Classroom management as method and manner

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We describe two case studies of experienced teachers whose classroom-management approaches, whilst quite different, appear seamless and in agreement with classroom manner and with the goals and desires they have for their students. We examine classroom management, manner, beliefs about classroom life and moral and intellectual goals for students, and classroom behaviour that directly informs students of expectations for virtuous conduct. The data include classroom observation and videotapes, and interviews with teachers. In developing these case studies, we join with the recent trend toward a more holistic view of the teacher and his or her conduct. The case studies focus on who a teacher is, what a teacher believes and how these beliefs are manifest in the teacher’s conduct.

In a review of research on problems faced by beginning teachers, Veenman (1984) concludes that classroom discipline is seen, by many such teachers, as their most serious stumbling block. Veenman presents several studies in which beginning teachers suggest that they did not learn anything about classroom management in their teacher education programmes, although their teacher educators can point to the material on this topic included in their classes.

Various explanations have been offered for this situation. One suggests that teacher educators try to cover too much, and that instruction in classroom management should focus on a limited number of skills to be taught in depth (Lasley 1994). Another suggestion is that pre-service students do not have a ‘need to know’ about classroom management, and are only able to process classroom-management issues when they develop some practical knowledge about classroom teaching (Koehler 1978).

Some recent examinations of classroom management, however, focus on the conception of classroom management used in literature and practice. This conception separates management from all other aspects of the classroom, such as instruction and relationships with students, and is considered a means to an end. As Bullough (1994) points out, teacher-education textbooks approach classroom management as a set of technical skills related to controlling students (Boostrom 1991, McLaughlin 1994). And, student discipline is still viewed largely as providing rewards and
consequences (Jones 1996). Classroom management is taught as a demarcated unit or class, and the teacher education students themselves may view classroom management as separate from instruction and interpersonal relationships (Weinstein 1998).

In pointing to the disconnection between classroom management and other aspects of teaching such as instructional and interpersonal conduct, several authors have begun to reconnect classroom management with instruction and teachers’ personal traits such as caring. For example, Weinstein (1998) underscores the lack of relationship between conceptions of caring and classroom order held by prospective students. Weinstein et al. (1994) focus not only on helping prospective teachers become more realistic in their conceptions of classrooms, but also on learning processes that allow them to maintain their humanistic orientation. Martin (1997) attempts to bring together classroom management and instruction in learner-centred classrooms. Tippins et al. (1993) examine change in the referent of ‘control’ as a science teacher struggles with becoming more constructivist in his teaching. Boostrom (1991: 193) points to two functions of classroom rules: how they ‘embody a way of life and how they shape instruction and subject matter’. Hansen (1993b) examines the moral meaning in the everyday management practice of turn-taking. He also places classroom management within a larger concept of shared morality: specifically, sharing standards of conduct makes possible the activities of teaching and learning (Hansen 1992).

The purpose of this paper is to continue the work on reconceptualizing classroom management by placing it within a broader frame that relates classroom management to manner in teaching. As Jones (1996: 505) suggests: ‘a central issue in defining classroom management will always be the manner with which the teacher chooses to develop safety and order’. By ‘manner’ in teaching, we are referring to a teacher’s virtuous conduct or traits of character as played out or revealed within a classroom context (Fenstermacher 1990, 2001). Manner is thought to be important for student learning. The philosophical literature suggests that students, in the presence of a virtuous person, will themselves learn virtuous conduct (e.g. Ryle 1972, MacIntyre 1984). However, there is another set of theories about learning virtuous conduct that relate to teachers’ conscious attempts to convey virtuous conduct through such moves as ‘call-outs’ (Fenstermacher 1999, 2001), as well as the explicit instruction of virtues in the form of specific curricula such as those described by Lickona (1997).

Classroom management, as now conceived, would be considered within the second of these sets of educational theories—explicit instruction in virtuous conduct. It is in the attempt consciously to promote moral behaviour such as politeness, honesty, etc., that one might locate classroom management. However, the relationship of a teacher’s virtuous traits of character and that teacher’s conscious attempts to develop virtuous conduct in students should be considered when attempting to understand classroom management. For these two could be in conflict and, thereby, powerfully affect the messages the students receive and their responses to the teachers’ requests.
There have been several studies on the concept of manner in teaching. Fallona (1998) combined philosophical and empirical inquiry to study the moral conduct of teachers. She constructed case studies illustrating three middle-school teachers’ expression of Aristotelian moral virtues. She concluded that it is possible to observe systematically and describe manner in teaching in terms of Aristotelian virtue. Richardson (1993) examined continuity and change in the teachers’ manner. The moral and intellectual traits of character that emerged in this analysis included fairness, caring, commitment to educative goals, and critical analysis of one’s own practices and theories.

We describe two case studies of experienced teachers whose classroom-management approaches, although quite different, appear seamless and in agreement with classroom manner and with the goals and desires they have for their students. We are looking at classroom management, manner, beliefs about classroom life and moral and intellectual goals for students, and classroom behaviour that directly informs students of expectations for virtuous conduct. In developing these case studies, we reflect the recent trend toward a more holistic view of the teacher and his or her conduct. This work includes biography (Knowles 1992), teacher emotions (Hargreaves 1998), beliefs and attitudes (Richardson 1996) and personhood (Britzman 1986). Similar to these researchers, we are interested in who a teacher is, what a teacher believes, and how these beliefs are manifest in the teacher’s conduct.

The study

This analysis of two teachers’ classroom management and manner has been undertaken within a larger study, the Manner in Teaching Project (MTP). We have selected for these cases two teachers who represent very different ways of teaching. Each teacher operates her classroom management in ways that appear, initially at least, to conform to their goals in helping students develop virtues that allow them to live and learn in a harmonious way within their particular contexts. Both are caring teachers who exhibit their caring in very different ways.

