosnik & Petty have described the defining features of attitude strength to be durability and impactfulness. Durability factors have been described as including (a) persistence--the degree to which an attitude remains unchanged over time, and (b) resistance--an attitude's ability to withstand attack. Impactfulness has been related to an attitude's ability to (a) influence information processing and judgments, and (b) guide behavior. While it seems likely that these features co-occur, with strong attitudes reflecting all or parts of each, Krosnik & Petty have found little research to substantiate the overlap of these features. Through reflective
practice, the opportunity awaits for the teaching profession to examine attitude strengths. Understanding the subjective and cognitive dimensions of an attitude's strength deserves reflection by today's teacher. Discussion of the personal relevance and degree of involvement or vested interest that has been held by teachers, allows exploration of the essence of our behaviors. When discussion of pre-existing beliefs and attitudes does occur, teachers have been shown to possess the rational reflection required to transcend beliefs and change behaviors (O'Loughlin, 1989). Looking at the strength attributes of effective teachers has allowed insight and growth.

Examination of teacher self-efficacy beliefs and their resultant strength has been promising as a recruitment tool. Goleman (1995) has said, "Self-efficacy is the belief that one has mastery over the events of one's life and can meet challenges as they come up" (p. 89). Goleman, interviewing Albert Bandura, has stated that:

People's beliefs about their abilities have a profound effect on those abilities. Ability is not a fixed property; there is a huge variability in how you perform. People who have a sense of self-efficacy bounce back from failures; they approach things in terms of how to handle them rather than worrying about what can go wrong. (p. 90)

This holds strong promise for staff development of self-efficacy competencies. Psychologists have worked to develop self-efficacy by developing competencies. If one has been more of a risk-taker and accepts more demanding challenges, self-efficacy increases. This attitude has made people more susceptible to reflection and maximization of skills.

Beliefs

Teacher belief systems and some traditional thinking regarding their impact on learners has been altered to consider a perspective envisioning a spectra of beliefs embedded in the chaos of teaching (Speaker & Madison, 1994). The complex interplay
of beliefs and behaviors occurring in our educational settings, has played out in the larger society as explained by Boulding (1985):

If there is any single key to the development of societies it is the way in which individuals in them learn their valuation structures, for the capacity to develop realistic images of the future also depends in no small measure on the values that are placed on learning and on testing and adaptability. (p. 91)

Using the work of Sigel (1995), beliefs have been defined as socially constructed representational systems that people use to interpret and act upon the world. Individuals who have developed highly consistent belief sets across a variety of domains can be said to possess a belief system. Regarding change in beliefs, Sigel has offered proof that those beliefs not based on evidence are more resistant to change. He has also spoken to the permeability of boundaries surrounding a belief and one's ability to exclude conflicting information regarding a belief with an impermeable boundary.

The relationship between belief and subsequent action has been of keen interest for those concerned with the profession of teaching (O'Loughlin, 1989). Evidence suggests that the models of practice employed by most teachers have been close facsimiles of teaching they experienced in the role of student (Goodlad, 1983). O'Loughlin has bemoaned teacher preparation programs that fail to cause future students to examine their beliefs. By not gaining ownership over a coherent set of core beliefs and beliefs about praxis, and dedicating themselves to carry over these beliefs into practice, the sole effect of teacher education has appeared to confirm existing beliefs through student teaching, thereby maintaining the reproductive cycle of schooling.

Evidence has been found to demonstrate that knowledge and beliefs have a powerful impact on practice and deserve consideration when designing teacher learning opportunities (Guskey & Passaro, 1993; Pajares, 1992; Richardson et al., 1991). Recent work in teacher preparation and staff development demands greater reflection by the professional. The understanding has been that such introspective searching creates

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synergism between beliefs and practices. Through analysis of one's underlying assumptions and perceptions—those beliefs shaping personal teaching practice—a powerful support system has been created for confronting teacher change (Hassler & Collins, 1993). Such reflection has been recommended in a variety of forms. Louden (1991) depicts three types: introspection, replay and rehearsal, and inquiry. Introspection, the looking inward and examining thoughts and feelings, relates directly to having personal understanding of one's beliefs and attributes.

Reflection clearly has elevated the fundamental purposes of teaching, requiring discussion of more than technique. The moral purposes of teacher development have been declared important and reflect belief systems. Durkheim has said, "School teaching is moral, firstly, because it contributes to the creation and re-creation of future generations" (in Hargreaves, 1995, p. 14). Classroom societies have been considered reflections of future adult societies. Whether by design or default, teachers have been preparing generations of the future. Hargreaves (1995) has explained that, "Children spend too many hours in their charge for teachers to escape this obligation" (p. 14). Implicit and unexamined beliefs must be studied to remind and refresh the broad moral purposes of teaching.

Cotton and Wikelund (1989) have clearly established that a teacher's thinking and beliefs impact learners. A compilation of findings and recommendations have been synthesized from their work that is supported by 46 documents offering research evidence about the relationship between expectations and student outcomes. Clearly established in each study used was the finding that effective schools have included high expectations for student learning among the essentials. Findings of importance in this study have warned of the power which low expectations hold to limit student achievement. Citing Brophy (1983) these researchers have reported that between five to ten percent of the variance in student performance has been attributable to differential
treatment based upon teachers' expectations. Also of interest was the finding that younger children have been more susceptible to the effects of expectancy communications than are older children, offering a strong reason for studying the attribution characteristics of elementary teachers. Recognition that teacher expectations can and do affect students' achievement and attitudes has also been noted in the report. Cotton and Wikelund have illuminated the training hopes held for changing biases and differential treatment.

In work detailing the beliefs of literacy teachers, Speaker and Madison (1994) have presented a complicated version of belief systems driving literacy instruction. Observations on the complex and dynamic nature of classroom social systems have clouded more simplified models of teacher beliefs. They have been feeling that the newer models of systems thinking through chaos more adequately describe the complexities of teacher thought process and decision making in the classroom. Claiming that a spectra of beliefs serves as a better model--a spectra that pays attention to understanding the relationships among and across teacher beliefs--these researchers have been pointing to research on both ends of the continuum. Yes, teachers have operated from a set of beliefs about teaching and literacy which guide their planning, decision making, and instruction (Brophy & Good, 1974; Schommer, 1990; and Schulman, 1986). Meanwhile, results of other studies have been finding no overt connections between beliefs and instruction, even going to the extreme to say that, "other social, environmental or psychological factors may outweigh a teacher's theoretical belief system" (Speaker & Madison, 1994, p. 6). The chaos and system theories have allowed for greater complications in teacher belief construct to exist because of the complexities of the educational system.

Matching belief systems with expectancy theory has complicated matters. Boulding (1985) has said, "...we can test our images of the world by deriving
expectations from them—that is, images of the future—and then seeing if these expectations are realized as time passes and the future becomes the past" (p. 24). Our success has been seen as a fulfillment of expectations and reinforces our existing beliefs. When success confirms our original image of the world, we learn nothing new. When we fail, our image of the future has not been fulfilled. That has caused us to revise our image of the world by reexamining our expectations and establishing a good probability that our image of the world has been changing in the direction of truth. Reflective training and practice has been used to promote such teacher growth and enhance student learning.

**Teacher training.** A mental model has been described as one's way of looking at the world. That model has been explained as a framework for the cognitive processes of our mind, determining how we think and act (Senge, 1990). Learning has only come from seeing the world the way it really is and our actions are arrived at through this thinking process. Argyris (in Larsen, 1997) has related this learning to the rungs of a ladder; one moves to the first rung following an observation. The second rung is where his/her own theories have been applied to the observation. As we have added assumptions and drawn conclusions, one climbs higher, establishing beliefs which finally substantiate the action we decide to take. These beliefs and assumptions have been generalized to the next encounter and have been used to foster new information, thereby impacting each new start up the ladder.

Studying teacher perceptions regarding a psychology of pedagogy, White (1989) has surveyed 455 graduate students. White has found that the subjects' belief systems were patterned after a direct teaching style, that they exhibited methods orientation, and that they offered positive external reinforcement used as a tool to change behavior. Such feedback has confirmed the hypothesis that teachers of today are probably reflecting the theory and methods of the teacher training program.
Marginal teachers have exhibited common behaviors that have negative impact on student learning (Rogus & Nuzzi, 1993). Two of the behaviors these researchers have listed include lack of personal insight and motivation and an unwillingness to accept responsibility for problems. Both of these characteristic behaviors have appeared antagonistic to a "professional model" of teacher growth. These areas have been discussed from a developmental perspective using reflective practices and the overall association with optimism and beliefs. The third, a failure to create an appropriate classroom atmosphere, has been directly related to the issue of classroom management. Rogus and Nuzzi claim this classroom atmosphere is the most crucial because of a teacher's duty to ensure learning. They further elaborate on issues which have caused this poor atmosphere such as: little or inconsistent discipline, weak lesson plans, and ineffective delivery.

Frequently, discord is evident in the beginning professional's philosophical mindset. Brookhart and Freeman (1992) have conducted a review of 44 studies defining characteristics of entering teacher candidates. Student motives for choosing teaching as a career have consistently profiled altruism and a desire to work with children as the primary reasons people enter teaching. Another consistent finding regarding the entering teacher has been a confidence in their abilities and an optimism regarding the success they will experience as teachers. Through reflection of beliefs and practice there is hope that we can retain this expectation of success and meet the needs of both teachers and students (Valli, 1990).

Hope for change has clearly rested in analysis of the epistemological beliefs of educators, those beliefs one holds regarding the structure, source, and certainty of knowledge, as well as the source of knowledge acquisition (Schommer, 1990). As teachers reflect on these beliefs, they have served to raise the level of complexity of their mental structures. There exists a body of support that contends that higher levels of
cognitive complexity predict more complex professional behavior (Reiman & Theiss-Sprinthall, 1993). Schommer has described individuals holding sophisticated views of knowledge as believers that knowledge is constantly evolving and thus uncertain. While some knowledge has been uncovered, some has yet to be discovered, and small bits of what we do know are considered static. Understanding that knowledge is not absolute, but instead, is actively constructed within specific context (King & Kitchener, 1994), has both enhanced our thinking about teacher beliefs and our need to examine these beliefs and attitudes.

Wheatley (1992) has said that the skill necessary for keeping beliefs and actions synchronized is the capacity for self-referral. By remaining consistent within oneself, a teacher creates the harmony of belief and action for generating growth in students. Wheatley has said, "We need to be able to trust that something as simple as a clear core of values and vision, kept in motion through continuing dialogue, can lead to order" (p. 147). Teaching excellence has been described as involving a balancing act; Duffy has related it to the balancing of round stones requiring more than pure pedagogical knowledge. To "balance the round stones," excellent teachers must exhibit a knowledge of self that portrays confidence, independence, and a sense of purpose. When a teacher's values have come in line with their professional intentions for children and schooling, the stones balance and the belief system is healthy (Duffy, 1998).

Management Styles

Management of a building and management of a classroom exhibit similarities which have been in a shifting process. Guild (1997) explains:

Educators who believe in the concepts of learning styles, brain-based education, and multiple intelligences bring an approach and attitude to their teaching of focusing on how students learn and the unique qualities of each learner. Each of these theories offers a comprehensive approach
to learning and teaching, not a one-shot program. Each can be a catalyst for positive student learning. Each forces us to examine our values about people, learning, and education to make the hundreds of daily decisions that put beliefs into practice. p. 30

Guild continues this discussion, pointing to the areas of overlap in each of these theoretical shifts overtaking education. He describes these shifts to include the need for learning and learner-centered work, reflective practitioners and decision makers (both student and teacher), education of the whole person, rich curriculums, and understanding of diversity.

Borko and Putnam (1995) have shared Doyle's (1986) concept of classroom management, discussing the two primary tasks: (a) promoting learning, and (b) promoting order. It is the environment which has been created which maintains order, therefore shifting the focus of classroom management away from the child and controlling misbehavior to the orchestration of classroom activities. Different types of classroom activities demand different programs of action. Academic tasks that require student thinking and reflection have often increased levels of ambiguity and uncertainty. These types of learning tasks demand new management. Classroom management decisions based on this newer thinking and positive student achievement have been incorporating diversity in addressing the three areas of management considered in this study: instructional, behavioral, and people management.

**Instructional management.** The physical environment has been considered a potential influence on the way teachers and students feel, think, and behave (Stewart, Evans, & Kaczynski, 1997). A classroom with an orderly and attractive environment has improved the level and quality of student interactions. The second factor that has been examined by these researchers was the time/instructional management. They have stressed the extreme importance of a daily routine, particularly for the opening and closing sessions. Declaring clear, short-term and long-term academic and behavior goals for both individual and class has increased the probability of student success.
According to Posner (1993), teachers' beliefs have affected their actions and the ways common teaching practices are viewed. These common teaching practices or instructional management techniques have become more complex. He has spoken of the constructivist teacher creating learning environments that are interactive and which demand complex instructional approaches to support the cognitively active and social learning within the classroom. This demand for complexity has complimented the changing mental model previously discussed for learners. Blank & Kershaw (1993) call for attention to the new instructional dynamics which demand congruency with the classroom environment suggesting that active social learning will require altered instructional technique. The recommended methods have included the instructional functions of planning, providing structure, facilitating group function, attending to physical requirements, actively monitoring and managing student behavior, and establishing a supportive classroom environment.

Brophy (1992) has described the teacher’s role as facilitator of this learning process. Such a role has demanded teachers: serve as resource person, clarify instructional tasks, structure the information support for learning, and provide assistance to students until independent progress is possible. Establishing this learning environment demands different thinking regarding classroom management.

