

Developing and Applying Classroom Rules: Foundation Phase Teachers' Perspectives

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ABSTRACT The Foundation Phase is a transitional stage from pre-school to formal schooling, especially Grade 1. The learners are often less familiar with the formal schooling space, making mistakes that teachers often regard as challenging and destructive behaviours. Therefore, this paper discusses in depth how the chosen Grade 1 educators create the rules in their classrooms and apply them. The research uses a qualitative approach to consider the experiences of teachers on creating and applying the learners' rules. Data was collected through semi-structured interviews with three teachers from Grade 1 who agreed to participate in the study. Thematic data analysis was used to analyze the data. The study found that there is often a disparity between the learners' identities and the expectations of the teacher. This includes teachers treating young children as a homogeneous group who need to adjust to formal school programmes and not vice versa.

INTRODUCTION

The start of formal schooling is the Foundation Phase, particularly Grade 1 (Marais and Meier 2012). A significant period of change for children, families, neighborhoods, and educators is the first year of school. Transition defines the time before, during, and after the transition of a child from home or from an early childhood program to primary school. This is the process when children try to adjust to changes in their roles in a new school structure. Vogler et al. (2008) warn that this change should not be regarded as an event that takes place at the beginning of formal schooling only. Depending on the context and the individual child, the transition may be a whole year process. Vrinioti et al. (2008:2) note that children's educational transition can be a critical factor in determining children's future progress and development. Such a transition may be an academic transition and social transition, which literature refers to as vertical and horizontal transition (Vrinioti et al. 2008).

Vertical transitions can be regarded as crucial changes from one state or status to another, often correlated with 'upward' shifts (for example, from pre-school to primary school; from primary to secondary school, etc.). This concept focuses on how the responsibilities, personalities, and aspirations of children change when contemplating the transition to school. It is also a period of shifts in others' attitudes, interaction patterns, and relationships around and including children (Vogler et al.

2008). These are the changes generated in the sense of formal education (Vogler et al. 2008).

Horizontal transformations, on the other hand, are less characteristic than vertical transitions and take place on an everyday basis. They apply to the movement's children (or indeed any human being) constantly make in their lives between different spheres or domains (for example, everyday movements between home and school or from one caretaking setting to another). These structure the movement of children that cuts through space and over time, and into and out of institutions that influence their well-being. In several cases, a 'bridge' linking the learning of children before school to a more structured learning background in schools is seen in the first year of school. Hence at this stage teachers should positively impact learners' physical, social, emotional, and cognitive development and promoting excitement about schooling (Broadhead et al. 2010). This stage is intended to substitute a newly defined, coherent and consistent approach to the care and education of children for the bewildering variety of pre-school experiences. Broadhead et al. (2010) underline the value of a healthy change in both social and academic areas during the early years of schooling because a positive start to education, in both academic achievement and social competence, is related to positive school trajectories, Children's images of themselves as learners are profoundly informed by their experiences in school. Their success encounters, or otherwise, have a significant influence on their

potential school success and their sense of self. In their school lives, and even throughout their adult life, children who encounter academic and social difficulties in the early school years are likely to continue having issues.

As the discussion above indicates, Foundation Phase, especially Grade 1, may bring about significant changes and potential challenges in the way that learners experience schooling which may be qualitatively different from the pre-schooling class. The new experience may sometimes be frustrating and traumatic (Vrinioti et al. 2008: 3). When children transition from pre-school to primary school, they undergo a change in identity from being a pre-school child to a school student, which indicates that they are supposed to act in a certain way and understand the rules of the classroom, learn the vocabulary of the classroom, and “read” the teacher. They also experience a larger physical setting when children start school, and it can be hard to find their way.

This is especially frustrating and confusing to learners who do not possess the cultural capital from the pre-schooling class environment. This is more so as learners at this stage are largely operating from within an egocentric world-view, and trying to develop a sense of community that extends beyond their immediate family to class or social groups. As a result, learners, in their varied ways, may experience a challenge in understanding the dominant culture of formal schooling.