Jackson (1992: 402) suggests that ‘the best way to learn about a teacher’s moral qualities is to get to know that person as well as possible, principally by spending a fair amount of time in his or her classroom, though also through conversation and other forms of social contact’. For this paper, multiple forms of data have been analysed (Richardson and Fenstermacher 2001) to examine who the teachers are, how they enact a particular virtuous disposition (Hansen 1993a), and their more conscious efforts to develop virtuous conduct in their students. The analysis is ongoing. In reference to this process, Merriam (1988: 119) writes: ‘Data collection and analysis is a simultaneous activity in qualitative research. Analysis begins with the first interview, the first observation, the first document read’. In this on-going process, data were organized, broken into units, synthesized, and searched for patterns (Bogdan and Biklen 1998).
Through this systematic process, we have come to understand aspects of the teachers’ conduct as the teachers interact with students and stress social virtues. The data from the transcripts and the video-records have been used to construct the following cases of the teachers’ manner as they engage in activities related to classroom management. The case of each teacher begins with a description of the teacher and how she organizes and manages the classroom environment. This first section is meant to be a traditional description of classroom management as it is generally treated in the literature. Following this section is a more holistic description of each teacher’s goals and what she wants for her students. This is followed by a description of each teacher’s manner. In our analysis of manner, we describe the teachers’ virtues using Fallona’s (1998) interpretation of Aristotelian moral virtues in teaching. In addition, a virtue described by Sockett (1993), practical wisdom, which borders on an intellectual virtue, is added. The case studies conclude with a description of how each teacher conveys the virtues.

**Darlene**

*Classroom management*

Darlene is a White female teacher at Jordan Elementary School, in her upper 40s, with 15 years of experience in teaching grades K–4. She has also taken several years off teaching to act as a staff-developer for an early reading programme. The school in which she teaches is located in a university city in the USA, and the population consists of a diverse group of students from low- and middle-income families. Her room is connected with the next classroom, and the two teachers often plan together and bring the students together for joint activities several times during the day.

The videotapes observed for this analysis represent 2 days in the Spring of 1998 in a grade 2/3 classroom, and 2 days in the autumn of 1998 in a grade 3/4 classroom with many of the same children. The organization of the two classrooms is somewhat different on the surface, but many underlying features are the same. In the first classroom, students are grouped in ‘prides’ of four in clearly demarcated squares consisting of four desks. A curved reading desk is located at the side of the room. In the second classroom (grade 3/4), two rows of desks, pushed together, are placed around three sides of the classroom, and the curved reading desk is in the middle of the classroom. Students are in groups of four (no longer called prides), but the groups are physically quite close to each other.

Darlene has an open and friendly approach, with a quick and engaging smile. In both classrooms, Darlene and her students share responsibility for the work. Students move independently around the classroom, putting their work in bins, picking up textbooks, sitting and working with others in their groups. They ask questions, and occasionally make suggestions as to changing the nature of the assignment. Nonetheless, Darlene is the focus of
attention, and the one who structures the tasks and pushes or asks her students to push to ensure that they are accomplished. For each of the standard activities (e.g. opening activities, reading groups, lunch money, morning mathematics work, lining up for special activities), students seem to know the form and function of each in terms of where to sit or stand, how to participate, what to do when the work is finished, and what is happening next. This awareness is indicated by the fact that most students do, in fact, move independently through these activities, although Darlene occasionally does have to remind some students of the expectations. Darlene works with the whole group, with small groups and with individuals. On our tapes, the time breakdown was ~30% whole-group, 40% small-group, and 30% individual.

This classroom operates very smoothly. Transitions are harmonious, with students moving quickly and preparing quite independently for the next activity. In the mornings, at least, there are very few disciplinary reprimands.\footnote{There are a few more in the afternoons, particularly as the end of the day approaches. Students seem well aware of the rules, and, although Darlene enforces those rules, she is flexible. For example, a student came to Darlene at the beginning of the class to say that her mother had not signed her progress report because she was late for work. Darlene asked if her mother had seen it. When the student said ‘Yes’, Darlene said: ‘Okay, a 1-day reprieve. But if you don’t bring it tomorrow, I will have to call her’. The reprimands related to off-task behaviour are gently and politely given. For example, a student has become squirmy in the middle of a seatwork task: ‘Sammy, are you done? [waits for his answer which is head shake—no]. Okay, please stay on-task and focus, focus’.}

She provides a rationale for most of what she asks the students to do. In each of the incidents we observed, the rationale for staying quiet always related to not disturbing others in the classroom. For example: ‘Would you please give me 2 minutes of silence while others finish up? Starting in 5 seconds: 5 [pause], 4 [pause]’.

Her reprimands detract very little from the lessons. In fact, she can maintain eye contact with one student to whom she has asked a question while picking up on a potential disruption from another student, by putting her hand up, moving toward the child, or saying his name quietly without interrupting the lesson. Reprimands often focus on social conduct. For example, twice on these tapes, Darlene reprimands students for put-downs of other students.

In sum, this is a very well-managed classroom. Darlene scores high on Kounin’s (1970) qualities of effective classroom managers such as ‘withitness’, ‘overlappingness’, ‘smoothness’, ‘momentum’, ‘group-alerting’ and ‘accountability’. The activity-structure is complex, with each activity having its own set of participation rules and requirements. Students move quickly from one activity to another. The students appear to know what to do and what the limits are. And students seem happily and highly engaged in activities. Few reprimands are given, and, from an observer’s standpoint, few need to be given.
A more holistic view

Darlene’s father was a teacher with a teaching style that she did not appreciate. She recalled that he had been very severe with his students and even more severe with his children. He seldom stated his rationale for what he was demanding that his students and children do. The rest of her teachers approached their work in a similar way. She grew up not understanding what she was doing in school until grade 7. Prior to that, school had been a blur to her; of much more interest was trying to get away with doing things that were not allowed in the classes. She has attempted to right this wrong as a teacher.

Knowing what you are doing as a student, and why, was a major theme in her discussion of what she wants for her students, and what she tries to give them. She models this theme by providing students with rationale for her own teaching: ‘... being real direct with the kids and helping them to understand exactly where you are going and why you’re going there. I think “why” is important to kids’.

