

Teacher Understanding of Classroom Management  
and Application of Methods for Dealing with Student Misbehavior

Submitted by

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GRAND CANYON UNIVERSITY  
Teacher Understanding of Classroom Management  
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by

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has been approved

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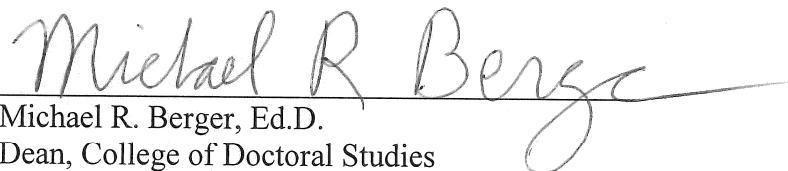
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## **Abstract**

The purpose of this qualitative case study was to explore how elementary school teachers selected, developed, and implemented classroom management strategies. An additional focus was on how teachers defined an effective classroom manager, and the training and support that teachers perceived they need in order to feel more confident in their approach to classroom management. The theoretical framework used for this study was based on social cognitive theory, person-centered theory, and the stimulus-response theory. The central question guiding this research focused on how elementary teachers selected, developed, and implemented classroom management strategies to use in class. Data collection consisted of questionnaires and interviews as well as a researcher's observations and focus groups over the course of four to six weeks in elementary classrooms at one school located in southern North Carolina. The results of the study included four key themes - noncompliant behavior, preparation, emotion, and training which helped to identify successful strategies and various obstacles in classroom management and student misbehaviors of these seven elementary school teachers. The results of this study provided education practitioners with ideas regarding how to benefit from helpful classroom management techniques and behavior approaches in order to increase the students' success and effectiveness in the classroom of elementary school teachers. Overall, the study increased awareness, development, and implementation of classroom management techniques from the personal accounts of a sample of elementary school teachers and their perception of classroom management and dedication to improve the current situation and approach options.

Key words: *classroom management, elementary school, teachers, North Carolina*

## **Dedication**

This dissertation is dedicated to numerous individuals, for all of them played an intricate part in the vision that has finally become a manifestation. I dedicate this dissertation to my mother and father, Arrita Alexander and Walter Patterson Jr.; they are the reason that I am the strong, consistent worker that I have become. I also dedicate this dissertation to my grandmothers, Sylvia Alexander and Mary Patterson. They instilled great value into me and have continued to be my life guide since I was born. I dedicate this dissertation to my sister and brother, Shaquana Alexander and Walter Malik Patterson III, who made me appreciate being a big brother. I dedicate this dissertation to all my aunts and uncles: Sutalia, Willette, Mary Jane, JoAnn, Lee, Marlon, and Malcolm. They always gave me encouraging words and were top supporters in whatever I decided to do. I dedicate this dissertation to my best friends, Tristan Williams and Danielle Allen. They both have always believed in who I was, not only to them, but who I was to the world. I dedicate this to my god brothers and sister Kimont, Kendrick, Otis, and Amanda. This group was by my side through my every high and my every low. I also dedicate this dissertation to my one and only niece, Malia, who is the light of my world. I dedicate this dissertation to all my spiritual leaders: Bishop Aaron and Lady Riley, Pastor Leroy and Lady Hamilton, Dr. James and 1<sup>st</sup> Lady Spence, and Dr. Pamela Herndon. I cannot forget Charles Caldwell who has been one of my best friends, wonderful inspiration, ideal example, and consistent leader in many ways. Finally, I dedicate this dissertation to all elementary school teachers striving to become better and more effective educators, but have not due to the lack of opportunity or information. We are a team! As one of my pastors would always say, “We do it better when we do it together!”

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It was an honor and privilege to have this opportunity to see other educators with such integrity, passion, character, and strength. It was interesting to hear various situations of behavior issues and how that dealt with them. However, it was even better to hear how they all were transparent and willing to learn from others. If I had to select one thing from this study to apply to my life now, it would certainly be that regardless how long I remain an educator and obtain various degrees, there is always something else to learn.

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## Chapter 1: Introduction to the Study

### Introduction

An understanding of proper classroom management techniques is a critical tool for teachers to possess in order to be successful within the classroom in regard to the effectiveness of their instruction as well as to deter student misconduct that might interfere with that objective. Effective classroom management is an ongoing process that can be difficult to sustain because it requires attention to detail on a daily basis (Guercio, 2011). Teachers use diverse means to promote positive and appropriate conduct in the classroom; however, there is still a question as to which methods are the most appropriate (Guercio, 2011). By collecting data on student engagement during instruction, disruptive behavior, and teacher observations, teachers can determine if changes are needed in the physical arrangement of their respective classrooms. Changing the classroom environment can increase academic engagement and decrease disruptive behavior (Guardino & Fullerton, 2010).

The purpose of this qualitative case study was to explore how elementary school teachers select, develop, and implement classroom management strategies. This study was a replication of a study conducted by Westbrook-Spaniel (2008) and focused on a diverse sample population and grade-level group that differed from Westbrook-Spaniel's study. Targeting a younger grade-level group diversified the scope of information and offered a different set of approaches to controlling student behavior through classroom management. Guiding research questions spotlighted how teachers discovered, chose, expanded, and executed the classroom-management techniques they use. Additional questions focused on how teachers defined an effective classroom manager, and the training and support that teachers perceived they needed in order to feel more confident

in their approach to classroom management. The results of the study added to the existing body of knowledge by providing teachers with information that went beyond current classroom management research in the field of education. The results offered practitioners an understanding of how effective classroom strategies are implemented and who could implement them effectively. Additionally, the study provided information on how teachers defined an effective classroom manager and what training they need in order to continue to develop their skills (Westbrook-Spaniel, 2008).

Data collection in this study included the use of questionnaires, interviews, focus groups, and classroom observations. Participants included teachers in elementary classrooms at one school located in southern North Carolina. In this study, some questions were answered regarding what classroom management methods were known to work best in reducing incidences of misbehavior in elementary-school classrooms. Teacher awareness of the specific strategies that work at the school targeted for this study was heightened and may have helped teachers and leaders in other elementary-school settings. It was not clear how educators were using and applying current research on classroom management to their own instructional environments. This study helped fill a gap in the existing literature and research on classroom management to illuminate how teachers learn, select, develop, and implement effective classroom-management strategies.

## **Background of the Study**

Classroom management is the ongoing process by which teachers seek to enhance students' affective growth by creating and maintaining an orderly environment (Jones, Jones & Vermette, 2013). In education, teachers and administrators are obligated to remain aware of innovative classroom management techniques that will prevent or reduce

incidences of misbehavior in the classroom (Marzano, Marzano, & Pickering, 2003). A well-managed classroom takes a good deal of effort to create and the person who is most responsible for creating it is the teacher (Marzano, Marzano, & Pickering, 2003). There is mounting evidence that teachers can influence the classroom's social climate through their behavior management skills and can directly affect students' behavioral adjustment (Farmer et al., 2006). Quite often, teachers try to apply ready-made solutions to fit every difficulty raised by a child's misbehavior, anxieties, conflicts with other children, or learning difficulties (Tal, 2010). Despite broad recognition that teaching excellence requires meeting students' intellectual and social needs, teachers struggle to explain the interplay between the academic and social dimensions of classroom life (Walker, 2009).

Classroom management has been studied from a variety of theories and perspectives. One popular method in the 1990s was Canter's assertive discipline model which incorporated an authoritative approach using various parental styles for managing the classroom (Swinson & Cording, 2002). Applying parenting-style theory to teacher effectiveness is important. Such a cross-disciplinary approach potentially paints a holistic portrait of adult-child interactions as developmental contexts (Walker, 2009).

Similarly, this management style can advance current understanding of teacher influence on student learning and development by reconciling the dichotomy between schools' highly controlling zero-tolerance policies and other more humanistic approaches to teaching and learning (Walker, 2009). According to Swinson and Cording (2002), the Canter model has three components: clear requirements, continuous positive feedback when students are successfully meeting requirements, and a published hierarchy of sanctions that are applied consistently when rules are broken.

Another classroom-management approach used in past years was the tiered approach. This approach covered three tiers: Preventative Classroom Management, First-Line Interventions, and Intensive, Individualized Interventions. During the first tier, anything the teacher does that establishes behavioral expectations in the classroom creates the core curriculum of highly engaging instruction by providing frequent opportunities for students to respond (Sayeski & Brown, 2011). With the second tier, teachers can look for a range of intervention options that compliment the standard core practices in their classroom (Sayeski & Brown, 2011). In the last tier, behavioral supports always begin with a Functional Behavioral Assessment (FBA) that move beyond the environmental scan of Tier 1 and the surface management or reinforcement strategies of Tier 2 to focus on an individual student's behavioral needs (Sayeski & Brown, 2011). Savage and Savage (2009) defined classroom management as two levels of management: the prevention of problems and responses when problems do occur. Doyle (2006) added that classroom management revolves around teachers' and students' attitudes and actions that influence students' behaviors in the classroom. Classroom management is not a gift bestowed upon some teachers and though it is true that some teachers adapt to classroom management techniques easily, classroom management is a skill that can be gained through training and many years of experience in the field (Bosch, 2006).

In order to work with students, teachers must approach challenging situations with optimistic, caring, and positive attitudes. Yet, it was not known how teachers learn, develop, and implement effective classroom strategies with today's changing student demographics. Further, it was not known how the teachers at the research site define an effective classroom manager and what training they needed in order to continue to develop their classroom management skills (Westbrook-Spaniel, 2008).

This study extended the existing body of research in this area by going beyond a current summary of classroom management in the field of education. Instead, it offered practitioners an understanding of how effective classroom strategies are implemented and who can implement them effectively. It also provided information on how teachers defined an effective classroom manager and what training they needed in order to continue to develop their skills (Westbrook-Spaniel, 2008).

### **Problem Statement**

It was not known how elementary school teachers selected, developed, and implemented classroom management strategies. Many classroom teachers are faced with challenging student behaviors that influence their ability to facilitate learning in productive, safe environments (MacSuga & Simonsen, 2011). The need for successful classroom management skills has not diminished during a time when school reform has emphasized academic testing and student achievement (Allen, 2010). The general problem was that there was a lack of research on how teachers learned, developed, and implemented effective classroom strategies with student behaviors. Further, it was not known how teachers defined an effective classroom management and what training they needed in order to continue to develop their skills (Westbrook-Spaniel, 2008). Proper classroom management methods are necessary for all teachers to become successful within the classroom. School reform that encourages learner-centered classrooms based on what is known about new developments in the learning sciences is a positive step (Allen, 2010). Dealing with student problem behavior is one of the most pressing concerns facing educators in the classroom (Ducharme & Shecter, 2011). Unless teachers came to the classroom with skills that establish a culture that proactively minimizes behavior problems and allowed them to intervene in positive, educative, effective ways

when students are disruptive, there was likely to be an environment that is predisposed to behavior problems.

### **Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of this qualitative case-study research was to explore how elementary school teachers selected, developed, and implemented classroom management strategies. An additional focus was on how teachers defined an effective classroom manager, and the training and support that teachers perceived they needed in order to feel more confident in their approach to classroom management. The researcher employed questionnaires, interviews, focus groups, and classroom observations over the course of 4 to 6 weeks in elementary classrooms at one school located in southern North Carolina.

Data collection methods included questionnaires, face-to-face or telephone interviews, classroom observations, as well as focus groups facilitated by the researcher. The use of three forms of primary data collection for triangulation purposes contributed to the credibility and reliability of the study. According to Denzin and Lincoln (2003), triangulation is often employed by qualitative researchers to develop the accuracy and representation of data. Since no form of data can fully represent the phenomena explored in qualitative studies, triangulation is used to clarify the information revealed as it appears in more than one source (Denzin & Lincoln, 2003).

The target school for this case study was an independent, non-profit school accredited by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools. It was a state-licensed college preparatory school for pre-K through grade 12. The school housed 85 students, and had 13 teachers with a 10:1 student-teacher ratio. The administration staff included three members, and the faculty had 16 members within the school. The composition of the student body was 94% African American, 5% Caucasian, and 1% other. Students

were allowed to bring their lunch, or order lunch through the lunch program offered by the school. During the 2011-12 academic year, the suspension rate of students was 1% and the average number of students sent to the principal's office daily varies from zero to one, and from none to three weekly.

This particular study focused on teachers in grade levels Pre-K through Grade 5. The demographics allowed the researcher to get a clear scope of the research. The sample included a diverse group of students with different personalities, academic levels, economic brackets, and race. The classroom is a very different place than it was one or even five years ago. Teachers are faced with larger, more-diverse classrooms where teacher accountability is mandated as a result of the No Child Left Behind legislation (Kariuki, 2009).

### **Research Questions**

The focus of the study was to discover the methods teachers in an independent school in southern North Carolina use in the classroom that deter student misconduct. In order to clearly narrow the scope of the study following research question was addressed:

R1: How did elementary teachers select, develop, and implement classroom management strategies to use in class?

The current methods used by the participating teachers became evident in the classroom through the direct observation of the teachers. Only a limited number of teachers were selected for this study based on the grade level they teach. Since this study only focused on the elementary grade levels, only elementary teachers within the school were selected for sampling. Teachers instructing grades 6 through 12 were not included for this study. Data collection consisted of questionnaires, interviews, focus groups, and

classroom observations for a period of four to six weeks in elementary classrooms at one school located in southern North Carolina.

### **Advancing Scientific Knowledge**

This qualitative case study extended the current research by creating a model for future intervention for teachers within the classroom. The study is based on social cognitive theory, person-centered theory, and operant conditioning theory. A teacher may be labeled highly qualified, but can still benefit from learning additional ways to become more effective with classroom management. According to Tal (2010), to lead classrooms, teachers need conceptual tools to help clarify how effective classrooms work. Teachers also need to create a commitment to the welfare and learning of the children, and develop skills to apply these insights and commitment. Teachers often resort to reactive and punitive strategies that have many negative side effects and drawbacks because teachers lack specific training in managing problem behavior in the classroom (Ducharme & Shecter, 2011). The lack of training in managing student behavior may cause a gap in learning to the students' fullest potential. Ducharme and Shecter's preferred approach to classroom management meets the clinical needs of children with challenging behavior while potentially serving as a more practical classroom alternative to commonly recommended strategies.

This study was grounded in the field of education with research giving clear knowledge of teacher understanding of classroom management and the application of methods for dealing with student misbehavior. Therefore, understanding classroom management as it relates to the way students behave and perform in the classroom is important. As a result, this study advanced the scientific knowledge base by adding to the existing theories used as a foundation for teachers and other educators who are interested

in learning more classroom management and strategies for effectively preventing or reacting to misbehavior within their classrooms. These theories sustained how teachers select management strategies to use in class, the development of the strategies and skill sets they use in classroom management and the training and support teachers need in order to feel more confident in their approach to classroom management. This study also added to the limited knowledge elementary school teachers may have about classroom management and their perceptions and observations of student behavior.

### **Significance of the Study**

There is mounting evidence that teachers can influence the classroom social climate through their behavior management skills and can directly affect students' behavioral adjustments (Farmer et al., 2006). According to Simonsen, Fairbanks, Briesch, Myers, and Sugai (2008), educators who follow current trends in educational policy, law, and research are guided to identify and implement scientifically validated or evidence-based practices, a standard that has gained popularity in the past decade. The interrelationship between teacher disciplinary practices and professional programs needs to be one where ongoing critical reflection, relevant discussions, and an ability to see various disciplinary approaches being practiced in classrooms are interwoven (Lewis & Burman, 2008). Studies are set in place to present the most pertinent information possible for other educators. The aim was not to provide an exhaustive list, but to outline those techniques that teachers believe are critical for creating contexts that foster positive and productive behavior from youths who tend to be challenging to teachers (Farmer et al., 2006).

By collecting data on students' engagement during instruction, disruptive behavior, and teacher observations, teachers can identify which physical aspects of their

classroom may need to be improved (Guardino & Fullerton, 2010). The results from this study were expected to extend more clarity to the classroom management approach and to inform the approach in order to counteract and prevent much of the misbehavior that occurs in the classroom. The study also promoted more teacher-to-teacher interaction as it pertains to making a collaborative effort to share various methods and techniques. Though the study only targeted one elementary school, the results and approach was useful to influence other elementary schools and higher grade levels as well. The positive outcome was that the school participating in this study was able to use the results as needed, and approach classroom management and student misbehavior accordingly with that particular school. In case the results do not meet the researcher's expectations, the sample size could be increased, a certain additional grade level could be selected, or the researcher could increase the number of schools involved in the study.

### **Rationale for Methodology**

This study employed a qualitative case study design. In qualitative research, the researchers explore the meaning as understood by the participants, in a natural setting (Arghode, 2012). Therefore, with this study, the qualitative research approach was more fitting because it offered an opportunity to investigate classroom management and students with a more hands-on approach rather than by statistics only as would be the focus of a quantitative study. Another situation is when the researcher cannot manipulate the behavior of those involved in the study. Also, when the researcher wants to cover contextual conditions because you believe they are relevant to the phenomenon under study. The last situation is when the boundaries are not clear between the phenomenon and context. Yin (2003) and Stake (1995) used different terms to describe a variety of case studies. Yin categorized case studies as explanatory, exploratory, or descriptive. He

also differentiates between single, holistic case studies and multiple-case studies. Stake identifies case studies as intrinsic, instrumental, or collective.

Discovering the effective management strategies that teachers are using may lead to developing a methodology for teaching those strategies and changes necessary to better maintain discipline while increasing student achievement. The study also gave credence to the current status of teachers' understanding of classroom management and student misbehaviors. In either suggesting change or reinforcing the current state of classroom management and student misbehavior, the results were important for not only elementary schools in southern North Carolina, but for schools at-large as well.

### **Nature of the Research Design for the Study**

The design selected for this qualitative research was a case study to explore the types of student misbehavior that teachers experience in the classroom, and to discover how teachers select their discipline techniques for handling or preventing those misbehaviors. According to Yin (2003), a case study design should be considered to address the problem and research question in several situations. One situation is when the focus of the study is to answer "how and "why" questions. Qualitative case studies allow the researcher to physically go into the environment and experience the results. The sample for this study included seven teachers from an elementary school in southern North Carolina. Data collection included a letter and questionnaire designed to describe the nature of the study and to solicit demographic information from the teachers in terms of degrees held, years of teaching experience, subjects taught, and grade levels taught. There also was a focus-group session centered on questions of classroom management training as well as definitions of effective classroom management and other techniques. The focus-group questions were listed in Appendix D of this document. From the initial

focus group, a subset of teachers was solicited for further participation in the study. The focus group allowed the researcher to gather additional face-to-face data from participants, and information from focus groups was immediately available to the researcher. Not all sources are essential in every case study, but the importance of multiple sources of data to the reliability of the study is well established (Stake, 1995). Yin (1994) suggested using multiple sources of evidence as the way to ensure construct validity.

Qualitative research requires learned practice of active waiting, striking a balance throughout a research project between moving forward and advancing the research process, and allowing adequate time for the full development of each aspect of the research. Through this study, the frequency of student misbehaviors teachers encountered in their elementary classrooms; the strategies teachers reported to work to effectively deter student misbehavior in their classrooms; how elementary teachers defined an effective classroom manager; the difference in approaches to classroom management among the teachers; how classroom-management strategies are learned, developed, and implemented; and who was able to implement those strategies effectively. This research study was designed to benefit the teachers and principals of a school in southern North Carolina.