According to Jacobsen (2013: 56), younger children may experience challenges with regards to adjusting to learning the formal school procedures and how to get along with other children. This is linked to challenges of vertical and horizontal transition as noted by Jacobsen (2013). With regards to challenges related to vertical transition, learners get overwhelmed by rigid routines and procedures prescribed by Grade 1 formal curriculum. They may also get frustrated by the change in social identities and expectations as now prescribed by their new identities as school-going learners. Hence it was noted that whilst transition to school may highlight discontinuities (physical, social, and philosophical) and these may not necessarily be negative, constant discontinuities may harm the transition to school. In trying to make sense of their new environment, they may behave in ways that are not regarded as obedient, and not express feelings regarded as appropriate by adults.

Young learners sometimes struggle to pay attention to routine and instructions and show less interest in a task. Hence it is important for teachers of young learners, to devise attention-getting techniques (Dunbar 2014). These involve using a simple technique of clapping patterns. To keep things interesting, Koomler notes that any time the class gets too loud to get their attention, she uses distinct clapping patterns. As a class, Koomler reports, learners will be expected to start listening and repeat the pattern back to me. To repeat the pattern correctly, this technique involves active listening. Teachers of the Foundation Process plan this and other techniques to eliminate destructive learner activities in their classrooms.

Marais and Meier (2012: 3) understand disruptive behaviour as merely inappropriate behaviour, improper or wrong behaviour for the classroom. It is attributable to disciplinary problems in schools that affect the fundamental rights of the learner to feel safe and be treated with respect in the learning environment. Disruptive behaviours are behaviours that fail to comply with educators’ expectations (Jacobsen 2013: 9). These are furthermore regarded by educators as challenging. These may manifest themselves in “destructive and aggressive behaviour, defiance, temper tantrums, impulsive and hyperactive behaviours”. Meany-Walen (2010: 1) also considers disruptive behaviours to include those behaviours in the classroom that interfere with the teacher’s ability to teach and children’s ability to learn. They may include such behaviours as noncompliance, rule-breaking, aggression, and destruction of property. Jacobsen (2013) surmises that disruptive behaviours are actions that disrupt, hurt, destroy, defy or infringe others. Consequently, such behaviours are more likely to lead to negative relationships with teachers and other students, including negative interactions despite receiving more attention from the teacher (Jacobsen 2013: 9).

The United Kingdom Department of Education (2012: 21) classifies inappropriate student behavior into five categories:

- Offensive behavior (for example, punching, hair pulling, kicking, pushing, derogatory language);
- Physically destructive behaviour (for example, objects breaking, destroying, or defacing, object throwing, other pupils physically annoying);

- Socially destructive behavior (for example, yelling, running away, showing temper tantrums);
- Authority-challenging behavior (for example, failure to meet demands, show of defiant verbal and non-verbal conduct, use of pejorative language);
- Self-disruptive behavior (for example, daydreaming, reading under the desk).

Marais and Meier (2012: 44) classify disruptive behaviour into four basic categories:

- Conduct that interferes with the act of teaching and learning (for example, a student who distracts other students during the presentation of the lesson, who refuses to obey directions or exhibits offensive behavior); behavior that interferes with other students' rights to learn (for example, a learner who continually calls out while the teacher is explaining content). It was recommended that children should be engaged in learning at this point without pressure to engage in structured learning or training with respect to Grade 1 learners. Instead, educators should opt to encourage the importance of learning for children through play, engagement, and developmentally suitable practice.
- Psychologically or physically dangerous behaviour (for example, sitting on a chair's back legs, unsafe use of instruments or laboratory equipment, threats to other students, and excessive bullying and abuse of classmates);
- Behaviour that destroys property (for example, vandalism in the classroom). These have the potential of creating a sense of instability and insecurity. In an attempt to manage such unwanted behaviours and creating a safe environment, teachers draw class rules. These are important to keep young children safe. And as such Foundation Phase learners develop resilience when their physical and psychological well-being is protected by adults (Department for Children, Schools, and Families 2010). They appreciate the need for rules to facilitate operation and to create a safe environment.