This goal goes beyond being a means to an end. Providing the whys seems to be a moral necessity for her, as a teacher. It also relates positively to three other themes which, themselves, are interrelated: community of learners, individual responsibility for learning, and know thyself and others as learners. These link to the overall goal for her students:

It’s always my hope to turn children into, ... or to help them grow toward independent learners who enjoy learning so that they have that intrinsic pride. They don’t need a sticker for everything they do. That drives me absolutely insane. I’m more apt to say, ‘You must be really proud of yourself’ ... I also know, because of my children, to add, ‘Well I’m sure proud of you’, after the child has had a sense to say he is.

Because these three themes weave in and out of the conversation and are clearly thought of within the same frame, we will not attempt to separate them.

Darlene and her team-teacher have been working on the community theme for several years. She sees the community operating to develop moral and intellectual virtues. The moral virtues are primarily social—learning to be nice to and work with all other students—and the intellectual virtue is an understanding that more can be accomplished in a group. She described this belief to students she had asked to work together on a task: ‘If there are three people working together, it is like three parts of a big brain. What gets done is better’. She connects the community with responsibility for learning. As she stated in her interview, she is ‘building the sense of community so that children can feel responsible for their own learning’.

The year (1997–1998) we started working with Darlene, she and her team-teacher had gone through an elaborate process of building community that included studying the nature of their own community, bringing the students together to participate in community circles, working with the students on social skills such as being polite, and modelling how they themselves are part of a community. A part of this process included helping
students take responsibility for their own learning. Again, this was accomplished in several ways:

In today’s math lesson I said, ‘Today I’m not looking at anything you do. You have total responsibility. You can decide you’re not going to learn at all and I can’t guarantee we’ll get another opportunity to learn this. Or, if you want to learn it, here are some steps you could follow. This is the goal and here are some steps you could follow to learn it today’. They’re just real responsible, but that’s what I think this whole process is about: having to take responsibility for their own learning. The reason I do it is because I didn’t have a clue until about 7th grade.

However, although responsibility for oneself is important within a community, taking responsibility for everyone’s learning is equally important.

The other thing I like to do is to make sure that every child in the room feels responsible for the learning of everybody else. Not that they have to teach them, but that they have to set up an environment and be a part of a community that allows children to be comfortable in making the mistakes that you have to make when you take the risks you have to take. So, those are the two magical musts [responsibility for your own and for others’ learning] in the classroom as far as I’m concerned. And so, consequently, already in every classroom I’ve ever been in you will hear kids saying, ‘Nice try, though!’, or ‘It’s okay, we’ll help you’, or ‘Shh! He needs awake time’. Those kinds of comments where they’re helping each other.

A third theme that weaves in and out of the conversation concerns the importance of knowing yourself and others as learners. Because children learn in different ways, it is important to treat them differently, and students should be aware of this policy. She considers her understanding of individual children to be a gift:

I seem to be really good—for some God-given reason, thank you!—at recognizing just when I can push which button on which kid, which is really a wonderful skill to have in classroom instruction. Knowing just when I can tell [a student], ‘Knock it off!’ or when I need to say ‘Do you need a hug?’

She also wants her students to understand themselves. She wants them to have the courage to talk about how they feel, and to be honest about the responsibility they have for their actions. Each week she asks them to assess themselves on the life-skills that include such virtues as courage, honesty, curiosity, perseverance, trustworthiness and friendship. Student have different profiles, and they will select life-skills to work on. She also thinks that children can understand the need for different instructional approaches for different students quite early in their schooling:

It still boggles my mind that children as young as kindergarten can be all right with Johnny who has to pace in the back of the room when Suzy is not allowed to. . . . But they do. They’re very accepting of that. And, if they aren’t, then all you need to do is to say, ‘It’s different for every person and I’m not going to ask you to do what I ask Johnny to do later on this afternoon either’ . . . And they just believe it because you have the aplomb to say it, I guess.
In addition to these three themes, Darlene’s firmly held theory of learning runs through her interviews and classroom actions. This theory is highly cognitive and relates somewhat to her involvement in a reading project that stresses multi-sensory approaches. She also believes strongly in Gardner’s (1993) theory of multiple intelligences. Her commitment to explaining the whys to students means that she describes these theories to her students. For example, in a small reading group, Darlene says: ‘Okay, let’s spell it out. This is the multi-sensory part—seeing, hearing and touching.’ (The students proceed to hold out their left arm and touch it with their right hand for each of the letters in the word.) In fact, she uses what she calls the ‘brain-compatible learning’ language with the students to help them recognize and understand themselves as learners on a particular day. When students are having difficulty sitting still and focusing, she asks them where they are. Students often respond: ‘Down in the brain stem’ [as compared to being in the cerebrum]. She also thinks that they often are unable to concentrate because of the troubles they bring into the classroom. One of her roles, she suggests, is to listen to these burdens; as she said, expressed in the words of a student: ‘Taking the burden off my shoulder then giving it to Mrs D____. Okay, she’s got it. Okay, I can go back with what we need to do.’ Thus, as is evident on the videotapes, she has many private conversations with students at the beginning of the day.

**Manner**

The virtues most firmly expressed by Darlene in her teaching include the following:

- **Friendliness** (‘showing care and respect for children and accepting responsibility for them’ (Fallona 1998: 80)). The videotapes of Darlene walking down the hall with an arm around a student, hugging a student, laughing with them, listening carefully to them and making authentic a ‘teacher’ question by waiting to hear the student’s response, reflect a positive caring disposition. This disposition is reinforced in her interviews as she describes her intuitive sense of what is ‘right’ for an individual student at a given time, and how she models virtuous behaviour she wants the students themselves to develop.

- **Wit** (‘having tact and joking/having fun with students in a tasteful way’ (Fallona 1998: 80)). Much of Darlene’s humour focuses on herself. Darlene often makes funny mistakes on the board or in her descriptions. These are often designed by Darlene to help students take responsibility and become independent learners, because she expects the students to correct her. These and other jokes also provide a gentle humour that the students appreciate.5

- **Truthfulness** (‘being honest, having integrity, and seeking the truth’ (Fallona 1998: 80)). Darlene makes it a practice to model honesty. In part, this is a rationale for the way she models her behaviour after making mistakes. She wants students to be honest about their
behaviour, mistakes, etc. to encourage the development of an integrity that is necessary for the community. She also is honest about her forgetfulness, and often brings this up. She sees her role as not only being honest but as modelling strategies for dealing with these personal traits, such as relying on the community to help her.