Behavior management. Wolfgang and Glickman (1980) have spoken of three discipline models ranging from child-centered to teacher-directed approaches. The relationship/listening model has required minimal use of power by the teacher. This has been described as a therapeutic relationship, characterized by supportive listening and observation. In the confronting/contracting model, the teacher has openly confronted the student with their misbehavior, asks for reflection, and guides the student toward success at excluding such practice in the future. The third model, the rules reward and punishment method, which Short, Short, and Blanton (1994) have claimed to be most
prevalent, uses negative reinforcement, isolation, and corporal punishment to enforce rules. In any school setting, teachers have been found at various positions along this continuum.

Willower (1975) has labeled the custodial educators as those who believe students arrive as passive receptacles of knowledge who need the clear-cut payoffs outlined through rigid classroom structure and organization. Conformity to the system has meant routine and standardization dominate in these classes. Humanistic educators focus on the individual student. Believing and acting from the understanding that students arrive with natural inclinations to learn, they have minimized routine, bent rules and viewed children as active problem solvers (Short et al., 1994). While humanistic educators have favored interventions involving communication and negotiation, custodial educators have subscribed to more punitive or controlling strategies. These researchers have offered the premise that teacher beliefs may influence expectations, perception of classroom problems, and preference for intervention techniques. Behavior management decisions have demanded close scrutiny to be compatible with beliefs and the futures-orientation thinking.

Developing congruency between discipline or behavior models and teachers' beliefs has been proposed as a more effective strategy (Short et al., 1994). When beliefs match, these researchers have found greater success with interventions. Commitment to compatible behavior plans is has offered comfort for teachers. When plans have been imposed from the organization, the degree of congruency decreases if conflict with teacher beliefs occurs.

Alfie Kohn (1996) derides the oligarchical classroom managers of the past, rationalizing that ownership by students is essential in a communal learning environment. Meeting someone else's behavioral expectations Kohn claims, does not develop the social or moral skills required to function in society. Faulting the schools, he questions the idea
of classroom management, instead asking teachers to examine carefully what they ask of students. A cynical vision of the young mind may be rooted in the teacher that has been maintaining absolute control. Reconsidering the behavioral demands we place on students has correlated with the complex issues surrounding learning. This potentially extreme position that has been taken by Kohn deserves study in the classroom environment.

As school reform has been creating a more participatory school organization, teachers need to adapt to this change (Fullan & Stiegelbauer, 1991). The psychology of traditional classroom management—the stimulus-response mode—has contradicted democratic principles. Evans (1996) has proposed a model for reforming classrooms based upon encouragement. Emerging from the Adlerian philosophy that an educator's most important task is to guard against a student becoming discouraged in the learning environment, Evans advocates encouragement training for teachers. Purporting the advanced state of learning that comes from children capable of looking to the future with hope and joy, he demonstrated that altered teacher attitudes hold potential to change the student's experience. The entire research premise to encouragement training has derived from this need to change teacher thinking.

Behavior management and classroom control have contributed essential factors to student achievement, with classroom rules communicating expectations for behavior. Research shows that teachers who have been effective in managing classroom behavior are also effective in improving achievement (Mastropieri & Scruggs, 1987). Recommendations have included positive attention, positive rules, a variety of interventions, and self-management or monitoring of behavior.

**People management.** Teacher effectiveness is the final major contributor to a healthy classroom environment (Stewart et al., 1997). Standards set by teachers seem to have produced self-fulfilling prophecies (Good & Brophy, 1978; Paine, Radicchi,
Rosellini, Deutchman, & Darch, 1983). Smith, Neisworth, & Greer (1978) have explained it well:

The teacher's attitude toward children and education determines to a very real degree how children perceived school, themselves, and each other—and how much progress they actually make . . . A teacher's personal style and approach, more than anything else, create the climate and mood which will characterize the classroom. (p. 84)

No other variable has held greater potential impact on a student than the relationship between the student and the teacher (Walker & Shea, 1995). Stewart et al. have found effective teachers use the traditions of honesty and integrity as the base environment, adding touches of humor, confidence, and enthusiasm regarding the act of teaching.

Kohn (1996) has urged teachers to be a person and risk vulnerability. When the "control" objective has clashed with the "care" objective, frequently control wins. Urging educators to develop truly caring relationships with students, Kohn has stressed the powerful example of the teacher who models concern through patient listening.

Apple (1995) has claimed that once we " . . . eliminate the personal, eliminate the connections between the concrete student and the school experience, . . . curriculums and teaching quickly lose both their vitality and their legitimacy in the eyes of students" (p. 136). Creating connections between teacher and student has offered a model of how such connections can be bridged while simultaneously building community.

Additional evidence for rethinking the "people" element of classroom management has come from the resiliency work of the past decade. Sagor (1996) has conceptualized the resilient student, offering the understanding based on research that the desired outcome is a competent student possessing a sense of belonging, usefulness, and potency; therefore, a problem-solving approach to discipline complimented by learning style-friendly instruction has become the standard. Much of this has occurred in the structured opportunities offered to children each day to impact their personal experience.

Through teaching strategies and our method of classroom organization, teachers have
prepared children to cope with the uncertain future (Sagor). Promoting student self-management has moved the classroom toward the optimal learning environment as responsibility and motivation become intrinsic factors driving learning.

Based on what is known about how we learn, an array of instructional management techniques have become important when dealing with a variety of students. Studying good differentiators and synthesizing the findings has been the focus of research by Simpson and Ure (1994). Commonalities demonstrated by these strong instructional managers have included sharing the management of learning with the student. This has included agreeing to shared duties and giving students responsibility for and support in identifying their problems and difficulties. Successful teachers have also promoted the belief that attainment can improve. These teachers have drawn upon a wide range of information sources to assist students including feedback from support staff, profiling, specific diagnostic assessment, classroom observation, and discussion with students. Identifying the range of needs has then guided instructional management. Findings have suggested teachers address students at appropriate work levels, select realistic targets, provide additional explanation and assistance with learning strategy, and make special arrangements as needed for individual children.

**Current Research**

White (1989) tested the hypotheses that teachers reflect what they have been taught while attempting to discern a psychology of pedagogy. The 455 graduate students responded to 70 items relating to theory and 30 items relating to case studies which demonstrated that they still believed and adhered to a Skinnerian theory resulting in the non-thinking, mechanical response from the learner. Reward or reinforcement were seen as essential elements of the learner's success. Although they have demonstrated some understanding of social learning and information systems theory, the teachers had not
altered significantly from this type of instruction. Recommendations have suggested a focus on the student as the base of self-regulatory behavior. This responsible, self-motivating student creates the atmosphere in which quality instruction and teacher reflection can exist.

In a qualitative study of teacher perceptions, Blank and Kershaw (1993) sought perceptions from elementary school teachers (n=34), principals (n=7), and supervisors (n=3) regarding the types of classroom management strategies demanded in an interactive instructional setting. The educators surveyed have identified certain classroom management skills necessary for this type of alternative task structure. Specifically, they have found worthwhile one's ability to plan, structure, and actively manage instruction. These educators have expressed strong beliefs in the need for flexibility, tolerance, a facilitator's role, and developing self-regulated behaviors in learners. Flexibility has earned recognition as a key element in their success. These teachers have reported increased confidence in students through academic gains and social skills. Finally, the educators have perceived that obstacles such as inefficient structuring and functioning can be overcome for use of interactive instructional approaches.

Most interesting was the finding that teacher characteristics can be viewed more in terms of attitudes. The attitude of giving up control has made a major difference in their degree of success. These researchers emphasized the blending of the old and new techniques, dependent on context. They have stated that teachers beginning the shift to student-centered classrooms need the support and opportunities to develop an understanding of the appropriate classroom management techniques to be used. One further recommendation has been for time to develop comfort with the role of facilitator to student learning (Blank & Kershaw, 1993).
This attitude of change and what causes one to thrive in such conditions has been studied by Salzman (1997). Hoping to find a common manner of relating to the world, Salzman has designed a questionnaire to assess the degree of thriving in response to organizational change. This instrument, along with three measures assessing different aspects of optimism and pessimism: general personality dispositions (Optimism/Pessimism Instrument), explanatory style (Attributional Style Questionnaire), and models of change (Metaphor Scale), has comprised the researcher's attempt at determining this relationship. Working with participants from two U.S.-based manufacturing organizations involved in team-based change initiatives, Salzman's results supported the hypotheses that optimistic and pessimistic outlooks are significantly correlated with thriving. However, the measures of general optimism, pessimism (O/P) and explanatory style (ASQ) were not correlated with thriving. The Metaphor Scale, a situational depiction of organizational change, has been proven significantly correlated with thriving. Individuals more strongly advocating optimistic metaphors of organizational change held a more positive view, in one of the two companies studied. Those who have strongly endorsed pessimistic metaphors of organizational change possessed a more negative view of change in both organizations. This finding, along with the multiple regression analysis, has provided additional support that the pessimistic relationship is usually a stronger predictor (Peterson & Seligman, 1984).

Salzman notes that the ASQ has demonstrated only modest correlations with both the Metaphor Inventory and the O/P Instrument. This lack of strong relationship, observed elsewhere (Geers, Reilley, Dember, & Denronde, 1996), has been complicated by questions regarding internal consistency of the ASQ and merit consideration. In addition, Salzman's discussion of the bipolarity of optimism and pessimism has been confirmed in this research, suggesting that the two constructs do not lie at ends of the
same continuum, but rather that individuals can have both optimistic and pessimistic orientations.

In a study conducted to investigate the effectiveness of a one day workshop for teachers, Scherer and Kimmel (1993) attempted to alter attributions styles toward greater optimistic patterns. Using pretest and posttest administrations of the Attributional Style Questionnaire and the Teacher Attributions for Academic Performance Scale (TAAPS), these researchers have found a significant decrease in ASQ composite negative scores, while positive scores were significantly increased. Although the TAAPS failed to confirm significant differences, these positive ASQ results have reflected enhancement of attribution styles thought to facilitate student motivation and achievement. Workshop participants, retrained through lecture, modeling, and role play have demonstrated an increase in responses that indicated attributions of internal, stable, and/or global causes for positive events and decreased the scores for negative events, reflecting fewer responses that indicated internal, stable, and/or global for negative events. This study was unable to evaluate the maintenance of the changed explanatory style over time, but the authors were able to replicate the results in four different workshop settings over the course of a year. These altered attributions have been demonstrated to be positively related to health and achievement. In addition, the authors have pointed to strong theoretical support for the expectation of a positive relationship with student achievement (Scherer & Kimmel).

An experimental design by Deck (1997) has engaged elementary school teachers (n=56) in two interview situations approximately a week apart. Results have pointed to a positive shift in attributional style during consultation. Attributional statements made at both interviews have served as the pre- and post-intervention measures. These statements have been analyzed using the Content Analysis of Verbatim Explanation (Peterson, Luborsky, Seligman, 1983). Following the second interview, all participants
completed the ASQ. Lacking a significant difference between the treatment and control group, Deck has highlighted the fact that the mean decrease in the treatment group was twice that of the control group. Those receiving consultation have displayed post-treatment causal explanations that were less external and stable than were causal statements offered at pre-treatment, not an anticipated finding. Looking for explanations for this effect, Deck has pointed to the unanticipated preponderance of pessimism in the treatment group, the fact that the retraining was merely a consultation rather than a workshop format, and the inadvertent treatment of the control group (1997).

A final study by Battagliese (1992) has focused on the relationship the elementary teacher’s attributional style has to the likelihood that they will refer a student and their belief in behavioral intervention. Hypothesizing that the attributional style of a teacher would affect his/her actions and preferences, Battagliese has used the modified Attributional Style Questionnaire. Results have failed to find a significant relationship between attributional style and a teacher’s perceptions regarding referral. Attribution style has also been insignificant in predicting willingness to spend more or less time and effort on behavior interventions. Pointing to the differences between the attributions of the particular child and those of the teacher, participants were asked to consider a child displaying problem behavior and to make attributions regarding that child’s role in the specific setting regardless of how the participant may attribute events in his/her own life. Since the purpose of the study was to explore the teacher-psychologist consultative relationship, Battagliese has actually produced encouraging results. The logical answer, that a certain attributional type refers more readily and disfavors extensive interventions, did not result. A teacher with depressogenic attributional style does not have a more negative toward consultation than the optimistic teacher (Battagliese).
Summary

As educational institutions experiment with new organizational patterns, the elementary teacher is provided an opportunity to mirror such changes in the classroom. Teacher attitudes and beliefs are primary motivators deserving scrutiny (Pajares, 1992; Cotton & Wiklund, 1989). Researchers have found explanatory style significantly related to depression (Peterson & Seligman, 1984; Robins, 1988), physical health (Peterson et al., 1988) and achievement (Peterson & Barrett, 1987; Schulman et al., 1991; Nolen-Hoeksema et al., 1986). Connecting the powerful component of attributional optimism to classroom management may help change teacher attitudes and belief systems. It therefore holds potential for improved student achievement.

School practice that heightens student and staff involvement produces superior learning environments (Short et al., 1994). Students desire to be a part of schools that solicit their involvement and input. Climates of student belongingness and involvement deserve nurturing in the classroom management arena. As professional teachers educate, they must develop individual aptitudes and interests, finding strength in the diversity which makes each learner unique; they must empower students with the proficiencies, knowledge, social confidence, and moral awareness to be contributors to a healthy society; they must help students see the connectedness of things, the relationships across disciplines (Boyer, 1995).

