



# Malleability of Classroom Misbehavior among Black Boys

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*This article foregrounds the lived school experiences of young Black male students around classroom discipline inequities in an urban elementary classroom. The study documents teacher and student accounts of classroom disciplinary moments as they unfold in real time. Using the Interpretive Meaning-Making Process framework to help teachers and students deconstruct their thinking during instances of classroom conflicts, findings reveal that classroom disciplinary moments are negotiable, malleable, and ubiquitous notions that greatly vary. The results shed new insights into the situated nature of classroom misbehavior. The Interpretive Meaning-Making Process framework can be used as a pedagogical and methodological tool in helping teachers to develop a greater sense of awareness of their practices. Suggestions for effective classroom strategies to address the complexities of school discipline are also offered.*

*Keywords: misbehavior, school discipline, discipline inequities, teacher-student conflict*

Nationwide, records of school discipline referrals showed that American Indian, Hispanic, and Black boys were most likely to be suspended, expelled, removed from the classroom setting, or placed into special education (Gregory & Roberts, 2017; Carter, Skiba, Arrendondo, & Pollock, 2017; Noguera, 2014; Wallace, Goodkind, Wallace, & Bachman, 2008). Discipline studies tend to report trends in infractions, but ignore students' interpretations of events during teacher-student conflict incidents that trigger discipline referrals and sanctions. Indeed, current studies fail to account for an emic perspective that would enrich analyses of discipline inequities.

Given the consistent disproportionate representation of students of color in school disciplinary sanctions, we must now alter existing disciplinary practices with new approaches that consider the sociocultural contexts in which children live, learn, feel, and behave. It is

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important that researcher consider perspectives as a way to understand how students and teachers come to negotiate decisions made during teacher-student conflicts that can lead to their involvement in classroom disruptions.

In this article, I draw on some of my research in an elementary classroom where I sought to explore sociocultural factors that shape how students and teachers conceptualize classroom misbehavior as a way to understand how these perceptions mediate classroom interactional processes that ultimately constitute the precursors of discipline infractions. The guiding research question addressed was “What factors shape teacher and student sense making of classroom misbehavior?”

### **Student Misbehavior**

In general, studies tend to report trends in infractions, ignoring students’ interpretations of events during teacher-student conflict incidents. Records of school discipline referrals indicate that Black students are the most likely to be suspended, expelled, or removed from the classroom setting (Gregory & Roberts, 2017). The literature illustrates that Black students, even a very young age, are at least twice as likely to receive a behavioral office referral as White students (Blake, Butler, Lewis, & Darensbourg, 2011; Skiba, et al., 2011).

A review of the discipline literature shows that much attention is given to documenting classroom infractions in decontextualized ways. In general, traditional explanations for the overrepresentation of students of color in school discipline tended around institutional delimitations of power and controls, and deficit bias perspectives of students (Artiles, Kozleski, Trent, Osher, & Artiz, 2010; Skiba, Artiles, Kozleski, Losen, Harry, 2016). As a category, institutional delimitations of power and controls includes school characteristics such as school wide policies, the location of school, and general school population descriptors such as percentage of students receiving free and reduced lunch. It was commonly reported that schools with a higher student of color populations often rely on stricter disciplinary sanctions than schools with fewer students of color (Payne & Welch, 2010).

Singling out students of color through behavioral referrals is seen as a leading cause for their overrepresentation in exclusionary discipline (Fenning & Rose, 2007). This singling out can cause undue blame where students become the targets of isolation (Swadener, 2012). Often noted is that students of color are perceived by teachers and administrators as more rule-breaking, disruptive, defiant and disrespectful than other student groups. This type of bias is often perpetuated by the ideas that expressions and verbalizations are expected to align with white class values and norms (Skiba, Horner, Chung, Rausch, May, & Tobin, 2011; Vandebroek, 2007). Nieto (2004) states that a school’s unfair policies and practices are often because policies are grounded in Eurocentric cultural beliefs that often perpetuates continued bias and unfair treatment toward some student of color populations. In general, teachers have classroom management styles and schools have disciplinary policies that are disconnected from students’ values and culture, which can have a negative influence on educational opportunities (Gregory & Weinstein, 2008; Newcomb et al., 2002; Skiba et al., 2011).