- **Mildness** (‘having a good temper’) and **temperance** (‘keeping the expression of feeling and actions under the control of reason’ (Fallona 1998: 80)). In all tapes and at all workshops and interviews, Darlene exhibits both of these virtues that seem to relate closely to each other in this case. In fact, when Darlene was watching a tape of herself, she mentioned that that was a bad day: ‘I was a little harsh and out of sorts. I was sick the next day.’ It was a complete surprise to all other viewers. She seemed, as always, mild and temperate. An apt metaphor for her classroom, coined by one of MTP members, is ‘a peaceful kingdom’.

- **Justice** (‘fairness in the application of both rules and norms to individual children’ (Fallona 1998: 80)). Darlene was very clear about her need to treat individual students differentially. It is, however, her responsibility to determine what is best for each child to allow them to reach their and her goals. She reflected constantly on this differential treatment, particularly on treatment that she thought was not natural for her. This treatment included being quite stern and directive for a male student. However, she made the judgement that this behaviour was what the student needed in order to understand what he was doing in the classroom and to take responsibility for his learning.

- **Practical wisdom** (‘Practical wisdom in a classroom accrues from reflective experience, enabling the professional to know what to do when and why’ (Sockett 1993: 85)). The extent and quality of Darlene’s reflection on her experience is considerable and deep. Of course, we may only access such reflection through well-developed verbal ability and inclination, which certainly is the case with Darlene. Her interviews are extensive and rich, and she has indicated how much she enjoys talking about this material. Darlene is very clear about the rationale for her classroom conduct and methods; and both are closely tied with her goals for her own and the students’ conduct and learning. This reflection also leads her to make significant changes in beliefs and method. Furthermore, the results, in terms of Darlene’s teaching, are quite profound.

### Conveying the virtues

Some philosophical literature suggests that virtuous conduct is learned by being in the presence of a virtuous person (e.g. Passmore 1972, MacIntyre 1984). However, there is a considerable amount of instruction in virtuous conduct in most classrooms in the form of conscious modelling on the part
of the teacher, and instruction in virtuous conduct through a variety of approaches (Fenstermacher 2001).

Darlene thinks that modelling the type of conduct that she wants from her students is critical. She is extremely polite with the students, even when she is reprimanding them, and she feels strongly about ‘applauding’ them, in the hope that they will learn to applaud each other. She wants her students to learn to support their colleagues, even when they make a mistake. In this way, they will contribute to an atmosphere that allows students to take risks.

Her approach is gentle, but clear. For example, she discusses an incident on the tape in which she stops the class and says to a disruptive student: ‘Jim, would you like to come up here and teach the lesson? Because I am really uncomfortable with being ignored and maybe you can handle it better than I can.’ She realizes that this approach required firm disciplinary action, but she takes that action because nothing else was working. Also, she thought she was modelling the ownership of her own discomfort, which takes a little heat off the other person.

She also models apologizing when she loses patience or makes a mistake:

Sometimes I just light into a kid. I did last week. I just blew a gasket in front of the whole group and I had to . . . I had to turn it off. I turned to the other kids and I said, ‘I’m real sorry you had to hear that because you didn’t deserve that. I very much apologize to the rest of you.’ And that . . . that kid felt that feeling that I had.

In addition to modelling, other forms of instruction in conduct relate positively to the importance of community. For example, although ‘moving the lesson along, and time on academic task’ is important to Darlene, she will interrupt a lesson with a reprimand to a student who she thinks is mistreating another student. An example was an incident on tape when, during a whole-group mathematics lesson, Darlene heard a student putting down another student for not getting the right answer. Darlene stopped the lesson and told the student that what he had just said was a put-down and, therefore, inappropriate. In her interview, she said:

And so, we have to stop Sammy from using a put-down even though it interrupts my lesson . . . . Because otherwise if you allow it, you teach that it’s okay to do that. And I firmly believe that.

Although many of her reprimands are given in private, when possible, she is willing to reprimand in public those behaviours detrimental to her conception of a community.

Darlene uses positive reinforcement to point out and ‘spread’ virtuous conduct. She talks about this as ‘applauding conduct’, and, as mentioned above, wants other students to engage in similar applauding conduct. She also uses unique methods for teaching such conduct as taking responsibility. One, for example, is to point to her own weaknesses:

I tell the kids, ‘I have no memory so you have to do it for me’. ‘Who will help me remember?’ And truly I don’t remember very well . . . . So, all week when they hand me something I’ll say, ‘Well, this is really . . . this is really good.
Did you want to hand it in because you don’t know I might put it some place wrong and then you’ll blame me at the end of the week? I don’t want that responsibility. Why don’t you take the responsibility for your work.’ And they turn it in to the right place.

The importance she places on students taking responsibility for themselves and their peers, her modelling of politeness, and her explicitness in teaching appropriate conduct may be seen in the following incident. Darlene has heard from the computer teacher that the students have been misbehaving in the computer class. This conduct becomes the topic of conversation in the community circle. They write a letter to the computer teacher, mentioning their frustration when she shouts at them, but taking responsibility for their misbehaviour. They then work at what they will try to do, such as ‘being more respectful’. She then asks the students to think about what they would do if someone forgets what they have agreed upon. She asks a student if she can use him as an example, and then presents a scenario of inappropriate behaviour and asks the students what should be said to the perpetrator. The students suggest what they might say to him: ‘John, try to be more respectful’. She then asks John if that would work for him, and he agrees. She moves to asking the students to take over her role in suggesting more appropriate behaviour to their peers. In the scenarios, she asks individual students if she may ‘use them as examples’. She runs through several of these examples. In this incident, she is asking the students to take responsibility for ensuring other students’ virtuous conduct and providing them with the authority for doing so—at least when they are outside her classroom.

Kai

Classroom management

Kai is an African-American, female teacher at Highlands Academy. Looking at Kai, the word ‘professional’ comes to mind. She is well dressed, and her hair is always neatly pulled back in a ponytail. She has been teaching since 1980, when she graduated from college. Over the course of these years, Kai has taught many grade levels in many locations. She has been in her current position for 4 years.