As teachers operate from the strength of their belief systems, reflection of those beliefs brings analysis of essential student skills and the need to prepare for the future (Hargreaves, 1995). Understanding the role of optimism in teacher attitude development and classroom management action offers the distinct possibility of enhancing the future prospects for learners.
This research was aimed at enriching the daily life of the elementary student by directing elementary-level teachers to the consideration of student futures. An optimistic attributional outlook has been described as both future-focused and healthy from the emotional and physical perspectives (Bjersted, 1992; Goleman, 1995, & Seligman, 1990). The specific intent was to study how a teacher's degree of optimism or pessimism relates to his/her attitudes and beliefs regarding certain classroom management practices which determine student options in the elementary classroom.

Research Design

This study was a descriptive, correlational survey based upon teachers' personal and professional self-assessments. The format has differentiated individual teachers by their positive or negative attributional style and determined to what extent, if any, these personal qualities are related to their classroom behaviors regarding management of instruction, people, and behavior. Demographic variables include gender, level of education, years in elementary education, grade levels taught, and current grade level. These variables were used to see if a relationship existed among demographic variables and both attributional and management style.

Research Questions

The central research question for this study investigated the relationship between a teacher's personal level of optimism/pessimism and his/her management decisions regarding classroom activities that impact learners. The descriptive questions were:
(1) What are these teachers' attribute styles as measured by the Attributional Style Questionnaire?

(2) How do these teachers rate on their attitudes and beliefs relating to classroom control as measured by the Attitudes and Beliefs of Classroom Control Inventory?

(3) Is there a relationship between a teacher's positive or negative attributional level and his/her attitudes and beliefs regarding classroom management issues?

The hypotheses were:

**H$_1$**: There will be a statistically significant relationship between a teacher's score of attribution and a teacher's self-assessed attitudes and beliefs regarding classroom management:

(a) as reported regarding instructional management techniques.

(b) as reported regarding behavior management style.

(c) as reported regarding people management skills.

**H$_0$**: There will be no statistically significant relationship between a teacher's score of attribution and a teacher's self-assessed attitude and beliefs regarding classroom management:

(a) as reported regarding instructional management techniques.

(b) as reported regarding behavior management style.

(c) as reported regarding people management skills.

Using the classical view of hypotheses testing, an $\alpha < 0.05$ was used to determine significance for all data analysis in this survey (Howell, 1997).

**Population and Sample**

The target population for this study involved elementary classroom teachers operating in a single classroom environment, thereby making the concentration the
individual classroom regardless of other characteristics. Consequently, the sample was derived via random selection of thirteen elementary schools from among 289 possible districts throughout the state of Montana. Altogether, 155 teachers constituted the potential subjects initially queried in this study. While traditional demographics have been sought via the instrumentation utilized in this research, an additional component relevant in this particular study was also added—that of position permanence. This inquiry requested the number of years teachers taught in the same grade level at the same school and was derived from the change theory perspective. When viewing the dynamics of the change process, Hall and Hord (1987) encourage the study of this process from differing angles of analysis: the individual teacher, the innovation, the intervention, or the school. If the intervention is a change of grade level, relevance could be found in the varied responses of individual teachers in either attributional style or management beliefs and attitudes.

Questionnaires were mailed to elementary buildings selected by systematic sampling with a random start. In each building selected, the elementary principal was asked to distribute the survey to all teachers currently in an elementary classroom, grades K-6 (Appendix C & D). Follow-up letters with notes of appreciation were mailed the week prior to the stated deadline (Appendix E). Phone calls were made to the participating principals to increase return rate, but resulted in limited success. To increase sample size a purposeful sampling technique was implemented using five sites. Again, the classroom and the individual teacher remained the source of information with this second sampling technique.

This single-stage sample for elementary-level teachers engaged each respondent in personal attribute determination and reflection of personal classroom practices. Each participant responded to the Future-Focused Teacher Survey which included: the Attributional Style Questionnaire (ASQ), the Attitudes and Beliefs of Classroom Control.
(ABCC) Inventory, and demographics. The teacher was solely responsible for completion and return for the random selections. The principal retained responsibility for dissemination on both sampling methods. In addition, for those purposively selected, the administrator was held responsible for return. Anonymity was guaranteed and all data was intended to be aggregated.

Respondents were viewed as a whole and also divided into two groups representing either an optimistic explanatory style or not, as determined by the ASQ. Relationships were then determined between the two groups and their responses regarding the three components of the ABCC: people management, discipline management, and instructional management. Assuming a fairly large effect size, a minimum of thirty respondents per group was sought (Suter, 1998) and achieved.

Instrumentation

Two primary instruments were used for gathering the quantitative data necessary for this study. The Attributional Style Questionnaire (Peterson et al., 1982) and the Attitudes and Beliefs of Classroom Control Inventory (Baldwin & Martin, 1992) were offered consecutively with demographic questions posed before and after. Use of both instruments has been approved by the primary authors (see Appendix A). The Future-Focused Teacher Survey instrument derived from these samples can be found in Appendix B. Descriptions of each instrument are included below.

Attributional Style Questionnaire (ASQ). This instrument was created by Peterson et al. (1982) following the reformulation of the learned helplessness model of depression (Tennn & Herzberger, 1986). A self-report measure defining patterns of explanatory style (Peterson & Seligman, 1984), the ASQ has been widely used to ascertain advantages of particular attributional styles, especially relating to depression or the lack of depression. Locus, stability, and globality are all related to Seligman's attributional dimensions.
People with a pessimistic explanatory style have been known to assign stable, internal, global causes for bad events and unstable, external, specific causes for good events. Those with optimistic explanatory style do the opposite, having assigned unstable, external, specific causes for bad events and stable, internal, global causes for good events (Salzmann, 1997).

Presented with a series of 12 hypothetical events--6 of which are described as good events and 6 as bad events--the respondents were asked to imagine their own involvement in that case, determine a cause, and rank the outcome on three seven-point scales. For scoring, causes were determined according to the degree they presented external versus internal elements (1-totally due to other people or circumstances, 7-totally due to me), unstable versus stable characteristics (1-will never again be present, 7-will always be present), and specific versus global impact (1-influences just this particular situation, 7-influences all situation in my life). Scoring results in six sub-scale scores, both a positive (CoPos) and a negative (CoNeg) for each of the three categories and a composite score (CPCN).

Reliability factors have been extensively examined for the Attributional Style Questionnaire instrument. Using Cronbach's (1951) alpha, Peterson et al. (1982) report internal consistencies of .44 to .69 on their original norming population of 130 undergraduates in a New York institute of higher education. These modest figures average to a .54 mean reliability for the locus, stability, and globality scales and are consistent with the reports of several other researchers as summarized by Tennen and Herzberger (1986). The composite score proved to be the more reliable measure, with reliability coefficients of .75 for good events and .72 for bad events. Peterson and Seligman's (1984) data indicates that criterion validity scores on the ASQ predict the future development of depression and attributions for actual life events. Consequently, most researchers have operated from the combined scores where necessary. This
researcher began with composite scores and considered the sub scale scores where necessary.

Although many recent studies (Battagliese, 1992; Coleman, 1996; Deck, 1997; & Salzmann, 1997) have employed the ASQ, the questionnaire has not been without critics. Concerns have been raised that particular scenarios hold little relevance to certain groups of people, reducing its power to predict. Items depicting dating scenarios or the receipt of a poor grade have appeared to hold little relevance to the spouse of a chronically ill patient or the expecting mother (Tennan & Herzberger, 1986). The teachers in this study were encouraged to use their creativity, vividly imagining each situation irrespective of proper fit to their current situation.

Corr and Gray (1996) have claimed the theoretical basis of the Reformulated Learned Helplessness Model (RLHM) presents cause for ASQ scoring concerns, claiming internality is relatively independent of stability/globality. These researchers have also suggested that CoPos and CoNeg are separate constructs, with a relatively homogeneous set of items for positive attributional style. However, because these factors may be important in measuring future-focused teaching, and because Seligman still recommends their use, they were used in this study.

Attitudes and Beliefs of Classroom Control (ABCC) Inventory. This survey was developed in 1992 by Martin and Baldwin for the purpose of identifying classroom management differences between certain groups, i.e: novice and experienced teachers, urban and rural teachers, male and female teachers, elementary and secondary level teachers. The inventory's overall purpose was to establish validity of the construct of classroom management styles which differs significantly from mere discipline. These authors were contacted for permission and to gain further insights regarding the instrument. According to Martin and Baldwin, most empirical research regarding
classroom management has been either on discipline using Willower's Pupil Control Inventory or it is qualitative in nature.

Originally called the Inventory of Classroom Management Style, the ABCC Inventory has undergone several revisions. Forty-eight items have been factor analyzed and the instrument now consists of 26 sound Likert format (1-4) items and three sub-scales. These sub-scales have the following Cronbach's coefficient alphas to verify internal consistency: Instructional Management (14 items, reliability = .82), People Management (8 items, reliability = .69), and Behavior Management (4 items, reliability = .69). The instrument's construct validity has been established with selected sub-scales of the 16 Personality Factor Questionnaire (16PF--Form A). Based on earlier research, Martin and Baldwin (1993) used only six personality factors in this validation: (1) dominance, (2) rule consciousness, (3) abstractedness, (4) openness to change, (5) perfectionism, and (6) impression management, each a personality trait known to be associated with a teachers' behaviors in the classroom. The full-scale score derived from the ABCC inventory has been determined to be of no use; therefore, the 3 sub-scale scores will be compared with the vital ASQ composite scores (CPCN, CoNeg, and CoPos).

Dimension one, instructional management, has been constructed to deal with issues that contribute to the general classroom atmosphere, reflecting classroom management aspects such as monitoring student work, structuring daily routines, and material allocation. Questions in this category (50%) are well-represented, considering that strong lessons serve as the first line of defense in a classroom. The manner in which such tasks are managed contributes to general classroom atmosphere and classroom management style. The smoothness and momentum of instruction were consistently found to be characteristics of well-planned lessons which prevent off-task behaviors (Martin, Yin, & Baldwin, 1998).
The people management dimension has been designed to reflect teacher beliefs about students as people and how teachers work to develop relationships. Quality relationships are those that create connections between student and teacher. Academic achievement and productive behavior are influenced by the quality of the teacher-student relationship (Martin et al., 1998).

The third dimension, behavior management, varied from discipline in that it focuses on pre-planned thinking about student behavior. Behavior management includes setting rules, establishing a reward structure, and providing opportunities for student input. Methods for formulation and implementation of classroom rules have produced significant differences between effective and ineffective classrooms. Motivational factors have weighed heavily in this dimension. Effective reward structures and student input have been shown to prevent misbehavior and promote maintenance of a productive classroom environment (Martin et al., 1998).

Teacher scores were then placed on a continuum ranging from interventionist (most controlling, i.e., behavior modification, Assertive Discipline) to non-interventionist (least controlling, i.e., Gordon's Teacher Effectiveness Training, transactional analysis). Between the two extremes is the interactionalist thinking (i.e., Glasser, Dreikurs). Studies demonstrated the *Attitudes and Beliefs of Classroom Control Inventory* to be a reliable, valid instrument useful in the empirical examination of classroom management styles (Martin, Yin, & Baldwin, 1998).

**Treatment of the Data**

The analysis of this data was intended to show the existence of relationships between teachers' degree of optimism and their attitudes and beliefs regarding classroom management decisions. Considering the nonparametric relationships of this data, descriptions of the intensity and magnitude of the relationships were sought.
Interrelationships among the ASQ score and the ABCC scores were studied using each of the three ABCC sub-scales independently. Correlational matrices were established for each of the three management dimensions: instructional, people, and behavior. Using the Pearson Product Moment correlation, statistical significance was sought at $p < .05$.

Cross-tabulations were developed to study questions: 66 (behavior management), 70 (people management), and 75 (instructional management). This was conducted to determine whether or not the distribution of one variable was related to a second variable (Howell, 1997).
Chapter Four

Analysis of the Data

The purpose of this research was to explore the relationship between teachers' attributional characteristics and their attitudes and beliefs regarding management decisions made in their classrooms. This study asked elementary classroom teachers to self-report both explanatory style, as measured by the Attributional Style Questionnaire (Peterson, et al., 1982), and to confirm management perspectives using the Attitudes and Beliefs on Classroom Control Inventory (Baldwin & Martin, 1994). The results of these assessments were correlated to test the hypotheses as described in Chapter 3.

Research Overview

As Kounin (1970) has demonstrated, there are different dimensions of group management—those greater than mere disciplinary technique—that have the power to influence the behavior of children in classrooms. Examining the teacher attitudes and beliefs which dictate complex classroom management decisions is valuable insofar as these actions have a powerful impact on learners (Cotton & Wikeland, 1989). This research compared the relationship between teachers' attitudes and beliefs with attributional style in an attempt to determine the influence of the personality construct on belief development and actual practice. If, as Bjerstedt (1982) has challenged, "more deliberate and systematic efforts should be made to prepare pupils for the future," teachers who exhibit the strength of optimism may offer students untold benefits.

This research investigated questions about the relationship between classroom management beliefs and attitudes and individual teachers' degrees of optimism. Classroom management was analyzed through its three component factors: instructional, people-oriented, and behavioral (Martin, Yin, & Baldwin, 1998). Results were compared to
elements of both positive and negative attributional style in the construct of optimism pioneered by Martin Seligman.

Characteristics of the Sample

Response rate. The original sample was comprised of 155 teachers selected via a random sampling of 13 randomly selected Montana schools with K-6 self-contained classrooms. Stratification of schools by size of community was determined irrelevant, rather, the emphasis here was on the individual teacher and the classroom unit. Administrators were then contacted at the 13 elementary sites across the state. Questionnaires were mailed for all classroom teachers, and the building principal distributed the original surveys. Some building leaders used the teacher mailbox, while others distributed the surveys at faculty meetings. All original surveys were returned to the researcher directly in a pre-stamped envelope.