### **Definition of Terms**

Terms that were used in this study are defined as follows:

**Classroom management.** An effective plan of creating the classroom environment, setting up materials, being ready to teach before class starts, and continually analyzing how to make teaching more productive (Palumbo & Sanacore, 2007).

**Misbehavior.** Behavior that is considered inappropriate for the setting or situation in which it occurs (Allen, 2010).

**No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB).** This act of Congress is intended “to hold educational agencies and states accountable for improving the quality of education for all students. It seeks to identify low-performing schools that have failed to provide a high-quality education to their students and transform them into successful schools” (Maleyko & Gawlik, 2011, p. 600).

**Self-discipline.** Determined by people’s perceptions (e.g. feelings, attitudes, beliefs, and aspirations); how the person positively sees himself or herself; and a feeling of belonging and oneness with others (Combs, 1985).

**Bandura’s social cognitive theory.** This theory suggests that how people interpret the results of their own behavior informs and alters their environments and the personal factors they possess which, in turn, inform and alter subsequent behavior (Pajares, 2002).

**Person-centered theory.** This theory creates a balance between the wants of the teacher and the efforts and needs of the students, forming a collective classroom, including all persons in a classroom. (Freiburg & Lamb, 2009)

**Lee Canter's assertive discipline.** This model is a preventative approach to behavior management, as the teacher is responsible for redirecting unwanted behaviors before they become disruptive to the entire classroom (Canter & Canter, 2001).

**Skinner’s theory of operant conditioning.** This theory uses the structure of teaching and subsequent learning is strictly architected to optimize the behaviors through reinforcement (Lineros & Hinojosa, 2012).

**Control theory.** This theory suggests that power sharing in the classroom is used to deal with any issues including rules, behavior, and discipline. Students are allowed to discuss any topic without fear of condemnation. The outcome should be an agreement of the solution(s) to the problems by both parties (Glasser, 1985).

### **Assumptions, Limitations, and Delimitations**

Several assumptions were made in this study. First, all participants sampled completed and returned their interview questionnaires. Second, the instruments that were used during the data-collection process presented an accurate assessment of the sample. To validate the assumptions, the researcher initially explained to each participant the importance of fully completing and returning the questionnaires, and of giving honest responses to the posed questions and prompts.

Several limitations were present in this study. The data collected were limited to seven teachers, which is 69% of the total teachers employed of the school. The selection process was open to all teachers working directly with or supervising the elementary grade levels. Therefore, the methods and perceptions documented did not represent all teachers within the school. This study was limited to one elementary school; therefore, it did not represent all schools in southern North Carolina. The researcher was not employed at the school where data collection occurred; therefore, the potential chance for researcher bias was minimized.

The following delimitations were presented in this study: The study gathered qualitative data, drawn from a sample of seven teachers. The teachers instructed pre-kindergarten through fifth grade classes in a school located in southern North Carolina. The participants were purposefully selected and, for this reason, the results were not generalizable to any other school in North Carolina or the United States.

## **Summary and Organization of the Remainder of the Study**

This chapter explained how the researcher conducted the study and set forth the theoretical framework. According to Cohen, Pickeral, and McCloskey (2009), more districts, states, and networks of schools use data to help define school success. Chapter 1 included the significance, nature, assumptions, and limitations. Chapter 2 will present a literature review of information on classroom management and the effect it has on student behavior. The literature review will introduce the study background, present the conceptual framework of the study, and present in-depth information on classroom management and student misbehavior. Chapter 3 will discuss the methodology used throughout the study and state the instruments used, the participants in the study, and how the data was collected. Chapter 4 provides detail on how the data were analyzed including both written and graphic summaries of the study results. Chapter 5 is an interpretation and discussion of the results as it relates to the existing body of research related to the dissertation topic, the research questions, chosen theoretical foundation, and recommendations for future practice and research.

## Chapter 2: Literature Review

### Introduction to the Chapter and Background to the Problem

The purpose of this qualitative case-study research was to explore how elementary school teachers selected, developed, and implemented classroom management strategies. An additional focus was on how teachers defined an effective classroom manager, and the training and support that teachers perceived they needed in order to feel more confident in their approach to classroom management. This section included a compilation of scholarly sources offering in-depth information on classroom management and student behavior. Sources were obtained in various formats, including peer-reviewed journals, doctoral dissertations, scholarly web sites, and textbooks. Scholarly electronic sources were used as well, including *ProQuest Dissertations and Theses*, *EBSCOhost*, *Academic Search Complete*, and *Education Research Complete*.

Public opinion trends over former decades have shown that lack of discipline has been and continues to be one of America's top public-educational concerns (Freiberg & Lamb, 2009). In recent years, awareness about the importance of having quality interpersonal relations both with and among the children for attainment of school goals seems to be growing (Sidorkin 2002; Evertson & Weinstein, 2006; Pianta, 1999). Disciplinary techniques are used to channel students' behavior into acceptable patterns and disciplinary policies function to bring order to the learning environment (Grubaugh & Houston, 1990). Changing the classroom environment can increase academic engagement and decrease disruptive behavior (Guardino & Fullerton, 2010).

Studies have been conducted to examine whether or not student teachers are adequately trained to use classroom management and are adequately prepared to face problems that may develop in the classroom (Pellegrino, 2010; Strett & Imig, 2011;

Folmer-Annevelink, Doolaard, Mascareño, & Bosker, 2009; Schmidt, 2010). Thus, understanding proper classroom management techniques is an essential tool for teachers to possess in order to be successful within the classroom as well as to prevent frustrations and problems with students.

Appropriate classroom behavior should be maintaining for many students in the classroom by naturally occurring reinforcers such as positive attention from the teacher, grades, or self-reinforcement that results from task completion (Little & Akin-Little, 2008). Buck (1992) stated that teachers must be aware that students need continuous practice to fully understand and comprehend classroom procedures and routines. Yet, in order to prevent student misbehavior, understanding the relationship between classroom management and student behavior is imperative (Buck, 1992). The proposed study was designed to further define that connection. The purpose of this qualitative case study was to explore how elementary school teachers selected, developed, and implemented classroom management strategies.

The researcher did notice some diverse cultures from the students within the classroom. Current literature showed cultural variances between students and teachers was a source of stress leading to the gap of learning for the students. Additional areas covered in this study were defining an effective classroom manager and the training and support that teachers perceive they need in order to feel more confident in their approach to classroom management. It is evident that the lack of information on how elementary school teachers selected, developed, and implemented classroom management strategies has become more of an epidemic throughout many classrooms.

Topics in the literature review included the existing research on classroom management and strategies, student misbehaviors and strategies, and understanding

diverse populations. The review included definition of classroom management; components of classroom management; types of student misbehaviors; reasons students misbehave; ethnicity, gender, and student misbehavior; teachers' views on student misbehavior; student misbehavior strategies; classroom environment; and understanding diverse populations in the classroom including cultures, languages, race, economic differences, and personalities.

### **Theoretical Foundations**

During research, it is important for the researcher to determine the theoretical foundation for the study. Classroom climate and school belonging lead to experiences and perceptions that influence academic self-efficacy, consistent with the tenets in Bandura's social cognitive theory (McMahon, Wernsman, & Rose, 2009). Sokal, Woloshyn, & Funk-Unrau (2013) suggested that teacher efficacy is another affective component frequently explored in relation to effective teaching practice and it refers to teacher's self-perceptions of his or her teaching competence in a given situation. Research has shown that self-efficacy beliefs can help predict behaviors such as those related to whether one will engage, persevere, and accomplish one's goals (Bandura, 1997; Pajares, 1996). Although theory and empirical research emphasize the importance of classroom climate and school belonging in relation to academic outcomes, few studies have examined connections among classroom climate, school belonging, and academic self-efficacy (McMahon et al., 2009). A study of classroom environment, perceptions of assessment tasks, academic self-efficacy, and attitudes to science revealed statistically significant links between classroom environment and academic efficacy (Dorman & Fraser, 2009). Veleyutham and Adridge's (2012) recent study identified aspects of the psychosocial learning environment that influence student motivation including self-

efficacy. These results suggested that student cohesiveness, task orientation, and investigation are the most influential predictors of student self-efficacy. Pajares and Kranzler (1995) found that the influence of academic self-efficacy on performance such as mathematics was as strong as the influence of general mental ability. Roeser, Peck, & Nasir (1996) found that a greater sense of school belonging, as well as emphases on effort, understanding, and beliefs that all students can learn were associated with greater academic self-efficacy. Classroom climate has been associated with academic and interpersonal efficacy among urban youth, both directly (Cowen et al., 1991) and indirectly (Baker, 1998). Cowen et al. (1991) found that students who perceived high levels of classroom competition, friction, and difficulty felt less efficacious in managing rational problems and difficult situations.

Self-regulated learning has been successfully applied to education (Clearly & Zimmerman, 2004; Zimmerman, 2000). Part of the research question guiding this study dealt with how teachers select their classroom management strategies. In order to facilitate self-regulated learning, teachers must consider the interactions of environmental influences, student perceptions, and learning behaviors (Shu-Ling & Lin, 2007). Self-efficacy beliefs and self-regulated learning can mutually enhance each other. Social-cognitive theory components have direct implications for structuring the student-learning environment so that desired learning outcomes are achieved (Erlich & Russ-Eft, 2011). Learners with a strong sense of academic self-efficacy will likely work harder and persevere longer when they encounter difficulties than will their peers with lower self-efficacy levels (Pajares, 1996). In contrast, struggling learners often resist or quickly quit activities they perceive as difficult or impossible for them (Wong, 1991). Therefore, it is

important for teachers to consider various types of learners in order to have the most effective approach to each student's behaviors.

Freiberg and Lamb (2009) suggested that by sharing control, learners begin the process of becoming self-disciplined. To facilitate a person-centered classroom, teachers should place themselves in the students' condition. Person-centered approaches can be easily acceptable on ethical, humanitarian, and educational grounds (Doyle, 2009).

Students often want to know how much the teacher cares long before they want to learn how much the teacher knows (Freiberg & Lamb, 2009). The Consistency Management and Cooperative Discipline program (CMCD) is a classroom management model from the person-centered theory. The program was developed by two teachers from the middle- and high- school levels. The program has been researched by a teacher educator (Freiberg, 1999b). Research reports that CMCD schools have increases in student achievement (Slavin & Lake, 2007). Increased teacher and student attendance, reduced office discipline referrals, and improved classroom and school learning environments have also been recognized within the CMCD program (Eiseman, 2005; Freiberg, Connell, & Lorentz, 2001; Freiberg & Lapointe, 2006). Another part of the research question is recognizing how teachers develop their classroom management strategies. Teachers are encouraged to systematize their disciplinary role in order to minimize time spent on behavior problems. A person-centered educational experience is important in achieving the significant curricular outcome of a sustained life-long dedication to learning and responsible citizenship (Doyle, 2009). Person-centered practices are necessary, but insufficient, conditions for management success. By themselves, they will not forge productive context in the absence of attention to activities and programs of action (Doyle, 2009). Teachers may experience similar behaviors from their students. When teachers

become aware and educated about their past educational experience it can help them become more efficient with the students.

Another approach used within the classroom is Skinner's operant conditioning theory based on reinforcement and punishment. Reinforcement refers to a consequence that influence the student to exhibit the behavior more frequently, while punishment refers to a consequence that causes the student to exhibit a behavior less frequently. Operant conditioning is not grounded in the belief that a stimulus is required to associate an unconditioned response with a new conditioned one. Instead, after a given behavior is observed, it is either rewarded or punished (Lineros & Hinojosa, 2012).

These theories supported how teachers select management strategies to use in class, the development of the strategies and skill sets they use in classroom management and the training and support teachers need in order to feel more confident in their approach to classroom management. It is clear the study fits and aligns within other research based on existing theories and model on classroom management and teachers can benefit from the additional updated research.

When teachers make evidence-based changes to their classroom environments, these modifications are a preventative and effective strategy (Abbott, Walton, Tapia, & Greenwood, 1999; Fullerton, Conroy, & Correa, 2009). Current studies broadened previous research by examining several dimensions of classroom environment such as satisfaction, cohesiveness, difficulty, competitiveness, friction, sense of school belonging, and academic self-efficacy (McMahon et al., 2009). Reflecting back on various similar theories helps understand the relevance of a child's purposes and goals which could be difficult unless the basic concept that all behavior is goal-oriented is accepted, thus producing a better environment throughout the classroom.

## Review of the Literature

It is important to recognize various components that are factors in the way student behave and learn within the classroom. Classroom management has become a large problem with questions and concerns regarding how to develop new teachers into experienced teachers (Strett & Amiga, 2011). Lack of preparation and the ensuing frustration with student misbehavior often leads teachers to become disillusioned with teaching and more prone to burnout (Evans, Lester, & Anfara, 2010). A knowledgeable teacher may fail in teaching due to inability to work effectively with students (Ediger, 2013). To address this challenge, teachers and administrators must collaborate and communicate, forming strong partnerships to set and enforce classroom management policies (Grode, 2009). Positive discipline has long been an essential dimension of school connectedness (Strahan, Cope, Hundley, & Faircloth, 2005).

The qualitative case study design is the most befitting approach. The case study design allowed the researcher to go within different classrooms to experience how teachers select, develop, and implement classroom management strategies. Everything that happens in the classroom will affect the student and his future. Research findings continuously have shown that one of the keys to success in teaching is the teacher's ability to manage the classroom and to organize instruction (Brophy, 1988; Cakmak, 2008; Emmer, Evertson, & Worsham, 2000). Therefore, ensuring the classroom and the classroom climate are conducive to student learning is vital (Kariuki, 2009). When teachers combine effective teaching behaviors with specific behavior-management techniques, educators can significantly reduce the frequency and intensity of disruptive behavior (Buck, 1992).

**Classroom management defined.** Researchers generally described classroom management as the full range of teacher's efforts to oversee classroom activities, including learning, social interaction, and student behavior (Burden, 2005; Good & Brophy, 2006). According to Rekabdarkolaei (2011), classroom control and management has become more frustrating and difficult for teachers of all grade levels. Teachers view both control and management as manifestations of the social problems of the outside world that have found their way into the schools (Rekabdarkolaei, 2011). Yet, classroom management is a task that every educator must face on a daily basis (Backes & Ellis, 2003).

According to Clement (2010), without sufficient knowledge of classroom management strategies, new teachers may begin using strategies from other teachers in the past. As for the support of this study, classroom management is as a cyclical process that includes advance planning, implementation, assessment during the implementation, and a final evaluation that takes into account factors related to the children and their environment, intended to bring about progress in the activities carried out for the emotional well-being and learning of the children in the class (Tal, 2010). Classroom management is the ability of the teacher to lead the class, both children and staff, toward achieving the socio-emotional welfare and learning of the students. Embedded in the definition of classroom management is a moral orientation being the pursuit of well-being and learning opportunities for every child (Tal, 2010). Classroom management is a critical area for teachers because classroom management skills are related to pupil achievement (Yilmaz, 2009). Regardless of differences in the definition, the value of classroom management knowledge for teachers has been consistently supported through research literature (Shinn, Walker, & Stoner, 2002; Wang, Haertel, & Walberg, 1993)

and classroom management strategies have been referred to as “the most valuable skills set a teacher can have” (Landau, 2001, p. 4).

In addition to the conventional measures of classroom management (involvement of all the children in learning, on-task behavior, and cooperating with the rules), studies propose a dynamic measure of effective classroom management, including the ability to modify classroom activities in the wake of difficulties in order to facilitate the children’s learning and well-being (Tal, 2010). Many teachers first have to experience the classroom and then learn how to deal with students and their behaviors (Clement, 2010). Teachers face challenges to find classroom management strategies that are proactive, relatively easy to implement, and which provide minimal disruption to the classroom (Guardino & Fullerton, 2010). Management skills of teachers are one of the main factors in the classroom, since classroom management style is parallel with classroom management efficiency (Yilmaz, 2009). Yilmaz presented styles of classroom management that range from authoritarian to laissez-faire. “Authoritarian classroom management is based on teachers’ control over pupils and the restrictions imposed by teachers. Laissez-faire classroom management is where teachers display little action to control pupils and demand little from them” (p. 158-159). Therefore, teachers must discover what classroom management style they are considered to be and begin to develop their style.

Palumbo and Sanacore (2007) conducted a case study of two teachers that offers a glimpse into the characteristics of effective classroom management. In the study, data collection consisted of observing two teachers (Teacher X and Teacher Y) teaching the same grade at the same school with nearly identical demographics in the classroom. In the classroom of Teacher Y there was chaos. Instruction was stopped to address students that arrived late. Students absent the day before had to wait for the teacher to find

yesterday's worksheet and hand it out. Teacher X, however, did not experience the same issues. In this classroom, expectations were clear and students began quietly working upon arrival in the classroom.

Students that were absent knew where to find yesterday's worksheets. Tardy students quietly came in and added their own name to the detention list on the board and then took a seat. Teacher X also used student leadership as part of classroom management. (Palumbo & Sanacore, 2007, p. 68)

In the case, the student was responsible for assisting the teacher within the class and helped to keep the class focused and on task. Teacher Y realized that she was not prepared for the arrival of the students, giving her less of a chance to gain their initial attention. Teacher X reflected on management problems. She planned not only what she wanted to teach, but also how she wanted to teach it. She anticipated that with thirty students, minor problems would occur, and she dealt with them easily (Palumbo & Sanacore, 2007). The study showed that with proper classroom management techniques, such as preparation, many student misbehaviors were prevented. The results of that study outlined characteristics of effective classroom management. These included helping students become academically engaged, organizing instruction to accommodate students' strengths and needs, and motivating students to be interactive during instructional activities (Palumbo & Sanacore, 2007). Additionally, effective classroom managers establish clear preparation, expectations, rules, procedures, and routines.

**Components of classroom management.** According to Trussell (2008), classroom management is a complex task consisting of planning lessons, providing a safe learning environment, teaching students, and, perhaps the most daunting task of all, appropriately responding to student behavior problems. Although teachers do not have

the power to control the number of students assigned to their classrooms, they do have control over the way in which the classroom is set up, and this consists of a safe classroom environment (Trussell, 2008). Classroom space can be modified in a variety of ways including arranging classroom furniture to define learning areas, improving accessibility and availability of materials, delineating traffic patterns, improving organization of materials (Bullard, 2010; Guardino, 2008; Lawry, Danko, & Strain, 1999). This section of the literature review covered classroom rules, classroom environment, and the structure of effective lessons.

***Classroom rules.*** In addition to effective lesson planning, classroom management also consists of rules. The primary purpose of classroom rules is to provide for positive interactions between teachers and students (Hardman & Smith, 1999). Teachers are expected to follow a set of procedures that should help maintain order in the classroom and involve both proactive and reactive procedures that can be combined to provide a comprehensive approach to classroom management (Little & Little-Akin, 2008). Teachers should ensure the classroom rules are clear, simple, number no more than five, and are stated in a positive layout. In other words, tell students what to do rather than what not to do. This allows for a focus on praise rather than on punishment (Babkie, 2006). Buck (1992) stated that teachers whose students exhibit better classroom behavior set and maintain clear and concise classroom rules. They keep the rules simple and limited in number. Further, they post the rules and review them routinely. Teachers should be consistent both in enforcing rules and in managing the classroom. Being consistent allows students to feel comfortable knowing that behavior and responses are predictable (Babkie, 2006). Allen (2010) expanded on this by elaborating that rules should be stated positively, and role-played and practiced so that students know what to

do to follow them. What happens in the classroom immediately prior to the lesson can have a tremendous impact on the amount of learning that takes place (Veverka, 2011). The goal of classroom management is to help students develop and shape their character, as well as to promote self-discipline (Garrett, 2003). Rules and routines helped accomplish this. Teachers should make sure to reinforce all boundaries on an ongoing basis so that students are sure about class expectations for interactions. Teachers are not their students' friend; they are the teacher (Babbie, 2006).