Deficit bias perspectives continues to be a prevalent theme in the explanation of classroom misbehavior (Valencia, 2010). This type of bias can attribute to educational challenges and low school success. Through such a deficit lens, students of color are viewed as inadequate, problematic, deficient, or possessing subordinate ways of knowing that contribute to their

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representation in school discipline. Although not yet attained, in 1994, Levin discussed how understanding students' ideas rather than judgement was necessary in creating peaceful classrooms where all students could thrive.

More than fifteen years ago, Morris (2005) stated that school officials view behaviors of Black male students as threatening. She also concludes that these students Black were issued strict and punitive disciplinary sanctions more often when compared to their peers. Similarly, Gregory and Weinstein (2008) suggest when cultural differences are evident between teachers and students, teachers are more likely to use judgments of students' argot, movement style, and self-expression tend to be adversely mediated. Commonly expressed in the literature is the ill characterization of students of color. Primarily, the actions of students of color are perceived through a criminalized lens, where they are viewed as deviant, deceptive and challenging to authority (Gregory & Weinstein, 2008). Contemporarily, the same patterns exists as the literature reveals that school officials tend to view the behaviors of majority (White) students as non-threatening, thus resulting in fewer and less severe sanctions for them in comparison to Black boys and girls (Payne & Welch, 2010; Carter, Skiba, Arrendondo, & Pollock, 2017).

In better understanding classroom misbehavior among young students of color, institutional delimitations of power and deficit bias perspectives often result in nearly insurmountable divides. Teachers often do not know how to positively build upon students' cultural assets, as a result, their actions generally result in misjudging students' behavioral codes and community values. These divides often produce misunderstanding for teachers and school personnel, resulting in misinterpretation of students' behavior, physical gestures, and manner of speech as misconduct. As a result, teachers subsequently perceive that there is a need to engage in corrected action of discipline. From the student perspective, these actions on behalf of the teacher may be viewed as one-sided, inflammatory, or negatively judgmental.

The overrepresentation of students of color in behavioral referrals signals the need for change. This trend is particularly concerning given that students of color are more likely to be suspended or expelled for similar behavior as their White peers (Carter, Skiba, Arrendondo, & Pollock, 2017; Skiba, et al., 2011). Guided by this context, the next section of this study will overview the methods employed in this study.

### **Methodology**

Farberman (1985) suggests there is a need to make sense of classroom behaviors by evaluating them through interactions with others. Ethnographic methods enabled an understanding of how teachers related to students in the environment as well as relational dynamics in the environment. Data were collected using video classroom recordings, participant observations, and interviews. Classroom recordings documented disciplinary incidents that allowed for the examination of the progressions of actions that led to the incident, events that occurred after the incident, and the teachers' reaction and interpretation of those events. Classroom observations provided additional nuances as they occurred to allow for a deeper and richer analysis of teacher and student sense making of classroom misbehavior.

Previous studies that have explored misbehavior, discipline, or perception have used both quantitative and qualitative research methods. Data collection methods for these types of studies have included a variety of sources, such as providing participants vignettes or behavioral descriptions, surveys, and questionnaires, videotaped class observations, stimulated recall

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interviews, and teacher and student interviews (Coleman & Gilliam, 1983; Saunders, Davis, Williams, & Williams, 2004; Supaporn, Dodds, & Griffin, 2003).

This study included four Black male students in 4<sup>th</sup> through 6<sup>th</sup> grade who were enrolled at a small kindergarten through 8<sup>th</sup> grade charter school in the southwestern part of the United States, and two of their respective teachers who self-identified as Black. Student participants included Jonathan (4<sup>th</sup> grade), Byron (5<sup>th</sup> grade), Broggen (6<sup>th</sup> grade), and Larry (6<sup>th</sup> grade). At this school, the entire student population received free or reduced lunch; and the majority of the students identified as Black (44%) and Hispanic (43%). Classroom sizes were small with no class larger than 22 students.

Data were collected data in the form of interviews, direct and video observations, surveys, memos, and field notes (see Table 1). Interviews with the teachers, school administrator, and two school employees (i.e., nutrition aide, and special education specialist) to identify potential student participants. During each interview, school personnel was asked to identify up to three students that had longstanding histories of classroom misbehaviors that occurred during the previous school year. Staff and teachers also completed a behavioral nominations forms containing 10 behavioral descriptors to identify male students in 4<sup>th</sup> through 6<sup>th</sup> grades thought to exhibit strong behaviors. Students in these grades were included in the sample as a way to examine grade levels not typically included in this research.