As the deadline approached, each administrator was contacted and received written notes (Appendix E), as did all teachers participating in the survey. Additional phone contact was made to schools with low response rates. Conversations with these principals resulted in positive affirmations that their teachers had responded, therefore, no additional returns were generated. After repeated follow-up inquiries yielded a cumulative response rate of 54.8%, additional teachers were sought through purposeful sampling in five additional sites. This purposeful approach netted 53 more completed surveys. Therefore, the final cumulative response rate was established at 66.8%.

Gender. One hundred twenty-six respondents returned completed questionnaires and were included in the statistical analysis. Of the respondents, 16 (12.7%) were male and 110 (87.3%) were female. Based upon statistics provided by the Montana Office of Public Education, male teachers of elementary students were slightly underrepresented in
this survey. Due to the extremes of this sample split, differences in gender were briefly studied. No significant differences were found.

**Educational preparation.** The demographic portion of the instrument gave teachers an opportunity to respond to one of four levels of educational preparation. These levels included Bachelor's degree, Bachelor's degree plus 15 credits, Master's degree, or Master's degree plus 15 credits. All four levels of educational preparation were represented, with the majority of respondents currently below the Master's level (66.7%). Just over one-third of those responding held a Master's degree or coursework beyond it. See Table 1 for the educational preparation of respondents. As anticipated, a correlation ($r = .43, p < .01$) between the number of years teaching and the level of educational achievement existed.

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<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Classroom teaching experience. Respondents' years in teaching ranged from one year to thirty-six years, with 75.5% having a minimum of 10 years' experience. Teachers with a minimum of twenty years' experience comprised 42.1% of the sample. This has been discussed as an important attribute by Tennen and Herzberger (1986) who speculated that the scenarios depicted in the ASQ require that a research participant be of sufficient age to have encountered some negative life experiences. Considering the large number of teachers beyond the ten year mark (n = 86), the mean age of this sample is greater than 32 years of age. Therefore, the subjects will certainly have been old enough to experience negative life events. The frequency distributions of classroom teaching experiences are provided in Table 2.

Table 2

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Length of Practice</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0-4 yrs</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>15.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5-9 yrs</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>9.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10-14 yrs</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>15.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15-19 yrs</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>18.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20-24 yrs</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>15.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25-29 yrs</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>20.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30-34 yrs</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>35-39</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>126</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Grade level taught. As Table 3 illustrates, each grade level was well represented in this population. A total of 57.9% of reporting teachers were employed at the primary level (kindergarten through third grade). The representation from grades four to six constituted 38.1% of the sample. Three respondents, a librarian, a K-12 substitute, and a classroom teacher with responsibility for concurrent high school instruction, were disqualified insofar as they did not meet the criteria for sample membership as outlined in Chapter 3.

Table 3
Grade Level Frequencies

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade Level</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Kindergarten</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>10.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grade 1</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>15.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grade 2</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>8.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grade 3</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>16.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grade 4</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>14.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grade 5</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>11.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grade 6</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>9.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Multi grades K-3</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>6.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Multi grades 4-6</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Multi grades K-6</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>126</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Position permanence. This demographic question elicited information regarding the number of years teachers had been teaching their current grade in the same school. Table 4 provides a frequency distribution of the number of years of their experience since a change occurred either in teachers' grade level or school assignment. The mean time reported by the teachers was nine years in their current positions (no grade level change/same school). Approximately one-third of the respondents (37.2%) had been teaching in their current positions for ten years or more. More than forty percent had been teaching at their current grade levels from one to four years. This permanence of position is important in these findings; correlations demonstrated a positive relationship between permanence of position and teachers' instructional management ($r = .18, p < .05$) and between permanence of position and their attitudes regarding behavioral management ($r = .26, p < .05$).

Table 4
Position Permanence

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Position Permanence = Years Since Change of Either Grade Level or Location</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0-4 yrs</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>41.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5-9 yrs</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>22.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10-14 yrs</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>15.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15-19 yrs</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>7.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20-24 yrs</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>7.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>≥25 yrs</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>7.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>126</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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Classroom management training. This question was used to determine the amount of participation in formal classroom management training the subjects had experienced, but a wide variety of unanticipated responses resulted in amendments to the categories used in scoring. Teachers' responses ranged from specific names of management training to non-specific references to undergraduate coursework and readings. Any response given has been counted as worthy of inclusion in this category. Nonetheless, 29% of the sample has either claimed no formal training in classroom management or has chosen to not respond to this final question. This question was the only question with a large number (36) of non-responses.

Table 5
Classroom Management Training

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Classroom management training</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>None provided</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>28.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>One course/source provided</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>26.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Two courses/sources provided</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>17.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Three or more courses/sources provided</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>27.8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Explanatory styles of participants. The Attributional Style Questionnaire was developed for the purpose of measuring explanations and explanatory style by Peterson, Semmel, et al., in 1982. This self-report instrument has been determined to yield scores for the explanation of "bad" and "good" events using 12 scenarios, 6 positive events and 6 negative events. Each scenario was followed by a series of four questions asking respondents to identify the single greatest "cause" for the situation. These initial responses.
or "causes" are not integral to the testing focus (see Seligman's recommendations in the scoring key, Appendix F). However, the remaining three questions for each situation classify the dimensions of the subject's responses on continua stemming from internal to external (personalization), stable to unstable (permanence), and global to specific (pervasiveness). Due to reverse order scoring, good and bad responses have been separated resulting in Composite Negative Attributional Style (CoNeg) and the Composite Positive Attributional Style (CoPos) scores. The difference between the Composite Positive minus the Composite Negative (CPCN) along with the CoNeg and CoPos have been established as the most valid and reliable in the prediction of such things as depression.

This sample of elementary (K-6) teachers offered an optimism mean score of 3.27 (SD = 2.52). Seligman (1990) has placed that mean in the average optimism range. The actual CPCN scores of respondents in this survey ranged from a -4.20 to a 10.8. Based upon Seligman's determinations, Table 6 details the CPCN scores for the 126 teachers and their explanatory descriptors. The optimistic portion described 51.6% of these respondents, while 48.4% fell into the pessimistic description.

Table 6

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category and Description</th>
<th>Number of Respondents n = 126</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>CPCN = &gt;8</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>4.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Very Optimistic</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CPCN = 6 - 8</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>11.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moderately Optimistic</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CPCN = 3 - 5</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>35.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average Optimism</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CPCN = &gt;0 - 2</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>38.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moderately Pessimistic</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CPCN = ≤0</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>9.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Very Pessimistic</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
In the ASQ survey, causal explanations have not been established, yet responses based on the internality, stability, and globality provide internal validity checks through the use of parallel questions. Although Seligman recommends that the composite scores serve as the focus of this assessment, Table 7 presents the means and standard deviations for the following six ASQ dimensions as well as the two remaining composite scores:

- Internal Positive (IntPos) and Negative (IntNeg) -- the total of the answers to the second question under each respective event divided by 6.
- Stable Positive (StaPos) and Negative (StaNeg) -- the total of the answers to the third question under each respective event divided by 6.
- Global Positive (GloPos) and Negative (GloNet) -- the total of the answers to the fourth question under each respective event divided by 6.
- Composite Positive (CoPos) -- the sum of all good event scores divided by the total number of good events (6), best possible score is 21, the worst score is 3.
- Composite Negative (CoNeg) -- the sum of all bad event scores divided by the total number of bad events (6), best possible score is 3, the worst score is 21.

These scores have been grouped into three categories described as High, Low, and Total group responses. Overall rates of the 126 respondents can be found in the Total group.

Because this research was focused on the relationship of explanatory style, the 126 responses were divided into equal thirds in order to delineate the contrasts between the 42 highest (range 10.8 - 4.2) CPCN scores and the 42 lowest (range -4.2 - 2.1) CPCN scores. Obvious differences existed and are described later in this chapter. In keeping with the construct of this future-focused theory, an examination of the differences between those teachers exhibiting high levels of optimism and those scoring high in pessimism served to test the hypotheses. Table 7 demonstrates the differentiation between the two extremes of explanatory style.
Table 7

Means and Standard Deviations of the ASQ by High/Low Group (n = 42) and for the Total Sample (n = 126)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sample</th>
<th>CoPos</th>
<th>CoNeg</th>
<th>IntPos</th>
<th>StaPos</th>
<th>GloPos</th>
<th>IntNeg</th>
<th>StaNeg</th>
<th>GloNeg</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>High, n = 42</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M</td>
<td>16.88</td>
<td>10.83</td>
<td>5.54</td>
<td>5.68</td>
<td>5.69</td>
<td>3.83</td>
<td>3.71</td>
<td>3.31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SD</td>
<td>1.41</td>
<td>1.79</td>
<td>.65</td>
<td>.68</td>
<td>.68</td>
<td>1.07</td>
<td>.72</td>
<td>.99</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Low, n = 42</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M</td>
<td>14.40</td>
<td>13.71</td>
<td>4.56</td>
<td>5.01</td>
<td>4.83</td>
<td>4.42</td>
<td>4.62</td>
<td>4.66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SD</td>
<td>1.63</td>
<td>1.56</td>
<td>.63</td>
<td>.71</td>
<td>.90</td>
<td>.72</td>
<td>.66</td>
<td>.90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Sample, n = 126</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M</td>
<td>15.54</td>
<td>12.26</td>
<td>5.00</td>
<td>5.31</td>
<td>5.24</td>
<td>4.13</td>
<td>4.16</td>
<td>3.96</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SD</td>
<td>1.89</td>
<td>2.05</td>
<td>.80</td>
<td>.75</td>
<td>.90</td>
<td>.93</td>
<td>.80</td>
<td>1.12</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In examining these relationships, two additional scales offered by Seligman were utilized:

- Hopelessness (Hless) -- the sum of the Stable Negative and Global Negative scores divided by two.
- Hopefulness (Hful) -- the sum of the Stable Positive and Global Positive scores divided by two.

Using these individual dimension scores has clarified the premise at the heart of this research. Future-focused theory as outlined in Chapter Two provides the basis for the use of these constructs, better identified as "hope." According to Seligman (1990), whether or not we have hope has been linked to two dimensions of our explanatory style: pervasiveness (global or specific) and permanence (stable or unstable). The ability to
describe temporary causes for personal setbacks mitigates helplessness, over time. Conversely, as Seligman (1990) noted, "[seeing] . . . permanent causes produce[s] helplessness far into the future" (p. 48). The more specific the cause may be determined to be, the less the reason to despair in individuals. As long as one views this cause as a one time event, not coloring one's entire future, Seligman asserts that hope prevails. The mean hopefulness score for the subjects in this study ($M = 31.67$, $SD = 4.12$, range = 19-40.5) exceeded the mean score of hopelessness ($M = 24.40$, $SD = 4.8$, range = 10-38). For the purpose of this research, those teachers with significantly higher rates of hopefulness versus hopelessness were selected for further analysis. Specifically, those responding with a hopefulness rank exceeding hopelessness by more than two standard deviations qualified to undergo additional scrutiny.

**Management attitudes and beliefs of participants.** Established as a valid and reliable instrument in the examination of classroom management styles, the *Attitudes and Beliefs on Classroom Control Inventory* (ABCC), was designed to dissect teachers' thinking in the field of classroom management. Too frequently, discussions of such management have been singularly focused on student discipline. This multidimensional instrument was designed to measure various aspects of teachers' beliefs and predispositions toward classroom management practices, with special attention paid to instructional management, people management, and behavior management decisions. This instrument, therefore, assessed these three dimensions as a comparison against explanatory style and degree of optimism.

Correlations existed between the three subscales of the ABCC, thereby substantiating the work of Martin et al. (1998). With the teachers in this study, the Instructional Management sub-scale was revealed to hold a stronger relationship with the Behavior Management component ($r = .44$, $p < .01$) than in the validation study. As in this study, the Behavior Management scale has been shown to share interdependence with

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the People Management dimension ($r = .36, p < .01$). Table 8 details the current study in contrast to the recent Martin et al. validation results. The sample from this study correlated with the elementary validation study, affirming the ABCC instrument as well as this study's responses.