Literature notes that teachers generally experience challenges with regards to learner behaviour. For instance, in South Africa, ever since the abolishment of corporal punishment, educators seem to be at a loss with regards to effective learner

behaviour strategies (Bechuke and Debeila 2012). The Teaching and Learning International Survey (TALIS) also shows globally that 25 percent of teachers in most of the 23 countries surveyed, at least 30 percent of their lesson time for interruptions or administrative activities, spent teacher time maintaining order in the classroom (Department for Education 2012: 5). Nevertheless, there are generally some underlying explanations for such behavior. It involves:

- A feeling of understanding. Many students may not have a robust base on which to create school success. They may not have the opportunity to prosper, including attendance at pre-school and general exposure to opportunities that prepare them for formal education. According to Jacobsen (2013: 28), Only a small number of emotions can completely understand children at risk, and the most common emotion is rage and fear;
- A feeling of relation. Most students feel isolated and have no sense of belonging to their neighbourhood, culture, or school. To be successful in school, according to Jacobsen, students must feel that they "belong" and consider the school's work as having great importance. Related also implies that, among other things, positive relationships with teachers, parents, and fellow students stress the importance of a positive relationship between teachers and students;
- A feeling of health. Poverty, worries about one's mental and psychological well-being, and concerns about what the future holds are creating a negative sense of well-being for many students. As a consequence, combined with low levels of self-confidence and self-respect, many have no sense of hope.

Literature Review

This section looks at the various definitions of classroom rules, how classroom rules are developed, strategies to ensure adherence.

Conceptualizing Classroom Rules

Bechuke and Debeila (2012) note that rules are a prescription that can be followed and

suggested behaviours that are obligated preferred or prohibited in particular contexts such as the classroom. For rules to be effective they need to be respected and followed. With regards to the classroom context, teachers regard rules as one of the effective management plans. Classroom management and organization are associated to influence the delivery of effective teaching and learning in the classroom, teachers' main business. When there are classroom harmony and well-behaved learners, teachers carry on with their curriculum activities, with less unnecessary disruption (Bechuke and Debeila 2012). In most cases teachers, as the authority figure, drawing up classroom rules.

Literature notes the importance of learner participation in the creation of guidelines for classroom behaviour and rules (Iqbal et al. 2012). And as such this process develops a sense of cooperation among the student, and is likely to increase their commitment to rules (Iqbal et al. 2012). Similarly, when educators involve their learners in the formulating of classroom rules, learners will consider them to be fair. Furthermore, Grade 1 learner involvement in classroom rules development allows them to make their own choices, and by so doing promotes their moral intelligence.

Learner participation in rules development is particularly important for Grade 1 learners as their moral development and reasoning take shape and evolving at this stage (Dancey and Vokes 2012). Hence it is important to allow them to examine questions of right and wrong themselves to become autonomous in following class rules (Ibid). Dancey and Vokes (2012) warn teachers against undermining young children's agency and emphasize the young children as social agents in their learning space. This strategy will lead students to work towards decreasing misbehaviour and therefore deem the classroom rules effective (Ibid). Bechuke and Debeila (2012: 243) refer to such a philosophy as Choice Theory. They go on to suggest that Choice Theory helps learners to have ownership of their learning, have pride in their participation, and will have exhibit greater levels of self-confidence and higher levels of cognition. Likewise, Vogler et al. (2008: 41) note the following aspects about young children participate in their learning environment:

Multi-method – recognises the different 'voices' and skills of children;

Participatory – considers children to be competent and experts on their own lives; respects children's views and also their silences;

Reflexive – includes children and adults in a joint effort of interpretation; views listening as a process;

Adaptive – can be applied in a variety of early childhood settings; methods will depend on the characteristics of the group, such as gender, cultural backgrounds, skills of staff or researchers, etc;

Focused on children's lived experiences – moves away from a view of children as consumers of services.