The videotapes we observed for this analysis represent 2 days in Kai’s kindergarten classroom, the first in Spring 1998, the second in Autumn 1999. As one would expect from 1 year to the next, the furniture was arranged differently on these days. On the first day, the tables built for two students were lined in horizontal rows facing the front of the room, and on the second, one row of tables faced the front and two groups of six tables were located in the centre of the room. Along one wall of the classroom was a large fireplace in front of which was a large, brightly coloured carpet and some teaching equipment, including a large easel displaying several picture books.
The environment in Kai’s classroom conveys the Afrocentric nature and academic emphasis of the school. The classroom walls are painted a baby blue and covered with posters of famous African-Americans. On one wall, there is a bulletin board called ‘Scholars’ Hall of Fame’ which displays exemplary student work. As this bulletin board suggests, the physical environment conveys the message that this is a place where kindergarten students come to learn. To aid the students in learning their letters and numbers, strips are posted above the blackboard with the printed alphabet and the numbers 1 to 20, and on the face of the fireplace are pictures of colours and shapes labelled with their names to encourage students to learn them. On top of the fireplace’s mantle and on a bookshelf in the front of the room, Kai has displayed children’s books with many African faces and locales that encourage the students to read about their heritage. Learning stations focusing on mathematics, reading, listening, and the computer are set up in opposite corners of the room. When the students come together as a whole class, they sit on a brightly coloured carpet in front of the fireplace.

Kai’s classroom is very teacher centred. She takes an active role in organizing and managing the whole-group instruction, seatwork and learning centres. On the videotapes of her classroom teaching, ~80% of the time was spent on teacher-directed whole-group instruction, and the remaining 20% of the time the students worked independently at their seats. The learning centres are places to which students go after completing their seatwork. Kai’s style of managing these classroom activities is assertive. She confidently and consistently states her expectations for their behaviour. When students choose not to behave accordingly, Kai’s style has been described by Wolfgang (1995: 5) as ‘I am the adult. I know misbehaviour when I see it and will confront the student to stop this misbehaviour’. She makes frequent directive statements to discourage behaviour she considers inappropriate, and she uses ‘I’ messages to convey how she expects students to correct their behaviour: ‘I need you to pick up your pencils and work on this example, now’.

Typically, teachers with this kind of intervention style employ ‘behaviour modification systems that mete out rewards and punishment to train the students to follow classroom rules’ (Oakes and Lipton 1999: 235). Observers in Kai’s classroom will not see the adherence to these, or any other specific classroom-management model (e.g. Canter and Canter’s (1992) assertive discipline, Dreikurs et al.’s (1982) logical consequences, and Gordon’s (1974) teacher effectiveness training). Rather, the way that Kai organizes and manages the classroom environment appears much more seamless than any formal classroom-management system. One of the best ways of describing this seamlessness is to say that Kai, like Darlene, exhibits many of the behaviours Kounin (1970) observed in teachers who are a managerial success. For example, one morning Kai was working with the students on their ‘A, B, Cs’. She would put a magnetic letter on a white board. Then, either she would tell the students what the letter was or the students would call out the name of the letter. Barely missing a beat between letters, Kai would remind students of expected behaviour. For example, she would say: ‘Here’s a small “p”. Pay attention! This is a small
“q”. Are you looking?" Kai’s ability to carry on with instruction while making these reminders about expected behaviours reflects the seamlessness of her classroom-management style and illustrates how she is able to organize and manage the classroom environment without a specific management system in place.

**A more holistic view**

Kai has wanted to be a teacher ever since she was a child. As a little girl, she played school and pretended to be a teacher. Ever since Kai can remember, being a teacher ‘was my first career choice’ and when it came time to declare a major in college, Kai entered teaching. Kai says that her decision to enter teaching ‘had a lot to do with the teachers that I encountered as a child’. Those whom she most wished to emulate were ‘loving and caring and nurturing’. They interacted well and had a good rapport with students.

Like the teachers she emulated as a child, Kai believes that she has good relationships with students. According to Kai, ‘I like to say my rapport with them is very positive’. If she asks students not to do something, they are very responsive. Kai says, ‘I can truly say that I have not had a negative response from the children’. Students take her ‘I’ messages to heart and follow her directive statements. For example, if she says, ‘I would like everyone to be quiet and listen carefully’, the students become quiet and listen carefully. Kai considers such responses from the students to be positive. She believes that she gets such a positive response from the students because she is ‘firm’ and because they are very ‘good kids’.

Kai wants to help them grow up to be good people. She discusses this intention when she talks about her goals for students and the kind of people she would like them to become. According to Kai:

> In the end, I guess, I’d like them to be the best human beings that they can be. If they don’t learn anything else, then I would like for them to just be good people, know how to treat one another, respect themselves. I’d say respect themselves first, and that’s something that we work on. Good self-esteem and being the best person that they can be and that they will have good relationships with other people and know how to treat other people.

Kai calls on students to treat one another with respect. This message is expressed through statements like:

> I need everyone to listen. Just because you said something already, it doesn’t mean that you should not listen to your classmates because it’s rude to talk when other people are talking.

As this statement illustrates, Kai notes when students are rude, and reminds them to exhibit polite behaviour.

Another goal that Kai has for students is that they ‘learn to communicate properly’, and she designs learning activities that will help foster their communication skills. For example, she had students act out a story they had read several times. As the students were acting, Kai helped them
with their parts. She made statements such as ‘Continue on with the story . . . . Then what did she say?’ and ‘Speak up so they can hear you’.

Kai believes that if she can enhance students’ communication skills, foster their self-esteem, and teach them to treat others with respect, then she will have contributed to their growth as human beings. She aspires to help them ‘grow up to be respectful, responsible, caring, good citizens, and whatever they decide to do in life—whether it’s go to college or drive a bus—whatever they do, do it well’. These aspirations for students are a central theme in Kai’s teaching. They are reflected in her manner.

**Manner**

The virtues most firmly expressed by Kai in her teaching include the following:

- **Magnanimity** (‘expressing dignity and pride in yourself, your students, and your profession’ (Fallona 1998: 80)). Kai dresses and carries herself as a professional. She takes pride in the heritage of African-Americans. She models this pride and conveys it through the classroom environment she has constructed.