***Classroom structure and environment.*** Another part of management is for the teacher to plan the structure of the classroom and establish an environment conducive to learning. Additionally, modifying the classroom environment may serve as a direct intervention for children who demonstrate ongoing disruptive behavior (Conroy, Davis, Fox, & Brown, 2002). Schools should set rules that are enforceable and reasonable, a process that means balancing legal obligations with the realities of student culture and tools (Diamantes, 2010; Humble-Thaden, 2011). Successful teachers prepare the room to minimize disruptions, plan lessons to flow smoothly, and design routines to maintain momentum (Strahan, Cope, Hundley, & Faircloth, 2005, p. 26). While preparing the classroom, teachers should use routines for all classroom activities so students know what to do at all times. Students should be certain where to put materials, when to transition, what the schedule is, and so forth, (Babbie, 2006). Additionally, effective teachers respond to teachable moments. When disruptions occur, successful teachers think about the causes of misbehavior and respond to students as individuals, using disruptions as teachable moments and opportunities to model self-discipline (Strahan et al., 2005). Teachers who use planned seating arrangements reduce opportunities for misbehavior (Buck, 1992). They observe the students within the classroom environment, noting where

and when disruptive behavior is occurring and how different areas of the classroom were utilized (Guardino & Fullerton, 2010). Arranging the class is helpful so that students who are in the immediate vicinity of a student with challenging behaviors are not provoked and are less likely to be pulled into a problem (Farmer et al., 2006). Teachers should organize the classroom and materials in a way that avoids clutter and that allows students to know where to find items and where to return them (Babkie, 2006). Babkie (2006) also suggest teachers to cue students as to what comes next, teaching them a set of cues to let them know when they want a certain response.

***Structure of lessons.*** Buck (1992) suggested structuring the curriculum for learning. The key to good classroom management is the use of techniques that increase student cooperation. Essentially, teachers should teach students how to change from one activity to another and from one location to another. Transition goes back to the concept of having routines, but beyond that, it involves teaching a set of skills for students to use (Babkie, 2006). Another technique is involvement in classroom activities, thus averting problems from occurring such as reducing downtime to help maintain discipline in the classroom as well as helping set limits on what all the students can or cannot do (Rahman, Jumanl, Basit, Chishil, & Ajmal, 2010). Teachers can reduce misbehavior by helping students become academically engaged, organizing instruction to accommodate students' strengths and needs, and motivating students to be interactive during instructional activities (Palumbo & Sanacore, 2007). Maximizing the time that students spend in academic activities could minimize the problems of discipline. When a teacher provides well-planned lessons that provide a smooth flow of instruction delivered at a sustained pace, it helps to prevent off-task behaviors (Unal & Unal, 2012). Therefore, the manner in which tasks are managed contributes to the general classroom atmosphere and

classroom management style (Burden, 1995; Weinstein & Mignano, 1993). Teachers should pace lessons on the basis of student needs and responses. If students are clearly struggling with a concept, it may be necessary to change the planned lesson and reteach in a different way (Babkie, 2006). Issues can also be improved by resolving incidents of minor inattention before they develop into major disruptions (Rahman et al., 2010). Babkie suggested ensuring active engagement by making learning purposeful. Teachers are expected to provide a rationale for real-world use, match the content taught to students' levels, consider students' interests in planning instruction, and plan activity-based instruction rather than worksheets or lectures (Babkie, 2006). Most problems with discipline could be prevented by efficient teaching, in addition to a relevant curriculum that corresponds to students' ability levels (Weishew & Peng, 1993). If students are demonstrating off-task behavior, teachers should consider either increasing or decreasing the pace, depending on the consistency and content of student responses (Babkie, 2006).

Preparation and proper training are two themes that were extracted from the literature. It is evident that these themes can help teachers become well aware of their classroom environments. Having the proper tools and training to manage within the classroom can help students will become more effective.

**Types of student misbehaviors.** Classroom misbehavior is taken as any activity which (a) annoys, upsets or distresses teachers, (b) is disorderly of good order in the classroom and causes trouble, and (c) leads teachers to comment frequently (Houghton, Wheldall, & Merrett, 1988; Ding et al., 2010). Students misbehave for a variety of reasons, and knowing the underlying cause of a student's misconduct can help the teacher to determine which intervention strategies may or may not be successful (Buck, 1992). Some behavioral problems are often the result of the teacher's failure to adapt their

instruction to their pupils' abilities (Palardy, 1995). Additionally, teacher expectations can predict student behavior as well. If teachers believe that pupils can and will act in socially acceptable ways, pupils will tend to do so. But if teachers believe, for any number of reasons, that pupils neither can nor will behave appropriately, they will tend not to (Palardy, 1995).

Four top categories of challenging behaviors have emerged over the past few years. One category is physical behaviors including temper tantrums, kicking, pushing, hitting, and running away. Another category is verbal behaviors including screaming, yelling, swearing, and lying. Academic disengagement is the next category which includes lack of time management and no priorities. The last category is miscellaneous non-compliance including opposition, social conflicts, and stubbornness. (McCready & Soloway, 2010, p. 117)

Misbehavior is further classified into one of five different types: Aggression, immorality, defiance of authority, class disruptions, and behaving mischievously (Durmuscelebi, 2010). Another type of misbehavior a teacher may face in the classroom is lack of respect. Teachers should consider the possibility that the way teachers behave in class can cause students to behave in ways that diminish our respect for them (Giampetro-Meyer & Holc, 1997). Reported problems included noncompliance, defiance, teasing and bullying peers, and disruptive behaviors such as talking out of turn or being out of seat without permission (Anderson & Spaulding, 2007). These noncompliant behaviors are just a few of many behaviors that teachers may encounter during the day in the classroom.

**Reasons students misbehave.** On a daily basis, students bring many complicated issues to school (Durmuscelebi, 2010). Students with challenging behavior tend to be

skilled at getting under the skin of adults (Farmer et al., 2006). There are many students coming from home environments where they are not receiving adequate support to develop the social skills for interacting appropriately in school (Durmuscelebi, 2010). Family related reasons are one of the most prevalent reasons of inappropriate behaviors (Atici, 2007; Weishew & Peng, 1993). Beginning teachers showed that they favor shared responsibility for classroom control, shared work on developing classroom rules, focus on not only behaviors but also feelings, and paid attention to what the student does to alter the external environment, as well as what the environment does to shape the student (Cakiroglu & Gencer, 2007; Martin & Baldwin, 1992).

According to Anderson and Spaulding (2007), discipline problems in the classroom occur with alarming frequency. Disruptive behavior, such as speaking without permission and getting out of one's seat, often interferes with students' engagement in the learning process (Guardino & Fullerton, 2010). Associating with the right or wrong peers can greatly affect students' status; improving and protecting their position in the social structure is a common concern for many youths. Therefore, conflict and aggression can build as individuals and groups jockey for power within the social structure (Farmer et al., 2006).

Durmuscelebi (2010) observed 245 teachers working in state primary schools and private primary schools. Results from this study showed similarity between these two types of school according to the most encountered and the least encountered misbehaviors. The most encountered misbehaviors were complaint about friends, talking without permission, studying without a plan, not listening to the teacher, doing other things during the lesson, and fighting with friends (p. 380). Durmuscelebi also stated that "the least unwanted behaviors that the teachers faced with were cheating, eating

something during the lesson, coming late to school, not respecting to teacher, taking and using friend's equipment without permission, and despising and excluding friends" (p. 380).

Students may or may not perceive misbehavior in the same ways as their teachers, so it is worthwhile to learn more about misbehavior from student perspectives (Supaporn, 2000). If a student's disruptive behavior is assumed to serve an escape function during difficult tasks, then the contextual modification might involve reducing demands to determine the effect on the misbehavior (Ducharme & Shecter, 2011). Students with challenging behavior tend to view behavior intervention in a negative manner. This can impede helping them to learn positive alternatives (Farmer et al., 2006). Teachers must realize that there is always a reason behind a student's behavior. Children rarely act appropriately simply because the teacher expects them to act in that manner. Rather, children act appropriately because of what they have learned either at home or in the classroom (Almeida, 1995).

Students who misbehave are usually trying to establish control in inappropriate ways. One way is avoiding schoolwork such as protecting self-esteem by not trying, rationalizing failure, and fear of ridicule from classmates. Another way is seeking attention such as clowning around, and learned helplessness. The next way is creating diversions such as poking fun at tasks or classmates. The final way is playing power games such as playing tough and choosing resistance as an identity. (Strahan et al., 2005, p. 26)

According to Farmer et al. (2006), youth form peer groups with others who are like them. Students who associate with each other tend to have one or more similar social characteristics (i.e., level of aggression, popularity, academic ability, and athletic ability).

Students may also associate with peers who complement their behavior (e.g., followers with leaders). Students who are actively engaged are less likely to be off task or to present management problems.

**Ethnicity, gender, and student misbehavior.** Students with challenging behaviors often come from nondominant racial or ethnic, economic, or cultural backgrounds (Thompson & Webber, 2010). The change in the racial, cultural, and linguistic diversity of the student population is not the main problem with students behaving in the classroom; rather, the way educators have responded to that change is perhaps the largest component of the problem (Brown, 2007). However, there are barriers and challenges that are common to teachers including difficulty with communicating and interacting with students, a lack of resources, a restrictive or overloaded curriculum, and establishing relationships with parents (Humphrey et al., 2006). This difference in socialization can increase barriers for these nondominant students as they negotiate unfamiliar expectations at school (Thompson & Webber, 2010). Many teachers are inadequately prepared to teach students from cultural and linguistically diverse backgrounds (Brown, 2007).

Differences in how teachers respond to students can be explained in part by racial/ethnic differences in family backgrounds and school bonding (Sung Joon, 2002). For instance, past studies have noted that African American students' classroom behavior is rated more favorably by African American teachers than by White teachers (Downey & Pribesh, 2004). This racial comparison is evident in the education community and could be a function of White teachers' bias rating African American students more harshly than they deserve or African American students' acting out more when placed with White teachers than African American teachers (Downey & Pribesh, 2004). Racial

comparison is evident in other races as well. Asian-American adolescents commit less deviance in the form of school misbehavior than White, African American, Hispanic, or Native-American adolescents (Sung Joon, 2002). In these diverse groups, gaps in learning could contribute to classroom management issues. The disruptive behaviors of a few difficult students often interfere with instruction practices, leaving both the noncompliant students and their classmates without adequate exposure to the curriculum (Canter & Canter, 1993). According to Downey and Pribesh cultural differences between students and teachers are a source of strain and have been modified by some scholars. The outcome for some students could be gaps in learning, and could enable existing gaps to plague learners and their teachers in the future.

Gender is frequently associated with the amount and quality of teacher-student interactions (McClowery et al., 2013). When dealing with gender, one should consider the influence of feminism on the classroom interactions between teachers and their students (Beaman, Wheldall, & Kemp, 2006). Beaman, Wheldall, and Kemp stated that boys have a higher tendency to display disruptive behaviors in the classroom. Research also demonstrated that male behaviors are perceived as more serious, even when both genders engage in the same behavior (Borg, 1998; Kokkinos, Panayiotou, & Davazoglou, 2004). In one study, 153 diverse preschool children and their teachers were observed; the researchers noted that girls received more positive interactions (Dobbs, Arnold, & Doctoroff, 2004). Greater teacher experience would be likely to reduce the amount of time spent on student misbehaviors, and boys would be more likely to be seen as exhibiting misbehaviors than girls (Jiliang et al., 2009). McClowery et al. observed 883 children and results explicate the critical need to untangle temperament from gender when studying child disruptive behavior. When the effects of gender were examined

alone, boys were, as expected, more disruptive than girls. However, when temperament was also taken into account, the effect of gender on student disruptive behavior reduced to non-significance. In other words, temperament was a stronger predictor of student disruptive behavior than child gender.

These studies demonstrated that while teachers are gentler toward girls, they interact with boys in a more robust way (Erden & Wolfgang, 2004). Within the classroom, gender differences in attention distribution appear more in Puerto Rican, African American, and White students (Dobbs et al., 2004). Therefore, being aware and prepared for the various backgrounds of students within the classroom is important.

**Teachers' views on student misbehavior.** Overall, studies showed that elementary school teachers provide much more negative than positive feedback to their students. When provided, positive feedback is associated with good academic performance (McClowery et al., 2013). Teachers set themselves up for disappointment when viewing challenging student behaviors as technical problems (McCready & Soloway, 2010). These problems are solved through professional development led by experts who are unfamiliar with the social and cultural context of the school community (McCready & Soloway, 2010). Successful teachers can help students understand that they choose their behaviors and guide them in accepting responsibility for their choices (Strahan et al., 2005). Researchers have also found that teacher perceptions tend to be influenced by classroom setting (Jiliang et al., 2009).

Erden and Wolfgang (2004) studied 130 female prekindergarten, kindergarten, K/1, and first-grade teachers employed in public schools located in a mid-sized southeastern city with a population of approximately 239,000. Erden and Wolfgang's study explored the differences in teachers' beliefs related to discipline, stating that

student behavior is major component of education for two reasons. First, if the teacher does not maintain discipline in the classroom, teaching and learning are not accomplished. Second, as socialization agents, teachers have to teach students which behaviors are expected in which situations (Erden & Wolfgang, 2004). With the assistance of the Beliefs about Discipline Inventory (BADI), the researchers were able to find the teachers' beliefs related to discipline philosophies while disciplining male and female students (Erden & Wolfgang, 2004).

Teachers often experience habitual patterns of reacting to challenging behaviors in the classroom (McCready & Soloway, 2010). Episodes of misbehavior are fraught with complications. Setting events, stimulus complexity, and the availability of competing reinforcements are just a few of the factors that confound clear analysis (Morin & Battalio, 2004). Teachers should be respectful at all times toward students. According to Babkie (2006), respect given leads to respect gained. For example, a teacher should use quiet individual discussion with students but don't call out students on their misbehavior in front of the class, use appropriate language when speaking with students, avoid sarcasm, and speak to students at their physical level (e.g., crouching down rather than looming over). The circumstances heighten episodes of misbehavior, the student's social and emotional orientation toward these circumstances, a teacher's professional attitude about personal responsibility, and a teacher's skill in managing such episodes are all part of the construal process (Morin & Battalio, 2004).

An important finding of research was the consistency in both teacher and students' perceptions concerning the promotion of prosocial skills in their classrooms, such as attentive listening, mutual respect and working together creatively, skills considered to be fundamental for healthy classroom interactions (Goleman, 1998; Poulu,

2005). Knowing how to control emotions from perspectives is an important trait to adopt within the classroom in order to have a clear focus on effectively teaching the students.

**Student misbehavior strategies.** Although many strategies are available for educators' use in schools to manage students whose challenging behaviors present frequent disciplinary problems, the most familiar disciplinary methods are punitive (Thompson & Webber, 2010). Studies have shown that the predominant teacher response to disruptive student behavior is reactive and punitive rather than proactive and positive (Thompson & Webber, 2010). Identifying what a student learns from the behavior can help a teacher be more strategic in dealing with the behavior. If the function of a student's behavior can be identified, then identifying an alternative, replacement behavior is possible (Mitchem & Downing, 2005).

In the classrooms, students not only learn more about the subject matter and performed better on tests, they also learned more about how to understand themselves and make better decisions (Strahan et al., 2005). According to Babkie (2006), teachers should use antecedent control by changing the environment and other variables identified in the analysis of the function of the behavior. For example, if teachers have determined that a student misbehaves during math time, perhaps the content is too easy or too difficult, the surrounding students may bother the student, or the time of day is the problem. Preventive strategies can reduce the probability that students will misbehave. The teacher should be a role model for students; instead of using extra work, fines, and verbal abuse as punishment technique in the classroom, they should focus on motivational techniques (Rahman et al., 2010). Reactive classroom management involves use of techniques focused on immediate termination of problem behavior, typically by means of consequences assumed to be aversive to the student (Ducharme & Shecter,

2011). Many teachers use reactive techniques, such as reprimands and classroom ejections, to manage misbehavior in their classrooms (Clunies-Ross, Little, & Kienhuis 2008; Infantino & Little, 2005; Maag, 2001). Considering the disadvantages and negative side effects of reactive approaches, research has increasingly promoted the use of more proactive methods to manage student problem behavior, particularly those involving functional assessment (Ducharme & Shecter, 2011).

Research and experience showed that students are likely to cease misbehaving when a different response more effectively and efficiently satisfies the same need (Gable & Hendrickson, 2000). Both general and special educators consistently report that they have children in their classes who have challenging behaviors; such students are defiant, throw tantrums, and make verbal and physical threats (Peterson, 2007). If the student's mistaken goal is to gain a sense of power, then teachers should look for productive ways to allow that student to feel powerful and, consequently, valued and recognized (Malmgren, Trezek, & Paul, 2005). Attempting to put a student in his or her place will only increase that student's feelings of neglect or inferiority and lead to increased acting out (Malmgren et al., 2005). When teacher-student relationships improve, concurrent improvements in classroom behavior such as reductions in aggression and increases in compliance with rules can be expected (Alderman & Green, 2011).

Teachers must remain cognizant of their student and what works within that particular classroom and the possible cause of the behavior. Popular and conventional peers that are often viewed as good students by teachers may use social aggression (i.e., covert and concealed tactics such as gossiping, starting rumors, triangulating friendships) to manipulate others. Such tactics can be highly provocative for youths with challenging behavior. Several techniques can be used to promote positive classroom communities.

According to (Cartledge & Loe, 2001; Farmer, 2000; Lo et al., 2002), one technique is monitoring classroom social dynamics (i.e., become aware of the social hierarchy and the strategies that students use to preserve the boundaries of their peer groups, including bullying and social aggression). The second technique is to develop and enforce meaningful social consequences for social aggression and bullying (e.g., students must have an adult escort during hall transitions, student must have lunch at an adult-monitored table) and apply these consequences in ways that foster positive alternative behaviors. The next technique is to create a climate that downplays social status by promoting activities that positively reinforce students' acceptance and tolerance of each other. In addition to this technique, teacher can provide positive social consequences (e.g., free time, special activities) for exemplary displays of favorable inter and intragroup relationships. Lastly, teacher can identify peer groups that routinely engage in activities (e.g., testing, bullying, social aggression) that promote interpersonal conflict. An adult "mentor" (i.e. teacher, administrator, counselor) should be assigned to each problematic group and should work to develop a positive rapport with the group (pp. 42-43).

Teachers' managerial abilities have been found to positively relate to student behavior and achievement in the most recent process-product study (Little & Akin-Little, 2008). Researchers consistently identified the components necessary for effective classroom management (Little & Akin-Little, 2008). Classroom organization combined with an effective discipline plan is important and helps the teacher to see important steps in dealing with discipline problems that may arise in the classroom.

Texts on classroom management and discipline often suggest strategies that are organized into models that reflect philosophical approaches (Allen, 2010). Some

researchers suggest programs to assist with various types of behavior and how to self-manage them. Additional qualities of effective self-management programs included the gradual shift from external process instruction to hands-on that affords students opportunity to learn problem-solving skill and to target behavior training that addresses specific skill deficits (Gable & Hendrickson, 2000).

