The Colors Personality Assessment and The Four Tendencies Framework

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Educators and administrators are constantly working to improve classroom management. The curriculum and instruction can be excellent, but without a well thought out classroom management plan, it is unlikely that students will gain the maximum benefits in the learning environment. The classroom is a place of diversity and the learning environment includes and is affected by the personalities of each student and teacher. Educators and students alike come to the classroom with their own expectations. Those expectations are both spoken and unspoken.

Keywords: classroom management, student behavior, classroom expectations

Personality Types and Response to Expectations

Behavior management in the classroom is just as important as curriculum and instructional strategies. Teachers must consider their own expectations, the needs of the students, the classroom arrangement, the materials needed to complete tasks, and what is needed to create a safe and engaging learning environment. These aspects impact student behavior. One aspect that is often the last to be considered and the hardest to account for when creating a behavior management plan is each student's personality. In addition, anticipating how students will respond to rules and expectations can be a daunting task. This is sometimes considered a gray area. It is usually left up to the teacher to manage at the moment.

Danielson (1996) estimates that a teacher makes more than 3,000 non-trivial decisions every day. No list can capture the extraordinary subtlety involved in making instant decisions about which student to call on, how to frame an impromptu question, or how to respond to an interruption. The late Madeline Hunter compared teaching to surgery, "where you think fast on your feet and do the best you can with the information you have." You must be very skilled, very knowledgeable, and exquisitely well trained because neither the teacher nor the surgeon can say, 'Everybody sit still until I figure out what in the heck we're gonna do next'" (Goldberg, 1990). Because of other things requiring a teacher's attention, assessing whether a student is being disrespectful or inquisitive in a moment could be difficult and result in a behavioral issue caused by miscommunication rather than intention. Schools are places that encourage learning, but, often, questioning the rules or procedures is seen as disrespectful. Granted, the way the subject is approached can become a behavioral issue, but, in some cases, understanding a personality type and how that person responds to expectations could provide the tools necessary to communicate for further learning without responding from a place of assumed rebellion or disrespect. How can we tell students about the inventions and revolutionaries that changed the world, present them with societal issues and ask them to contribute to this society something that would promote much-

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needed change in their generation, yet require them to accept rules and expectations without question and punish them if they do not fit the mold or conform?

The heart of education is not the desire to create conformity. It is to create self-actualizing questioners who are compelled to respond to what they see and experience around them. Therefore, we require participation, ask critical thinking questions, and expect students to justify their reasoning and arguments. Gaining an understanding of student personality types can help teachers to plan strategies for communicating, preventing discipline problems, and planning lessons that effectively meet the needs of all students. In addition, being aware of a student's innate tendency when responding to expectations and rules can shape the way teachers approach behavior management.

It creates space for interactions to become opportunities to gain perspective and appreciate as well as learn from differences without feeling challenged or disrespected. In reference to matters of values to be discussed in traditional classes, Sizer & Sizer (1999) propose, "Wise schools use these as places for grappling, not only for matters normally expected in (say) a science or history class but also for occasions to deepen each student's habit of confronting, and thus deepening, his or her understanding of values".

Theoretical Application

Are the theories of differing personality types valid enough to take into consideration when teaching? With so many theories existing and so many personality type indicators and categories, where would a teacher even begin to look to find useful information that they could apply directly in their classroom management plans? Theories of the different temperaments and specific mental qualities of humans have developed as early as Hippocrates. Sanguine, Choleric, Phlegmatic, and Melancholic are the four common temperaments possessed by all humans according to Hippocrates. Plato laid foundations and gave form to theories explored in ancient civilizations as well as by psychologists such as Jung and Freud.

Inspired by Jung's (1921) human psychology theories, published in "Psychological Types" in 1923, Katherine Cook Briggs and Isabel Briggs Meyers created the personality inventory known as *the Meyers-Briggs Type Indicator* (1956). Created by Myers-Briggs (1958), the *Characteristics of Types in High School* describes sixteen-character types. Keirsey (1978) adapted the Myers-Briggs Manual to model his own work describing observable human behavior. Keirsey (1978) took note of the sixteen types described by the Myers Briggs Manual and created his own model for describing observable human behavior. Keirsey used a four-temperament format in which he modified and expanded the sixteen types. His data was aimed at understanding what individuals value, how they communicate, and how they approach processes.