- **Friendliness** (‘showing care and respect for children and accepting responsibility for them’ (Fallona 1998: 80)). Kai takes responsibility for teaching social virtues seriously. She expects that students exhibit manners and complete their work to the best of their ability. Her commitment to her students conveys how much she cares for students. Her friendliness is also exemplified in politeness and helpfulness.

- **Truthfulness** (‘being honest, having integrity, and seeking the truth’ (Fallona 1998: 80)). Kai models honesty by clearly expressing her expectations. She is candid and very direct with students about the kind of work and behaviour she wants from them. If students do not meet her expectations, she honestly expresses her disdain and disappointment.

- **Honour** (‘positively reinforcing students for their good efforts and work well done’ (Fallona 1998: 80)). Kai honours students by commending them for work that they have done well and for excellent behaviour. There is the ‘Scholars’ Hall of Fame’ where she posts exemplary work. Students who deserve recognition are the recipients of a ‘quiet clap’.

- **Justice** (‘fairness in the application of both rules and norms to individual children’ (Fallona 1998: 80)). Kai allocates fairly the time and attention she gives to students. As she says, ‘I have to give everybody some of my time. And sometimes I have to give those who need it most a lot of my time.’
Conveying the virtues

The most salient way Kai conveys the virtues relates back to her comments about her positive rapport with children. Her style of dealing with misbehaviour is to be firm. Kai says, ‘I’ll stop them if I observe a behaviour’. As noted in the description of Kai’s classroom management, she is assertive and uses directive statements and ‘I’ messages to correct children’s behaviour. For example, when students gather on the carpet, they are expected to sit flat on the floor with their legs folded and hands in their lap. When students do not adhere to this expectation, Kai asks them to correct their behaviour. Often these directions contain ‘I’ messages. For example, when members of the class were fidgeting on the carpet, Kai said: ‘I want you to sit flat on the floor. Girls, everyone, I want you sitting flat on the floor!’

By requesting desired behaviour through ‘I’ messages, Kai encourages ‘them to be the best that they can be at all times’. She cares for students and wants them to grow up to be good people. Therefore, Kai says she is ‘firm in that she has expectations for the students, and they know what those expectations are’. Even when doing something as simple as sitting on a carpet, Kai wants them to do it as best they can.

One of the expectations Kai has is that students are polite. She considers politeness a virtue. Therefore, politeness is one of her basic classroom rules. According to Kai, ‘we talk about being polite [as] . . . just having good manners’. Good manners are a classroom norm that Kai reinforces through her way of dealing with students. She requests and models social virtues. Kai tries ‘to teach them manners, how to be respectful, and how to carry themselves as ladies and gentlemen’. She does this by example. Even on occasions when she interrupts inappropriate behaviour to correct it, she says, ‘Excuse me’. It is also common for her to say ‘please’ and ‘thank you’. When students are impolite, Kai politely reminds them that their behaviour is inappropriate. For example, on one occasion when a student sneezed very loudly, Kai said, ‘Excuse me. That was rude’. On other occasions, Kai reminds students of how to be polite. For example, she makes statements like, ‘Let’s be polite because we can’t hear other people if you’re talking’. The way Kai politely points to students’ polite and impolite behaviour exemplifies her good manners.

The clarity with which Kai expresses her expectation that students act politely conveys her honesty. Kai is extremely candid with students about the behaviour she wants and about her disdain when students do not act as expected. For example, one morning Kai had given students a reminder that she wanted everybody to sit flat on the floor with their legs folded and their hands in their laps. On this morning, one student sitting directly in front of Kai was finding this request particularly difficult. Kai spoke to her a couple of times, but she still had her hands on the floor in front of her. Kai accidentally stepped on one. Kai immediately responded by saying:

Excuse me . . . I just stepped on Kira’s hands because her hands are way over here. That’s why I asked you to keep your hands in your lap and not be up here by the area where I’m walking back and forth. See what happens when
you don’t follow directions? ... I don’t tell you things just to say it. I tell you things to help keep you safe. Okay? You have to remember that. I tell you things to help you be safe and help you become better people not just because I like talking. I get tired of talking.

As this incident illustrates, Kai sends the students ‘I’ messages that honestly express her thoughts and feelings regarding students’ behaviour. She uses these ‘I’ messages to get students to consider their actions and behave in ways that are desirable. Kai also makes ‘I’ statements expressing the kind of behaviour she likes. For example, she tells the students, ‘I like it when people raise their hands and wait their turn so I call on them’. Such messages are sent in an effort to positively reinforce students; Kai is honouring those students who behave excellently. By honouring students for those things that they do well, Kai is modelling how to treat others. In this way, her manner supports her goal that students will ‘know how to treat one another’.

In addition to using ‘I’ messages as a management tool, it is Kai’s style to question students about what they are doing. She will say, ‘Do you think that you should be doing that?’ Kai’s rationale for asking students such questions is to ‘encourage them to think’. This was evident one morning when a student was shouting across the room to another student. To the student who was shouting, Kai said:

Excuse me. Why are you hollering like that…? Can’t she hear you?

The student responded that she could, and Kai ended the exchange by stating:

So, don’t scream in this room. You can talk to people. You don’t need to do that [shout].

By questioning students about an action, Kai tries:

to make them conscious of it and to make them think about what it is that they’re doing so they can really correct their own behaviour. I don’t want to be the sole person telling them what to do. I want them to problem-solve for themselves and figure out what is it they should have done [and] what they can do better.

Kai attempts to improve students’ ability to reason about their actions, and in so doing fosters their intellectual and moral virtue. She also shows students how to communicate in a proper manner. When she discusses their actions with them, she refrains from shouting.

Kai recognizes that requesting specific behaviour and modelling how students should treat one another are not always sufficient. She relies on parents to support her efforts in the classroom. If a child is not acting appropriately or doing what is expected of him or her, she will call the parents. Unlike assertive discipline programmes where a call home is made after several infractions, Kai will call immediately. Her rationale for this action is that ‘a lot of times if the kids know that their parent is going to be slightly upset on the other end, they’ll straighten up. That’s all that’s needed.’ This proved to be the case one morning when we observed her class. On this particular morning, and apparently the day before, one boy
was having some trouble getting down to work. To rectify this, Kai publicly told the teacher’s aide to call his mother. Kai told the student to:

   go over there by the telephone. You had your chance to get your act together. We’re not going through this today.