Effective intervention strategies can be thought of as points along a continuum. Each choice of a strategy to use for an individual student or group of students is, however, highly individualized (Buck, 1992). A variety of strategies can help to foster positive social relationships for youths with challenging behavior (Farmer et al., 2006). More helpful strategies include giving students' leadership responsibilities, developing mindfulness and empathy, engaging parents beyond traditional parent-teacher conferences, making time to connect with students in and out of class, and developing cultural awareness (McCready & Soloway, 2010).

On the other hand, if a student likes his teacher, he or she will enjoy spending time with the teacher and will want to please the teacher by doing what is requested (Mitchem & Downing, 2005). The importance of teaching students the rules lies in providing a definition and rationale for each rule, and then providing students with many of opportunities to practice saying and doing examples of rule-following behavior (Mitchem & Downing, 2005). For example, Slider, Noell, and Williams (2006) showed various types of instruction-giving and their operational definitions. The first type is to get the child's attention, provide a clear instruction, and wait 5 to 10 seconds. Then, the teacher models the appropriate response and waits for the child to respond. Thereafter, the teacher physical guides the student to comply with the request and then provide feedback following the student's response to the teacher's request (p. 218).

Some of the strategies Mitchem and Downing (2005) provided are to help students develop affiliations with peers who are supportive of positive social behavior, anticipate and avoid placing bullied students in situations that promote being picked on. These strategies also provide students who are frequently picked on with opportunities that highlight social strengths. Teaching strategies that are less intrusive require the teacher to directly intervene with the disruptive student (Buck, 1992).

Teachers need to feel effective in order to act in ways that will likely result in positive student outcomes, yet teachers also need the confirmation that these same actions will result in positive outcomes in order to feel efficacious (Morin & Battalio, 2004). Effective teachers must provide instruction in the step-by-step process, model each of the steps for the student, and train across multiple stimuli (Gable & Hendrickson, 2000). Cognitive mediation strategies enable students to take responsibility for their behavior and, through identification and analysis of problem situations, self-instruction, and self-evaluation, increase the likelihood of maintenance of positive changes in their behavior (Gable & Hendrickson, 2000).

In order to remain effective, teachers should be proactive, organized, and always uphold a level of professionalism in the classroom. Effective teachers decrease student disruption by starting class on time, conducting themselves in a professional manner, and setting clearly defined goals for each class lesson, usually communicated to students through the use of an advance and post organizer (Buck, 1992). Studies have shown that the predominant teacher response to disruptive student behavior is reactive and punitive rather than proactive and positive (Thompson & Webber, 2010). The Positive Behavior Supports (PBS) program encourages teachers to be proactive and positive rather than reactive and negative with regards to behavioral management strategies (Allen, 2010).

Babbie (2006) suggest designing contracts, if necessary, in which the teacher and the student examine the behavior of concern and determine together how to change it. Contracts should specify not only what a student will do but also what the teacher will do to assist the student in meeting his or her goals.

While many great teachers are confident that they have the resources, knowledge, and energy needed to handle misbehaviors, other teachers indicate that they have received relatively little training and support to handle them (Almeida, 1995). In fact, to assume that only behavior management strategies that incorporate punishment will be capable of managing student behavior can be extremely naive (Buck, 1992). Sometimes no matter how interesting or stimulating teachers think their lesson is, competing with peer attention can be difficult (Buck, 1992). Misbehavior of students interferes with the learning of others, and it prevents the student who is misbehaving from doing what he or she is supposed to do in order to learn (Morin & Battalio, 2004). Two approaches that have proven effective in teachers' dealings with student misbehavior are the diagnostic approach (preferred), and the behaviorist approach, which fails to treat the causes of misbehavior and does not emphasize prevention (Palardy, 1995).

Dealing with disruptive students can be a challenge for any teacher. If students are off task, for example, the teacher can move quietly to where they are (proximity control) or provide information if they need assistance getting started or returning to work. It is important for teachers to redirect students without embarrassing or calling attention to them (Babbie, 2006). When teachers confront frequent discipline problems that disrupt their teaching activities, stress and burnout are inevitable consequences (Buck, 1992). Babbie suggested redirecting students by prompting appropriate behavior using the cues

and strategies, as well as intervening as soon as potential problems develop. Responding predictably to inappropriate behavior is the key to consistency in the classroom. One way to accomplish this is to have a set routine for responding to students who behave inappropriately (Mitchem & Downing, 2005). Mitchem and Downing suggested what is called Planned Ignoring. For example, the first time a student calls out, it makes sense to ignore the behavior. By this, teachers do not call on the student. Another response is called Prompt when teachers look to prompt a student to be quiet or raise his or her hand. The look refers to a person who can communicate with another person simply by using their eyes without verbalizing. Praise Around is another response when other students who are following rules are praised as another method of prompting the student who is not following the rules.

The last response is called Catch Student Being Good when a student who typically always calls out actually raises his hand, catching him or her being good is important so that you increase the chance of him doing it again. (Mitchem & Downing, 2005, pp. 189-190)

Although many strategies are available for educators' use in schools to manage students whose challenging behaviors present frequent disciplinary problems, the most familiar disciplinary methods are punitive (Thompson & Webber, 2010). Results from completed studies are published for teachers to read concerning classroom management and how an educator can learn to become more efficient in that area (Farmer et al., 2006). Deciding which variables changed and changing them allows teachers to handle the problem behavior by preventing it from happening rather than having to react after it has occurred (Babkie, 2006). The aim was to outline those techniques that are critical for

creating contexts that foster positive and productive behavior from youths who tend to be challenging to teachers (Farmer et al., 2006).

**Classroom environment.** Student misbehaviors can threaten the effectiveness of a class learning environment (Kulinna, 2007). Rather than structuring the school environment to prevent problem behavior, many school discipline systems continue to rely on consequences, depending on punitive or reactive strategies such as detention and suspension to curb behavioral violations (Gottfredson & Gottfredson, 2001; Kincaid, Childs, Blasé, & Wallace, 2007). With knowledge of the motivation for student misbehavior, modifying one or more aspects of the physical or social environment to facilitate maintenance and generalization of behavior changes can be useful (Gable & Hendrickson, 2000). Creating a learning environment where all students can thrive academically requires an understanding of the complexities of classroom management (Jones, Jones, & Vermete, 2013).

Positive classroom climates also reduce disruptive behaviors in two ways: The teacher's use of effective discipline and management strategies that discourage student misbehavior and via the instruction and modeling teachers provide to help students manage conflicts adaptively, including support for appropriate emotional expression and social problem-solving skills (Hamre & Pianta, 2005; Howes, 2000). In primary school, students are not able to concretize abstract concepts in their minds. It is much easier to concretize abstract concepts by using materials. Thus, primary school teachers need materials for an effective teaching process (Akbulut & Tatli, 2013). This environment should produce creativity, cooperation, individual growth, social development, parent communication, student interaction, and good behavior (Rahman et al., 2010).

Instructional materials play an important role in teaching and learning environments. Instructional materials can be a tool, a source or equipment used to develop students' knowledge, skills, attitudes, and values during instruction (Akbulut & Tatli, 2013). Compelling empirical research shows that a positive and sustained school climate promotes students' academic achievement and healthy development (Cohen et al., 2009). Visual elements enlist students' interest, activate students, develop their creativeness, increase their success, give importance to students' individual learning, facilitate teaching in the lesson and give opportunity to organize the lesson better (Akbulut & Tatli, 2013). To facilitate maintenance and generalization, teachers need to blur the distinction between treatment and natural environments to teach students specific behavioral exception (Gable & Hendrickson, 2000).

Buck (1992) suggested structuring the environment for learning. For example, many educators feel increased pressure to employ drill-and-practice strategies to ensure that every student succeeds on high-stakes assessments. In this climate, teachers must find strategies that facilitate a positive, caring classroom environment (Paciotti, 2010). For example, initially, students and teachers work collaboratively to write an agreement of classroom rules, which students and teachers sign and post. Then, teachers and students work together to establish positive reinforcers to nurture a caring atmosphere (Paciotti, 2010).

Classes are the most important places for the educational processes because all the educational events take place in them (Durmuscelebi, 2010). Research has shown that schools implementing supportive and positive school climate strategies are more successful in creating environments conducive to learning (Safe and Positive School

Climate, 2008). Classroom climate and classmate aggression levels should be similar, given prior evidence that positive classroom climates are associated with reduced levels of classroom behavior problems (Hamre & Pianta, 2005; NICHD Early Child Care Research Network, 2005). Classrooms are complex societies where students and teachers live and interact with each other (Ratcliff, Jones, Costner, Savage-Davis, & Hunt, 2010). Other peers play a known active role in the environment for students. In exploring other ways to maintain positive behavior change, knowledge that attention is the motivation for student misconduct is especially relevant to the roles of peers (Gable & Hendrickson, 2000). Studies of school climate confirm that school climate affects student behavior (Haynes, Emmons, & Ben-Avie, 1997). Peers engage in both contiguous and more continuous interactions with age mates than adults and, once a behavior-changes program has put into place, research has shown that peers can effectively model, prompt, and reinforce appropriate responses (Gable & Hendrickson, 2000).

Teachers should build an effective rapport with their students which will help tackle and understanding some ongoing behavior problems. Researchers further revealed that classroom management should take a partnership approach between teacher and students, and should satisfy the needs of both (Lewis & Burman, 2008). The interrelationship between teacher disciplinary practices and professional development program should be one where ongoing critical reflection, relevant discussions, and an ability to see various disciplinary approaches being practiced in classrooms are interwoven (Lewis & Burman, 2008). A teacher who focuses on nurturing relationships can better teach and motivate students, for by understanding their organization (both individually and collectively), the teacher can connect with the students with more

informed and possibly effective ways (Burris, 2005). Classrooms should have a positive environment that supports certain values, such as respect and equality, and makes students feel welcome and effective (Durmuscelebi, 2010). Through consistent application of positive reinforcement, teachers facilitate a positive, helpful atmosphere by praising students who comply with classroom rules and/or participate in learning tasks (Paciotti, 2010). Teachers can be proactive in implementing positive responses to student behaviors by planning, creating an environment where positive interactions set the mood for the classroom (Hardman & Smith, 1999). The teacher's role is important to successful teacher-student interaction and creating an encouraging classroom climate (Miller & Pedro, 2006). School climate helps improve academic achievement and reduce discipline problems, and thus is often a target of school improvement initiatives (Mitchell, Bradshaw, & Leaf, 2010).

It is important to create a classroom environment that uses innovative materials, methods, and knowledge in a positive manner and is able to incorporate new advances in education and learning (Rahman et al., 2010). Classroom strategies not only are influential initial interventions, but arranged to sustain targeted replacement behaviors across time and location (Gable & Hendrickson, 2000). Although the well-designed classroom has proven benefits, there is little research on the impact environmental modifications have on behavior and learning (Guardino, 2009; Schilling & Schwartz, 2004). Effective teachers who create positive learning environments develop not only a classroom setting, but also an emotional setting that enhances student performance, making the learning environment a key focus in educating students (Swafford, Bailey, & Beasley, 2014).

**Understanding diversity in the classroom.** It is important for teachers to understand that students within the classroom exude various races, genders, personalities, and learning abilities. Understanding diversity is especially important when dealing with English language learners (ELLs) because this population is growing at a rapid pace (Glaeser, Haas, & Szabo, 2012). When viewing with special education, educators are not all knowledgeable in their approach with certain races.

Often, due to biased assessment procedures and general lack of knowledge about diverse cultures and languages, African-American and Hispanic students are overrepresented in special education (Sung Jik & Clark, 2005). In urban schools, increased numbers of culturally linguistically diverse students with disabilities create challenges (Sung Jik & Clark, 2005). The increased diversification of classrooms in recent years has placed additional demands upon teachers who strive to facilitate the learning and participation of all pupils (Humphrey et al., 2006). Students with challenging behaviors often come from nondominant racial, ethnic, economic, or cultural backgrounds (Thompson & Webber, 2010). The development of a respectful classroom leads to a greater understanding of and appreciation for diverse populations within a school community (Miller & Pedro, 2006). A teacher that is sensitive to the needs of his or her children and strives to create a positive environment may be more likely to be sensitive to the diversity present in the classroom, and/or broader society (Perlman, Kankesan, & Zhang, 2010). In order to meet the unique academic needs of each student, teachers should value the differences each child brings to the classroom (Compton-Lilly, 2008). Teachers who are flexible with their children, and understand the value of

teaching through a variety of modalities and perspectives, may be more likely to incorporate diversity-sensitive materials and activities (Perlman et al., 2010).

Teachers should become more aware in recognizing various themes of development that arise within the classroom. Teachers cannot always immediately see the developmental differences with each student as they enter the classroom. Therefore, it takes many forms and needs to be understood in order to support a child and his/her family (Miller & Pedro, 2006). American and Canadian populations are changing and are becoming more diverse, and diversity is an issue that has gained prominence in the last decade for both researchers and policy-makers (Perlman et al., 2010). Themes that emerged included development of awareness of socioeconomic differences, development of empathetic rapport and caring attitudes, and development of a commitment to culturally responsive teaching (Bennett, 2008). Students from diverse backgrounds are disproportionately identified for special education in the most restrictive placements, and such students tend to have the least access to the general education curriculum as well as experiencing the greatest levels of school failure (Cartledge, Singh, & Gibson, 2008).

In the United States, there are large numbers of low-income African American and Hispanic children in comparison to other races. Racial and ethnic minorities make up the highest percentage of low-income children (Bennett, 2008). These students would benefit most from positive interventions that enable them to adjust to their school's culture and to master the requisite behaviors leading to their success in school (Cartledge et al., 2008).

Responsive teaching involves recognizing and capitalizing upon the vast range of differences that students bring to classrooms. It is crucial that teachers attend to all of

these differences (Compton-Lilly, 2008). A respectful classroom environment decreases the fear of the unknown and unexplored. Therefore, children are encouraged to become acquainted and share ideas with the feeling of safety and appreciation (Miller & Pedro, 2006).

## **Summary**

There are a host of management strategies that can help teachers promote appropriate classroom behavior (Algozzine & Kay, 2002; Johns & Carr, 1995; Walker, Colvin, & Ramsey, 1995). Learning occurs in contexts, and school is a context where adults as well as students learn from one another (Allen, 2010). According to Guardino and Fullerton (2010), teachers are not trained in modifying the classroom environment to encourage academic engagement and discourage disruptive behavior.

To manage successful group processes and general classroom social dynamics, teachers often need collaborative support to develop comprehensive skills and strategies that can enhance children's social growth by promoting a behavioral context that supports prosocial patterns (Cartledge & Loe, 2001; Lo, Loe, & Cartledge, 2002; Lonczak, Abbott, Hawkins, Kosterman, & Catalano, 2002; Walker, Colvin, & Ramsey, 1995). Elementary teachers often cite challenging student behaviors and classroom management as areas of concern, and therefore priorities for professional development (McCready & Soloway, 2010).

It was not evident how elementary school teachers chose, improved, and implemented classroom management strategies. Using the qualitative case study approach explored the types of student misbehaviors that teachers experience in the classroom, and to discover how teachers select their discipline techniques for handling or

preventing those misbehaviors. Due to the various ethnic backgrounds and possible language barriers within the classroom, students faced various missing components in learning within the classroom. In these diverse groups, gaps in learning could contribute to classroom management problems. Supporting teachers' capacity to manage a classroom with positive behavior management strategies, to deliver a curriculum designed to promote social competence and emotional regulation, and to encourage teacher– parent involvement will lead to fewer conduct problems, increased school readiness and eventual academic success (Webster-Stratton, Reid, & Stoolmiller, 2008).

The theories supported throughout this study helped support how teachers select management strategies to use in class, the development of the strategies and skill sets they use in classroom management and the training and support teachers need in order to feel more confident in their approach to classroom management. Providing specific approaches as a foundation helped value the research and various classroom management strategies presented helped to enable students to behave in an organized fashion which increases the likelihood of effective learning environment.

Each specific source of data responded to a certain part of the guided research question throughout the study. The interviews focused on how teachers selected and developed strategies within the classroom. The questionnaires and observations focused on how teachers implemented the classroom strategies. Lastly, the focus group focused on how teacher selected, developed, and implemented strategies within the classroom.

This study advanced the scientific knowledge base by adding to the existing research for teachers and other educators who are interested in learning more classroom

management and strategies for effectively preventing or reacting to misbehavior within their classrooms.

In Chapter 3, the researcher will introduce the method used throughout the study. Chapter 3 will also address the instruments used, the participants to be involved in the study, and how the data will be collected. There will be a clear, concise plan presented to select the study sample and gain consent from participants. The researcher will gather all necessary data from participants to help offer proper results to the current study.

## Chapter 3: Methodology

### Introduction

Classrooms are complex societies where students and teachers live and interact with each other (Ratcliff et al., 2010). Ratcliff et al. (2010) stated that teachers are the leaders of these societies, and the ways they exercise their leadership abilities greatly affect the quality of interactions between teachers and students. The purpose of this qualitative case study was to explore how elementary school teachers selected, developed, and implemented classroom-management strategies. The guiding research questions focused on how teachers learn, select, develop, and implement the classroom-management strategies they use on a daily basis. The particular research focus was extracted from Westbrook-Spaniel's (2008) study and further enhanced by the research focusing on grades Pre-K through 5. Additional questions focused on how teachers defined an effective classroom manager, and the training and support that teachers perceived they needed in order to feel more confident in their approach to classroom management. This chapter presents information related to the methods that was used to collect and analyze the data in this study. This section describes the participants, the participating school, details regarding of the methods of data collection, details regarding the sources of data, and the analysis of data.

### Statement of the Problem

It was not known how elementary school teachers selected, developed, and implemented classroom-management strategies. Further, how the teachers at the research site defined an effective classroom manager, or what training they needed in order to continue to develop their skills is not evident (Westbrook-Spaniel, 2008, p. 34). Since

proper classroom-management methods are a necessity for all teachers to become successful within the classroom, teachers should be linked with the opportunities that nurture their classroom management skills. Although research has been conducted on classroom management, few studies have yielded information about the classroom management practices of teachers. Yet, these factors can affect children's behavior and their school performance (Berry, Hoke, & Hirsh, 2004).

### **Research Questions**

The target sample for this case study included elementary-level teachers in one school located in southern North Carolina. The following research question guided this study:

R1: How do elementary teachers select, develop, and implement classroom management strategies to use in class?

Data collection in this study included the use of questionnaires, interviews, focus groups, and classroom observations. In order for the data required to these research questions to be reliable, each participant responded to the questionnaire with honesty and integrity, return questionnaires in a timely manner, actively participate in the interviews and focus groups, and be themselves during the observation period. The qualitative case study design is the best approach. The case study design allowed the researcher to go within various classroom environments to extract effectively experience how teachers select, develop, and implement classroom management strategies. As a result, the current classroom-management methods used by the participants helped other teachers in the building create more effective classroom management plans.

## Research Methodology

This study proposed a qualitative approach as the method for this particular case study. In case-study research, focusing on meaningful phenomena in ways that examine how those phenomena appear differently in different contexts is important (Westerman, 2009). Data come largely from documentation, archival records, interviews, direct observations, participant observation and physical artifacts (Yin, 1994). Qualitative work using focus groups, unstructured interviews, observation, or other techniques can help the researcher to identify the key issues (Bamberger, 1999). Yin recommended the use of case-study protocol as part of a carefully designed research project that would include an overview of the project (project objectives and case study issues), field procedures (credentials and access to sites), questions (specific questions that the investigator must keep in mind during data collection), guide for the report (outline, format for the narrative) (p. 64).