What these researchers emphasise is the importance of learner participation and involvement to discourage the construction of young children as only consumers of learning. It is also worth noting that not only is learner participation in rule development that is of great importance but also the nature of the rules is an essential factor in their effectiveness.

Bechuke and Debeila (2012: 242) assert that disciplinary strategies, including classroom rules, should be non-coercive, yet assertive and non-confrontational. When crafting the classroom rules, teachers should keep in mind three general guidelines:

- Phrase your rules in the form of a positive statement.

- Establish and state your rules clearly.

- Minimize your list of rules (most teachers have 3-5 rules)

Also, the rules are considered more effective if they are devised in a positive frame so they tell learners what they should be doing. This is in contrast to giving learners a list of things they are not allowed to do. This is referred to as positive discipline. According to Maphosa and Shumba (2010), since the child has high self-esteem, positive discipline creates an atmosphere that encourages self-discipline and is thus more able to maintain self-control. Whenever possible, children should be active in deciding or changing rules and encouraged to speak about how rules apply to such circumstances (Department of Children, Schools and Families 2010).

When practitioners provide children with opportunities to engage in the collection of activities

and the creation of decision-making abilities, children become more self-reliant and take responsibility for their learning (Estyn 2011). Yet, more often teachers use negative strategies that include corporal punishment, which may be indicative of anger and frustration. Some teachers use forbidding statements in their classroom rules such as do not run, do not talk out of turn, do not come in late after recess, etc. These are in most cases regarded by young learners as a punishment. Instead, the rules should indicate “Walk in the classroom, if you run you might trip over a chair and hurt yourself; then you might have to go to the doctor” (Estyn 2011). This is indicative of the purpose of the rules being to empower students to learn and behave by making the right decisions daily (Dunbar 2014).

The purpose of effective classroom rules is to promote discipline and good behaviour rather than punishment. According to Bechuke and Debeila (2012: 242), discipline is an all-encompassing concept that refers to strategies used to coordinate, regulate and organize individuals and their activities in the school. This is contrary to punishment. As noted by Bear (2010: 3) some of the limitations of punishment include:

(a) Teaches students what not to do and does not teach desired behavior or alternative behavior; (b) Its impacts are always short-term; (c) Teaching students to threaten or punish others; (d) Fails to address multiple factors typically contributing to the behavior of a student; (e) Unintended side effects are likely to occur (for example, frustration, retaliation and dislike towards the teacher or school, social withdrawal); (f) creates a negative environment in the classroom and school; and (g) it can be improved (that is, negative reinforcement) by encouraging students to avoid or prevent conditions they find aversive, such as time-out and suspension (for example, academic work, peer rejection, a harsh and uncaring teacher).

For the effectiveness of classroom rules, teachers should explain to the learners the consequences and outline what would happen if students chose to break the rules. Dunbar (2014) states that, as well as negative sanctions directly related to that misconduct, students should receive constructive reinforcement outcomes for enforcement. For example, if a student violates the rule

in the classroom about the following instructions, according to Wong (2011), that student should obtain the result of practicing following them during free time. As also noted in the protocols, the essence of the misbehaviour will be noted by students immediately afterwards, and this will take place as the repercussions are determined.

Under such circumstances, both teachers and students should be able to interact with each other easily under the established rules, procedures, and regulations (Iqbal et al. 2012). It is also important that the rules be simple, and be displayed in the classroom (Dunbar 2014). For Grade 1 learners such rules must be displayed on a bright large poster at the front of the room, perhaps with pictorial clues for non-readers (Ibid). This assists the teacher to remind the learners of the rules on an ongoing basis.