Table 8

Management Attitudes and Beliefs
Validation Means and Standard Deviations of the Three Dimensional ABCC

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dimensions:</th>
<th>Future-focused Study K-6</th>
<th>Martin et al. (1998) Validation Study K-12</th>
<th>Martin et al. (1998) Validation Study Elementary only</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Instructional</td>
<td>$M = 40.05$</td>
<td>$M = 41.49$</td>
<td>$M = 40.77$</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Management</td>
<td>$SD = 6.53$</td>
<td>$SD = 6.75$</td>
<td>$SD = 7.85$</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>People Management</td>
<td>$M = 22.28$</td>
<td>$M = 18.18$</td>
<td>$M = 19.23$</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>$SD = 3.61$</td>
<td>$SD = 4.15$</td>
<td>$SD = 4.60$</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Behavior Management</td>
<td>$M = 10.69$</td>
<td>$M = 8.15$</td>
<td>$M = 10.09$</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>$SD = 2.29$</td>
<td>$SD = 2.83$</td>
<td>$SD = 2.70$</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>$n = 126$</td>
<td>$n = 274$</td>
<td>$n = 78$</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Further analysis of these three classroom management factors was conducted to describe the sample. The range, mean, and standard deviations of these three components of classroom management are detailed in Table 9. That breakdown includes the information for the entire sample, including both the optimistic (high CPNC) and the pessimistic (low CPCN) scores of explanatory style. Table 9 displays the information which provided the basis for the second stage analysis in this investigation.
## Table 9

Management Attitudes and Beliefs  
High/Low Means and Standard Deviations of the Three Dimensional ABCC

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dimensions</th>
<th>Total Study n = 126</th>
<th>Optimist n = 42</th>
<th>Pessimist n = 42</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Instructional</td>
<td>M = 40.05 SD = 6.53</td>
<td>M = 41.99 SD = 7.18</td>
<td>M = 39.29 SD = 5.97</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Management</td>
<td>range = 26 - 53</td>
<td>range = 27.5 - 53</td>
<td>range = 29 - 50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>People</td>
<td>M = 22.28 SD = 3.61</td>
<td>M = 22.20 SD = 3.59</td>
<td>M = 22.71 SD = 3.80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Management</td>
<td>range = 12 - 30</td>
<td>range = 13 - 28</td>
<td>range = 12 - 30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Behavior</td>
<td>M = 10.69 SD = 2.29</td>
<td>M = 10.63 SD = 2.07</td>
<td>M = 10.70 SD = 2.22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Management</td>
<td>range = 4 - 15</td>
<td>range = 6 - 15</td>
<td>range = 7 - 15</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Responses to Research Questions

**Research question one:** What are these teachers' attribute styles as measured by the *Attributional Style Questionnaire*? The attributional styles evidenced by the ASQ of the teachers in this sample, placed them in the lower end of what Seligman (1990) described as "average" optimism (M = 3.27). Twice as many of these elementary-level teachers scored in the very pessimistic category (n = 12) than in the very optimistic contingent (n = 6). While these teachers in general have been found to be only mildly optimistic, their CoNeg scores also indicate that as a group they score well above the clinically-depressed. These respective CoNeg scores are also well below the scores of psychiatric sample populations (Peterson et al., 1982; Seligman et al., 1979). This sample reported a CoNeg (M = 12.26, SD = 2.05) similar to other non-psychiatric subjects studied (Salzman, 1997).

Upon further analysis, when dividing by high and low CPCN rankings, the most optimistic 42 teachers have reported a CoNeg of 10.82 (SD = 1.79) while the most pessimistic end scored a mean of 13.71 (SD = 1.56). Both means fall within one standard deviation of the normative scores.
deviation of the mean and offer realistic assurance that large numbers of extremely depressed people were not present among survey respondents. Yet, among the lowest scoring 42 respondents, the range of CoNeg scores was 16.7 - 8. Using a mean of depressed psychiatric patients who exhibited a CoNeg of 16.27 - 15.10 (Salzman, 1997), eight of these teachers, or 19% of the pessimistic group, fell within this range.

Research question two: How do these teachers rate on their attitudes and beliefs relating to classroom control? Research conducted by Martin and Baldwin (1993) provided guidelines for the analysis of these data. They explained the underlying continuum of control as the theoretical construct upon which the ABCC survey was designed. Each of the three management scales offered a range of responses. The higher end of each scale was related to the interventionist teacher, the type of teacher who has total command of the class. These teachers emphasize the outer environment created through a series of controlling behaviors. The low end of each scale is related to the non-interventionist teacher, the type to use a laissez-faire approach to classroom management. The non-interventionist "presupposes the child has an inner drive that needs to find its expression in the real world" (Martin et al., 1998, p. 6). Of these two categories, it is the interactionalist teachers who tend to focus more on the relationship between the individual and the environment, striving to find solutions satisfactory to both teacher and students.

This continuum of management attitude and belief is reflected in the scoring of the ABCC instrument. The Instructional Management scale ranges from a high potential score of 56 to a low of 14. This range is based upon the number of questions remaining in each category following a thorough item analysis (Martin et al., 1998). The People Management section offers a possible range of 32 - 8, while the Behavior Management scale ranges from a possible high of 16 to a low of 4. Respondents rate their attitudes and beliefs on a Likert scale comprised of the following choices: (1) describes me very well, (2) describes me usually, (3) describes me somewhat, and (4) describes me not at all.
For the purpose of this analysis, ranges of possible scores were categorized to match the theoretical construct. The continuum of attitude and belief has been transposed onto the range of scores possible and divided in equal thirds, as shown in Chart 1.

**Chart 1**

**Management Continuum as per ABCC Instrument**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Non-Interventionist</th>
<th>Interactionalist</th>
<th>Interventionist</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Instructional</strong></td>
<td>14 - 28 points</td>
<td>28 - 42 points</td>
<td>42 - 56 points</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>People</strong></td>
<td>8 - 16 points</td>
<td>16 - 24 points</td>
<td>24 - 32 points</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Behavior</strong></td>
<td>4 - 8 points</td>
<td>8 - 12 points</td>
<td>12 - 16 points</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Respondents' attitudes and beliefs were presented earlier in Table 8, and the mean scores for the Future-Focused Study closely approximated the validation work conducted by Martin et. al. in 1998 using a sample of elementary teachers. Therefore, the teachers participating in this study scored within the expected range in terms of their management responses. When observed from the continuum perspective, these elementary teachers reflected a relatively strong attitude toward controlling instruction and a more mild interactionalist view regarding people management and behavior management. Future-Focused respondents did appear to have stronger attitudes about controlling people ($M = 22.28$) than did those in the validation study ($M = 19.23$).

The information in Table 9 provides insight into the differences between the high and low performers in terms of classroom management decisions. The extremes on the ASQ were defined as representing the top and the bottom third of the respondents. When the CPCN scores were refined further using standard deviations, only one teacher fell
beyond the second standard deviation point of -1.77 with a CPCN of -4.20 in the most pessimistic category. Adding those scoring between one and two standard deviations (-1.77 - .75) brought the total number of pessimists to 21. Those respondents with scores greater than two standard deviations (> 8.31) totaled six individuals. Adding the entire group falling one deviation above the mean (>5.79) resulted in 21 teachers who were the most optimistic of the sample.

Cross-tabulations using these distinctions within each scale were conducted. Table 10 presents the results of cross-tabulating CPCN by high/low standard deviation categories with the Instructional Management scale divided by equal thirds. This analysis showed the difference between the most optimistic and pessimistic instructional managers. Those with low CPCN scores were significantly more interactionalist in belief. The cross-tabulation produced an \( \chi^2 \) value of 5.467, \( p = .021 \) for the Fisher's Exact Test on a 2 x 2 table. Pessimists spend more time negotiating between the two extremes when making instructional management decisions. Conversely, the optimists' instruction is characterized by more directive controlling responses to instructional decision making.

Table 10

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ASQ Scores</th>
<th>Interactionalist 28 - 42 points</th>
<th>Interventionist 42 - 56 points</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Optimistic CPCN &gt; 5.70 (1SD)</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pessimistic CPCN &lt; .75 (1SD)</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. Non-interventionists were not included in this analysis because there were too few in number.

Tables 11 and 12 detail the People and Behavior Management scales respectively. The cross-tabulation for People Management showed a stronger interactionalist approach
by those more optimistic teachers. However, the relationship between People
Management and CPCN was not significant ($\chi^2 = 2.309$, Fisher's Exact \( p = .117 \)). The
pessimist appears more likely to control the People dimension than does the optimist.

Table 11
People Management by ASQ Extremes (n = 42)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ASQ Scores</th>
<th>Interactionalist 16 - 24 points</th>
<th>Interventionist 24 - 32 points</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Optimistic CPCN &gt; 5.70 (1SD)</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pessimistic CPCN &lt; .75 (1SD)</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. Non-interventionists were not included in this analysis because there were too few in number.

The Behavior Management tabulation exhibits the tendencies of teachers,
regardless of attributional style, to be more focused on the individual needs of students.
The majority (57.1\%) of the respondents fall into the mid-range category of attitudes and
beliefs. There appears to exist a tendency for the pessimist to take a more controlling role,
intervening more frequently than the optimist. However, the relationship between
Behavior Management and CPCN was not significant ($\chi^2 = .487$, Fisher's Exact \( p = .364 \)).

Table 12
Behavior Management by ASQ Extremes (n = 42)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ASQ Scores</th>
<th>Interactionalist 8 - 12 points</th>
<th>Interventionist 12 - 16 points</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ASQ &gt; 5.70 (1SD)</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ASQ &lt; .75 (1SD)</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. Non-interventionists were not included in this analysis because there were too few in number.
Research question three: Is there a relationship between a teacher's positive or negative attributional level and his/her attitudes and beliefs regarding classroom management issues? This research did not find evidence to reject the null hypotheses for any of the three management styles. That is, no statistically significant relationship was found between and among the attributional characteristics and reported attitudes and beliefs of classroom management.

Correlational analysis continued to demonstrate only one significant relationship—that of a negative correlation \( r = -0.2104, p < 0.05 \) existing between Hopefulness as measured by the ASQ and the People Management section of the ABCC. The more hopeful teacher exhibited less controlling attitudes and beliefs regarding the management of students in the classroom. A second level of analysis was utilized in examining the Hopeful/Hopeless dimension measures proposed by Seligman (1990). Seligman suggested that this scale be studied in the context of a strong theoretical reason. As outlined in Chapter Two, the theory of hopefulness is associated with optimism (Seligman, 1990; Goleman, 1995; Campbell, 1986; Henry, Martinko, & Pierce, 1993), resilience (Luthar, 1991; Rutter, 1987; Segerstrom, Taylor, Kemeny, & Fahey, 1998; Henderson & Milstein, 1996), and attitude strength (Krosnik & Petty, 1995; Goleman, 1995).

The difference between the two scores for Hopefulness and Hopelessness appeared to highlight a set of respondents that differed to a degree from those categorized by ASQ scores. Attitude and belief scales were again juxtaposed according to the scale ranging from non-interventionist to interventionist. Table 13 describes the frequencies for both (1) the extremes of Hopeful Difference—those hopeful scores greater than two standard deviations above the Hopeless score, and (2) the most optimistic and pessimistic CPCN scores per dimension—those beyond two standard deviations of the mean CPCN \( (M = 3.27) \).
Observations regarding the extremes have been complimentary to one another. Contrasting the Hopeful Difference with the ASQ High and Low results again confirms that more hopeful or optimistic elementary teachers believe in managing instruction and controlling that job responsibility ($\chi^2 = 4.88$, Fisher's Exact $p = .030$), whereas the more hopeless and pessimistic teacher approaches instructional management from the interactionalist viewpoint, thereby allowing vacillation in their instructional attitudes and beliefs. The People Management scale presents a picture of the optimistic interactionalist versus the more pessimistic interventionist as confirmed by the statistically significant negative correlation between CPCN and People ($r = -.2104, p < .05$). When it comes to attitudes and beliefs regarding people, optimists, or those with more positive attributional styles, are apt to negotiate and examine each situation independently, while pessimists are more likely to control people. The Behavior Management scale found both extremes clearly operating from more of an interactionalist viewpoint with positive extremes showing greater attitude strength and negative extremes less attitude strength. The differences demonstrate that it is more likely the optimistic teachers will intervene in behavior management situations, while fewer of the pessimistic group will intervene.

Table 13
Management Scales by Extremes—both ASQ and Hopeful Difference

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Instructional Management</th>
<th>People Management</th>
<th>Behavior Management</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>14 - 28 pts. 28 - 42 pts. 42 - 56 pts.</td>
<td>8 - 16 pts. 16 - 24 pts. 24 - 32 pts.</td>
<td>4 - 8 pts. 8 - 12 pts. 12 - 16 pts.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hopeful Difference &gt; 2SD</td>
<td>1 7 10</td>
<td>0 13 5</td>
<td>2 13 3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CPCN &gt; 2SD</td>
<td>1 7 13</td>
<td>2 14 5</td>
<td>2 14 5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hopeful Difference &lt; 2SD</td>
<td>1 4 14</td>
<td>0 9 10</td>
<td>2 11 6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CPCN &lt; 2SD</td>
<td>0 15 6</td>
<td>1 10 10</td>
<td>2 12 7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

n = 18 for Hopeful Difference > 2SD
21 for CPCN > 2SD
19 for Hopeful Difference < 2SD
21 for CPCN < 2SD

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Finally, peripheral to the research questions, but related to this study, one final subset of the data was examined. The findings are worthy of discussion here. Three questions on the ABCC assessment were identified as being particularly reflective of teachers' future-focused perspectives. These questions included one from each of the three dimensions of classroom management. These questions were:

# 75 (Instructional Management)
I believe students need direction in how to work together.

# 70 (People Management)
I believe students should judge the quality of their own work rather than rely on what the teacher tells them.

# 66 (Behavior Management)
If students agree that a classroom rule is unfair, then I would replace it with one they think is fair.

The entire sample underwent cross-tabulation for the analysis of this issue. In Tables 14 - 16, each of these questions was analyzed first using the CPCN scores of the entire population (n = 126), then by focusing upon respondents whose Hopeful Differences were more than or equal to 2SD above the mean.

Question #75 was important due to the attention that has been given the ability to work together as was described in Chapter Two. Table 14a has been arranged to present the data regarding the instructional dimension based upon CPCN results. The second chart (14b) depicts the top 34 scores of hopeful respondents as determined by the differential between hopefulness and hopelessness.

Fifty percent of the optimistic teachers selected "describes me very well" when responding to the degree of direction they would use in teaching cooperative working skills to students. This demonstrated a strong relationship to those most hopeful people depicted in Table 14b, where 44.1% also preferred the strongest or most controlling form
of instruction. These findings revealed that optimists and hopeful teachers in this study are consistent with other similar people who have been found to demonstrate stronger belief and attitude strength than pessimists, in this case regarding the purpose and control of instruction. In this research, only 37.1% of pessimists felt the same way.