Table 1  
*Inquiry-guided Data Collection*

| Inquiry   | Data Collection Procedure  |
|---|--|
| Student Nomination Stage  | Interviews<br>Surveys  |
| What factors shape teacher and student sense making of classroom misbehavior? | Face to face interviews<br>Stimulated video recall interviews<br>Observations<br>Fieldnotes<br>Memos |

Students with the highest nominations were identified as potential participants because school records were informal, infrequently maintained, and not regularly available for review. Teacher nominations have been used in previous research and there is also evidence to the fact that teachers can be good judges of students' performance levels (see Good & Brophy, 1972; Lane et al., 2009; Ramsey et al., 2010). Students who received the highest nominations across the three different data sources (school administrators, teachers, and school staff) were identified as potential participants and a pool of potential student participants were identified.

Interviews were based on constructs included in studies that investigated discipline, misbehavior, and perception (Coleman & Gilliam, 1983; Gregory & Mosely, 2004; Saunders, Davis, Williams, & Williams, 2001; Supaporn, Dodds, & Griffin, 2003; Vavrus & Cole, 2002).

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Below is a sample of interview questions:

- a) What are some examples of how students misbehave?
- b) If a student is being quiet but not participating or following directions, is that student misbehaving? Why or Why not?
- c) What can happen when a student misbehaves?
- d) What does it mean when a student misbehaves?
- e) How would you describe a teacher being fair?
- f) How would you describe a teacher being unfair?
- g) How are students expected to behave in class?

The use of stimulated recall involved students and teachers separately watching a video-recording of a specific classroom event in which they were involved. Teacher and student responses were audio recorded and during the interview, I asked questions that related to events observed in the classroom. Using an adapted version of Morine and Vallance (1975) stimulated recall interview procedure, during certain video clip segments, I asked questions like:

- a) What was going on here?
- b) What they were thinking?
- c) Was there anything else you thought about doing at the point, but did not?

### Data Analysis

In this study, a combination of qualitative methods, specifically, case study (Merriam 1998), grounded theory (Glaser and Strauss, 1967), and video analysis (Erickson, 2006; Ridder, 2007) provided the framework for data analysis and interpretation (see Table 2 for data analysis procedures). Given the strengths and weaknesses of various methods, researchers may combine methods in complementary ways as a strategy for investigating classroom interactions (Mercer, Littleton, & Wegerif, 2009). Such is the case for this study.

Table 2  
*Data Analysis Procedures*

| Inquiry   | Data Collection                                   | Data Analysis Procedures  |
|---|---|---|
| Participant Selection through Nomination Stage                                | Interviews<br>Surveys                             | High frequency nomination: select 6-8 students across nominator   |
| What factors shape teacher and student sense making of classroom misbehavior? | Interviews<br>Observations<br>Fieldnotes<br>Memos | Grounded theory (Glaser and Strauss, 1967) including constant comparison method of analysis (Strauss & Corbin, 1990)<br>Whole-to-part (Erickson, 2006)<br>Video analysis (Ridder, 2007) |

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Data was analyzed using open coding (Strauss & Corbin, 1990). The conceptual labels were identified from open coding then sorted and compiled. Using Strauss and Corbin's (1990) suggestions for axial coding, categories from the data was arranged. This secondary analysis was used as a way to produce a conceptual model of student misbehaviors. Data was also systematically analyzed for thematic patterns using a constant comparison method of analysis (see Glaser & Strauss, 1967; Strauss & Corbin, 1990). In addition, by conducting a descriptive analysis, categories were created to describe the interactions of each participant. This was accomplished by:

- a) identifying key issues, recurrent events or activities in the data, i.e., types of reactions toward teachers and students;
- b) determining if patterns could be collapsed into smaller and similar categories;
- c) finding examples of transcribed text that illustrate different categories;
- d) writing about the categories being explored describing all the incidents in the data while searching for new incidents; and
- e) engaging in sampling, coding, and writing as the analysis focuses on key categories.