Yin (1994) offered a very straightforward protocol approach for case-study research emphasizing field procedures, case-study questions, and a guide for the final write-up. The goal of collecting data through a variety of means is both to enhance the theory generating capabilities of the case, and to provide additional validity to assertions made by either the researcher or the participants in the case itself. There is also discussion in the field about how much a researcher is part of any particular presentation of a case study, an effort to manage researcher subjectivity as well as to let the case speak for itself (Stake, 2005). One can view discipline statistics in terms of office referrals, but the reasons why students are misbehaving in the classrooms was better gleaned from a qualitative methodology. Actually discovering what teachers within the school are

educated in the area of classroom management caused more receptivity to new techniques in their classroom.

This study was proposed to give credence to how teachers understand classroom management and their approach to student misbehaviors. In either suggesting change or reinforcing the current state, the results were important for not only elementary schools in southern North Carolina, but schools in general. Through the use of questionnaires, interviews, focus groups, and classroom observations, this qualitative approach produced results that satisfy many principals, and enhance the understanding and skills of classroom management and how to manage student misbehavior. The questionnaire, interview questions, observation form, and focus-group questions came from instruments used in prior studies by Todras (2007) and Gilpatrick (2010). From all the sources of data, various types of data was collected including: written definitions, list of misbehaviors recognized by teachers, management techniques used by teachers, behavioral methods teachers currently use, and any trainings needed dealing with classroom management and student behavior. Once the research methodology and protocols was approved and informed consent was obtained from the participants, the researcher began researching within a set period and gathered all necessary information needed for the study.

### **Research Design**

A research design is like a blueprint for a study (Gillis & Jackson, 2002). A research design provides a detailed plan for data collection and analysis, and is the critical element linking the theoretical framework and questions with the resultant data (Gillis & Jackson, 2002). The blueprint or qualitative design for this study is a case study.

A case study is a necessary and sufficient method for certain vital research tasks in the social sciences and holds up well when compared to other methods in the range of social-science-research methodology (Brown, 2007).

There are various types of research approaches that can be used within qualitative studies. According to Doerr (2004), a phenomenologist frees himself or herself of everyday biases and beliefs in order to observe the essence of some phenomenon and attempt to understand the meaning or essential nature of that phenomenon. Phenomenon research carries out in a rational, investigative manner, and studies awareness, aims, meaning and personal and social experience. Phenomenology gives equal attention to both the personal and social aspects of communal life (Owen, 1994). Therefore, phenomenology would not be a suitable fit here.

According to Thomas and James (2006), there is also another approach researchers use called grounded theory. The ultimate goal of a grounded theory study is to generate a new theory (Charmaz, 2008). The researcher observed the teachers and precisely recorded what is occurring in the classroom. The researcher was able to see a clearer scope of how each observed teacher manages their classroom and handles student misbehaviors. While collecting data, the researcher had the chance to get a sense of the classroom environment. Glaser (1992) stated that grounded theory renders a theory discovered in the data which explains the subjects' main concerns and how they are processed. Creating a theory was not the goal of this research.

Case study is known as a triangulated research strategy. Stake (1995) stated that the protocols that are used to ensure accuracy and alternative explanations are called triangulation (Stake, 1995). The need for triangulation arises from the ethical need to

confirm the validity of the processes. Yin (1994) suggested three principles of data collection for case studies which are the use multiple sources of data, creating a case study database, and maintaining a chain of evidence. In Yin's (2003) view, rigorous data collection follows carefully articulated steps: the use of multiple sources of evidence, the creation of a case study database, and the maintenance of a chain of evidence. The use of multiple sources of data enable the researcher to cover a broader range of issues, and to develop converging lines of inquiry by the process of triangulation. This design is intended to assist the researcher to carry out the study of understanding teacher classroom management strategies and its effect on student behavior while increasing the overall reliability of the research.

### **Population and Sample Selection**

The researcher studied a small sample of elementary level teachers. The school had 13 teachers employed, but only seven teachers taught at the elementary level. The specific sample of this qualitative case study included seven elementary school teachers. All the teachers were from an elementary school in southern North Carolina. The total sample size consisted of seven participants of the school. The researcher was looking at specific grade levels throughout the study period. If the researcher chose to use the entire teacher population of this school, the sample size would have been six additional teachers. The teachers excluded from this study sample were teachers who taught at the middle and high school grade level, which was not appropriate for this particular study. The researcher did not teach at the school where observations were taken.

In Appendix E, the researcher received approval to use research documents and to facilitate research at the study site. The researcher contacted the principal to set up a time

to introduce study to the elementary teachers. From that point, the researcher introduced the study at one of the faculty meetings. Each participant was asked to sign a consent form (Appendix H) before the study began. Each research participant's privacy and confidentiality were protected. Every participant's name remained unknown. The data collected did not request a name and were collected in an unmarked, sealed envelope when returned to researcher. Names remained anonymous and data collected was safeguarded. The participants were able to withdraw without penalty or consequence and their identities were not be used. Once teachers gave proper consent, the researcher scheduled time with teachers and gave them a questionnaire before leaving. Elementary teachers were given questionnaires, set up observation times and dates with the researcher, scheduled interviews with teachers. Then, the elementary teachers from grade levels Pre-K through 5 participated in a focus group session facilitated by the researcher. The researcher did not observe and collect data based on the students and their behavior patterns, but rather observed how the teacher manages his or her classroom in order to prevent these misbehaviors. The researcher also observed how the teacher responded to these behaviors, and the strategies used to address the misbehaviors. The primary investigator was the only one collecting data throughout this particular research study.

Those excluded from the study equaled approximately 31% of the total school faculty and staff. The principal was used for clearance and gathering any additional items needed to assist in validating the research (e.g., school behavior policies). Having the participants observed teachers helped guarantee first-hand responses. The teachers varied from primary teachers who were directly responsible for the students most of the day, to others who were not, including library, technology, and art teachers. The researcher

directed teachers to focus on how they managed the classroom and their experiences with various types of misbehaviors as well.

### **Sources of Data**

The instruments that were used in this study were previously created by other researchers in a former study and are located in appendices A, B, C, and D. The questionnaires, interviews, focus groups, and observations were used to examine the different methods used by public elementary school teachers in a southern North Carolina school for handling student misbehavior in the classroom. Instructions for completion were placed at the top of the questionnaire. The questionnaire had a section where teachers can report descriptive information (i.e., educational degree earned, years of experience, and grade level that they currently teach). The questionnaire consisted of 26 questions. Some questions asked participants to list methods and misbehaviors, and some asked general questions regarding classroom management and their experiences regarding student behavior. The questionnaires took no more than 15 to 20 minutes to complete. The researcher also requested an interview with all elementary teachers at the school and scheduled a time during the 4 to 6-week period during which this study took place. The teacher interviews and a focus group facilitated after the school instruction day has ended. The classroom observations were during instruction time during the school day. Each of the seven teachers was observed for a one to two hour period during instruction and transition times during the day, with each teacher being observed on 2 days. The researcher sat in the back of the classroom to view, and record observations. During transition times, the researcher moved with the class, when necessary.

Each specific source of data answered a certain part of the guided research question throughout the study. The interviews focused on how teachers selected and developed strategies within the classroom. The questionnaires and observations focused on how teachers implemented the classroom strategies. Lastly, the focus group focused on how teacher selected, developed, and implemented strategies within the classroom.

### **Validity**

Validity could use a wide variety of forms of data (words, pictures, videos, etc.) as the basis for descriptions, explanations, or theories. This re-widening of the definition of validity provides a way to talk about qualitative studies as having validity means that researchers can draw meaningful and justifiable inferences from scores about a sample or population (Creswell, 2009). The validity of the questionnaire, interview questions, observations, and focus-group questions was determined by using instruments used in prior studies by Pia Todras (2007) and Robin Gilpatrick (2010). This study gained quality by triangulating the data using the open-ended questionnaire, observations, and face-to-face interviews. Questionnaires and interviews determined the classroom management strategies and student behavior techniques that teachers experienced. This information was used to determine distinguishing strategies and approaches among the teachers who participated in this study. The process of individual interviews and focus groups were useful in obtaining additional information, and discovering more detailed information on the strategies and approaches that teachers use. The questionnaires focused on identifying the strategies each teacher uses. Observations allowed the researcher to gather pertinent information while the teacher is instructing. Triangulation was used to correlate the findings.

## **Reliability**

The reliability of the questionnaire and observation outline was determined based on the evaluation of the principal for the selected school. Reliability means that individual scores from an instrument should be nearly the same or stable on repeated administrations of the instrument and that they should be free from sources of measurement error and consistent (Creswell, 2009). The principal reviewed the sources of data and approved them by concluding that it has reliable content and he or she did not recommend making any changes before conducting the research.

## **Data Collection Procedures**

The sources used to collect the data included the interview questionnaires and the direct classroom observations. The following steps were prepared for data collection. Per the principal's approval, the recruitment process began at a faculty meeting to introduce the study, gathered all the elementary teachers, and asked for volunteers who would like to participate in the study. The participants were given consent forms. Once consent forms were collected, questionnaires were distributed at the beginning of the four- to six-week research period. Data from questionnaires from the seven teachers were collected throughout the course of the four- to six-week period. During the same period, seven teachers were interviewed by the researcher. The researcher requested an interview from seven teachers at the school and schedule a time during a two- to three-week time period. The interview was facilitated either before or after the school day.

Data were collected by the researcher from each participating teacher from grades pre-K to fifth. Data observed from seven teachers was collected within the selected school. Each of the teachers was observed for a one- to two-hour time period at least

twice throughout the research period. With the approval and assistance of the principal, data was collected from school policies regarding student misbehaviors and/or student conduct for the principal's use, in-classroom teacher preparation, and/or informative educational trainings.

All data collected were organized by coding the questionnaires and observations. Interviews and focus-group sessions were recorded and then transcribed. Data was only kept during the duration of the study. Upon completion of the study, the questionnaires and observations were shredded. All electronic files and data will be secured and stored for at least five years after the publication date of this study before being discarded or deleted.

### **Data Analysis Procedures**

All focus groups and interviews were recorded. The researcher typed, reviewed, and then summarized all information from focus groups and interviews. Overall, the researcher analyzed the data using transcription, assessment, and recapping. Utilizing multiple methodologies for information gathering allowed the researcher to gain deeper insight into the manner by which the new teachers and their more-experienced colleagues learned, selected, developed, and implement effective classroom management strategies (Westbrook-Spaniel, 2008). In this case, qualitative data analysis began with labeling or coding each item of information so that differences and similarities between all the items could be found. The qualitative researcher needed a system of identifying and coding data that show in the transcript so that all of the items of data that appeared in one dialogue could be compared with data collected from other participants.

In order to maintain appropriate focus, the research study was crafted based on the research question it most effectively helped to answer:

R1: How do elementary teachers select, develop, and implement classroom management strategies to use in class?

In order to discover the methods used by teachers in the classroom, the questionnaires listed the various methods (e.g., remove from, warnings, ignore the behavior). While observing, different methods that various teachers used for different behaviors became evident. The interview also allowed the researcher to determine strategies that teachers used in the classroom. The interviewer allowed the various teachers an opportunity to express what methods actually worked for them in the classroom. Teachers also explained how they developed these types of strategies. Teachers were able to include more information in the additional comments section or verbally during the interviews and/or focus groups. The teacher interviews and focus groups were recorded and information was transcribed. Individual interviews were coded as Teacher A through Teacher G.

A copy of each of these sources of data (questionnaire, interview questions, observation outlines, and the focus group) was included in the appendices. Once all data was collected, the researcher reviewed the information. All questionnaire questions and responses from participants were entered into an electronic table to clearly view comparisons of responses. The researcher listened to recorded responses from interviews as well as focus groups. The researcher transcribed and typed all responses from the interview and focus groups in an electronically formatted table. All notes from classroom observations were organized in table format to clearly view all notations during the

observation period. In order to align this data with the research question, the researcher ensured all classroom management techniques and student behavior strategies were in a well-organized form to help understand common factors, reoccurrences in behavior, and what seems to work best for teachers in the classroom in alignment to their students' behaviors.

### **Ethical Considerations**

The participants in this study included seven elementary school teachers from a school in southern North Carolina. This study ensured that each research participant's privacy and confidentiality were protected. Every participant's name remained unknown. The data collected did not request a name and were collected in an unmarked, sealed envelope when returned to researcher. Names remained anonymous and data collected was safeguarded. The researcher ensured that all parties involved are comfortable participating in the study. Students were not recorded or taped throughout this study. To assist in eliminating bias throughout the research, the researcher ensured that participants were given enough time to complete the questionnaire and the results were accurately recorded.

Precautions were taken to ensure that the participants were treated with respect and dignity. Another ethical consideration was avoiding cultural bias and racism. All teachers participated in the same questionnaires and focus groups. Participants were informed of their right to not participate in the research study, or to withdraw from the study at anytime without penalty. The right to not participate from the research study at anytime was clarified to the participants before the start of the research study. This study will be published via ProQuest as an approved dissertation while additional data

completed by participants remained confidential for 5 years in a locked receptacle and then destroyed via shredder later that time.

### **Limitations and Delimitations**

The researcher was aware of the following limitations that may interfere with the results and outcome of this study. The data collected in this study were limited to seven teachers within the elementary school; therefore, classroom management methods and perceptions were not representative of all grade level teachers within the school. As a result, this case study focused on seven teachers within one elementary school in southern North Carolina. This study was limited to elementary classrooms in one school; therefore, the results were not a representative of all schools in southern North Carolina. This qualitative case study was completed in elementary classrooms in one school. As a result, one school was different when compared to various schools in southern North Carolina or outside the area.

It was assumed that the use of a questionnaire was a suitable instrument to obtain the subjective data associated with school classroom management practices, attitudes, and behavior to which participants would respond. However, while a span of information was obtained, the data lacked depth. To ensure limitations did not affect the proposed study, the researcher remained consistent throughout interviews and focus groups. The researcher emphasized to the participants the importance of completing the questionnaires.

### **Summary**

Through the use of a qualitative study, the author focused on how data from seven teachers in an elementary school in southern North Carolina employed classroom

management strategies. By using sources of data such as questionnaires, interviews, focus groups and classroom observations, the researcher was able to determine the effects that those strategies have on student behaviors within the classroom. Teachers used consent forms to participate in the study and names of teachers remained anonymous throughout the data collection period. Upon completion of data collection, the researcher organized all information into multiple tables to clearly view the various strategies used, reoccurring behavior issues, and how teachers ultimately view classroom management. This chapter presented multiple methodologies for information gathering allowing deeper insight throughout the research. This chapter also listed some ethical considerations to ensure confidentiality throughout the study. Chapter 4 will discuss the data collection and analysis more in-depth including thorough descriptions of the study sample and participants, identified themes and patterns that emerged from the study.

## Chapter 4: Data Collection and Analyses

### Introduction

The purpose of this qualitative case-study research was to explore how elementary school teachers select, develop, and implement classroom management strategies. Using the replication approach allowed the researcher to repeat the study using similar methods but different subjects and participants. An additional focus was on how teachers define effective classroom management, and the training and support that teachers perceive they need in order to feel more confident in their approach to classroom management. One research question guided data collection for this study. The central question gathered information related how elementary teachers in southern North Carolina schools select, develop, and implement management strategies to use in class. Using Westbrook-Spaniel's (2008) study was possible because the original research question was essential and could contribute to the existing body of information supporting the discipline. Classroom observations, questionnaires, face-to-face/phone interviews, and a focus group were used to collect data. Chapter 4 presents the data collection and data analysis of these participant's perspectives of this study through summaries and textual descriptions.

This chapter contains the analyzed data, often presented in both text and tabular or outline format. To guarantee readability and precision of findings, organization is vital in this chapter. Adequate guidance in the description should be provided to highlight the findings of utmost significance for the reader. Most researchers begin with an explanation of the model and the applicable demographic characteristics obtainable in manuscript or tabular format.

## **Descriptive Data**

**Participant recruitment plan and participation.** For the purposes of this study, the teachers selected were from the elementary level only. The target sample size used for this study was seven elementary teachers and all seven teachers agreed to participate in the study. In the original study by Westbrook-Spaniel (2008) the research focus was similar, but the research participants were different and sample size was larger.

The school principal contacted the teacher who taught at the elementary level face-to-face. The principal notified the researcher via e-mail of all the teachers agreed to participate in the study. After receiving e-mail with a list of names, each participant received a consent form directly from researcher to sign. All consent forms were signed by each participant within three days.

The questionnaire consisted of 26 questions (see Appendix A). Some questions asked the participants to list methods and misbehaviors, and some asked general questions regarding classroom management and their experiences regarding student behavior. The questionnaires took approximately 15 to 20 minutes to complete. All questionnaire questions and responses from participants were entered into an electronic table to clearly view comparisons of responses. Any additional information noted in the 'comment section' was recorded as well at the conclusion of the table.

Data were also collected through individual interviews with the use of an interview guide consisting of 14 questions (see Appendix B). The participants were very knowledgeable and willing to answer the interview questions. All interview questions were answered with no difficulty. The average time of each interview was approximately 30 minutes; however, one of the interviews took almost one hour. Additionally, field

notes were taken from researcher observations in the classroom to capture the skills and management strategies of each teacher. The researcher did not teach at the school where observations were taken.

Classroom observations were another form of data collection. The researcher was positioned strategically in a certain area of the room away from the teachers and students, but able to easily see all areas of the room. The researcher also followed teachers and class during any transitions that occurred during the observation period. The field notes were entered into a separate electronic table to view comparisons of the researcher's field notes. Any additional information noted by the researcher during the observation was recorded in writing as well as at the end of the table. Observations were pertinent to the process of triangulation in this study. Observations allowed the researcher to gather pertinent information while the teacher is instructing and associate the findings in connection to the questionnaires and interviews. Observations were documented using a checklist (see Appendix C) and additional notes made by the researcher during the observation period. The researcher observed how each teacher managed his or her classroom, including the approaches used with students misbehaving, techniques used during transition periods between lessons, and systems used to reward students. The classroom observations were during instruction time. Each of the seven teachers was observed for a one to two hour period during instruction and transition times during the day, with each teacher being observed on two separate days. The researcher sat in the back of the classroom to view and record observations. Through the observations, it was evident that some teachers chose to react to their classroom as the misbehaviors arose while other teachers were more prepared and proactive. The researcher noticed a

consistency of reoccurring acts of preparedness from some teachers even on day two.

This observation showed that some teachers' strategies were natural to them, whether it was from training or simply intuition. During transition times, the researcher moved with the class, when necessary. The researcher and the teachers observed were not co-workers prior to or during the study period.

Lastly, a focus group (see Appendix D) was formed including elementary school teachers. The forum was set up as a question and answer format. Teachers were divided into groups and given select questions to answer. Each group had approximately seven minutes to answer the set of question as one unit. Each group was asked to record each answer in writing. After seven minutes expired, a representative from each group read the questions and presented the answers. The remaining groups were given the opportunity to comment on questions as well. The focus group was audio recorded and transcribed within three days after focus group was completed. Upon completion of focus group, researcher collected written answers from each group as a form of data for the study. The questions asked in the interview, questionnaires, and focus group originated from instruments used in prior studies by Pia Todras (2007) and Robin Gilpatrick (2010).

**Descriptive data of study participants.** In total, seven elementary school teachers, with various ages and education backgrounds, participated in the study. The population in the study ranged from age 39 to 62. Out of the total population of participants, 60 percent were over the age of 50. The following table shows the various levels of educational degrees and years of experience of each participant.

