Study predicts student behavior based on brief interactions with teachers

This story was a result of a press release from the MU News Bureau:

By Roger McKinney

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In a mere five minutes with a student at the start of the academic year, a recent study indicates teachers can set the course for that student’s behavior for the rest of the year.

**A team of University of Missouri researchers found that students who were reprimanded during brief interactions generally had more behavioral problems at the end of the year. Conversely, students who received positive feedback tended to fare better.**

The study also found that teachers directed more negative attention to black students, males and students who qualify for free and reduced-price meals.

The team of three MU professors recently published their findings in the academic journal Assessment for Effective Intervention. Wendy Reinke and Keith Herman, professors in the MU College of Education and co-directors of the Missouri Prevention Center, and Lori Newcomer, an associate research professor in the College of Education, led the research.

The researchers developed a new technique they call Brief Student-Teacher Classroom Interaction Observation. Participants in the study were 53 teachers and 896 students in kindergarten to third grade in a low-income, urban, Midwestern school district.

Observers monitored each student in a classroom for five minutes to note any interaction between the student and teacher, tracking the number of negative interactions, such as reprimands, and positive interactions, such as praise.

The study found students who were reprimanded during the five-minute observation were found at the end of the year to have more problems with emotion regulation, concentration problems and disruptive behavior.
Students who received positive feedback demonstrated more pro-social behavior.

The researchers said teachers often are not aware of the nuances of their interactions with students and how those brief exchanges affect them.

“Teachers want to have positive relationships with students,” Herman said. “This tool is one way to give them ongoing feedback.”

From the study: “The early social interaction foundations of antisocial behaviors that initiate behavior problems at home are often replicated in schools, whereby adults unwittingly selectively reinforce these behaviors.”

Reinke said students who most need positive reinforcement — often black students and those who qualify for free and reduced-price meals — most often receive negative reinforcement from teachers.

“Teaching is a challenging job,” she said. “They have 20 or more students in their classrooms, and they don’t always realize the implications of their interactions with each child.”

She said the five-minute observation method could be a useful tool for teachers and school administrators, making them aware of the results of their own behavior.

“Teachers aware of negative interaction patterns early in the school year can become more cognizant of how they interact with students in their classrooms,” the study reads.

The study mentions a professional development model called Double Check, which is an intervention to support culturally responsive teaching practices.

Columbia Public Schools Superintendent Peter Stiepleman said district officials have worked closely with Reinke and Herman to implement their research in schools.

Stiepleman said the human side of education is as important as the academic side, noting positive interactions with students can be the difference between success and struggle.

“A child will not care how much you know until you’ve proven that you care,” Stiepleman said. “Positive interactions and clear feedback are essential.”
Missouri’s athletic director search, which netted former San Diego State athletic director Jim Sterk on Tuesday, came with a price tag of $75,500.

The University of Missouri System Board of Curators agreed to pay North Carolina-based Collegiate Sports Associates that sum plus agreed-upon expenses for assistance in identifying Mack Rhoades’ successor, according to a copy of the contract obtained by The Star.

The agreement also stipulates that if Sterk if fired or leaves his post with the Tigers for any reason other than death or disability within two years from his start date, Collegiate Sports Associates will reopen the search at no additional fee.

Under such circumstances, Mizzou would only be responsible for agreed-upon expenses provided the search for Sterk’s successor commenced within three months.

Collegiate Sports Associates also agrees not to recruit anyone who directly reports to Sterk for six months and will not seek to recruit Sterk for another position during the term of his employment at MU.

Sterk will be formally introduced at 11 a.m. Thursday during a news conference at Memorial Stadium’s Columns Club.

When former Tigers athletic director Mike Alden resigned in January 2015, then-Missouri chancellor R. Bowen Loftin contracted Korn Ferry for $75,000 to assist in the search that resulted in hiring Rhoades.
Subsequently, Rhoades resigned July 13 to become Baylor’s athletic director. According to the terms of the Korn Ferry contract, Mizzou received a one-year guarantee. Rhoades stayed in Columbia for approximately 14 months, but had he left last April the firm would have performed a search for his successor with no additional retainer.

This time, Missouri agreed to pay Collegiate Sports Associates a $38,000 initial retainer, which included a one-time $500 “office support fee,” and another $37,500 upon completion of the search.

The contract spelled out the following services:

▪ Assist with the development of a profile for the position and advertising in industry publications;

▪ Manage inquiries, recommendations and applications;

▪ Create and maintain a confidential database of candidates, which MU interim chancellor Hank Foley and other members of the search committee could access;

▪ Identify and recruit candidates that fit Missouri’s desired profile;

▪ Assess interest from and communicate with priority candidates on behalf of the university;

▪ Consultation on preparation of a “Candidate’s Notebook” and with the employment contract.

Fidget Your Way to a Healthier Heart

Tapping toes, other movement when sitting for long periods may help benefit blood vessels, study suggests

TUESDAY, Aug. 9, 2016 (HealthDay News) -- Remember all those times you were told to sit still as a kid? Well, a new study questions that advice.