The use of video was incorporated as an extension of direct observations and allowed for a more detailed analysis to occur (Gobo, 2008). The first four weeks of video data were used to create a portrait of everyday routines in each of the classrooms observed. Field notes and video-recordings were closely analyzed for critical classroom behavioral events between the teacher and student. The teachers' and students' responses were coded several times to identify representations of misbehavior. Next, video segments were indexed and divided into segments of conflicts to create a library of incidents per student. Following, episodes of misbehavior to characterize strategies used by teachers and students to negotiate their moment-to-moment decision during instances of classroom conflict were coded. Categories from these preliminary codes were used to identify teachers' and students' thinking regarding their involvement in these incidents. What follows is a synopsis of some key findings from this research.

### Results

The results show that teachers and students derive meanings differently during their interactions and developed varied conceptualizations of misbehavior during the progression of classroom disciplinary moments. Teachers' and students' conceptualizations were influenced by their preconceived notions of misbehavior, personal beliefs and cultural practices, and derived understandings from social interactions.

The two teachers in this study, Mr. Abrahm and Ms. Esther and students to some degree, shared a common understanding of what symbols (i.e., objects, events, constructs, vocalizations, gestures) signified classroom misbehavior. Mr. Abrahm insisted that students remain quiet, still, and looking in his physical direction. He interpreted this kind of behavior to indicate positive engagement and a readiness to learn:

When students are talking to a neighbor while I'm giving instruction, or getting out of their seat while there's instruction going on, or doing something other than listening; and I can tell, that is a distraction to the classroom, it is an interruption or disruption. When I begin the instruction I wait until everyone's eyes are on me. I say, pencils down, eyes on me.

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Ms. Esther considered noise and movement as central signifiers for misbehavior. She stated:

Well, unnecessary noises, just like random acts of noise. Students moving around the classroom when they are supposed to be seated, when it's not time to move around. Or taking someone else's attention from what's supposed to be happening. It is also throwing things, messing with somebody else's stuff intentionally, making faces, doing things to get attention from the other students and students use of language.

Students considered similar observable behaviors as symbols that signified misbehavior. For example:

*Byron:* Either breaking one of the rules, doing something that you are not supposed to be doing or not keeping your hands to yourself.

*Broggen:* It's like talking, being funny, playing around in class telling jokes and not doing my work, just walking around and talking to everybody.

*Larry:* If a teacher tells you to do something, and then, like if she is trying to—if you're constantly talking in class, and she's teaching something on the board, and then the other students, they next to you, you're talking, they're not gonna be able to hear her. While you're talking out loud, and they're trying to learn and take notes, but you're talking, and they didn't know what she's saying.

These quotes suggest that teachers and students had similar notions of classroom misbehavior. Teachers and students understood classroom disciplinary moments based on preconceived definitions of misbehavior, contextual clues, and the interactional processes that occurred during meaning making processes. In addition, environmental stimuli contributed to teachers' and students' sense meaning making as they interacted with one another and interpreted behaviors in the context of their environment.

Charon (1989) referred to this as covert action because it takes place within one's mind. For that reason, we stress that teacher's and student's meaning making is internal (inside the mind). Moreover, continued processing of an interaction occurred after the actual interaction which also leads to further interpretations and meaning making (Mazzotta & Myers, 2008). The interpretive meaning making process framework that was developed as a tool to aid in teachers' and students' meaning making processes is shown in Figure 1. Revealed in Figure 1 is that a students' and teachers' decisions to act emerges from an interaction with oneself.