Table 1

*Participants' Education and Experience*

Teacher Code	Experience	Highest Degree	National Board Certified
<b>A</b>	4-6 years	Bachelor's	No
<b>B</b>	10-12 years	Master's	No
<b>C</b>	4-6 years	Bachelor's	No
<b>D</b>	over 12 years	Doctorate	No
<b>E</b>	over 12 years	Master's	No
<b>F</b>	over 12 years	Master's	Yes
<b>G</b>	Over 12 years	Bachelor's	No

The age range and educational experience of the participants were significant in the fact that some of the study participants revealed strategies, and approaches that were practiced during the 1960s and before. It should also be noted that due to some of the generational differences between some of the participants, responses to interview questions may have differed slightly due to the age and generational differences. Some of the participants were practicing the same strategies and behavior approaches that they used when they began teaching such as time out.

### **Data Analysis Procedures**

Groundwork for the data analysis process included transcribing the audio recorded interviews and organizing classroom observation notes that were taken during the interviews. All interviews were completed over a three week span. Thereafter, interviews were transcribed within two weeks. For member checking purposes, the transcripts were returned to each participant via email including a thank you for

participating. The email requested each participant to check the transcripts for accuracy and precision. In the case of errors, the participants were asked to respond with any proposed additions or corrections or additions that needed to be made. Each participant was asked to reply to email within five days from which the email was received. It was stated that in the case of 'no reply' in the five days, the researcher would proceed with the current data as is. Out of seven participants, only one replied with corrections or additions to the transcribed interview content.

The validity of the sources of data used throughout this study was determined by using instruments used in prior studies by Todras (2007) and Gilpatrick (2010). This study gained value by triangulating the data using the open-ended questionnaire, observations, and face-to-face interviews. The principal reviewed the sources of data and approved them by concluding that they had reliable content and she did not recommend making any changes before conducting the research. There was no source of error that may have impacted the data.

Upon gathering all information from each source of data the researcher began to transcribe the data. First, each transcript was read through two times looking for comparable words, responses and techniques. To help keep group all similar items, a color coding method was used. Secondly, all information that was irrelevant noted and discarded from the study. After the color coding method was complete, all reoccurring relevant information was counted manually. Thereafter, the information was placed in similar categories and/or personality themes or patterns grouped into themes based on similar words, responses, or techniques. The data were aligned with the field notes from the observations of specific behaviors, dealings, and occurrences that support the

individual participant interviews and comments. Field notes were coded based on similarities to already recognized words, responses, or techniques.

## Results

Through transcribing, coding, and analyzing the responses from the questionnaires and interviews, four themes emerged. The themes were (a) noncompliant behaviors, (b) preparation, (c) emotions, and (d) training.

Table 2

*Key Themes*

Theme	Definition
Noncompliant Behavior	Failure to comply, refusing to cooperate
Preparation	Timeliness, knowledge, foundation
Emotion	Any strong agitation of the feelings actuated by experience
Training	Organized activity aimed at imparting information and/or Instructions to improve the recipient's performance

**Noncompliant behavior.** Of the participants, four experienced many instances of misconduct within the classroom with their students. Some teachers felt that before a teacher can deal with the students' misbehaviors he or she must first recognize the types of behaviors. Throughout the study, the participants concluded that they experience various types of misbehaviors within the classroom. Most behavior patterns were similar; however, there were many behavior issues that were different.

Below is a description of the emerging themes and supporting words, responses and techniques. The first set of tables (3-6) show questionnaire results emerging from the noncompliant behaviors:

Table 3

*Percentage of Students Identified as Noncompliant Students*

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Participant Code	Response
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A	15%-20%
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B	1%-5%
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C	1%-5%
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D	Depends on the school. 15%-20%
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E	1%-5%
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F	15%-20%
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G	6%-10%
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Table 4

*Noncompliant Behaviors within the Class*

Participant Code	Response
A	Inattentiveness, lack of motivation
B	Speaking when others are speaking
C	Speaking out, argumentative, out of seat
D	Active – shutting out, fighting, insulting other students, crazy jokes; Passive – uncooperative, but silent
E	Speaking out of turn, Inattentiveness
F	Inattentiveness, getting out of seat
G	Speaking when others are speaking, getting out of seat

Table 5

*Number of Times Noncompliant Behaviors are Addressed*

Participant Code	Response
A	up to 3 times
B	none
C	up to 3 times
D	Depends on the school. 10 or more times
E	4-6 times
F	up to 3 times
G	up to 3 times

Table 6

*Is your Response to Item #3 (see Table 3), Reflective of the Past Year as well?*

Participant Code	Response
A	Yes. Students sleeping in class, not paying attention
B	Yes (No explanation given)
C	Yes (No explanation given)
D	No (No explanation given)
E	No. This year is easier with Kindergarten. Last year I started teaching the class in February and there was no classroom management in place.
F	No. Because I had fewer girls in my class
G	Yes (No explanation given)

**Preparation.** Of the participants, 100% (7 out of 7) felt that being prepared and organized was one of the key factors to effective classroom management. The participants felt that in order to advance and become better as an educator one must always be prepared for any behavior situation that may arise throughout the school day. All of the study participants concluded that preparedness was one of the most significant factors in effective approaches to student misbehaviors. However, they often noted that there were some teachers who may need help in the area of classroom management, but may be afraid to reach out to their counterparts with the school who may be dealing with similar issues. When speaking about of preparation, some participants were straightforward and clear in their statement, while others seemed a little more hesitant to voice their opinion about the issue.

**Emotions.** Many participants were vocal about how these various noncompliant behaviors made them feel. One participant, in particular, stood out when she said that “It lets me know that this is an area that this child needs help in developing. I typically don’t get upset; I just change gears to quickly address the issue”. Another participant was very straight forward and stated that his feeling was simply sadness.

**Training.** All, with the exception of one participant, agreed that additional training was needed in classroom management and student behavior. One participant, in particular, stated that most teachers depend on ‘old’ strategies to have the same affect one this ‘new’ society of students. “Some techniques may need to be revisited and others should not be used at all in the classroom”. There was one participant who was solely behind his statement saying “Trainings are not effective.” He believed that more practice within the classroom is the best approach of learning how to become better at classroom management and student behavior approaches. One participant suggested that mandatory trainings should be reoccurring throughout the school for new and tenured teachers. She stated that she would be open to administrators coming in the classroom to observe her current classroom management skills. She felt being observed would help her get feedback about what areas she could improve in to become a better educator. One participant did not prefer anyone observing her classroom. She felt it would cause more of a distraction in the class. Majority of the participants, with the exception of one, felt that additional training classroom management is needed and effective for to improve student behaviors within the classroom. It is evident that teachers desire to be trained and more developed in classroom management. Effective classroom management is a necessity for teachers to become more effective within the classroom.

The researcher discovered the differences in perception among the teachers who participated in this study. From the responses, the researcher perceived that teacher trainings should be done during and outside of instruction time. For example, observations from administration or co-teachers followed by meeting to discuss what was observed or traditional trainings during teacher workdays.

### **Research Questions**

The following discussion and analysis pertains to how the research question was answered by the data. This section shows how the question was synced with the themes that emerged from the data analysis.

**Central research question.** The central research question (R1) focused on how the elementary teachers selected, developed, and implemented classroom management strategies to use in class. Some of the participants had additional comments to share about the experiences that they had while managing the classroom. Sharing related issues, the participants felt that being aware of management strategies helped manage various misbehaviors from students.

TEACHER A mentioned insight about experience within the classroom with the students how she manages disruptive behavior:

Major disruptive behaviors are inattentiveness, getting out of their seats and becoming argumentative. In response, I immediately make sure I take control of the classroom and situation. It teaches the student that there is order in the classroom. I realize that through experience these strategies work pretty well for me.

TEACHER C gave more of a step-by-step approach to classroom management

and student behavior she uses:

Most of the disruptive behaviors I see in the classroom are talking out during classroom discussions, being off task, and fidgeting; primarily the boys. Be clear and detailed. Explain classroom expectations at the beginning of the year. I am very comfortable in the classroom and when disturbances arise, I may move closer to the student. I may say "You are not meeting our expectations." From years of teaching, I found these strategies to be effective through experimentation.

Reading 'Classroom Discipline 101' by Craig Seganti gave direction and instruction in how to approach various types of behavior that may occur within the classroom. Some of the techniques were more effective than others, especially when dealing with many personalities within the classroom.

TEACHER D was detailed in sharing his view of classroom management strategies and misbehaviors in his classroom throughout his experience:

Students seem passive and aggressive throughout the day. Many students seem to shout out and began goofing around with other peers. As teachers, we should engage the students, keeping in mind that each student is different. Therefore, the approach and how I engage a student is different. Private chats with the disruptive student, away from the other students, are always good approach. I believe cooperation and compromise is key with the student. I learned to give a little power to the students throughout the day making the class more theirs than mine. I manage disruptive behaviors by setting up circumstances that encourages cooperation, learn to earn students respect, and stay clear and constant.

TEACHER G talked about her first year teaching at a new school and gave her view on management strategies within the classroom and the misbehavior she has encountered at a new school:

The most behavior problem I deal with in classroom is when the students simply not following directions. I found that allowing students to be classroom helpers, line leaders, assistants, and head up class for morning assembly really minimizes a lot of behavior issues.

The next of set of tables (7 through 8) show questionnaire results emerging from the classroom management strategies:

Table 7

*Rated Top Three Strategies*

Participant Code	Rating: #1	2	3
<b>A</b>	Verbal Reminders of Appropriate Behavior	Parent Telephone Calls	Note to the Parents
<b>B</b>	Loss of Privileges (esp. participation in discussions)	Verbal Reminder of Appropriate Behavior	Parent Telephone Calls
<b>C</b>	Clearly Defined Classroom Expectations	Seating Arrangements	Parent Communication
<b>D</b>	Conversation	Cooperation	Compromise
<b>E</b>	Reward System	Parent Notes or Emails	Verbal Reminders of Appropriate Behavior
<b>F</b>	Reward System	Parent Notes or Emails	Loss of Privileges
<b>G</b>	Verbal Reminders of Appropriate Behavior	Parent Telephone Calls	Reward System

Table 8

*Rate the Effectiveness of Classroom Management Strategies in General*

<b>Rating of Effectiveness</b>	<b>Participant Code</b>
Very Effective	A, B, C, D
Effective	D, E
Sporadic Effectiveness	F
Inconsistent	---
Ineffective	---

Table 9

*Indicate the Classroom Strategies used in the Classroom.*

Participant Code	Response
A	Office referrals, parents notes or emails, parent telephone calls, verbal reminders or appropriate behaviors
B	Reward system, office referrals, time out in classroom, time out in another classroom, parent telephone class referral to school counselor, seating arrangements, name on board, detention or after school consequence, verbal reminders of appropriate behavior, contracts, loss of privilege (recess, etc.)
C	Parent notes or emails, parent telephone calls, notes in agendas, seating arrangements, detention or after school consequence, verbal reminders of appropriate behavior, loss of privileges (recess, etc.), clearly defined classroom expectations and consequences.
D	Parent notes or emails, parent telephone calls, seating arrangements, verbal reminder of appropriate behavior, ignore misbehaviors, talk to the student
E	Reward system, parent note or emails, parent telephone calls, notes in agenda, seating arrangement, verbal reminders of appropriate behavior, loss of privileges
F	Reward system, time out in classroom, parent notes or emails, parent telephone calls, seating arrangements, verbal reminders of appropriate behavior, loss of privilege (recess, etc)
G	Reward system, office referrals, parent notes or emails, parent telephone calls, seating arrangements, verbal reminders of appropriate behaviors

All of the participants briefly shared how they developed these strategies. They also stated skills they choose to use in the classroom. Table 10 shows how each participant's develop their classroom management strategies:

Table 10

*How Teachers Develop their Classroom Strategies used in the Classroom*


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Participant Code	Response
A	Remain attentive to class as a whole. There may be times throughout the year when students will need a different seating arrangements or even better preparation from me.
B	Allowing the students to assist within the classroom. Making them a part of the planning process.
C	Simply by experiencing different situations day to day. Sticking to what work and not reinventing the wheel.
D	Making sure I am prepared at all times because the students know when I am not on my game.
E	Treating each student as an individual and using strategies that meet that. Maintaining expectations and remind students of those expectation throughout the school year.
F	Keeping an open and listening ear.
G	Getting advice from other teachers that may have similar issues with behaviors and management. Talking to the students more about their needs.

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Tables 7-10 showed the selection and implementation of all the participants within the study. Each teacher stated various types of strategies used in the classroom and had a different approach to how they developed their classroom strategies. Some teachers felt their strategies were more effective than others. Being prepared and involving the students seem to be common in many responses from the teachers. The researcher was not surprised that only one teacher was open to getting advice from other teachers.

This study also supported what teachers needed in order to feel more confident in their approach to classroom management. Teacher B stated that back in college she thinks she had some basic psychology classes, but for the most part, learned to deal with inappropriate behavior on the job. She did not receive any specific training in handling disruptive behaviors from students. She stated that “You can never really prepare for everything you will face in a day. I think the best training would be to be preemptive in your expectations and consequences.” She thinks herself, along with most teachers, could benefit from more training. “I think on the one hand, everyone would like more training. However, sometimes trainers are met with resistance because teachers take critique personally.” She feels stress management training would be beneficial to her and her peers.

Teacher D did not receive specific training in handling disruptive behaviors or classroom management. He stated that he does not think he could not benefit from additional training because it is not effective. “More practice instead of theory.” He thinks his co-workers would be passive and suffer through the admin-forced trainings. The kinds of training that would be more beneficial would be simply watching other teachers and talking with each other.

Teacher F has not participated in any additional training. The teacher felt she could benefit from more training in classroom management and student behavior. “I feel that my-coworkers would be open to more training because it would help them develop a positive learning environment.”

**Participants' opinions.** During the study, all participants gave their opinions of various statements dealing with classroom management and behavior approaches. The table below shows the responses of each participant:

Table 11

*Opinions on Classroom Management Strategies and Behavior Approaches*

Opinions	(SA-Strongly Agree, A-Agree, N-Neutral, D-Disagree, SD-Strongly Disagree)				
	SA	A	N	D	SD
Disruptive student behavior interferes with learning	Teacher A, C, D, G	Teacher F, E	Teacher B		
Disruptive student negatively affect the overall classroom climate	Teacher C, D, G	Teacher A, E	Teacher B, F		
Student achievement scores would increase if there were fewer discipline issues in the classroom	Teacher C, D, F	Teacher A, B, E, G			
Instructional time is lost due to student behavior problems	Teacher C, D	Teacher B, E, G	Teacher A, F		
There is a relationship between time learning and academic success	Teacher C, D	Teacher A, B, F, E, G			
All students lose opportunities to learn because of discipline problems	Teacher C, D, E	Teacher A, G	Teacher B, F		
Teachers experience stress because of daily interactions with noncompliant student	Teacher E, G	Teacher A, B, C	Teacher F	Teacher D	
Teachers can get discouraged because of ineffective classroom management strategies	Teacher C, E	Teacher A, B, D, F, G			
Teachers receive adequate training in dealing with difficult students		Teacher B		Teacher A, F, E, G	Teacher C, D
Current strategies are effective in minimizing student disruptions	Teacher D, G	Teacher B, F	Teacher A, E		Teacher C
Providing professional development opportunities in classroom management strategies is a good idea	Teacher C, D, G	Teacher A, B, E			Teacher F
Allotting time for teachers to enhance classroom management skills through mentoring, collegial coaching, of study group is a good idea	Teacher C, D, F, G	Teacher A, B, E			
A desktop reference manual with research-based classroom management strategies would be a beneficial tool for teachers	Teacher C, F	Teacher A, B, E, G			Teacher D
Effective classroom management strategies would improve teachers' job satisfaction	Teacher C, D	Teacher A, B, F, E, G			
Improved classroom management strategies would improve student academic success	Teacher B, C, D, F	Teacher A, E, G			

This table showed the variation of opinions between the participants. Each teacher had similarities as well as difference in the way they approach various types of behaviors and manage their classroom. All teachers agreed that disruptive students negatively affect the overall classroom climate. The researcher learned that all teachers were discouraged because of their ineffective classroom management strategies. As expected, current strategies used by some teachers are not effective and most teachers agree with the necessity of future training to improve their management skills.

**Researcher observations.** The researcher did classroom observations through the research period. During this period, it was evident that each participant approached classroom management and student behavior various ways, some similar and some different. The researcher used a classroom management observation checklist to help capture various behaviors areas that may be seem during the observation period. The checklist included the rating scale: 0 = None, 1 = Some, 2 = Extensive for observed behaviors. Each participant was observed on 2 separate days (2 hours each day). With the help of the rating scale the researcher was able to better understanding regarding the types behaviors that actually occur in the classroom. From the results of the observation checklist the researcher was able to narrow the 32 behavior areas down to the following 11 behavior categories: On Task, Gives Directions, Rules Posted, Gives Rewards, Procedures, Small Transitions, Proximity, Knowledge, Positive Attitude, Interaction, and Climate. The researcher used a classroom management observation checklist (Appendix C) from a prior study by Robin Gilpatrick (2010). The following table shows the scores from all participants (P = participant).

Table 12

*Scores from Classroom Management Observation Checklist*

Behavior Category	# of P	(N=None, S=Some, E=Extensive)	
		Day 1	Day 2
On Task	7	N=0%	N=0%
		S=0%	S=28.5%
		E=100%	E=71.5%
Gives Directions	7	N=0%	N=0%
		S=57.1%	S=42.9%
		E=42.9%	E=57.1%
Rules Posted	7	N=14.3%	N=14.3%
		S=0%	S=0%
		E=85.7%	E=85.7%
Gives Rewards	7	N=42.9%	N=42.9%
		S=14.3%	S=14.3%
		E=42.9%	E=42.9%
Procedures	7	N=0%	N=0%
		S=28.5%	S=0%
		E=71.5%	E=100%
Small Transitions	7	N=0%	N=0%
		S=57.1%	S=14.3%
		E=42.9%	E=85.7%
Proximity	7	N=0%	N=0%
		S=28.5%	S=14.3%
		E=71.5%	E=85.7%
Knowledge	7	N=0%	N=0%
		S=14.3%	S=0%
		E=85.7%	E=100%
Positive Attitude	7	N=0%	N=0%
		S=42.9%	S=14.3%
		E=57.1%	E=85.7%
Interaction	7	N=0%	N=0%
		S=14.3%	S=0%
		E=85.7%	E=100%
Climate	7	N=0%	N=0%
		S=28.5%	S=28.5%
		E=71.5%	E=71.5%

**Field notes: Observations.** During the observation period, the researcher compiled additional notes while in the classroom. The researcher captured in-depth notes on each participant based on their classroom management skills and behavior approaches. During the observation, various management skills and behavior approaches were captured.