Table 14a

Instructional Management and ASQ
Question 75: I believe students need direction in how to work together.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Interventionist=</th>
<th>Describes me very well</th>
<th>Describes me usually</th>
<th>Describes me somewhat</th>
<th>Describes me not at all</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>n = 126</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High Optimism</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&gt; 5.79, 2 SD</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mid-Optimism</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&gt;3.27, 1 SD</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mid-Pessimism</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&lt;3.27, 1 SD</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High Pessimism</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&lt; .75, 2 SD</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 14b

Instructional Management and Hopefulness, Question 75

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Interventionist=</th>
<th>Describes me very well</th>
<th>Describes me usually</th>
<th>Describes me somewhat</th>
<th>Describes me not at all</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>n = 34</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High Hopefulness</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&gt; 5.79, 2 SD</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The People Management question (#70) was selected for the analysis primarily because the literature on self-assessment (Preece, 1995; Caine & Caine, 1997) has determined that this skill is integral to one's ability to self-assess progress parallel to future goals. As Chart 15a and 15b indicate, there was no notable difference in this response. Across optimists, pessimists, and most hopeful scales, the elementary teachers in this study largely favored a "somewhat" response to this question. In fact, the optimist and hopefuls
actually have a higher percent of "not at all" responses (approximately 17%) to this question. This reveals that elementary teachers in this study have not ventured strongly into this realm of teaching self-assessment to their students.

Table 15a

People Management and ASQ

Question 70: I believe students should judge the quality of their own work rather than rely on what the teacher tells them.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Interventionist</th>
<th>=&gt;Non-Interventionist</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>n = 126</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High Optimism &gt; 5.79, 2 SD</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mid-Optimism &gt;3.27, 1 SD</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mid-Pessimism &lt;3.27, 1 SD</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High Pessimism &lt; .75, 2 SD</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 15b

People Management and Hopefulness, Question 70

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Interventionist</th>
<th>=&gt;Non-Interventionist</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>n = 34</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High Hopefulness &gt; 5.79, 2 SD</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Question 66 also shows the distribution of teachers' responses, with little difference exhibited between attributional style. Those with high hopeful differentials are interactionalists. Futurist Mary Alice White (1982) has suggested that we should prepare for the future by changing ways of behaving on a rational basis. Such rethinking of values, a skill necessary for the future, is the type of situation presented in this question. Within the subjects of this study, 73.6% of those exhibiting hopefulness scored in the two middle
categories. This question examined the flexibility of a classroom teacher and his or her use of encouragement in student self-management. This question also served to ascertain teachers willingness to change. The cautious response of all teachers surveyed suggested that the optimistic and hopeful group was more closely clustered in the middle two categorical response columns. The small percentage of responses found in the "not at all" response to this question by most optimistic and most hopeful people is also noted. The pessimists were dispersed more widely, with 31.4% responding for an immediate change and 10% not willing to vary the rules whatsoever. This offers assurance that the optimistic and hopeful teachers are solidly willing to negotiate behaviors, but that they will demand that just cause be established before altering the rules. Conversely, the pessimistic teachers offer a wider range of responses, not being as balanced and reflective a group as the optimists. The pessimist is more willing to throw a rule out or never to consider the harm generated by some rules. The interactionalist approach of the optimist seems much richer in potential for students' growth.

Table 16a

Behavior Management and ASQ

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question 66: If students agree that a classroom rule is unfair, then I would replace it with one they think is fair.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Interventionist</strong> =&gt; Non-Interventionist</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High Optimism &gt; 5.79, 2 SD</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mid-Optimism &gt;3.27, 1 SD</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mid-Pessimism &lt;3.27, 1 SD</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High Pessimism &lt; .75, 2 SD</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 16b
Behavior Management and Hopefulness, Question 66

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Interventionist</th>
<th>Describes me very well</th>
<th>Describes me usually</th>
<th>Describes me somewhat</th>
<th>Describes me not at all</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>High Hopefulness &gt; 5.79, 2 SD</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Summary of Results

The data, ASQ score and ratings on the three management dimensions of instruction, people, and behavior, were analyzed through correlational methods. No statistical significance was found between or among the individual scales for explanatory style and management dimensions. Therefore, this research found no evidence to reject the null and no statistical significance at the level of face value as queried by the three research questions. However, second level of analysis was employed to determine the existence of relationships, and several powerful findings ensued.

Further analysis resulted in repeated evidence through cross-tabulation and Fisher's Exact Test that teachers possessing an optimistic attributional style exhibited a more future-focused perspective, operating directly through instructional expertise to impact students, than did teachers characterized by a pessimistic style. Further, the optimistic and highly hopeful people preferred to exert control over their instruction and indicated a willingness to solve problems in ways that are satisfactory to both the teacher and the student in areas of people and behavior. The pessimists, however, were less in charge of the instruction taking place in their classrooms, and they preferred to exert their control over students in both the people and behavior response dimensions.
Chapter 5
Summary, Conclusions, and Recommendations

Summary

This study sought to determine whether or not there existed a relationship between an individual teacher's level of optimism or pessimism (as measured by explanatory style) and three dimensions of classroom management (instruction, people, and behavior). The study began with a broad view of the role of optimism plays in a future-focused perspective, as reported in Chapter Two. Included in this discussion were attributional theory, resilience, learned helplessness theory, and learned optimism. With the importance of this psychological construct established, elements of the new management theory pioneered by Margaret Wheatley (1992) advanced the argument that the future-focused perspective best meets students' need for altering their understanding of the world as the demands placed on them in the future are intensified (Bjerstedt, 1992; Pinker, 1997; Gardner, 1997).

The second half of Chapter Two dealt with the documentation of findings reporting ways in which attitudes and beliefs impact decisions, particularly those decisions made by teachers in the area of classroom management. Elementary teachers influence students in powerful ways on a daily basis; their impact upon children is great (Cotton & Wikelund, 1989). Students deserve the best teachers, those capable of preparing them to face the uncertainties of the future. By assessing teachers' level of optimism or pessimism against classroom management beliefs across the dimensions of instruction, people, and behavior, this research investigated these seemingly important connections.

Data for this study were gathered from 126 elementary teachers in self-contained grades K-6 in 18 schools throughout Montana. Respondents completed the Attributional Style Questionnaire by Martin P. Seligman (1984) and the Attitudes and Beliefs of
Classroom Management by Baldwin and Martin (1994). Demographic questions were sought to describe the sample. Hypotheses were tested at the .05 level of confidence. No statistically significant relationships were found in the initial correlational analysis. However, when highly optimistic or hopeful teachers were differentiated and compared to the highly pessimistic or hopeless teachers, the results indicated specific differences in both teachers' practices and perspectives.

Findings and Conclusions

Predicated upon the analyses as reported in Chapter Four, the following items constitute the findings of this research:

1. The majority (51.58%) of the elementary teachers in this study have positive Attributional Style Questionnaire scores. A large portion of these teachers (48.42%) fell below the optimism mark established by Seligman (1990). This is powerful from a leadership perspective when the potential impact upon children who are subjected daily to that teacher's attitudes and beliefs for an entire year is considered. Additionally of concern, 6.35% of these practicing teachers were clinically depressed, similar to national statistics on depression.

2. The predominant instructional management approach utilized by both the sample and the Martin, Yin, Baldwin (1998) validation study is interventionist. When examining the continuum of beliefs in the current study, the mean of 40.15 falls at the upper end of the interactionalist category. Both elementary samples demonstrate a strength of attitude which requires teacher control of instruction. This means that these elementary teachers scored at the "controller" end of the continuum in the domain of instructional management. Such is the nature of the elementary curriculum. The teacher holds extreme responsibility for wide-ranging curricular issues, and elementary teachers as a
whole accept this responsibility, perhaps, because there is no way to share at
the classroom level.

3. In the dimension of people management, this elementary teaching sample
appeared to exhibit strong tendencies toward the interventionist approach \(M = 22.28\). These Montana teachers held more controlling attitudes and beliefs
regarding working with people than those in the Martin et al. validation study
which was conducted in the Southwest. In part, this could arise from the rural
nature of most of this survey versus the fact that two-thirds of the people in the
validation study were from large, urban districts. The size factor, coupled with
the more impersonal nature of urban life, accounts for less ownership in
shaping people. The statistically significant negative relationship between high
hopefuls and less controlling attitudes regarding people confirms the best of
presumptions, namely that teachers chose the profession due to interpersonal
strengths. Those with the strongest hopeful attributes are willing to work for
resolution through interactionalist methodology.

4. Behavior management for these teachers clearly fell into the mid-range of the
continuum \(M = 10.69\), creating a picture of the interactionalist-type of
optimist. This teacher will be objective when possible, yet maintains a sense of
fairness which is greatly demanded at this level of education. The elementary
age child is bound to make mistakes frequently. Teachers appear intent to
mediate situations individually, realizing that the child is at a developmental
phase of responsibility practice.

5. While there is a strong social impetus for an optimistic demeanor on the part of
elementary teachers, these results have not determined optimism, as measured
by Seligman's ASQ, to be statistically significantly related to classroom
management decisions. Correlational data did not show relationships of

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statistical significance. The simple relational aspect sought is clearly not so simple. To cull teacher applicants by explanatory style will not provide a quick fix to classroom settings deemed negative in climate. Future-focused perspective says that students should have some shared responsibility for developing the skills of independence. Optimistic and pessimistic explanatory styles do not distinguish classroom managers as holding a particular mindset. Yet there is promising information to be realized when this study contains itself to the most optimistic and most pessimistic of the teachers investigated.

6. Second-level analysis provided understandings worthy of closer attention. Further examination of the extreme cases of optimism and pessimism did generate differences in belief and attitude regarding classroom management. Optimists appeared to operate from more interventionist-belief perspectives with elementary children when addressing instructional management. They are more willing to negotiate and serve as solid interactionalists in the remaining two dimensions of people and behavior management. Pessimists, on the other hand, were less controlling of instruction and more controlling of people and behaviors. These findings substantiated the negative impact pessimists can have on future-focused thinking and most importantly, on students. If the classroom instruction is not well-managed, effective schooling literature claims student achievement is at risk. Likewise, if students are not viewed as individuals, each bringing different circumstances and backgrounds to the learning environment, they become disenfranchised from the school community. This research illuminates the potential harm of the pessimistic teacher while vindicating the optimists' approach to classroom management. The optimistic teacher who effectively and efficiently delivers instruction, while
mitigating the people and behavior dimensions with care, creates the potential for student excellence and commitment to life-long learning.

7. The hopefulness component (viewing events as specific and unstable) versus the hopelessness approach (viewing situations as global and stable) melds with the future-focus work of Bjerstedt (1992). Bjerstedt has spoken of four futureme components: (1) a positive emotional charging, (2) an understanding of the time and space spectrum, (3) the ability to influence, and (4) a vision of oneself as a player in the future. This hopefulness reading, derived from the pervasiveness and permanence questions of the ASQ, offers significant evidence that the most hopeful of the respondents are in control of instruction and more interactional in their dealings with people and behavior in the classroom setting. According to Seligman's work, the hopeful person views negative events as less pervasive and less permanent; these "bad happenings" are specific to an event and changeable over time. That equates to someone who understands their position on the time and space continuum, realizes their power to influence situations and causes, and operates under the premise that he or she will be present to impact the future. Consequently, these hopeful teachers connect directly with Bjerstedt's futureme perspectives. The greater the number of hopeful teachers employed in elementary schools, the greater the modeling and verbalization for children of these future-focused frames of mind.

8. A correlation existed between the length of time teachers spent at a grade level and an increase in instructional (r = .18, p < .05) management. As teachers became more expert at a level, they became more controlling of the instructional dimension. Creating such expertise in instructional management offers compelling reasons for leaving teachers in one position for a longer length of time. As teachers become increasingly comfortable with a body of
knowledge, their instructional skills become more finely tuned, and hence, they are controlling. Concerns generated by such control issues deserve attention by school leaders. Teachers too deeply entrenched at a grade level operate with such a grade-level paradigm that change becomes difficult. These teachers can establish effective roadblocks to new instructional techniques and curriculum. They pose a threat to the synergistic growth of the learning organization if they remain continually entrenched and are characterized by interventionist thinking as it relates to instruction. When this occurs, personal growth can be stymied, and students undoubtedly suffer.

9. Even stronger correlations exist \((r = .26, p = .05)\) between teachers' years at the same grade level and their control of student behavior. The more permanent the teacher placement, the more directive they appear to be regarding their beliefs toward discipline. This makes sense, particularly when the veteran place-bound teacher is considered. They become known as an expert in both the learning community and the broader scene on child development at that particular grade level. So, for the hopeful and optimistic teacher, holding high expectations for that grade level becomes increasingly the demand, whereas the pessimistic teacher would tend to become more controlling. Most likely, these pessimistic place-bound teachers are those complaining that, the children "are just not coming to them as prepared and ready as in years past." Pessimists would not be inclined to take ownership of the problem. Future-focused optimists, on the other hand, would view their expert role as one which must extend into the future. Creating a student at the turn of the millennium demands attention be paid to the futureme concepts. Fortunately, such expert grade level people do exist, and they adapt as needed to the subtleties of changing student needs.
Recommendations

Implications for further research.