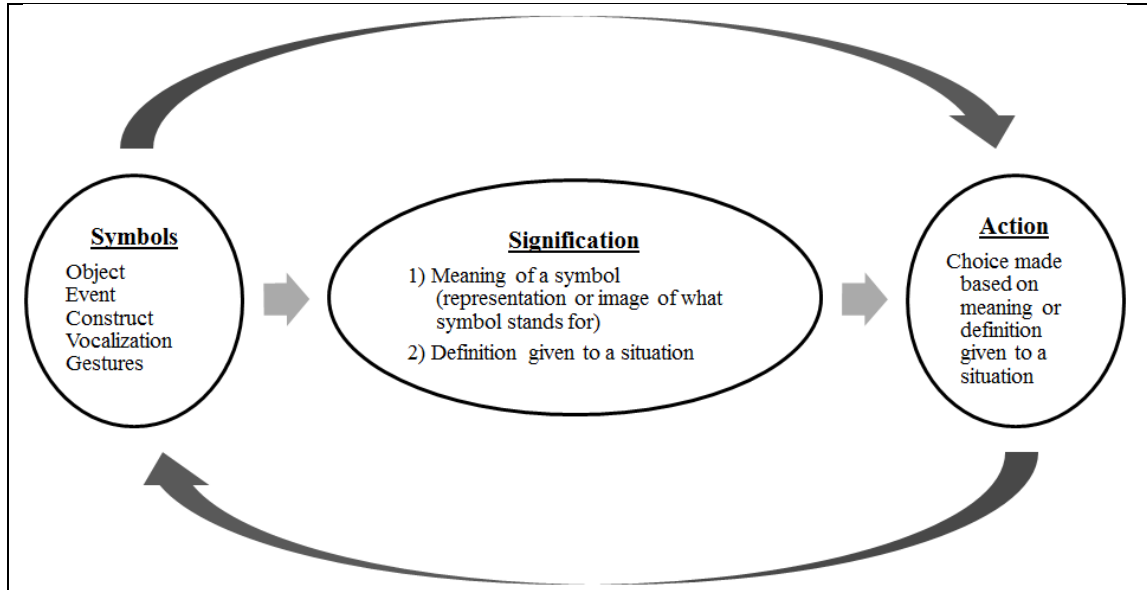


Figure 1. Interpretive sense-making process.

The expectation of appropriate classroom behavior was also displayed in each teacher's classroom. Five rules of Mr. Abraham's choosing were written on a yellow square shaped bulletin board taped to the classroom door:

- Rule 1: Raise your hand before speaking.
- Rule 2: No shouting out.
- Rule 3: Come to class prepared.
- Rule 4: Use respectful language.
- Rule 5: Be nice to others.

These posted rules reflected Mr. Abraham's beliefs about misbehavior and an assumed communal agreement among students regarding their ideas of classroom expectations.

In the corner of Ms. Esther's room, behind her desk, printed in small font were the words, "Rights and Responsibilities." To see the print, students needed to stand in front of the teacher's desk. Underneath was:

- 1) You have the right to make choices
- 2) You have a right to learn
- 3) You have a right to be respected

Ms. Esther indicated that:

I use rights and the fact that with rights there are responsibilities. So that's sort of the direction that I took, instead of saying here are the classroom rules. I know in the past I



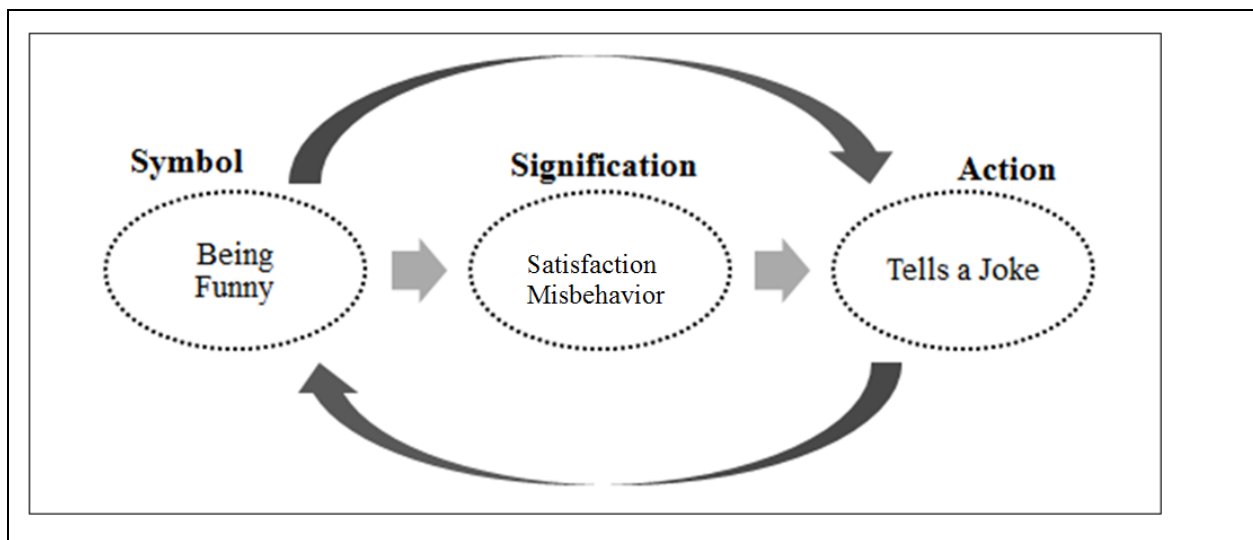
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used to let the students make the rules but that just seems like a game at this point. I don't – not to say that their rules don't make sense but they're just so broad, they're so, so I just try to bring it in where the actual rule gave them the power, gave them that privilege.... I mean if they do something, I'll refer to it and I know I refer to one way more than I do others which is the one where they have the right to make choices, because when they make a good choice there are good consequences, when they make a bad choice there are bad consequences. The other two rights are pretty – you know them coming into the game, you have a right to learn, you have a right to – it was respect. It had to do with being respectful and being respected.