When the student returned from the telephone, Kai asked, ‘Were you able to reach his mother?’ The aide replied that the mother was not at her desk at work. Kai responded, ‘She’ll call back’. In the meantime, the student sat down at his desk and immediately began to work. Kai turned to him and said:

   I like the way you’re working. When your mother calls back, we can tell her something nice, hopefully.

As Kai said:

   It worked. I’m not trying to be a pest, but it worked. When I call, I get a response from him. That’s the only thing that works.

By calling parents, Kai shows that their learning is important and members of a community must support one another’s learning.

Kai’s belief that everyone must work together is also reflected in the ‘we’ statements that she makes to students. She constantly calls on the students to help one another. For example, one morning during a study of the calendar, the students were having some difficulty recalling what day of the week it was. She asked the whole class to focus and then said, ‘Let’s get real quiet so we can think’. At another time, Kai asked the students to show a new child in the class how they practice their letters. She said:

   Let’s do a good job because Malcolm is new to our room, and he doesn’t know how we do this part of our class, and this may be a little different from his class. So, let’s help him. Show him by doing a good job.

In these and other instances, Kai uses ‘we’ to call on the students to help one another and model excellence. Through her manner of calling on students to display these virtues, she shows them how to express friendliness toward one another.

Although Kai models friendliness, it could not be said that she is the students’ friend. There is no doubt that Kai is the authority figure in the classroom. In many ways, we find that Kai fits Noblit’s (1993) description of African-American teachers who believe that children are not equal conversation partners and that they must be socialized to this end. Through such actions as sending ‘I’ messages, making ‘we’ statements, and questioning students about their behaviour, Kai expresses her manner and models her virtues. She sets the norms and calls out for exemplary behaviour. It is through her manner that Kai is the socializing agent in the classroom; as such an agent, her goal is to help ‘them to grow up to be respectful, responsible, caring, good citizens, and whatever they decide to do in life—whether it’s go to college or drive a bus—whatever they do, do it well’.
Analysis

These two cases represent very different approaches to the organization of classroom life. At the same time, there are some interesting commonalities. In order to examine the differences and commonalities, we present the critical aspects of the cases in table 1.

One can see several commonalities across these two teachers, particularly with high-inference concepts such as Kounin’s (1970) qualities of effective classroom managers, and virtues such as friendliness. There are also several lower-inference concepts in which there is agreement. For example, in both classrooms, the teachers are clear about the rules and expectations, and the students appear to know them. Both teachers are conscious of modelling virtuous conduct, particularly being polite to others. One form of direct instruction in virtuous behaviour in both classrooms is call-outs; however, there are many more in Kai’s classroom.

The differences between Darlene and Kai centre around some fundamental issues of the role of schooling in the education of the young, and consequently the appropriate relationships between teachers and students. Darlene wants students to become the best that they can be. However, what ‘the best’ is is something that she is not willing to state or push for. She is willing to provide students with the opportunity to take responsibility for their own learning and for determining the nature of the person they are to become. There are clearly some limits: she wants students to be kind to others, for example. She is willing to share her role as teacher with the students. Kai is also interested in helping students become the best human beings they can. However, she has a sense of what that should be and communicates it to her students. They are to excel academically and socially, and her role is to make sure that they do so. These differences can be seen in the way the classroom operates. Kai’s classroom is teacher-centred—she works with the whole group and is assertive in managing the classroom. Darlene, however, works hard to share task work with the students to ensure that they take responsibility for their learning. Kai uses a disciplinary moment as an opportunity to educate the whole group about expectations and appropriate behaviour, whereas Darlene often disciplines in private, focusing on the individual.

Differences may also be seen in the way that teacher manner manifests itself in the classroom. Caring, in Kai’s classroom, is expressed in what might be called ‘tough love’ in the popular literature. She cares for them and, therefore, demands that they work toward her expectations for their academic and social success. One could say that caring is expressed for the group of students as well as for individuals. Darlene is also a caring teacher and expresses her caring in hugs, applauding, careful listening to the students, and attempting to determine what is best for individual children. Although much of this activity happens in groups, much more is expressed when Darlene is communicating with individual students, often in private.

The firmest commonality between Darlene and Kai is not visible within the categories in table 1. This relates to the seamlessness among the various
Table 1. Method and manner: Darlene and Kai

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Classroom management</th>
<th>Kai</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Sharing task accomplishment with students.</td>
<td>Teacher-centred classroom.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Works approximately equal amounts of time in whole group, small group, and with individuals.</td>
<td>Majority of time spent in whole-group instruction.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Open and friendly approach.</td>
<td>Environment conveys Afrocentricity and emphasis on academics.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Students knowledgeable of expectations and work independently.</td>
<td>Assertive style of managing the classroom.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Few interruptions for reprimands, and these don’t detract from flow of lesson.</td>
<td>Directive statement and ‘I’ messages when dealing with inappropriate behaviour.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Provides rationale for requests for student conduct and for teacher’s methods.</td>
<td>Questions students about inappropriate behaviour and encourages them to think about the correct way to behave.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Reprimands for quiet accompanied by rationale that relates to not disturbing others.</td>
<td>Provides rationale for requests for student conduct.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Smooth transitions.</td>
<td>Reprimands accompanied by rationale.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Rules are known by students, and enforced by teacher, but sometimes flexibly.</td>
<td>Rules are known by students, and enforced by teacher.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Scores high on Kounin’s qualities of effective managers.</td>
<td>Scores high on Kounin’s qualities of effective managers.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

A holistic view

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Kai</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Wants students to know what they and she are doing and why.</td>
<td>A collective responsibility for helping students excel academically and socially.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Goals for students:</td>
<td>Wants to help students grow up to be the best human beings they can be.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• students as independent learners with intrinsic pride;</td>
<td>Aims at fostering good self-esteem.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• building Community;</td>
<td>Pushes for respect: yourself and others.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• taking responsibility for their own learning;</td>
<td>Wants good communication skills in students.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• taking responsibility for their peers’ learning; and</td>
<td>Wants students to do anything that they do well.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• understanding of theirs and their peers’ learning styles.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Manner