1. Selecting different instruments to study the relationship between attributional style and classroom management beliefs would be beneficial and further test the validity of these questions. Additional instruments exist to measure optimism as detailed in the current research findings of Chapter Two. Further observations of teacher performance in the classroom could be used in verifying classroom management attitudes and beliefs. Determining that a stated attitude provides the actual basis for interaction with students would be valuable information in attitude strength study. Such work might require observations followed by interviews in a mixed-methodological study.

2. Research should be conducted to compare highly experienced single grade level teachers to colleagues who have worked equally long in a variety of grade levels. This could provide insight into changes in teachers' beliefs and attitudes and might also serve to improve professional in-service in the area of classroom management.

3. Further study is called for regarding the benefits of self-assessment from the teacher perspective in personal attributional traits. The case for teaching learned optimism has been made by Seligman and deserves continued attention from a research basis. Studying both optimism and hopefulness as tools which can be learned and which are demanded for effective futures opens opportunities for studies tied to change theory.

4. Researchers should investigate through observation highly optimistic or hopeful teachers in light of effective schooling practices. This work could
ascertain whether or not these teachers exhibit a greater number of the effective traits than pessimists exhibit.

5. Rich opportunity for research lies in discerning the student viewpoint. Explaining the impact of optimistic teachers versus pessimistic teachers is usually reserved for story-telling in the adult years. Most likely, students have stories to tell at any grade level, and these stories deserve the attention of educators.

Implications for educational leaders.

1. The longer a teacher maintains position permanence at a specific grade level, the more interventionist he or she becomes in instructional and behavioral management. Therefore, principals should closely supervise such teachers, striving to use the expertise generated by experience, while remaining cautious of control issues. Something as simple as changing roles for a day with another entrenched peer may create opportunities for reflection. Those spoofs played for fun, such as giving a teacher a bag of feathers as their only teaching tool for the day, tend to open educators' eyes regarding instruction. Pairing professionals for peer development experiences offers another approach for working with the entrenched teacher. Something must elevate concern to the degree that place-bound teachers examine their own tendency toward increased control issues.

2. The inclusion of interview questions or situational questions which depict explanatory style might offer insight into teachers seeking a position. The applicant's degree of optimism or hopefulness might be known according to their responses. Developing administrators' potential to screen out pessimistic explanatory styles would be a worthy consideration. Both written and interview questions could be developed for this purpose. Personnel practices
would have to include training for screeners and interview teams to recognize negative or positive attributional styles.

3. Awareness training to teach administrators indicators of depression and the provision of resources to assist teachers experiencing this condition could prove beneficial to students. To continue to allow depressogenic educators daily exposure to the elementary-age child may pose great harm. Life circumstances can create depressed periods, but the clinically depressed need more immediate help. The fast-paced elementary classroom, with its doors that swing shut, offer opportunities to hide depression. Depression can reside in a person's character, but can also be situational--and an appropriate response to tragic events. Awareness training and continual quality contact provide the building administrator with opportunities to assist such people.

4. Training administrators in the future-focused perspective would help school leaders build optimism research into efforts at improving the school climate and culture. This could increase the levels of optimism and hopefulness in schools, and it could also create the climate in which pessimism becomes intolerable. As accountability measures continue to increase, teachers must increasingly remain cognizant of the potential impact of their classroom management decisions on learners. Holding high expectations resides in the same category as optimism. Connecting these components for teachers builds the synergism for increased learner expectations schoolwide.

5. Training for supervisors in reflective, self-assessment evaluation measures might generate teacher growth based upon these positive directions. As teachers self-examine, they grow personally and professionally. In like fashion, they see the relevance of such tools for inclusion in their work with students.
Implications for teacher education

1. Undergraduate and graduate level coursework relating to futures thinking could enhance opportunities for students. Prospective teachers must be trained more thoroughly regarding the ways in which their beliefs impact students. Teacher training programs must proactively develop philosophical educators who understand the dynamics of creating future-focused students and who—through their own modeling and instructional decisions—support such thinking.

2. Creating situational case studies for undergraduates regarding classroom management options would allow for greater reflection and growth. Such judgements as are required in the average classroom setting must be learned through scenario analysis and experience. Students in our schools would be better served if novice teachers have been prepared through seminars focusing on management issues. This research is certainly predicated upon the direct teaching of management skills and is crucial to the preparing teacher.

3. Teachers who learn to self-assess will recognize the value in such a technique and transfer that evaluation tool to work with students. It would be especially beneficial as students discover how to internalize the expectations. Intrinsic motivation supersedes the traditional rewards system which has thwarted the life-long learning premise.

4. The power of learned optimism offers strength for both teachers and students. Developing the tenacity to struggle with a difficult task, even to fail momentarily, but persist brings great rewards to individuals. Dweck (1975) has demonstrated that helplessness is debilitating. However, through attributional therapy, such as the teaching of learned optimism, symptoms improve. The short-sighted approach of "success only" teaching needs to be tempered in our elementary schools. Raising the level of difficulty, thereby
produces errors but fosters resilience. This trait is aligned closely with future-focused thinking.

**Endnote**

Optimistic teachers offer hope to children and enhancement to the profession through their contagious enthusiasm. They refuse to do anything less than engage the learner directly in instruction, while mediating problems with and for students. The optimistic teacher accepts empowerment and creates opportunities to empower children. He or she allows the synchronistic actions of their classroom to evolve toward healthy climates of high expectations. Such teachers are builders of our future, operating from a shared vision. These are the teachers we should demand in our schools.

The future is not a result of choice among alternative paths offered by the present, but a place that is created—created first in mind and will, created next in activity.

The future is not some place we are going to but one we are creating. The paths are not to be found, but made, and the activity of making them changes both the maker and the destination.

*-by John Schaar in Costa & Kallick (1995, p. 99)*

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Appendix A

Approval for Instrument Use
PERMISSION TO USE THE ATTRIBUTIONAL STYLE QUESTIONNAIRE

The Attributional Style Questionnaire (ASQ) is copyrighted material and may only be used with the written permission of the author, Dr. Martin E.P. Seligman. This letter grants you permission to use the ASQ, so please keep it on file. The questionnaire may be used only for academic research or by a clinical psychologist for the diagnosis or treatment of patients. It may not be used for profit or for any corporate-related activities.

Sincerely,

[Signature]

Martin E.P. Seligman
Il. Martín,

<< ABCC.26 Item.2/1898 >>

result of the completion of your study.

You have my permission to use the scale as long as you share any of the results with me. I am sending it to both e-mail addresses you sent me.

 lobster. I hope the lobster is acceptable. Your colleague has a little bit of information on each of the variables with the lobster.

The ACBC inventory is attached. I included some information on the

Deb.

To: Deb@Yale.com, Deb@Yale.com, Deb@Yale.com
From: M. E. Martín
Date: Thu, 12 Jul 1998 14:06:34 -0500
Subject: ACBC Inventory
Appendix B

Future-Focused Teacher Survey
Future-Focused Teacher Survey

The first half of this survey will engage you in a study of your attribution style and require use of your imagination, while the second part more comfortably requests you reflect on your teaching practice. Please know that you are guaranteed anonymity. This work will take you approximately 20-30 minutes.

Please respond carefully to each question.

1. Please circle the grade level you teach.
   a. K  b. gr. 1  c. gr. 2  d. gr. 3  e. gr. 4  f. gr. 5
   g. gr. 6  h. combined grades (please state grade levels) ____________________

2. Please record the number of years you have taught in your current position (same gr. level, same school): ____________

3. Please record the total number of years you have taught: _________

4. I am (please circle one)
   male  female

5. Please circle the category most closely reflecting your level of education:
   a. Bachelor's degree in education
   b. BA plus 15 or more credits
   c. Masters degree
   d. Master's plus 15 or more credits

Directions for #6-#53.

   a. Read each situation and vividly imagine it happening to you.
   b. Decide what you believe to be the one major cause of the situation if it happened to you.
   c. Write the cause.
   d. Then answer the questions about the cause by circling one number per question.

6. YOU MEET A FRIEND WHO COMPLIMENTS YOU ON YOUR APPEARANCE.
   Write down the one major cause for the compliment: ________________________

7. Is the cause of your friend's compliment due to something about you or something about other people or circumstances?
   Totally due to other 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Totally due to me people or circumstances

8. In the future, when you are with your friend, will this cause again be present?
   Will never again 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Will always be present be present

9. Is the cause something that just affects interacting with friends, or does it also influence other areas of your life?
   Influences just this 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Influences all particular situation situations in my life
10. YOU HAVE BEEN LOOKING FOR A JOB UNSUCCESSFULLY FOR SOME TIME.
Write down the one major cause: ____________________________________________

11. Is the cause of your unsuccessful job search due to something about you or something about other people or circumstances?
   Totally due to other people or circumstances 1 2 3 4 5 6 7  
   Totally due to me

12. In the future, when looking for a job, will this cause again be present?
   Will never again 1 2 3 4 5 6 7  
   Will always be present

13. Is the cause something that just influences looking for a job, or does it also influence other areas of your life?
   Influences just this particular situation 1 2 3 4 5 6 7  
   Influences all situations in my life

14. YOU BECOME VERY RICH.
Write down the one major cause: ____________________________________________

15. Is the cause of your becoming rich due to something about you or something about other people or circumstances?
   Totally due to other people or circumstances 1 2 3 4 5 6 7  
   Totally due to me

16. In the future, will this cause again be present?
   Will never again 1 2 3 4 5 6 7  
   Will always be present

17. Is the cause something that just affects obtaining money, or does it also influence other areas of your life?
   Influences just this particular situation 1 2 3 4 5 6 7  
   Influences all situations in my life

18. A FRIEND COMES TO YOU WITH A PROBLEM AND YOU DON'T TRY TO HELP HIM/HER.
Write down the one major cause: ____________________________________________

19. Is the cause of your not helping your friend due to something about you or something about other people or circumstances?
   Totally due to other people or circumstances 1 2 3 4 5 6 7  
   Totally due to me

20. In the future, when a friend comes to you with a problem, will this cause again be present?
   Will never again 1 2 3 4 5 6 7  
   Will always be present

21. Is the cause something that just affects what happens when a friend comes to you with a problem, or does it also influence other areas of your life?
   Influences just this particular situation 1 2 3 4 5 6 7  
   Influences all situations in my life
22. YOU GIVE AN IMPORTANT TALK IN FRONT OF A GROUP AND THE AUDIENCE REACTS NEGATIVELY.

Write down the one major cause: ________________________________

23. Is the cause of audience's negative reaction due to something about you or something about other people or circumstances?
   Totally due to other people or circumstances 1 2 3 4 5 6 7  
   Totally due to me

24. In the future when you give talks, will this cause again be present?
   Will never again 1 2 3 4 5 6 7  
   Will always be present

25. Is the cause something that just influences giving talks, or does it also influence other areas of your life?
   Influences just this particular situation 1 2 3 4 5 6 7  
   Influences all situations in my life

26. YOU DO A PROJECT WHICH IS HIGHLY Praised.

Write down the one major cause: ________________________________

27. Is the cause of your being praised due to something about you or something about other people or circumstances?
   Totally due to other people or circumstances 1 2 3 4 5 6 7  
   Totally due to me

28. In the future when you do a project, will this cause again be present?
   Will never again 1 2 3 4 5 6 7  
   Will always be present

29. Is the cause something that just affects doing projects, or does it also influence other areas of your life?
   Influences just this particular situation 1 2 3 4 5 6 7  
   Influences all situations in my life

30. YOU MEET A FRIEND WHO ACTS HOSTILELY TOWARDS YOU.

Write down the one major cause: ________________________________

31. Is the cause of your friend acting hostile due to something about you or something about other people or circumstances?
   Totally due to other people or circumstances 1 2 3 4 5 6 7  
   Totally due to me

32. In the future when interacting with friends, will this cause again be present?
   Will never again 1 2 3 4 5 6 7  
   Will always be present

33. Is the cause something that just influences interacting with friends, or does it also influence other areas of your life?
   Influences just this particular situation 1 2 3 4 5 6 7  
   Influences all situations in my life
34. YOU CAN'T GET ALL THE WORK DONE THAT OTHERS EXPECT OF YOU.
Write down the one major cause: ____________________________________________

35. Is the cause of your not getting the work done due to something about you or something about other people or circumstances?
   Totally due to other 1 2 3 4 5 6 7  Totally due to me  
   people or circumstances

36. In the future when doing work that others expect, will this cause again be present?
   Will never again 1 2 3 4 5 6 7  Will always be present be present

37. Is the cause something that just affects doing work that others expect of you, or does it also influence other areas of your life?
   Influences just this 1 2 3 4 5 6 7  Influences all particular situation situations in my life

38. YOUR SPOUSE (BOYFRIEND/GIRLFRIEND) HAS BEEN TREATING YOU MORE LOVINGLY.
Write down the one major cause: ____________________________________________

39. Is the cause of your spouse (boyfriend/girlfriend) treating you more lovingly due to something about you or something about other people or circumstances?
   Totally due to other 1 2 3 4 5 6 7  Totally due to me  
   people or circumstances

40. In the future interactions with your spouse (boyfriend/girlfriend), will this cause again be present?
   Will never again 1 2 3 4 5 6 7  Will always be present be present

41. Is the cause something that just affects how your spouse (boyfriend/girlfriend) treats you, or does it also influence other areas of your life?
   Influences just this 1 2 3 4 5 6 7  Influences all particular situation situations in my life

42. YOU APPLY FOR A POSITION THAT YOU WANT VERY BADLY (E.G., IMPORTANT JOB, GRADUATE SCHOOL ADMISSION, ETC.) AND YOU GET IT.
Write down the one major cause: ____________________________________________