When asked about classroom rules, Mr. Abraham and Ms. Esther read their classroom rules, or rights and responsibilities, as opposed to recalling the information from memory. In addition, based on direct and video observations, both teachers inconsistently enforced (implicit and explicit) classroom rules.

In short, Mr. Abraham's description of what constituted misbehavior matched the rules posted in his classroom, along with students' conceptualizations of misbehavior. On the other hand, Ms. Esther had more of an implicit alignment between her definitions of misbehavior and what was posted in her classroom; however, in the everyday life of these classrooms, it became evident that teachers and students came to understand misbehavior differently.

Figure 2 shows Broggen's interpretive meaning making process of himself where Broggen considers himself funny. For Broggen, "being funny" meant misbehavior and satisfaction, which in turn he would tell a joke, act silly in class, play with a classmate during class, walk around the classroom without permission; and later describe "feeling very satisfied."



*Figure 2.* Broggen's interpretive process of himself as the symbol.

As a point of discussion, the interpretive meaning making process framework is applied to Ms. Esther. Shown in Figure 3 is what Ms. Esther's thinks of Broggen. Captured is that Ms. Esther's thoughts of Broggen signify to her that he represents a symbol for misbehavior. For example, while in an unattended classroom where no teacher was present, Ms. Esther heard a commotion, and entered

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the classroom. Students were seated, but talking loudly. She saw a mathematical problem written on the board and instructed students to quiet down and work. After entering the room and redirecting the group of students as a whole, Broggen was singled out. Ms. Esther remembers:

There was problems on the board to add and subtract and some little strip of kids that don't work – when their mouths are all doing it. And I come in there several times in the past 15 minutes. You know, everybody else is talking. Some students don't have it [the mathematical problem] written down but at least they were doing something school related. And he [Broggen] is focused on taking the edges off the papers.

