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“Nobody Said Nothing About Learning Stuff :” Students, Teachers and Curricular Change

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Abstract: The purpose of this study was to examine the potential multiple meanings assigned to a curricular change effort in a secondary physical education program. Data were collected from class observations and interviews with 3 teachers and 16 of their students from a large urban high school. All data sources were analyzed using constant comparison and analytic induction methods. At least part of the explanation for the success or failure of the teachers' curricular change efforts was the difference between the meanings that teachers and students assigned to physical education and the program changes.

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Grade-level Status Effects in Multiage Group work: The Lady Bountiful Syndrome

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Abstract: This study examined the experiences around multiage group work in a classroom with third and fifth graders. Semistructured interviews with eleven pairs of students provided the data for this work. Using an interpretive methodology called “grounded theory” (Glaser & Strauss, 1967), three major themes were chosen for discussion: “We both know different things,” “Because they help us,” and “We work together.” Findings include the notion that these themes relate to students’ theories of knowledge and their perceptions of helping which lead to status-effects in the classroom, otherwise termed The Lady Bountiful Syndrome. This is similar to Berger, Cohen and Zelditch’s Expected States Theory (1972). Implications for classroom practice are discussed.

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Elementary Students' Preferences for Teacher Praise

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Abstract: The aim of this exploratory, descriptive study was to investigate elementary students' preferences for praise used in the classroom. An instrument was developed to measure upper elementary school students' preferences for teacher praise. The items measured preferences for how often teachers should give students different types of feedback (particularly ability and effort feedback) as well as the degree to which students felt that feedback should be given publicly, privately or not at all. Gender and cross-sectional developmental differences were investigated using the resultant scales and Schunk's (1991) hypothesis that students' need for effort feedback declines with age while the need for ability feedback increases with age was tested. Some gender and age differences were found but Schunk's hypothesis was not supported.

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Defining Caring Teachers: Adolescents' Perspectives

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Abstract: The study examined middle schools students' definition of a caring teacher in two middle schools, an urban and a suburban. Responses from interviews with 101 students and field notes from participant observations lead to the identification of two broad themes: teacher behaviors related to content and pedagogy and teacher behaviors that implied a relationship between the student and the teacher. However, all caring acts were unidirectional, from the teacher to the student. Thus, although caring acts occurred to a certain extent (from the teachers to the students), neither school embodied the characteristics of a caring community.

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