43. Is the cause of your getting the position due to something about you or something about other people or circumstances?
   Totally due to other 1 2 3 4 5 6 7  Totally due to me  
   people or circumstances

44. In the future when you apply for a position, will this cause again be present?
   Will never again 1 2 3 4 5 6 7  Will always be present be present

45. Is the cause something that just influences applying for a position, or does it also influence other areas of your life?
   Influences just this 1 2 3 4 5 6 7  Influences all particular situation situations in my life

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46. YOU GO OUT ON A DATE AND IT GOES BADLY.
Write down the one major cause: ________________________________

47. Is the cause of the date going badly due to something about you or something about other people or circumstances?
   Totally due to other people or circumstances 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Totally due to me

48. In the future when you are dating, will this cause again be present?
   Will never again 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Will always be present

49. Is the cause something that just influences dating, or does it also influence other areas of your life?
   Influences just this particular situation 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Influences all situations in my life

50. YOU GET A RAISE.
Write down the one major cause: ________________________________

51. Is the cause of your getting a raise due to something about you or something about other people or circumstances?
   Totally due to other people or circumstances 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Totally due to me

52. In the future on your job, will this cause again be present?
   Will never again 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Will always be present

53. Is the cause something that just affects getting a raise, or does it also influence other areas of your life?
   Influences just this particular situation 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Influences all situations in my life

Part II

Now for the part that seems more directly related to the teaching profession. There are no correct answers, only what you believe (and good teachers present a variety of beliefs). Please reflect upon your response, placing a check on the statement best describing you.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>54. I believe the teacher should direct the students' transition from one learning activity to another.</th>
<th>This statement</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>_ _ _ Describes me very well</td>
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<tr>
<td>_ _ _ Describes me usually</td>
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<td>_ _ _ Describes me somewhat</td>
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<tr>
<td>_ _ _ Describes me not at all</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>55. I believe it's important to continuously monitor students' learning behavior during seatwork.</th>
<th>This statement</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>_ _ _ Describes me very well</td>
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<tr>
<td>_ _ _ Describes me usually</td>
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<td>_ _ _ Describes me somewhat</td>
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<td>_ _ _ Describes me not at all</td>
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<tr>
<td>Statement</td>
<td>Descriptions</td>
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<td>--------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>---------------------------------------------------</td>
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<tr>
<td>56. I believe students should create their own daily routines as this</td>
<td>This statement</td>
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<tr>
<td>fosters the development of responsibility.</td>
<td>--- Describes me very well</td>
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<td>--- Describes me usually</td>
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<td>--- Describes me somewhat</td>
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<td>--- Describes me not at all</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>57. I believe students will be successful in school if allowed the</td>
<td>This statement</td>
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<tr>
<td>freedom to pursue their own interests.</td>
<td>--- Describes me very well</td>
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<td>--- Describes me usually</td>
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<td>--- Describes me somewhat</td>
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<td>--- Describes me not at all</td>
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<tr>
<td>58. I believe the teacher should decide what topics the students</td>
<td>This statement</td>
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<tr>
<td>study and the tasks used to study them.</td>
<td>--- Describes me very well</td>
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<td></td>
<td>--- Describes me usually</td>
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<td></td>
<td>--- Describes me somewhat</td>
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<td></td>
<td>--- Describes me not at all</td>
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<tr>
<td>59. During the first week of class, I will announce the classroom</td>
<td>This statement</td>
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<tr>
<td>rules and inform students of the penalties for disregarding the rules.</td>
<td>--- Describes me very well</td>
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<td>--- Describes me usually</td>
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<td></td>
<td>--- Describes me somewhat</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>--- Describes me not at all</td>
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<tr>
<td>60. The teacher knows best how to allocate classroom materials and</td>
<td>This statement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>supplies to optimize learning.</td>
<td>--- Describes me very well</td>
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<td>--- Describes me usually</td>
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<td>--- Describes me somewhat</td>
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<td>--- Describes me not at all</td>
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<tr>
<td>61. When a student bothers other students, I will immediately tell the</td>
<td>This statement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>student to be quiet and stop it.</td>
<td>--- Describes me very well</td>
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<td>--- Describes me usually</td>
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<td>--- Describes me somewhat</td>
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<td>--- Describes me not at all</td>
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<tr>
<td>62. I believe class rules stifle the student's ability to develop a</td>
<td>This statement</td>
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<tr>
<td>personal moral code.</td>
<td>--- Describes me very well</td>
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<td>--- Describes me usually</td>
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<td>--- Describes me somewhat</td>
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<td>--- Describes me not at all</td>
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<tr>
<td>63. While teaching a lesson on library skills, a student begins to talk</td>
<td>This statement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>about the research she is doing for her book report. I would remind the</td>
<td>--- Describes me very well</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>student that the class has to finish the lesson before the end of the</td>
<td>--- Describes me usually</td>
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<td>class period.</td>
<td>--- Describes me somewhat</td>
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<td>--- Describes me not at all</td>
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<td>Number</td>
<td>Statement</td>
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<td>----------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
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<tr>
<td>64</td>
<td>I believe teachers should require student compliance and respect for law and order.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>65</td>
<td>When moving from one learning activity to another, I will allow students to progress at their own rate.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>66</td>
<td>If students agree that a classroom rule is unfair, then I would replace it with one that students think is fair.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>67</td>
<td>I believe students need the structure of a daily routine that is organized and implemented by the teacher.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>68</td>
<td>I allow students to select their own seats.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>69</td>
<td>When students behave appropriately, I will provide a reward of some kind such as points toward a party or free time.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>70</td>
<td>I believe students should judge the quality of their own work rather than rely on what the teacher tells them.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>71</td>
<td>I believe students will be successful in school if they listen to the adults who know what's best for them.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Response Options</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>72. I believe students should choose the learning topics and tasks.</td>
<td>This statement</td>
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<td>____ Describes me very well</td>
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<td>____ Describes me somewhat</td>
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<td>73. During the first week of class, I will allow the students to come up with a set of classroom rules.</td>
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<td>____ Describes me very well</td>
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<td>____ Describes me somewhat</td>
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<td>____ Describes me not at all</td>
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<td>74. I believe the primary purpose of homework is to provide drill and practice of skills learned in the classroom.</td>
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<td>____ Describes me very well</td>
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<td>____ Describes me somewhat</td>
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<td>75. I believe that students need direction in how to work together.</td>
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<td>____ Describes me somewhat</td>
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<td>76. Students in my classroom are free to use any materials they wish during the learning process.</td>
<td>This statement</td>
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<td>____ Describes me very well</td>
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<td>____ Describes me somewhat</td>
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<td>____ Describes me not at all</td>
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<tr>
<td>77. I specify a set time for each learning activity and try to stay within my plans.</td>
<td>This statement</td>
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<td>____ Describes me very well</td>
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<td>78. I believe friendliness, courtesy, and respect for fellow students is something that students have to learn first-hand through free interaction.</td>
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<td>____ Describes me very well</td>
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<td>____ Describes me somewhat</td>
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<td>79. I believe class rules are important because they shape the student's behavior and development.</td>
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<td>____ Describes me not at all</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
80. Please describe and detail any training you have received or sought pertaining to classroom management


Sincere thanks to you for the time spent completing this survey. Please return today in the attached envelope to: Deb Yerkes
2753 Greenbriar
Great Falls, MT 59404

All responses will be aggregated and information concerning the results will be sent as soon as they are available.
Appendix C

Initial Administrator Contact Letter
January, 1999

<Principal>
<Elementary School>
<Address>
<City>

Dear <Principal>,

Happy 1999! Thank you for your warm response to my phone call Friday, December 18 seeking permission to gather information from your elementary teachers for my doctoral study. Your school was chosen in a stratified random sampling technique that balanced schools by state certification classes.

My studies regarding futures and leadership led me to research the effect a teacher's optimism level may have on the teacher's attitudes and beliefs regarding classroom management. Two tools have been incorporated for this work: The Attributional Style Questionnaire of Dr. Martin Seligman and the Attitudes and Beliefs on Classroom Control Inventory by Nancy Martin and Bea Baldwin. Intentional use of the elementary (grades K-6) population focuses the study on the level of teaching where the greatest amount of teacher time is dedicated to a single classroom environment.

Fully realizing how busy you are, I would ask that the enclosed surveys be distributed to teachers when they return from the holiday break. Please only share this work with classroom teachers of grades K-6 reassuring them that all information will be aggregate and anonymous. A brief report of the findings will be made available to you and your teachers upon completion.

This research stems from dedication to the development of the effective teacher/student relationship crucial for future-focused learning environments. Due to your facilitation and the participation of your teachers, I hope to be able to share something of value. If you have any concerns or questions regarding this work, please feel free to call me, Deb Yerkes in Great Falls (791-2222), or my Chair, Dr. Bobbie Evans, at The University of Montana (243-2914).

Sincerely,

Debra P. Yerkes
Principal, Lincoln Elementary
Great Falls Public Schools
Appendix D

Letter to Teachers
January 4, 1999

Dear Colleague,

Happy New Year! I send wishes hoping that this year, the one prior to the new millennium, has begun in fine fashion for you. As an elementary classroom teacher your current state of mind holds great value to me, and I ask that you please spend the necessary time to respond to this questionnaire.

The goal of my research is to discover if a relationship exists between a teacher's personal attributional style and their teaching practices. As elementary classroom teachers, your teaching experience and beliefs are crucial to the success of this research. There are no right or wrong answers to any of these questions and no attempt will be made to identify you by building or as an individual. Analysis will be based on the group response, and I hope that you choose to participate.

The attached survey combines a number of indicators that will add to the knowledge base regarding the vital role of the elementary classroom teacher. Your careful attention to all items will allow that research to happen. At first glance some of the questions may seem unrelated to our daily experiences at school. Please use your imagination and place yourself into the question--answering as if you were actually experiencing the moment. You will find all references for the instrument cited at the survey's end.

In advance, thank you for the careful completion of this work. A synopsis of the findings will be sent to you. Please use the self-addressed envelope and return this work by January 31.

Sincerely,

Deb Yerkes
Appendix E

Follow-Up Contacts
January 27, 1999

2753 Greenbriar
Great Falls, MT 59404

Dear <Principal>:

I send my sincere thanks for your assistance distributing my study, "The Future-Focused Teacher Survey." It has been exciting to find surveys arriving in the daily mail. As of today, close to 50% of these surveys have been returned. It is my sincere hope that with the enclosed thank you, I might encourage a few more returns.

If you would please distribute these cards to all classroom teachers who originally received a survey, I would be greatly appreciative. Your help has made a great difference in this work, and if I can ever return the favor please don't hesitate to call.

Sincerely,

Deb Yerkes
Thank you for your assistance in my research.

I look forward to returning results to you and would still welcome surveys.

Recommended reading:
Learned Optimism & The Optimistic Child both by M.E.P. Seligman
Emotional Intelligence & Working with Emotional Intelligence both by D. Goleman
Appendix F

Seligman's Attributional Style Questionnaire Scoring Key
The Attributional Style Questionnaire Scoring Key

The Attributional Style Questionnaire is composed of 12 different hypothetical situations, consisting of 6 good events and 6 bad events. Each of these situations is followed by a series of 4 questions. The first question following each situation asks for the one major cause of the situation. This question is not used in scoring and simply serves as an aid to better answer the remaining questions. The remaining three questions are arranged in the same order for each situation and measure three different dimensions. The second question following each situation measures whether the subject's response is internal or external. The third question following each situation measures whether the subject's response is stable or unstable. The fourth question following each situation measures whether the subject's response is global or specific.

For each response, subjects marked an answer in the range of 1 to 7. For good events, a score of 1 is the lowest, or worst possible score, whereas a score of 7 is the highest, or best possible score. Conversely, for bad events, a score of 1 is the highest, or best possible score, and a score of 7 is the lowest, or worst possible score. Because of the reverse order of scoring for good and bad situations, scores for good events must be separated from scores for bad events.

**Composite Negative Attributional Style (CoNeg):** ________
(sum the total of all bad event scores and divide by the total number of bad events, 6. The best score is 3, the worst score is 21)

**Composite Positive Attributional Style (CoPos):** ________
(sum the total of all good event scores and divide by the total number of good events, 6. The best score is 21, the worst score is 3)

**Composite Positive minus Composite Negative (CPCN):** ________
(The best score is +18; the worst score is -18)

CPCN, Composite Negative (CoNeg), and to a lesser extent, Composite Positive (CoPos) scores are the most valid and reliable in the prediction of depression and various other outcomes. The individual dimension scores (internal, stable, and global), because they are based on only a few questions, have much lower reliability and validity. We therefore recommend that you concentrate all or most of your efforts on the composite scores (CPCN, CoNeg, and CoPos), unless you have a strong theoretical reason for investigating the individual dimension scores.

Following is a list of the individual dimension measures:

**Internal Negative:** ________
(sum the answers to the second question under each bad event and divide by the total number of bad events, 6)
Stable Negative: ________
(sum the answers to the third question under each bad event and divide by the total number of bad events, 6)

Global Negative: ________
(sum the answers to the fourth question under each bad event and divide by the total number of bad events, 6)

Internal Positive: ________
(sum the answers to the second question under each good event and divide by the total number of good events, 6)

Stable Positive: ________
(sum the answers to the third question under each good event and divide by the total number of good events, 6)

Global Positive: ________
(sum the answers to the fourth question under each good event and divide by the total number of good events, 6)

Hopelessness: ________
(Sum the Stable Negative and Global Negative scores and divide by 2)

Hopefulness: ________
(Sum the Stable Positive and Global Positive scores and divide by 2)
References


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