While observing TEACHER A, the researcher immediately recognized the participant complimenting students. “You are doing a great job!” Lesson plans were located on the dry erase board before students entering the class. As noted in the literature review, when teachers provide planned lessons that provide a smooth flow of instruction and helps prevent off-task behaviors. Class instructions began on time. A parent dropped one student off late to the class, but student fell in the normal routine smoothly with the other students. Students were given a heads up of the lesson plan for the next day. Student expectations were evident and the students were asked to recite the post expectations. Items posted on the classroom wall were aligned with the subjects being taught in class allowing student to see them clearly. The teacher gave specific direction and repeated them to students for clarity

As far as size, the classroom was fairly smaller than normal, but the teachers’ use of desk and table placement was used well. Students were still sitting close to each other. The behavior of students seemed to be more regulated during group discussion as oppose to the typical seating format in the classroom. The literature review shows that modifying the classroom, for a variety of developmental and educational levels, may serve as a direct intervention for children who demonstrate ongoing disruptive behavior. The literature reviews also states that successful teachers think about the causes of

misbehavior and respond to students as individuals. When teachers learn to use disruptions as teachable moments and opportunities to model self-discipline, the teacher begins to develop similar management approaches in the future. The teacher asked many questions to the student and praised them when they were correct. If students were incorrect, the teacher challenged them to dig for the answer. The researcher noticed one student who seemed out of the loop and somewhat drowsy. The teacher did not notice the student immediately, but eventually saw her and addressed the student to sit up.

The researcher observed a teacher discussing homework that was given the previous day. The teachers acknowledged students who brought in completed homework daily in front of the class. The classroom went over homework together. Even though it took additional time to go over incorrect homework answers the teacher made it a teachable moment by working the problems. The teacher matched students with correct answers with those who had incorrect answers. Once students were done with the homework problems they walked over to teacher to check answers. Some students became frustrated when they did not understand, but the teacher encouraged them to keep working. The teacher verbally ‘in front of the class’ stated that a particular student could not seem to get answer correct putting the student on the spot. The student seemed somewhat embarrassed in front of his peers. As stated in the literature review, some behavioral problems are often the result of the teacher's failure to adjust their teaching to their students' abilities. During another situation, the teacher called on one of the students and the student responded “yeah.” The teacher immediately corrected the student *excuse me* and the student said quickly responded “yes maam.”

TEACHER B was very proactive with the students by having additional tasks ready when some student finished early. The teacher had an independent teaching style. Students worked in separately, but could ask the teacher if they had questions. The teachers walked around the class and praised students for their focus as well as correct answers. The students, overall, seemed very on task and well behaved. The teacher noticed one of the students, who did not ask for help, was struggling with the assignment. The teacher asked the student if he needed help and he actually did. There was a smooth transition between each lesson. The students seemed to know exactly what to do next.

The researcher noticed the classroom desks were decorative which can become a distraction to some of the students. The teacher allowed students to help create and implement classroom rules together. As noted in the literature review, classroom rules provide positive connections between teachers and students. The researcher noticed multiple sets of rules posted which can become confusing for the students. After almost an hour of sitting, the teacher allowed the students to stop, stand, and shake themselves off.

During the observation period, the researcher walked in on TEACHER C speaking with a student about a behavior issue. The student seemed very stubborn and began talking back. The teacher used the classroom phone to contact the student's parent. The other students were busy doing activities while the teacher dealt with the behavior problem. This issue stemmed from the student not completing homework again, which seemed to be a reoccurring issue. At the same time, the teacher told another student to throw away gum in a stern voice and student stormed to the trash can. The teacher reminded one student that "When I have to stop and deal with your issues I cannot move

on with the rest of the class.” None of the additional students were off task. The teacher began to go over homework with a student and noticed the student becoming frustrated and disrespectful because he did not understand the assignment. The teacher immediately informed the student that “I am not entertaining your behavior” and told the student to focus and continue working. The teacher did not allow the student to continue making excuses to why the work was not done or why he did not understand the assignment. The teacher challenged the student and let him know “You can do it!” The student was irritated that he had to do the math problem a certain way. The teacher told him “Because that is the way it is done” and then she told him that he needed to show his work in the math problem in order to find the answer. After 45 minutes, the teacher finally got through to the student and the he smiled once he understood the math problem. The teacher presented sarcastic moments with some students.

At one point during the observation, one of the school administrators walked into the class to talk to the teacher and the student began to get rowdy and noisy. The teacher immediately turned around and gave the class ‘the look’ and the student quickly got quiet. The student seemed very comfortable and the classroom climate was very family oriented. It was evident that the teacher had a great relationship with her student in her classroom. She really knew how to engage her students and had a fun teaching delivery using the computer as a part of her teaching tool. Students seem to be having so much fun learning through various activities. The teacher would actually sit and participate with the student in some of the activities and games. The teacher was pulled out in the hall of the classroom briefly and the students were so captivated in their activity that no one noticed the teacher had left the room.

Lastly, the teacher noticed one of the students' head on the desk. She immediately addressed the student in a friendly way by saying "I always heard that the brain works better when it is up" and the student quickly sat up. The teacher used a different approach rather than simply saying 'sit up'. The teacher continued to praise the student throughout the classroom.

When the researcher walked in the classroom of TEACHER D the students were on task and surprisingly quiet for an elementary age. The teacher was putting a problem on the dry erase board to solve as a class. When students were asked to independently work on another problem and the teacher walked across the classroom to grab something off the table the students remained quiet and on task. As shown in Table 12, being on task was evident in the researcher observation in the classroom. Once the teacher retrieved the items she began walking around the class. It is good to walk around the class at least once to see if any students need assistance. The teacher originally told the students they had 5 minutes, but noticed they were still working around the 5 minute mark and gave them more time. Upon completion of the problem, the teacher gained the students attention and they all begin 'walking through' the problem together. It appeared that a few students were more involved; answering questions more than others. Therefore, the teacher immediately began to call on the students who seemed 'out of the loop' instead of calling on those who were raising their hands. The climate of the classroom was somewhat 'dry' and the teacher's voice tone was very monotone. The student, overall, were quiet and only 2 or 3 students really seemed interested; answering questions. During the transition from one assignment to the next the teacher clearly stated directions for the next activity. The one situation that stood out the most was when the teacher asked a question and none

of the students said a word. The researcher noted that the students seemed perplexed by the assignment given. The teacher stated that “the winning person will get a prize, but I’m not sure what the prize will be yet.” Preparation is key even in rewarding students. The classroom had a job chart visible showing leadership opportunities within the classroom. The classroom had a posted list of AM and PM procedures such as unpack bookbag, sharpen pencils, pack bookbag, etc. The class schedule was also posted on the board. The desks were placed in a good distance from one another and the white board. The teacher made it her duty to ensure the student understood all assignments and directions throughout the day. Being clear and concise in direction helps eliminate many behavior issues such as unnecessary chatter, joking, and frustration.

During another observation time, the researcher was able to observe the students entering the classroom and they were asked to look at the board, which directed them to read over their notes for a small quiz. Some students walked in the classroom talking to friends and laughing and others were quiet. Students seem to know the routine and begin working. The teacher was also grading papers before the students walked in, but once she noticed the students were coming she stopped and said “Good Morning” to each of the students. The tone of the teacher seemed very relaxed. The way a teacher begins a day has a major impact on the way the rest of the day even down to the morning greeting.

During instruction time, the teacher did not request the students to raise their hands. The students simply shout out the answers to the teachers. This type of approach works in classrooms, but not in all cases. Allowing students to shout can become noisy and some students came become disruptive in other ways as well. Teachers must know

what works to ensure they do not give any loopholes for misbehaviors. The teacher had total control over her class and misbehaviors were minimal.

TEACHER E ensured she controlled her classroom by including breaks, songs, and wiggle moments. As shown in Table 12, small transitions were less evident in day one of the researcher's observation, but were more evident on the next day of observations. Incorporating moments within the instruction that allows students to get all their jitters out prevents some misbehaviors and disinterest. During carpet time, some students became talkative because they were attempting to get the teacher's attention or talking to other students. The teacher immediately, in a nice stern tone, redirected the students. She continued to encourage the students throughout activity use statements like "You can do it!" or "I have such smart star students!" The teacher did not talk 'at' her students but 'to' students.

The researcher also noticed TEACHER E observing her students during one of the classroom activities. During the handwriting activities the teacher walked around to each table monitoring the students writing their names. The teacher gave directions of what she wanted them to do once they are done writing their names. For example, she had the students get a book from the baskets that were located on each table. The students quietly picked up a book and begin reading independently.

The teacher ensured her students knew the expectations of the classrooms. The students read and repeated classroom rules. The teacher even took it a step further by having the students explain the classroom rules so that the students understand what they are reciting. During group time, the students were asked to stand and the teacher had the students repeat the following class pledge:

“I pledge today to do my best in reading, math, and all the rest.”

“I promise to obey the rules in my class and in our school.”

“I’ll respect myself and others too.”

“I’ll expect the best in all I do.”

“I am here to learn all I can.”

To try my best and be all I am.”

This pledge placed responsibility on each student to own up to their individual behavior and task in class.

The teacher gave warnings when students broke the rules. The researcher noticed that the teacher used a traditional ‘name on the board’ approach when the students misbehave. Whenever students became rowdy and inattentive, the teacher would automatically become silent. This method seemed to work well and students began to regroup. To praise students, the teacher used a ‘dollar’ reward system. Most teachers, as shown in Table 9, used reward system within their classroom. When students did something good and remained focused they were rewarded a dollar which they could redeem at the end of the week for a prize. One statement that stood out regarding the reward system was when the teacher said “Here’s a dollar for sitting like a scholar!”

The researcher observed TEACHER F leading assembly during group time. Assembly consists of singing the ‘Good Morning’ song, doing the calendar, checking the weather, and more. One of the songs during group time dealt with following directions (similar to Simon Says). The student who followed directions the best became the new leader. The teacher even played with the students. The researcher noticed one child crying because he wanted to become the leader and the teacher initially ignored him.

Eventually the student stopped crying (after about 2 minutes) and began to participate in the activity. Some students left the group without permission for various reasons (i.e. going to the bathroom, walking to cubby) and the teacher immediately redirected students asking “Do you have permission to leave the carpet?” This statement did not give the student information and direction of what to do if they need to leave the carpet. One student hit another student during group time and when the teacher began to walk towards the student, he began to cry. Students know when they are in trouble and the teacher’s approach has to be ‘tailor made’ for each student, making the moment teachable. When the students were asked to line up, one by one, the teacher continue to redirect a particular student (sitting on the carpet) about keeping his hands behind his back before being called to get in line. One instance of the teacher addressing one of the student misbehaving was a simple statement; “You’re a first grader!” She explained to the student that he is an example and leader now; no longer in Kindergarten. The student began to smile and teacher gave him a high five.

TEACHER G was doing a writing assignment about leaders and Martin Luther King Jr. became to subject. The teacher adjusted the writing assignment based on the student’s interest and had the student write a brief paragraph describing the significance of Martin Luther King Jr. The teacher encouraged the students; “Students do your best writing!” Because of the interest the student were very focused in the assignment. No time limit was given on the assignment which can prevent nervousness and pressure for the students to speed through the assignment. When the students feel pressured they tend to not be as effective with the task at hand. Most students who finished early remained quiet while other finished while some whispered to others. The teacher passed out the

next assignment when the student finished early. The teacher read each paper as students finished them and praised each student for their work. Some students were asked to read their work aloud if the teacher felt it was great writing sample. When those students felt appreciative and happy, selecting certain students could cause other students to become upset, embarrassed, and not smart enough.

**Field notes: Focus group session.** All 7 participants were invited via email to participate in the focus group. The focus group was facilitated by the researcher outside of the normal school instruction period. Out of the 7 participants who were invited, 4 (TEACHER B, D, E, F) agreed to participate. The focus group was structured as a question, answer and discussion forum. The session lasted only 1 hour. Therefore, 2 questions were eliminated out of the 10 listed in Appendix D. The questions eliminated were questions 8 and 10. Both questions were infused within the overall discussion during the session. Each participant was given 2 questions and given 10 minutes to write a brief response to each question to present to researcher and rest of the participants. After each question was presented (in no particular order) the responses were discussed with the entire focus group. Other participants were able to add to the original response, creating one solidified response as a group. The researcher posed a question from the synthesis activity for each participant to answer based on their opinion. Upon the completion of the discussion, the researcher ended the session with a closing statement and all participants had the opportunity to give any last statements on the topic. During the session, researcher took notes as well as collected written answers from each participant. Researcher reviewed and transcribed notes and participant responses for the use of the study.

TEACHER B was asked to speak to the topic of classroom management in her classroom:

Simply knowing how to manage your classroom based on the type of students that you have. Be able to think ‘outside of the box’ of traditional learning and meets the needs of every student in one set learning environment.

Another participant stated that it was a teacher’s control of their learning environment.

The next question was to explain the relationship between students’ noncompliant behaviors, teachers’ stress, student success, and teacher efficacy:

They all work together as a unit. There is always reason behind a student acting out. If teachers are not properly trained or using old, traditional techniques they may not be as effective as they need to be which will affect student learning.

Ultimately, the students become frustrated because they do not understand assignments and test questions. They then start getting bored and talkative with others. The teacher can become stressed from all the misbehaving and not knowing all the answers to why they are acting out. No other teacher responded to this question.

TEACHER D was asked to describe the classroom management strategies he employed and how effective he thought they are with which types of behaviors. He was asked to offer an example of a classroom behavior experience, in that caused great stress:

Changing the desk around, notifying parents if behavior continues, remind the students about correct behaviors, try to ignore it. In one instance, one of my students decided to storm away from the desk and made scene. I ignored it and continued teaching. Once the class began their assignment I walked over to

student and simply as what is going on. The student began to discuss some issues at home that had nothing to do with me or the class.

TEACHER D was also asked to explain how his ability to execute effective instruction was influenced by student behaviors:

My theory has always been if the teacher is lost, the students will be lost.” In addition, another participant stated that preparation is vital.

TEACHER E was asked how she feels her students are affected by the noncompliant behavior of the few disruptive students and your need to address the behaviors and in what ways:

When a student acts out, other students get off task because they begin looking. The misbehaviors become a distraction. Students may talk to other students when they are done early. I quickly get the students of task be either reminded them of the time limit, moving the disruptive student, and having directions for the students who finish early. Others stated that their students tend to have a hard time refocusing and others never fully understand the assignment.

She also asked how effective classroom managers meet the needs of difficult students: Being prepared as much as possible, showing students that you care about their well-being, and being loyal to your students. This will help touch places within a student that is beyond the surface. An additional response was making you available and consistent to the student.

TEACHER F was asked what impact does effective classroom management behavioral interventions have on overall student achievement:

Training is good, but you can never really prepare for everything you will face in a day. I think the best training would be to be anticipatory and expected the unexpected. One participant stated that we must set students up for success and that start in the classroom. Another stated that you must present quality to receive quality.

TEACHER F was asked if she would embrace a professional development opportunity to build a repertoire of research-based proactive classroom management strategies. If so, how would she like the training delivered:

Yes. Professional development forums or trainings would be beneficial.” The rest of the group agreed with ‘Yes’ with training focusing on emotional management, stress management, and technical training in dealing with disruptive students. One response, in particular, opposed to direct training and stated that learning by experience or from each other is the best training.

It is evident that there were various types of data collection used to ensure proper alignment with the central research question. The following table explores the data collected within this qualitative case study corresponding to the selection, development, and implementation of the classroom management strategies. The table also gives some examples from the participants aligned with each particular strategy.

Table 13

*Data Collection in Correspondence to Selection, Development, and Implementation*

Responses from:	Corresponds to:	Strategy Examples:
Interview Questions	Selection	Teacher A: Trial and Error
		Teacher C: Chose strategies from various textbooks
		Teacher E: Watching other teacher during beginning years of teaching
	Development	Teacher A: Better teacher preparation
		Teacher B: Creating helpers within the classroom
		Teacher C: Daily experience
Questionnaires	Implementation	Teacher B: Reward system
		Teacher E: Seating arrangement
		Teacher G: Office referrals
Observations	Implementation	Teacher A: Teacher's positive attitude
		Teacher C: Supplies available
Focus Group		Teacher F: Praising students
Selection		Teacher B: Learn how to manage the classroom based on the type of students in the classroom
		Teacher D: Teacher preparation
		Teacher E: When a student begin misbehaving, addressed the behavior immediately
Development		Teacher B: Always think outside the box
		Teacher D: Build a relationship between the teacher and student
		Teacher F: Look for trainings
Implementation		Teacher D: Changing desks around
		Teacher E: Moving the disruptive student

Table 13 helps to explain that this replication study, if carried out, carries the potential to empirically support the outcomes of the original study, either by clarifying issues raised by the original study or extending its generalizability.

**Theoretical framework.** The theoretical framework used for this study was built with several theories in mind. One theory was Bandura's social cognitive theory which deals with classroom climate and school belonging lead to experiences and perceptions that influence academic self-efficacy (McMahon et al., 2009). Throughout the study, the researcher was able to decipher the various approaches the each participant use to approach various misbehavior. The person-centered theory by Freiberg and Lamb (2009) suggested learners' sharing control beginning the process of becoming self-disciplined (also compared to Lee Canter's assertive discipline model). At least half on the participants ensured that they allowed students to become an intricate part of the class by placing them in various leadership roles as well and them creating the rules for the classroom. Lastly, Glasser's (1985) stimulus-response theory has been accepted as common sense since formal education began. In other words, teachers attempted to motivate challenging students to follow the rules and/or work harder by doing something to or for those students. It was evident that most teachers used reward system and prizes to motivate their students to stay on task and remain well behaved during the day.

This study confirmed that the participant's need additional training in classroom management skills and behavior approaches. Appropriate classroom management methods are required for all teachers to become successful within the classroom. Each participant selected, developed, and implemented classroom management strategies differently and could benefit from each other. It is also evident that each participant had a

different view of classroom management, and the training and support they need in order to feel more confident in their approach to classroom management.

These theories were, collectively, a good choice to frame this study, especially for those participants who were employed as an elementary teacher in southern North Carolina schools. These theories support participants' individual and collective attitudes toward classroom management and student behavior. The majority agreed that classroom management has a direct impact on student behavior.

### **Summary**

The study consisted of seven participants who met the participant inclusion criteria for the purposes of this research. After the participant recruitment letters were presented, 7 participants agreed to participate. Upon participants' approval, the researcher began distributing questionnaires, scheduling classroom observation and interviews, and facilitating a focus group. By the seventh interview, the interview process was concluded, and the transcription process began. Data were coded, transcribed, and the transcripts were sent to the participants for verification of accuracy of content (member checking). Once verification was received and the member checking process was concluded, the initial color-coding of the data as themes and patterns emerged. All data and data analysis results were related to the guiding research question. The interviews focused on how teachers selected and developed strategies within the classroom. The questionnaires and observations focused on how teachers implemented the classroom strategies. Lastly, the focus group focused on how teacher selected, developed, and implemented strategies within the classroom. The researcher discovered that all participants felt that being prepared and organized was one of the most key

factors to effective classroom management. All but one agreed that additional training was needed in classroom management. All the participants had various opinions about classroom management and student behavior, but all response led to the common factor that teacher need adequate support and consistent development in classroom management.

Four themes emerged from the data: noncompliant behaviors, preparation, emotions, and training. These themes are important because each of the participants felt that either one or a combination of them played some part in their current classroom management skills, approach to student behaviors, or the lack thereof. These themes directly related to the elementary teachers who participated in the study, but it is assumed that similar feelings may be shared among all elementary teachers who are pursuing becoming an educator in public school education system. These themes will be discussed in light of the existing body of literature and research in the next chapter. Chapter 4 presented data collection, data analysis of results, and how the outcome supported the original study. Chapter 5 provides a (a) summary of the study, (b) summary of findings and conclusions, (c) theoretical implications, (d) practical implications, (e) future implications, (f) recommendations for future research, and (g) recommendations for practice. Chapter 5 also presents the researcher's perception about the study, data collection, and analysis process.