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Kai</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Friendliness (caring)</td>
<td>Magnanimity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Wit</td>
<td>Friendliness (caring)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Truthfulness</td>
<td>Truthfulness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Mildness and temperance</td>
<td>Honour</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Justice</td>
<td>Justice</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Practical wisdom</td>
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Conveying the virtues

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Kai</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Conscious modelling of virtuous conduct toward others:</td>
<td>Conscious modelling of virtuous conduct toward others:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• direct statements of virtuous expectations;</td>
<td>direct statements of virtuous expectations;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• clear and explicit descriptions of appropriate conduct;</td>
<td>clear and explicit descriptions of appropriate conduct; and</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• applauding appropriate behaviour;</td>
<td>call outs for students to be polite and help one another.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• call-outs; and</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• using her own weakness (memory and mistakes).</td>
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</table>
elements of Darlene’s and Kai’s goals for students, beliefs about teacher role and student learning, manner, and classroom-management moves. These pieces fit together into a coherent whole that creates in the classroom a presence that works quite successfully in addressing the goals laid out by the teachers. Perhaps this seamlessness, this coherence, can be considered as lending itself to a consideration of authenticity in teaching. It may also be viewed as an essential element of expertise in teaching. This topic will be developed further within MTP. However, it is clear that whatever this seamlessness and coherence is named, two teachers who express it may organize and manage their classrooms in very different ways, and their beliefs, manner and method may also vary considerably.

Conclusions

MTP has presented us with an opportunity to focus on classroom management in a way that attempts to relate it with other elements of teaching which, in the past, have remained separate in research and teacher education practice. We have learned a great deal about the relationship of method and manner, and what it means to be an expert teacher. We have reached the following somewhat speculative conclusions.

Classroom management—and particularly effective classroom management—is interwoven with the goals and beliefs of the teacher, and with his or her manner. An understanding of a teacher’s classroom management is greatly enhanced through an understanding of the degree of authenticity—coherence—in which he or she expresses his or her beliefs, goals, manner and methods.

Separation of constructs such as method and manner, and classroom management and instruction, is certainly possible. The question becomes whether it is useful to do so. In our case, we first separated manner and method around classroom management. This was quite useful, particularly because the concept of manner is just being developed. However, in viewing these concepts within two expert teachers’ classrooms, we found that they became woven together in the person, conduct and practice of the teacher and her students. It was then necessary to attempt to connect them in our analyses. We conclude that there is a place for the separation of method and manner. However, it is not always called for. Above all, this separation should never become reified, as it has with most conceptions of classroom management.

Effective classroom management can look very different in different classrooms and schools. We have presented two cases of effective classroom managers whose classroom method and manner are very different. From this analysis we can suggest that one aspect of their effectiveness derives from the seamlessness among beliefs, manner and method. However, we may have to move to the school context to understand more fully the nature of and reason for this effectiveness.

This analysis is leading us in the direction of a potentially new understanding of the nature of expertise. It is possible that what is seen in expert teachers is this sense of coherence and clarity of goals, method and manner.
This would mean that for teachers to become experts, they would need to learn consciously to weave their goals, beliefs and aspirations together with manner and method. It is that movement from neophyte to reasonably competent to expert that researchers have not understood fully, because they have tried to do this solely through behavioural and cognitive psychology, without paying attention to the moral aspects of teaching and the essence of the human being.

**Implications for teacher education**

Attending to the essence of the human being is not the norm in teacher education. Rather, teacher educators focus upon methods of instruction and techniques for management. Teacher education students are rarely asked to consider their manner.

As an aspect of conduct, manner should be attended to in teacher education. The task for teacher educators is to encourage teacher education students to attend to the importance and potential impact of a teacher’s manner in organizing and managing the classroom. One thing that can be done is to provide pre-service teachers with new ways of looking at teaching and their roles as educators. This includes moving pre-service teachers beyond considerations of method to considerations of manner. Teacher educators should help future teachers understand that teaching is a moral endeavour. As Fenstermacher (1990: 133) points out:

> What makes teaching a moral endeavour is that it is, quite centrally, human action undertaken in regard to other human beings. Thus, matters of what is fair, right, just, and virtuous are always present . . . . The teacher’s conduct, at all times and in all ways, is a moral matter.

The relationship between student and teacher is at the heart of teaching, and, thus, at the heart of organizing and managing the classroom environment. Therefore, throughout their teacher education programmes, students should be asked to reflect upon their beliefs about teaching and the attributes of their style that may be indicative of their manner. Furthermore, teacher education students must be provided with opportunities to think about what their beliefs and attributes suggest with regard to who they will be as teachers, how they will interact with students, and how they will construct the classroom environment.

The underlying purpose for engaging in such thought and attending to the essence of the human being is to enhance the manner of the teacher so that he or she may educate children in ways that are ennobling and empowering, that successfully and powerfully impart knowledge and understanding, that promote the learner’s capacity for discernment and reflection, that engender the development of character and instruct in virtue, and that promote the welfare of the learner as a person and as a future citizen in a democracy.
Acknowledgements

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Notes

1. There may be cross-cultural differences in the degree to which this disconnection exists in the minds of teachers. Noblit (1993) describes the case of Pam, an African-American teacher who does not see caring and control as dichotomous. She sees caring as moral authority, and her classroom is teacher-centred because she loves her students and takes her role as socializing agent seriously.
2. For details, see Richardson and Fenstermacher (2001), Chow-Hoy (2001), Fenstermacher (2001) and Sanger (2001), in this issue of JCS.
3. It should be pointed out that this aspect of the inquiry (the teacher’s instilling virtuous conduct in students) has become less tacit and, therefore, more salient to the teachers as we have moved through this project.
4. In fact, we recently talked to her student teacher who said: ‘She is a fabulous classroom manager, but I can’t see what she does’.
5. In recently conducted student interviews, Darlene’s students also described her as funny.

References