Tapping your feet or other types of fidgeting while sitting for long periods of time may reduce your risk of health problems, researchers say.
Sitting for extended lengths of time reduces blood flow to the legs, which may contribute to the development of cardiovascular disease.

"Many of us sit for hours at a time, whether it's binge watching our favorite TV show or working at a computer," said study lead author Jaume Padilla. He is an assistant professor of nutrition and exercise physiology at the University of Missouri.

"We wanted to know whether a small amount of leg fidgeting could prevent a decline in leg vascular function caused by prolonged sitting. While we expected fidgeting to increase blood flow to the lower limbs, we were quite surprised to find this would be sufficient to prevent a decline in arterial function," he said in a university news release.

The researchers compared leg vascular function in 11 healthy young people before and after three hours of sitting. While sitting, the participants were told to repeatedly tap one foot for one minute and then rest it for four minutes, while keeping the other leg still.

The participants moved their feet about 250 times per minute, the researchers said.

There was a significant increase in blood flow in the tapping leg and a reduction in blood flow in the stationary leg, the study showed.

Previous research has shown that increased blood flow is an important stimulus for circulatory health, but the protective role of fidgeting had not been studied.

Despite the findings, the researchers emphasized that moving your legs while sitting isn't a substitute for walking and exercise.

"You should attempt to break up sitting time as much as possible by standing or walking. But if you're stuck in a situation in which walking just isn't an option, fidgeting can be a good alternative. Any movement is better than no movement," Padilla said.

The study findings were published recently in the *American Journal of Physiology Heart and Circulatory Physiology*.

More information
The U.S. National Institutes of Health outlines how to [protect your heart](http://www.nhlbi.nih.gov/health/topics/heart-disease/practices/diet-medicine).

SOURCE: University of Missouri, news release, Aug. 4, 2016

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City tries to curb underage drinking
COLUMBIA — If the clouds cooperate in mid-Missouri, midnight to dawn Friday could be a real dazzler.

That's because an "outburst" is expected then during this year's Perseid meteor shower. The annual show began on July 17 but will reach its peak during the outburst — which is a meteor shower with more meteors than normal.

The Perseid shower happens annually when the debris of the ancient Swift-Tuttle comet hurdles through Earth’s atmosphere at 132,000 miles an hour.

This year will be more vivid than most, according to NASA. On average, the Perseid shower displays 50 to 100 meteors an hour. This week, however, its numbers will double, and up to 200 meteors could light the sky per hour.

The last Perseid outburst occurred in 2009. Val Germann, a member of the board of directors for the Central Missouri Astronomical Association, predicts there will be two outbursts. With these come "Earth-grazing" meteors.

Earth-grazing meteors "go right along the top of the atmosphere," Germann said. "They're very long and leave a trail, and they're bright. The thing about Perseids is when they're really going, you will see meteors that will light up the sky."
Germann said he has seen meteors so bright they reminded him of a flash bulb going off over Earth. These meteors can produce different colors such as green, yellow and white.

Credit for this year's grander display is given to the solar system's strapping fifth planet, Jupiter. According to NASA, Jupiter's gravitational pull yanks the large network of debris closer, bringing the larger middle into Earth's path. The middle of the dust trail contains more meteoroids — what meteors are called before they burn up in Earth's atmosphere — so when Jupiter pulls in the dust trail, Earth moves through it much closer to the concentrated center.

The Swift-Tuttle comet makes its way around the sun every 133 years, leaving trails of tiny meteoroids, the Perseid meteoroids, in its wake, and the Earth passes through the trails every July and August.

The Perseid meteors get their name because they appear to fly out from the constellation Perseus, which rises in the eastern part of the sky. That's why Germann recommends finding a viewing site east of Columbia.

As the meteors travel through Earth’s atmosphere, they heat up to anywhere from 3,000 to 10,000 degrees Fahrenheit, then quickly disintegrate in a flash of light. Generally, the meteors in the Perseids are too small to make it to Earth. Most of them are only about the size of a grain of sand, according to space.com.

The best time to see the shower is between midnight and dawn Friday morning. NASA recommends finding an area away from artificial light and allowing your eyes to adjust for about 45 minutes. Then, lie back and enjoy the show. Although early Friday morning will offer the largest number of meteors in the shortest time, meteors can be seen until Aug. 24.

The meteors can be seen with the naked eye, so you will not need binoculars or a telescope, Germann said. The biggest hurdle will be the weather: On Tuesday morning, the National Weather Service forecast clear skies Thursday night, but with a 20 percent chance of thunderstorms.
"Just pay attention, don't go to sleep,” Germann said. "It's what happens to me. I usually have to stand up because if I sit down, all of the sudden I'm asleep. Don't do that."

**MU Director of Astronomy Angela Speck suggests getting out of town.** The light pollution makes it difficult to see the shower, so be sure to find someplace dark. State parks and conservation areas are good places from which to watch, but find a spot away from trees where the sky is in full view.

“Everybody should just go out and watch it. We have these every year, but this one is supposed to be particularly good,” Speck said. “Let’s make the most of it.”