Can you help me, Mrs. Martin? This wasn't covered in any of my education courses.
Group Dynamics
Fritz Redl & William Wattenberg

Education 382, section 3
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Favorite kind of Bear
Fritz Redl and William Wattenberg

Redl—professor at Wane State University

Wattenberg—educational psychologist


Fritz Redl and William Wattenberg have provided the groundwork for several later theories based off their work on group dynamics, self-control, the pleasure-pain principle, and understanding reality.
Big Ideas

**Group dynamics:** peer pressure has a powerful role in middle school classrooms.
- Group behavior affects individuals, just like individual behavior can affect group behavior.
- “Students who model appropriate group behavior often influence other students to do likewise” and vice-versa.

Teachers should support students’ **self-control** in which the students should be responsible for controlling their own conduct.
- “This lack or loss of control may occur because they forget, feel uncertain about the rules, are bored, or are tired of sitting.”

To modify students’ behaviors, teachers should use the **pleasure-pain principle** where they “deliberately provide experiences to produce a range of pleasant to unpleasant feelings.”
- The good feelings surrounding a pleasant experience will motivate an individual to repeat a desirable behavior.
- Unpleasant experience will lead to avoidance of the unwanted behavior.

Teachers should encourage students to appraise or **understand reality**.
- Explaining to students the connection between their conduct and its consequences.

Educators should clearly define classroom and school rules and expectations.
- Redl and Wattenberg: let everyone "know what the rules of the game are" (p. 361 Redl).
- Help students develop the values that should govern their behavior.

(Katherine Bucher, *Middle School Management*)
(Redl and Wattenberg, *Mental Hygiene in Teaching*)
Practice Challenges

1. It's the first day of school. What are some messages and activities you will use to start creating the learning environment you want?
   • Clearly define classroom and school rules and expectations. Explain the intentions of the rules put in place.

3. You teach 5th grade. Kiki is a girl in your class. Shayal is a boy in your class. Your class has recently finished reading a book. You assigned an individual response writing assignment. You're scoring Kiki's response and it reminds you of Shayal's response. You compare the responses side by side. The sequence of ideas and some phrasing are identical, although some phrasing is different. What do you do?
   • Establish the pleasure-pain principle to create an unpleasant experience for the students. This unpleasant experience will make the students want to avoid this behavior in the future. This can be done through calm disapproval and showing them that their conduct has consequences. Students would receive a zero on the assignment. This is fair because the rules and expectations were clearly established on the first day of school.
Our Perspective

• Good model for making students think about their actions and understanding how those actions affect themselves as well as how it affects their peers.

• Some good self-control strategies.

• It might be difficult to some of implement these strategies, and would require a lot of work on the teachers behalf.

• “promotes sheep mob mentality.”
Conclusion: Understanding of Consequences

Rules should be clearly established and the consequences for breaking those rules should be presented in a calm manner as opposed to lecturing in hopes of helping the student connect those consequences to reality.

“Helping students understand and appraise reality (e.g., seeing how annoying behaviors affect others), and helping students develop self-control.” (Redl and Wattenberg)
Resources


• http://www.thefreelibrary.com/Exploring+the+foundations+of+middle+school+cla ssroom+management%3A+the...-a081857965