Application of and Adherence to Classroom Rules

Teachers use different strategies to implement and enforce classroom rules. These include teaching young learners the rules and consequences like any other curriculum content. It is possible to teach and practice rules as role-plays, and to reinforce them with praise or reward. For kids who keep the rules, there must be positive results. For those that do not, there must also be implications. Both children respond to attention and, thus, positive behavior would be reinforced by an emphasis on positive behavior. Often educators tend to catch kids who are successful and praise or reward them for this, putting the focus of emphasis in the classroom on the majority of kids who act properly. The most important in all is teacher modeling the rules during teaching and learning (Iqbal et al. 2012). Dancy and Vokes (2012: 8-10) say that the behavior of teachers, whether unconscious or conscious, influences the behavior of learners. Students need role models, especially at a young age, someone to look up to who could affect their lives. The people with whom children spend the most time and/or who have been modelled as their ‘role models’ may have a greater effect on the orientations and transitions of children.

Dunbar (2014) states that the guidelines for young learners in the classroom must be supplemented by a disciplinary plan that is designed to

discourage wrongdoing before it even happens. For example, her plan is centered around a set of cards coloured green, yellow, red, and black. Any student will have a green start to the week. The corrective action of flipping a card, ordering from green to yellow to red, and ending in black after three misbehaviours each week would result in a breach of the rules or a disrespectful action. The student would need to write what they did wrong on a scrap piece of paper after flipping the card at a class meeting on Fridays, they reflect on what went well and on what can be changed. Students in green or yellow often receive a small reward at this meeting, in the form of a snack, a no-homework pass, and other separate incentives. Red students will have a written home note reminding the parents of the actions of the learner during the week. Dancy and Vokes (2012: 16) note that it is important to have regular contact with parents as well. When the children are brought into school, the teachers need to have regular contact with the parents. A regular letter of reflection is also sent home to the parents, letting the parents know what was going on during that day.

Teachers use multiple methods to ensure the obedience of learners to the laws of the classroom. Some teachers respond positively to anger and frustration when students violate the rules. Some teachers say to their students, "I need a moment to calm down; right now, I'm very upset." Others calm down by counting to 10 or leaving the room for a few minutes. To help them understand what annoys them, some teachers explain their feelings to their students. Then the kids are learning what not to do and why. For elementary-age children who reflect on the extent of the issue and have a solution, the 'I message' is used (Dancy and Vokes 2012: 24). It encourages children to appreciate the meaning of social and emotional growth as they learn to become 'good' friends with others. Levin and Nolan (2012) say that the 'I message' is a three-part message aimed at encouraging the disruptive student to understand the negative effect on the teacher and other peers of his behaviour. An explanation of the action, how it impacts the rest of the class or person, and how the teacher feels about this will be included in the note. This method offers students an opportunity to take responsibility for their actions by recognizing what they have done

and how others have been affected, and therefore fixing the situation.

METHODOLOGY

Research Approach/Sample

A qualitative research approach was considered suitable because this project is an exploratory study aimed at gaining the selected educators' perspectives on the development and application of classroom rules. Three Grade 1 educators (all female) from the different schools that include Township, Village, and Former Model C schools participated in the study. All the educators gave permission to be interviewed and the interviews to be recorded. Furthermore, documentary analysis, which is comprised of Classroom Rules were used as another data collection instrument. The use of the classroom rules in the study was also negotiated with the participants. Ethical procedures that included seeking permission, confidentiality, and anonymity were adhered to. Schools were allocated Code Names such as School A (Village School); School B (Township School) and School C (Former Model C school). Participants were also assigned pseudonyms such as Respondent 1; Respondent 2 and Respondent 3. The research questions the data was responding to are:

- What are the Foundation Phase teachers' conceptions of classroom rules?
- How were classroom rules drawn and applied in the selected classrooms?

Instrumentation

For this research two data generating strategies were used. Firstly, the interviews whereby the researcher orally communicated with the selected Grade 1 educators on how they draw classroom rules and how these were applied. Secondly, the researcher requested to read and look at the evidence of classroom rules that were used by the different educators (documents).