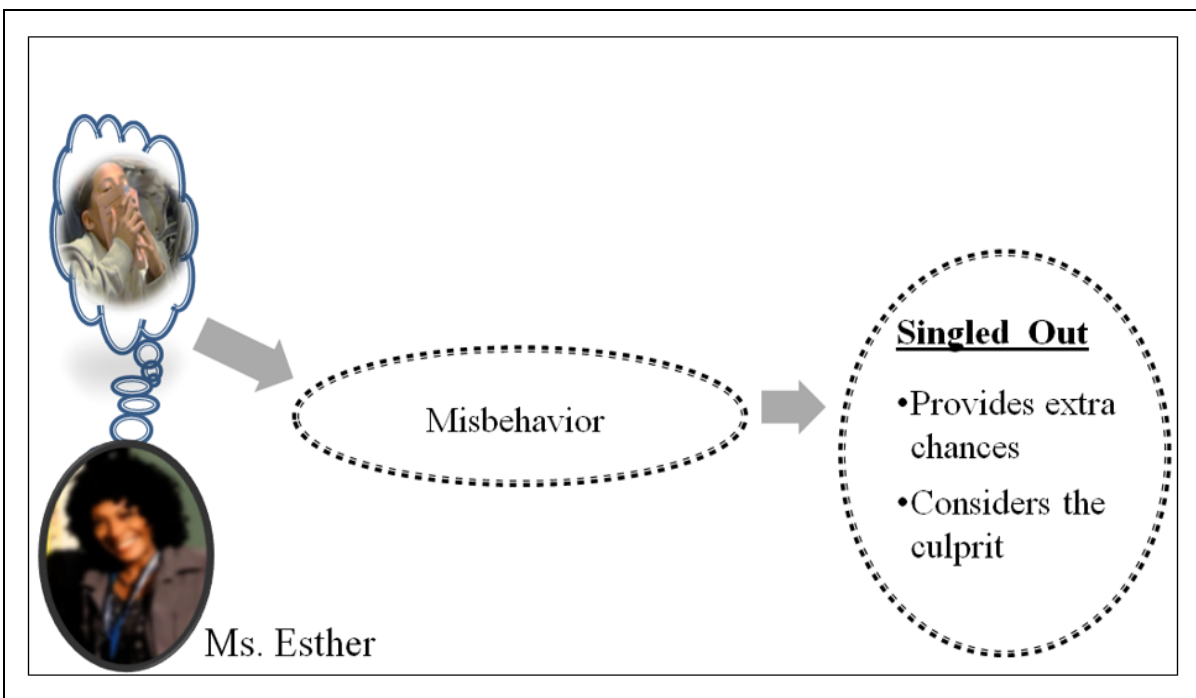


Figure 3. Ms. Esther's interpretive process of Broggen as the symbol.

As a consequence, Ms. Esther wrote on Broggen's paper, "Refuses to work in LA [language arts] and math. Had to write problems for him. Very uncooperative. Ms. Esther." She then verbally instructed Broggen to complete the unfinished problems as homework and told to obtain his mother's signature as evidence he informed her of the incident. Important to keep in mind, is that the time of incident occurred during a math class of which Ms. Esther was not teaching. Her comments about Broggen's behavior during language arts class was an embellishment to what actually occurred, but also an indicator of what Broggen signifies to Ms. Ester - misbehavior. Broggen's account of what happened was:

Our teacher left us and put another student in charge. And then that student was telling everybody to be quiet. And then we all started arguing and stuff like that. Then Ms. Esther came in and she said that we were being loud. Then she said, "Do your guys' work." And then she left. After that she went back into her room. We were all arguing again, and then

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she came back in and she saw, ‘cause I was cutting on my paper, Ms. Esther, she saw me and she was all like “Broggen do your work.” And then I didn’t do it. Then she got me in trouble. Then she, like, she wrote down – she told me to write the problems down and go to the office. Then I was writing them slow and then she told me we needed a better idea, and then she started writing them. That’s when she wrote the note on there too.

Ms. Esther talked to Broggen about the event:

*Ms. Esther:* Okay, you stand out a little. They [other students] may be talking, but they seem to be getting something done. I’ll get to them, but when I see you not doing anything, you stand out more than the others. When you got your head laying on the desk, books not even open, you draw attention to yourself. That’s just what happens.

*Broggen:* I wasn’t reading.

*Ms. Esther:* That’s the only reason, and it’s not so much about unfair. It’s just that you stand out more when you’re not doing anything, as opposed to talking and working. Do you see the difference at all?

*Broggen:* [shrugs both shoulders upward]

What Ms. Esther referred to as “standing out” is a clear indication that for her, Broggen represented a student likely to misbehave. In Ms. Esther’s meaning making processing of the event, Broggen is at fault and she perceived his behavior to be synonymous with negative intentions. In return, Ms. Esther confronted Broggen and ultimately applied a consequence by writing a note on his homework and making him take it home to get signed by his mother. Important to note is that following any behavioral event, multiple immediate reactions occurred from students and teachers alike. To further explain, Ms. Esther’s idea that Broggen stood out more shows her meaning making processes in what she thought of Broggen of which he signified to her misbehavior and thus the culprit.

### Discussion

Misbehavior is a pervasive notion in schools; however, in live context, we see how teachers and students come to understand differently what Charles, Senter, and Barr, (1999) defined as misbehavior, “behavior that is considered inappropriate for a setting or situation for which it occurs” (p. 2). There are systems of discipline within each state, school district and school sites. Within schools, there are categories and rules displayed on charts and written in policies and outlined in handbooks. Created is an illusion and conveyed is the message that misbehavior is a static notion of acceptable and unacceptable conducts.

Baiyee, Hawkins, and Polakow (2013) noted there are essential differences between considering students in need of discipline, and seeing them as agents of their own lives possessing voices and viewpoints that must be heard. Mercer and Howe (2012) posits that one’s thinking and knowledge is not only individual, but also a result of an exchange of common and uncommon

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understandings of a shared use of ‘cultural tools’ including language, objects, policies, thoughts, and memories of lived experiences.