Influenced by both the Myers-Briggs (1958) sixteen types and Keirsey's (1978) four temperament model, Lowry (1978) applied the colors Blue, Gold, Green, and Orange to the assessment methodology in his own model. He called this model *True Colors* (1978) and he began by using theater and cards to demonstrate the concept and the impact on the lives of others. The *True Colors* (1978) personality concept and assessment is used today in career and college counseling, professional development, teaching methodologies, employment, and training programs, as well as in building and improving personal relationships (Lowry, 2017).

Practical Application

In life, the classroom provides one of the most systemized and eclectic settings for the human experience. Teachers and students spend the greater part of each day learning how to interact with each other, and the hope is that this experience will prepare students for successful human interaction long after graduation. Behavior management is an integral part of the learning experience in every classroom for teachers and students. When rules and expectations are set forth, many factors must be considered; however, very little training exists to equip teachers how to navigate the widely varying and seemingly unpredictable responses from students to rules and expectations without assuming any "nonconformist" is a behavioral issue.

According to Kashiwa (2001), some underachieving students are put into special classes and these evaluations are not based on academic potential. Instead, many students who are considered academically at-risk have been evaluated based on behavior alone. Lowry's (1978) True Colors personality assessment is a recommended tool to be used in training teachers to better manage their classrooms by gaining perspective on differing personality types (Tucker, 2004).

Tucker (2012) outlines lists and quick references that compare students and teachers according to their True Colors evaluations in her publication, *First Year Teacher Notebook.* Her work lays a valuable foundation creating a classroom management plan that takes each personality type into consideration (Tucker, 2012). True Colors in the classroom has been described by authors such as Kashiwa (2001) in her books "Meaningful Conversations" (Kashiwa, 2001) and "True Teaching" (Kashiwa, 2015). (Kashiwa, 2001, 2015)

Method

This study compared the personality assessment results of participants who completed the True Color survey. The method chosen for this comparison was quantitative research. Participants were given a ten question True Colors personality assessment with sentences to be ranked and totaled. The True Colors assessment questions are meant to reveal patterns in motivations, behaviors, and approaches to communication. These patterns result in four main categories or colors.

Participants

The participants in the study were selected randomly from businesses, churches, friends, and families within a thirty-mile radius of East Texas. Additionally, the assessments were given to participants in social media groups including two parenting groups, a group of educators, two health and wellness groups, and a general group including college students. Each group included members from various states and other countries as well as a variety of ages. There were a total of 90 participants all over the age of 18. The fact that 20% of the 90 participants were males should be taken into account. While gender did not affect the overall results, Kashiwa (2015) mentions that a higher percentage of female participants' personalities align with the *Blue* personality traits and male participants typically receive the assessment of *Green* when completing the True Colors personality assessment.

The largest ethnicity group within the participants was White Non-Hispanic. The smallest two groups were of African American or other. The Hispanic percentage, 20%, was small due to limitations within the English speaking population of participants.
The largest group of participants was in the online group.

Instrument

This research was done as a quantitative survey. The survey gathered data through comparisons of results from totaled questions. The True Colors survey gathered data using a Likert scale. The survey range for these questions was: 1-Least like me, 2-Less like me, 3-More like me, and 4-Most like me. Each item contained a sentence to be completed by the subsequent four statements. The participants were to rank the subsequent statements using the Likert scale according to how much they identified with each in completing the original sentence.

Procedure

Students were asked to choose a sentence to complete all of the statements on a ten item survey for the True Colors personality assessment. Participants were asked to rate four statements that completed each sentence, labeled alphabetically, within each item on the True Colors survey. The numbers from each letter were added together and combined to determine the dominant, secondary, tertiary, and quaternary colors in ranking order from highest to lowest. The surveys that were completed and returned with a consent form were totaled and results were recorded in an EXCEL spreadsheet.

Results

There was a larger number of female participants with 72 of the overall 90 being female. Only 20% of the group was male and this should be taken into account. Gender is not noted as affecting overall percentages, but Kashiwa (2015) mentions that in the Blue and Green groups, Blues have a higher percentage of females in their total participants and Greens have a higher percentage of males among their color group (Kashiwa, 2015). The survey questions were sent out to online groups including at least three hundred members. Of those three hundred members, the online participation 72% of total participation. Non-online participation totaled 28%, as indicated in Figure 2. These totals reflect data totaled from participants who returned the completed survey questions and consent form giving permission for their results to be used anonymously. This data was collected from July 2017 until June 2018. Figure 3 indicates the total percentage of the colors indicated by the results of the overall participant population.