Data Analysis

After the completion of data generation through interviews and document analysis, the next stage was data analysis. This involved breaking up data

into manageable themes, patterns, trends, and relationships. Analysis aimed to understand the various constituting elements of the data. A qualitative thematic approach was used to analyse the data. The interviews were transcribed and coded. Thereafter it was categorized and put into themes. The documentary analysis (Classroom Rules) hung on the walls of the Grade 1 classes visited were also analysed.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Teachers' Perspectives Regarding Disruptive Behaviours

All the participants explained disruptive behaviours as “those unwanted actions and activities by learners that disturb teachers and learners”.

- (a) A learner who is talkative and speaking when the teacher is teaching/talking.
- (b) A learner fighting with others: Learners who fight. Respondent 1 (from School A) felt learners who fight compromise teaching and learning in the classroom. “Fights make teachers waste time instead of completing the syllabus”. While Respondent 3, from School C, felt that learners who fought at school “don't make other children happy at school”
- (c) Two participants also reported that sometimes learners would just cry without any provocation. They said this was common especially during reading periods.

Respondent 1 also suspected that such was just attention-seeking young children. She was, however “sympathetic as these were sometimes younger and less matured than the majority of the class”.

The above data is in line with Marais and Meir (2012: 43)'s conceptualization of disruptive behavior as behaviour that: Interferes with the act of teaching and learning (for example, a student who distracts other students during the presentation of the lesson, who refuses to obey directions or exhibits offensive behavior); Conduct that interferes with other learners' rights to learn (for example, a student who continuously calls as the instructor discusses the content); Psychologically or physically dangerous behaviour (for example, sitting on a chair's back legs, unsafe use of

instruments or laboratory equipment, threats to other students, and excessive bullying and abuse of classmates); Conduct which destroys property (for example, vandalism in the classroom).

Some respondents also identified what may be linked with Jacobsen (2013: 25)'s vertical and horizontal transition challenges. Such challenges not only include cognitive adaptation but also social adaptation problems as well. For instance, Respondent 1 links a particular learner with immaturity which may be linked to school readiness (Jacobsen 2013). However, she does not specify how the school gets ready for such children. Schools also need to be ready for children and not always the other way round.

Respondent 1, from School A, (rural school) also identifies a learner who is disruptive as the one who leaves the classroom, whether going to the toilet without seeking teacher permission. She explains such behavior as not only being disrespectful but also disturbing to the teacher. This explanation links with the view that classroom rules being the major classroom management strategy to ensure the smooth running of teaching and learning (Bechuke and Debeila 2012).

All the respondents reported that they have always drawn rules to minimize learner challenging behaviours. All the rules were displayed and hung on the walls. When asked as to when the rules were developed, they all responded that they developed the rules when they first taught their current Grade 1 class. For instance, the teaching experience each respondent had in their respective schools, reportedly represented the year the respondents developed their rules. For instance, Respondents 1 and 3 reportedly had a five-year experience in their schools teaching Grade 1 whilst Respondent 2 had a ten-year teaching experience teaching in her current school. However, during this study, she had a three-year experience teaching Grade 1. In other words, Respondent, 2's classroom rules were developed in 2011. The discourse in all three schools is that learners are consumers of rules than social agents in the school context. Because adults consider them immature, their voices are silenced and their agency is not respected (Jacobsen 2013).

With regards to the languages through which the classroom rules were written, for Schools A and School B (rural and township schools

respectively), they were boldly written in isiXhosa. In both schools, isiXhosa is the medium of instruction. While in School C (Former Model C School) where the medium of instruction is English, the rules were written in English and were also shown in colourful pictures. In responding to the choice of colours and font for the classroom rules, Respondent 3, from School C said the learners were meant to understand the rules and the colours made that the learners were attracted to the poster. This is in line with Language in Education Policy, which prescribes that Foundation Phase learners be taught in the medium of their mother tongue.