To that end, understanding that teachers and students either relate to their environment or have a relationship with their environment (Farberman, 1985) suggests that they make sense of classroom behaviors by evaluating them through their interactions with others. In addition, continued processing of an interaction after it occurs leads to further interpretations and sense-making (Mazzotta & Myers, 2008). A person’s decision to act emerges from an interaction with oneself. Charon (2007) refers to this as covert action because it takes place within one’s mind.

Factors that shaped teacher and student sense making of classroom misbehavior were highly contextualized and thought of as a singular verbal or non-verbal behavior that occurred during moment-to-moment interactions. During interviews teachers and students were able to articulate similar notions of misbehavior. They considered that misbehavior entailed talking, not doing work, walking around the classroom, being loud, among many other actions. However, teachers’ and students’ conceptualizations of misbehavior changed during moment-to-moment interactions. This is an important distinction with important implications for future research on discipline inequities. Many researchers rely on study participants’ reports on their conceptualizations about key constructs such as misbehavior.

Teachers’ and students’ perspectives during interaction ultimately shaped one’s thinking that allowed behavior to seem the same or viewed as changed. Consistent with a symbolic interactionist perspective, these shifts showed how teachers’ and students’ perceptions mediated the meaning that was derived during their interpersonal interactions (Blumer, 1969). Moreover, a changed viewpoint, was often dependent upon and modified through interactions (Blumer, 1969).

Building on teachers’ and students’ organization of classroom disciplinary moments as a lens for understanding how classroom disciplinary moments are negotiated; symbolic interactionism provides a useful framework for understanding how meaning is derived in a given situation. As such, a stimulus is considered to be a symbol whose representation reflects an individual’s sense-making process. This means that each person gives a symbol a meaning uniquely shaped through a process that involves interactions with context, prior experiences and beliefs, and other influencing factors.

### Conclusion

In conceptualizing classroom disciplinary moments, years ago, Skiba et al. (2002) reported that disciplinary moments began in the classroom between teachers and students. Knowing teachers’ and students’ conceptualizations of misbehavior can shed light into understanding how classroom disciplinary infractions are created. By investigating the interactional spaces that teachers and students co-occupy as classroom conflicts unfold will allow gained insight into school disciplinary inequities.

Meanings emerged not only from individual behaviors of teachers and students, but also as a product of coordinated processes of interaction (Goodwin, 1986). Investigating what people do and say provides insight into how misbehavior becomes interactively constituted between teachers and students in the classroom. Factors that shaped teachers’ and students’ conceptualizations of misbehavior were a foundational aspect for understanding classroom disciplinary moments as classroom disciplinary moments progressed, teachers and students made mental, emotional and physical shifts (i.e., movements). These shifts were guided by individual perceptions, but also influenced interpersonal interactions.

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Because research suggests that teacher-student relationships are a foundational aspect for reducing behavioral referrals (Hamre, Pianta, Downer, & Mashburn, 2007), and teachers' perceptions of students vary (Gregory & Thompson, 2010); there needs to be closer attention into examining the sociocultural context of classrooms. Teachers and students understanding of the sociocultural knowledge and considerations of cultural factors can improve social, behavioral, and academic learning opportunities (Boykin & Bailey, 2000; Neal et al., 2003). Next steps for better understanding school discipline inequities should consider examination of the contextualization of culture in classrooms.

Current studies on school discipline account for culture or students' perspectives in limited ways. As such, there is a need to understand classroom behavior through different vantage points so that students' interpretive and meaning-making processes during instances of teacher-student classroom conflict can be understood. It is necessary to create alternative frameworks that consider cultural aspects during episodes of tense classroom moments.

This study suggests it is critical to document not only people's conceptions of these notions, but also to collect evidence on the actual practices in which disciplinary moments emerge in everyday classroom life. That is, this study offers empirical support for a situated analysis of discipline inequities.

Future research should examine in more detail the situated nature of classroom misbehaviors and the effects of sociocultural influences on: a) teachers and students conceptualizations, b) interpretations, and c) negotiations of classroom disciplinary moments. Future studies in school discipline should investigate classroom disciplinary moments between teachers and students at an interactional level. Such a focus, will allow researchers to gain insight into teachers' and students' sense-making processes of misbehavior and understanding of classroom disciplinary moments.

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