As shown in Figure 3, participants who had *Blue* as their dominant color emerged as the highest percentage, but it was closely followed by the *Gold* group. *Green* was the smallest group, with 15% of the participants, and *Orange* totaled 20% of the participating group.
According to Kashiwa (2015), *Golds* and *Oranges* generally make up most of the surveyed adult population. Teachers are usually identified as being either *Blue or Gold*, however, over half the students surveyed identified as being *Orange*. (Kashiwa, 2015)
The participants whose results on the True Colors survey reflected Blue as their dominant color made up 35% of the population.

Dominant Greens made up 15% of the entire surveyed population.

Overall, Golds made up 30% of the surveyed participants. The secondary colors of the Golds included 61% Green and 39% Blue.
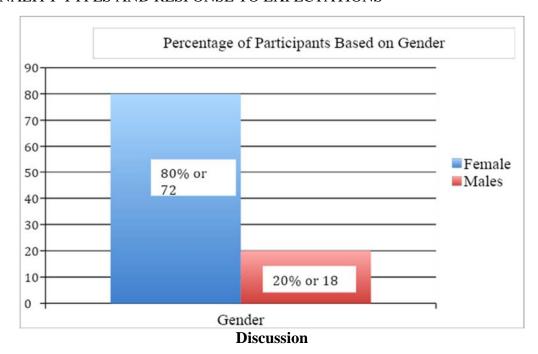
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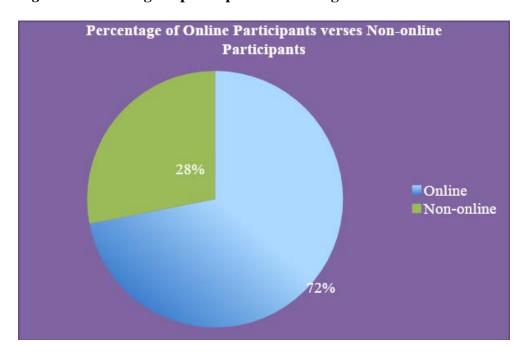
Figure 1. **Percentage of participants based on gender.**

Figure 2. Percentage of online participants versus non-online participants.

Participant Total Percentages from the True Colors Assessments
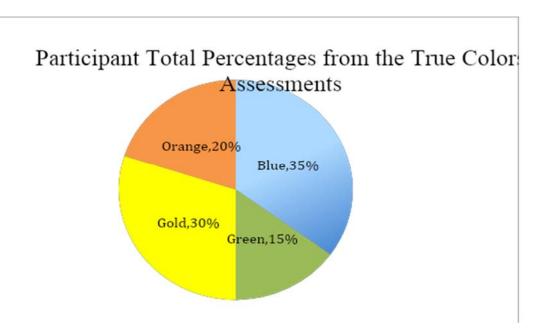
Orange, 20%

Blue, 35%

Gold, 30%

Green, 15%

Figure 3. Participant total percentages from the True Colors assessments.

Implications for Future Research

Further research is needed to determine if these results apply to the population on a broader scale. Additionally, this research was bound by age restriction and further research would need to be done on students in the classroom to determine the applicability of the theory in the classroom management process. Continued research would indicate the correlations of personality type and response to expectations among students in the classroom setting. The results of continued research could be used to improve classroom management plans and increase educator awareness in the effective interpretation and guidance of behavior as students respond to teacher expectations. It would be beneficial to replicate this study in a variety of classrooms with different age groups, teachers, and cultures in order to gain a broader perspective on any correlations and reduce limiting factors on study results such as location, socio-economic status, cultural diversity, age.

Conclusion/Recommendations

In conclusion, this study indicates that the personality type factors of motivation, communication, and behavior are correlated with the way in which individuals respond to expectations to some extent. The data gathered from this research is being used, in part, for professional development and teacher training.

A recommendation for using this research is utilizing the comparison on the True Colors in professional development settings and developing more classroom management plans and tools for guiding student behavior.

Deviation from typical approaches to classroom management is also recommended, as this data requires teachers to meet their students in order to understand their needs before formulating all of the aspects of their classroom management plans.

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