The Process of Rules Development and Communication

All the participants reported that they have developed the classroom rules without the learner participation. They all believed that Grade 1 learners were too young to participate in the development of the rules. All the selected participants had class rules hung on the classroom walls. The number of rules ranged between 8 (School A); 12 (School B) and 5 (School C). The majority of the rules were brief and commanding in nature.

The above state of affairs with regards to the number of rules the two schools have developed seemed contradictory with literature that advises that teachers should minimize the number of rules. For instance, Estyn (2011) reports that most teachers develop 3-5 rules, which are general guidelines that are structured. Estyn (2011) also note that rules are considered more effective if they are devised in a positive frame so they tell learners what they should be doing. This is in contrast to giving learners a list of things they are not allowed to do. This is despite the discourse in the framing of the rules in two of the three selected schools in negative command discourse.

The dominant discourse in School A and School B was a negative command discourse. For instance, in School A, two out of eight were the negative commands, whilst in School B respectively, seven out of twelve rules were the negative commands, "do not...". Whilst in School C, there was one rule out of five that had a negative command in it, it read "do not run, walk". Whilst School C had a negative command it also told learners what is expected of them.

In the other two schools (School A and B) the rules were succinct about what the learners were not allowed to do. These include "Sukungxola (do not make noise); sukulwa (do not fight other learners, do not eat inside the classroom, etc.). The teacher explained that she "wanted peace" and "do not have time for fights". This also indicated that the rules were meant to respond to the teachers' needs and expectations. The fact that only teachers reportedly participated in the development of the classroom rules may explain the biasness of the rules towards teacher authority and power.

Even though the learners did not participate in the development of the classroom rules, Respondent 2 (From School 2) reported that at the beginning of the new academic year, she explained the meaning of each rule to the learners. This is in line with Jacobsen (2013) who reports that teachers should explain the rules for the learners to understand. Also, after the winter and short summer school vacations, she reminds the learners of the rules. She reported that she reminded them because "young children forget some school stuff after a long holiday". Respondent 2 seemed to be sensitive to learner vertical and horizontal transition and are trying to bring the learners to the new academic and social space. Jacobsen (2013) warns that as much as students need to respond to the school program the school programme should also respond to the children.

With regards to the adherence to the rules, in School 1, the learners, especially after one or two of them have transgressed a rule, the whole class was made to recite the classroom rules. All the schools also reported using the school rules "sometimes when teaching particular letters of the alphabet". It is also worth noting that none of the selected teachers reported involving learners both in rule development and adherence. Literature however links partnerships between schools, home, and society as key during the vertical and horizontal transition. Vrinoti et al. (2008:4) put it more succinctly when suggesting the application of Bronfenbrenner's (1979) ecological developmental model in children's transition. When the three environments or Microsystems, which are made up of the children's home world, the pre-school world, and the school World, work together, they exchange information and empower the children.

Discourse in the Classroom Rules

All the participants reported that the rules were written in order of importance. The first rule that was indicated on the three walls was as follows:

<i>School A</i>	<i>School B</i>	<i>School C</i>
Fika ngexesha (be punctual)	Akungxolwa (do not make noise)	Walk- do not run

Respondent 1 reported that in her experience as a Grade 1 teacher, some learners arrive at school very late, some thirty minutes after the first lesson. She noted that sometimes, especially at the beginning of the year she expects that “learners are trying to adjust from pre-school culture”. Respondent B noted that she normally has a Grade 1 class of no less than sixty (60) learners and they “can be very noisy”. With regards to Respondent C, whose class size was reportedly between fifteen (15) and twenty-five (25) learners, her learners do not differentiate between outdoor activities and indoor activities. This particular rule was meant to emphasise the difference.

(a) *Respect hierarchical (respect teachers)*

In Schools A and B, there were distinct rules that indicated a strong sense of respecting hierarchy (the teacher) and nothing vice versa. In school B for instance, Mamela xa kufundiswa (listen to the teacher), buza yonke into (Ask the teacher everything); whilst in School referred to “Put your hand up”; Be polite to teacher”. And there was not much in reference that suggests teachers respecting and loving children.

(b) *Students leaving classroom:*

In-School B, the rules also indicated procedures for leaving the room. They indicated that the learner requests the teacher permission to go to the toilet. The teacher noted that sometimes they admit learners who “needed more attention as most did not come through the ECD route”. This is the category of learners thatrefer to as not possessing the cultural capital.

(c) *The inside versus the outside classroom behaviour:*

In-School B and School C, there was a discourse of inside versus outside behaviours. These included the use of voice (there was a classroom versus playground voice). Also,

the learners were asked to walk and not to run inside the classroom. During the interview, Respondent 3, from School C explained that the rule was meant to ensure that learners are safe inside the classroom as the physical space does not allow them to run as freely as they could outside. In School 2, the inside versus outside discourse included “akutyiwa eklassini (you are not permitted to eat inside the classroom); sukulahla izinto ezimdaka eklassini (don’t throw dirty things in the classroom); akuliwa eklassini (you are not allowed to get involved in a physical fight inside the classroom), and others. On the other hand, Respondent 2, from School B explained.

Furthermore, respondents from Schools A and B (township and village schools) had also indicated the following:

- Punctuality
- Mandatory by learners to come to school every day.

They both explained that punctuality and absenteeism were the major problems experienced. They further explained that most of their learners had not attended Early Childhood Classes, and were therefore not accustomed to the formal education routines.

How Do The Participants Ensure Adherence To The Rules?

Even though the rules were not aligned with any explicit sanctions. The rules were just outlined on the wall. Also, the participants reported that no clear sanctions had been communicated to the learners.

- Sanctions included: Shouting at the misbehaving learners, asking the offender to face the wall; one learner writing names of the offending learners on the board. In most cases, the offending learners were reported as the ones who make noise in the classroom in the teacher’s absence.

Variety of strategies

- By a show of disapproving eye contact to the misbehaving learner
- Clapping hands
- Remind the whole class of the rules
- Punishment such as “come and sit in front of the classroom”; “face the wall”

CONCLUSION

This research studied teachers' perspectives regarding the development of the classroom. Foundation Stage, and especially Grade 1 is one of progression, presented in the form of a large number of so-called 'Stepping Stones'. Also, it is regarded as a potential break or make a stage to the child as the child is adjusting from pre-schooling. It may even be worse if the child has not been exposed to the pre-school culture. And as such the rituals and procedures determined by the teachers may be threatening to some children, hence misbehave, in the eyes of the Grade 1 educator. Also, as this paper indicates, some of the reported disruptive behaviours are explained as normal behaviours by literature. These include challenges with vertical and horizontal transitions and a constant need to explore their surroundings.

Some of the perceived disruptive behaviours sometimes are due to challenges of the transition from preschool to formal school. Sometimes the transition is negative because of the unreasonable expectations of formal schooling to young children. Sometimes the formal curriculum and the rigid teacher routines negatively "forced" children to be ready for school. Therefore Grade 1 teachers' expectations of the child need to be realistic taking into consideration the routines of the reception class that included more playing, outdoor activities, and a napping time. This, therefore, requires Grade 1 teachers to gradually introduce the formal procedures and routines to a Grade 1 class.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The paper recommends among others that Grade 1 educators need to consider young children's academic preparedness for formal schooling and introduce the formal routines gradually. This amongst others will minimize the negative experiences of vertical and horizontal transition. A positive start to schooling is what is promoted by transition. A positive start to schooling promotes a child's positive adjustment and is likely to lead to future school enjoyment and success (Ibid). Young children need to be involved in decisions about their curriculum and the development of classroom rules. Literature

has unpacked the advantages of involving learner participation in curriculum decisions and classroom rule development. These include learners owning their learning which boosts their self-esteem and cognition. More importantly, literature also warns educators of young children to respect children's agency and not treat them as consumers of knowledge.

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