## **Chapter 5: Summary, Conclusions, and Recommendations**

### **Introduction**

An understanding of appropriate classroom management skills is critical for teachers to acquire in order to be successful within the classroom as well as for preventing possible frustrations and problems with students. Teachers should be afforded with various opportunities that cultivate their classroom management skills and approaches to misbehavior within the classroom. Although there are many strategies used to handle misbehavior in the classroom, there should be an obvious focus on the methods that various teachers use that successfully deal with the problem, as well as an examination of the techniques used by those whose students exhibit frequent misbehaviors in the classroom (Guercio, 2011). Collecting data on student engagement during instruction, misbehaviors, and teacher observations can help recognize which physical aspects of their classroom need to be enhanced. The remainder of this chapter includes discussion of findings, conclusions, limitations, and recommendations of this qualitative case study. The chapter is structured as follows: (a) summary of the study, (b) summary of findings and conclusions, (c) theoretical, practical, and future implications, and (d) recommendations for future research and practice.

### **Summary of the Study**

The purpose of this qualitative case study explored how elementary school teachers select, develop, and implement classroom management strategies. This study was a replication of a study conducted by Westbrook-Spaniel (2008) using a different grade-level group. One research question guided this particular study. The central research question focused on how the teachers selected, developed, and implemented

classroom management strategies to use in class. The study also addressed the training and support teachers needed in order to feel more confident in their approach to classroom management.

The target population of this study included 7 teachers in elementary classrooms at one school located in southern North Carolina. The data collection in this study included the use of questionnaires, interviews, classroom observations, and focus groups. The researcher initially contacted the principal to set up a time to introduce study to the elementary teachers. From that point, the researcher introduced the study at one of the faculty meetings. Each participant was asked to sign a consent form (Appendix H) before the study began. The participants were able to withdraw without penalty or consequence and their identities were not used. Once teachers gave proper consent, the researcher set up a time with teachers and gave them a questionnaire before leaving. Elementary teachers also set up observation times and dates with the researcher, and scheduled interviews with teachers. Then, the four of the seven elementary teachers, from grade levels Pre-K through 5, agreed to participate in a focus group session facilitated by the researcher. The researcher did not observe and collect data based on the students and their behavior patterns, but rather observed how the teacher managed his or her classroom in order to prevent those misbehaviors. The researcher also observed how the teacher responded to those behaviors, and the strategies used to address the misbehaviors. The primary investigator was the only one collecting data throughout this particular research study. The researcher did not teach at the school where observations were taken.

The questionnaire consisted of 26 questions. Some questions asked participants to list methods and misbehaviors, and some asked general questions regarding classroom

management and their experiences regarding student behavior. The classroom observations were done during instruction time during the school day. Each of the seven teachers was observed for a 1 to 2-hour period during instruction and transition times during the day, with each teacher being observed on two different days. During transition times, the researcher moved with the class, if necessary. The teacher interviews and focus group were scheduled after the school instruction day has ended. All focus groups and interviews were recorded. All information from focus groups and interviews was typed into the computer then reviewed and summarized. The researcher analyzed the data using transcription, assessment, and recapping. In this case, qualitative data analysis began with labeling or color coding each item of information so that differences and similarities between all the items can be found. Through transcribing, coding, and analyzing the responses from the questionnaires and interviews, four themes emerged. The themes were: (a) noncompliant behaviors, (b) preparation, (c) emotions, and (d) training.

### **Summary of Findings and Conclusion**

After the data analysis process was complete, the results were critiqued in relation to each research question, the theoretical framework, and how the results contributed to the existing body of knowledge in this area. A descriptive analysis of participant demographics yielded a thorough description of the study participants and their educational experiences. Participant's ages ranged from 39-62. They all had various years of experience ranging from 4 years to over 12 years. Participants also had varied education levels including Bachelors, Masters, and Doctorate degrees. One participant was National Board Certified.

The findings of this study were grounded in the field of education with research giving clear knowledge of teacher understanding of classroom management and the application of methods for dealing with student misbehavior. Therefore, understanding classroom management as it relates to the way students behave and perform in the classroom is imperative. As a result, this study advanced the scientific knowledge base by adding to the existing research for teachers and other educators who are interested in learning more classroom management and strategies for effectively preventing or reacting to misbehavior within their classrooms. This study also added to the limited knowledge elementary school teachers may have about classroom management and their perceptions and observations of student behavior. In case the results do not meet the researcher's expectations, the sample size could be increased, a certain additional grade level could be selected, or the researcher could increase the number of schools involved in the study.

Four major themes emerged in response to the data collection and analysis procedure and were aligned directly with the selected research questions. The themes identified were as follows:

1. Noncompliant Behavior - Failure to comply, refusing to cooperate
2. Preparation - Timeliness, knowledge, foundation
3. Emotion - Any strong agitation of the feelings actuated by experience
4. Training - Organized activity aimed at imparting information and/or instructions to improve the recipient's performance

The four major themes recognized helped to answer the central question and the secondary questions that guided the study by identifying perceptions and observations of participants about classroom management skills and student behavior approaches. The

study was able to support standing research as identified by primary researchers in this area of study such as McMahon, Wernsman, and Rose (2009) about the obstacles and challenges that elementary teachers face daily with classroom management and their students' behaviors. The study also identified similar themes as the studies of Shu-Ling and Lin (2007), Freiberg and Lamb (2009), and Glasser (1985). The research was also successful in providing individual accounts of the reoccurring themes and patterns that the data discovered. The following section will provide an assessment of the study results and the significance of each finding in relation to what is known in the literature.

### **Key Themes**

**Noncompliant behavior.** Based on the data presented, noncompliant behavior was a very important aspect of classroom management for elementary school teachers in public schools. According to Canter & Canter (2001) the assertive discipline approach states that the teacher is responsible for redirecting noncompliant behaviors before they become disruptive to the entire classroom. Lack of knowledge in classroom management and miscommunication between teachers and their students were identified as obstacles that could have a direct impact of student learning and success. Many participants believed that effective classroom management and environment were imperative to tackle student misbehavior.

There must be an opportunity to dialogue with other teachers and educators so that information can be transferred from one to the next. The participants did agree that noncompliant behaviors were very important to recognize and approach correctly, but it was not always easy to prevent. Knowing that other teachers may be experiencing similar situations can help the teacher tremendously.

**Preparation.** The data identified a fundamental need to strategically prepare the classroom for students. Elementary teacher cannot wait until students to enter the class; they have to have everything in order and set before the students arrive for the day; keeping all the students in mind. This was confirmed in the study when all participants agreed that it was important to be prepared before good behavior and student success actually happens. Preparation covers everything from furthering their education, having obtained certain degrees, and being educated about various classroom management skills and student behavior approaches. Preparation aligns with Shu-Ling and Lin's (2007) theory that teachers must consider the interactions of environmental influences, student perceptions, and learning behaviors when preparing their classroom.

**Emotion.** It was clear that some participants approached student behavior based on emotions. Some teachers react to a student's behavioral issue instead of considering the possible factors and then responding the student accordingly. Bandura's social cognitive theory suggests that teachers interpret the results of their own behavior informing and altering their environments and the personal factors they possess which, in turn, inform and alter subsequent behavior (Pajares, 2002). It is easy to take a student's misbehavior personally causing the teacher to react in a personal manner which is often the incorrect approach to the particular behavior. Teacher emotions can link with preparing for the student's behavior issues. Taking the time to think and consider what the student may be going through and taking more of a parent approach when responding to the student gives a more effective solution.

**Training.** Another major theme identified by the data was the importance of training. According to Almeida (1995) many great teachers are confident that they have

the resources and knowledge needed to handle misbehaviors, while other teachers indicate that they have received relatively little training and support to handle them. Some participants in the study believed that training in classroom management and student behavior approaches was minimal to nonexistent. With the lack of training, teachers have no opportunity to collaborate with other teachers. Other participants stated that there is so much focus on curriculum and student achievement that the obstacles and challenges that teachers may face while on the journey is overlooked.

The study concluded that many of the participants gained their training through hands on experience while they are in the classroom. Other participants felt that their training is somewhat trial and error, in hopes that their approach was and is effective. Most teachers stated that faculty meetings and teacher workdays are the only opportunities they received that would be considered close to training.

## **Implications**

**Theoretical implications.** The theories supported throughout this study helped support how teachers select management strategies to use in class, the development of the strategies and skill sets they use in classroom management and the training and support teachers need in order to feel more confident in their approach to classroom management. Research Question R1 asked, “How do teachers select management strategies to use in class?” Part of the research question guiding this study dealt with how teachers select their classroom management strategies. According to Shu-Ling & Lin (2007) teachers must consider the interactions of environmental influences, student perceptions, and learning behaviors. Elementary school teacher base their knowledge of classroom management on past classroom experiences. Some of the participants associated their

experiences to their former students from the previous years. For example, teachers often experience usual patterns of reacting to challenging behaviors in the classroom (McCready & Soloway, 2010). In the data, some differences were noted depending upon grade level as well. These differences were particularly spotted on the types of noncompliant behaviors the teacher experienced.

The data show that elementary school awareness of classroom management in public schools in southern North Carolina is formed based on their experiences. The participants often answered questions based on situations that previously occurred in their classroom which showed their current thoughts and beliefs; even those to come in the future. Elementary school teachers would benefit from opportunities to collaborate with other elementary school teachers who are interested in becoming better classroom managers in order to effectively approach student misbehaviors. The participants may already have general support such as administration, co-teachers and district systems that provide a wealth of information to the participants, but having a collaborative community of elementary teachers would create a stronger foundation for those seeking to absorb more about classroom management and student behavior.

**Practical implications.** Practical implications that resulted from this study are as follows. It is important that the administration team create multiple opportunities for elementary teachers to connect with other elementary teacher through team meetings, faculty meeting or conferences as model and mentors. Teachers and administrators must collaborate and communicate, forming strong partnerships to set and implement classroom management strategies (Grode, 2009).

The Southern Association of Colleges and Schools should be encouraged to create teacher leadership workshop and/or conferences exclusively elementary school teachers to network with other elementary school teachers with similar educational challenges and situations. Next, the workshops could be for independent school as well as other surrounding school districts in North Carolina. These forums could be created to provide an environment for elementary school teachers as a resource for each other, soon becoming a major annual conference within the area or across other regions. Lastly, other colleagues and researchers, interested in studying elementary school teachers and classroom management, should join forces on future studies on ways to improve future practice in North Carolina. Positive discipline has always been an important element of school connectedness (Strahan, Cope, Hundley, & Faircloth, 2005).

Through research it is evident that many classroom management strategies and theories exist, but all do not work for every teacher within the classroom. Therefore, practical implications are great to close the gap and provide resources for teacher to adopt and implement in their classroom.

These practical implications can help those teachers experiencing misbehaviors within their classroom, but do not know exactly what to do.

**Future implications.** These practical implications can make quite an impact on education advancement for elementary school teachers in public school education in North Carolina. However, on an individual basis, elementary school teachers can be proactive in seeking training and additional classes by taken to account personal goals based on the four key themes. Studies have been conducted to examine whether or not student teachers are adequately skilled in classroom management and are prepared to face

problems that may develop in the classroom (Pellegrino, 2010). Therefore, elementary school teachers should begin to create discussion among themselves even when there are not trainings and concrete resources available. It is vital to converse with other educator in hopes that something will soon change. Elementary school teachers can also begin to create small collaborative communities that may become greater in the future. Creating collaborative communities with other teachers is a part of the preparation process. Preparation is one of the key themes in this study. The teachers will learn to deal with their emotions through speaking with other teachers and their situation, realizing that it is nothing personal. Through the collaboration with others, it will become evident and clear the other teachers are experiencing noncompliant behavior as well; some different from others. With that in mind, teachers will be able to share their approaches in hopes that it will help another teacher with a similar situation.

Through meeting with other teachers and educator provides a program or a base within the education and become a valuable resource for elementary teachers located in southern North Carolina and the surrounding school districts. Researchers and colleagues that are interested in this particular study will have the opportunity to add to the already deficit information that exists. Future study by researchers and colleagues will allow those who are trying to move forward with more information that can get them started on their study.

### **Recommendations**

Based on the findings of this study, the researcher was able to create recommendations for future research as well as recommendations for practice. The recommendations were based on the data collected from the participants. The

recommendations also show the significance of this study as it relates to those participants and connect to the study's research questions.

**Recommendations for future research.** Upon the completed study, the researcher discovered other areas of study that could be researched. The researcher believes that any one of the following recommendations would add to the limited body of research that already exists that pertain to a teacher's understanding of classroom management and the application of methods used for dealing with their student's misbehaviors in an elementary setting. The researcher also believes that if any combinations of the recommendations occur, then obstacles of classroom management and student misbehaviors for elementary teachers in public schools will be identified. Therefore, those challenges will decrease gradually and thus close the gap that has been evident for years in education. Future research may explore the following paths:

1. Expanding the current study's population to include teachers who are first year teachers. First year teachers may have a different perspective of the classroom and may come with more or less training as well as more behavior issues than experienced teachers. Questionnaires and interview questions can capture this information.
2. Limiting the current study's population to include veteran teachers who have been teaching for over 10 years. Veteran teachers may have a different perspective of the classroom and may come with more or less training and expertise as well as more behavior issues than less tenured teachers. Questionnaires and interview questions can capture this information.

3. Focusing on other grade levels other than elementary level teachers. Middle or High school teachers may experience different types of behaviors problems than those in lower level grades. The researcher can gain consent from grade level above elementary grades. Questionnaires and list Middle or High school grades only.
4. Replicating study to include teachers from other elementary schools outside of southern North Carolina. The geographical area could extend beyond southern North Carolina schools; outside counties, cities, even states. Broadening the scope could show more dynamics of information regarding teacher perspectives and approaches.
5. Researching the perspectives held by administrators regarding teachers' various classroom management methods and the impact that a school wide behavior plan might have on individual teachers and students. Interviewing administrators may allow the researcher to see the view on classroom management and student behavior. The interview also may capture how much time administrator put into training their teacher on the topic.

The results identified that some gaps were evident during the research period.

According to the literature review, the lack of training in dealing with student behavior may cause a gap in learning to the students' fullest potential. Most teachers made it clear that there was a lack of training in classroom management and student behavior. With the lack of training, most teachers designed their class in a traditional way, offered traditional classroom systems, and approached misbehaviors the same for all students. When teachers began to take advantage of the practical implications of training workshops and

networking with other educators will help to close the gap in learning caused by the lack of training. Therefore, the central research question on how teachers selected, developed, and implemented classroom management strategies are clearly answered.

As noted in the literature review, diverse groups can cause a gap in learning contributing to classroom management problems. During the observation, the researcher did not notice any language barriers. All students varied in race, but all spoke the English language. Even though language can cause a huge gap in learning, there was no language barrier issue discovered during this study.

The researcher did notice some diverse cultures from the student within the classroom. According to the literature review, cultural variances between students and teachers are a source of stress. The outcome for some students could enable gaps of learning for the students. Teachers can help close this gap by figuring out how other teachers deal with possible similar situation. Teachers can also seek trainings dealing with how to approach the classroom with a variety of cultures.

To forward this line of research, the researcher suggest administrators to take research data information and implement a plan of action for the school to ensure teachers have various opportunities or trainings. In connection with the research question, teachers can take in information and be open to try new classroom management strategies and behavior approaches and collaborate with other teachers and educators to share ideas. Teachers can also take the initiative to seek out training opportunities and literatures to become a more effective classroom manager.

The strengths of this study included having open-ended questions that permitted the participants to speak freely about their classroom experiences. During the focus

group, the study opened up an opportunity that many of the participants felt did not exist for them to speak out about the issue. Another strength of the study included the opportunity to each participant to be observed by the researcher. Through observations, the participant was able to show the researcher how he or she manages the classroom, the types of strategies used, and what areas the teachers is well-trained in. The observations allowed the researcher to clearly answer the research question and understand what strategies elementary teachers are using mostly or not at all as well as the areas of training needed. The study placed a spotlight on areas that elementary school teachers felt were sometimes ignored, due to the lack of training.

Weaknesses of the study were that there were a restricted number of participants and only covered one geographical location. It was instantly known that some participants in one area or school had a different working relationship with elementary school teachers than other participants located in another area or school. Another weakness of the study is that because of the limited amount of participants, the range of the study did not cover or represent a wide spectrum of teacher.

**Recommendations for practice.** The results of this research are too preliminary to recommend concrete implementation steps, but this study suggests that the following considerations be evaluated for their practical value for practitioners:

1. School districts re-evaluating their training and professional development trainings prior to hiring teachers and throughout the academic school year. It is the researcher's belief that based on the data collected, that the primary reason for hiring teachers are due to demand, and not necessarily what they know or their qualifications.

2. Teachers communicating and partnering with co-teachers or others educators to obtain new classroom management ideas and student behavior approaches. It is the researcher's belief that based on the data collected, interviews and the focus group support the need for the collaboration.
3. More family-oriented approaches within the classroom. It is the researcher's belief that based on the data collected, that students are willing to receive criticism and/or reprimand from teacher when they feel the teacher ultimately cares and have their best interest at heart.
4. Ensuring teachers separate teaching and their person emotions. It is the researcher's belief that based on the data collected, that in order for a teacher to effectively discover the root to a student's behavior the teacher must remember that the behavior may be deeper than what the teacher assumes; nothing personal toward the teacher.

If these practices were implemented, there may be a greater chance that classroom management strategies and student behavior approaches will improve for elementary school teachers. These practices could be creative and cost effective, but would require total commitment. Implementation of these practices could lay the foundation for elementary teachers in southern North Carolina education to become more confident and feel more appreciated. Implementation of these practices will also give clear answers to all research questions presented in this study.

Reflecting on the theories presented in the literature review and the prior study by Westbrook-Spaniel (2008), it was evident that teachers needed guidance and a more clear focus as an effective classroom manager. There was also a lack of training necessary for

teachers to continue to develop their skills. Therefore, this particular study was able to help bridge the gap with the previous study by extending qualitative information such as additional management strategies and in-depth sources of data to help gain quality within the classroom and education for teacher in general. Both studies may have focused on different grade levels, sample sizes, and geographical locations, but replicating the prior study was well worth the research reaching elementary school teachers. Teachers may be highly experienced and grounded in some of their traditional theories, but can still benefit from learning additional ways to develop more effective classroom management strategies.

Many encounters with the participants left the researcher pondering and reflecting on past teaching experiences. The researcher was forever touched by the teachers' desire for teaching, dedication, and commitment. The researcher learned that reinventing the wheel was not necessary for the study, but instead taking a prior research model and applying it to another grade level. When expanding the original scope of study to another sample population it allows the researcher to see other teachers' views and perspectives in how they select, develop, and implement classroom management strategies. By replicating this study, the researcher was able to support the results of Westbrook-Spaniel's (2008) study by extending its' generalizability. Once the study was completed, the researcher was able to not only see results from the higher primary grade level, but now the lower primary age group. Both studies are now able to complement each other by having a more depth and offering more information on how to select, develop, and implement classroom management strategies for teachers in grades Pre-K through 12. The researcher also learned that there are many teachers that desire more information to

make them a better classroom manager, but either they do not know how to obtain them or simply feel the current techniques are working just fine. The researcher believes that the elementary is such a pivotal place to begin when dealing with classroom management and student behavior. The researcher was surprised, but appreciative by the teachers' willingness for allowing observations during instruction times. Some teachers felt that during the observation, the researcher would find negative components within the classroom that the teacher did not want to go beyond the classroom.

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**APPENDIX A****Questionnaire**

Thank you for participating in this survey. Your participation is valued. Follow the directions for each group of items. There are no right or wrong answers and no tracking devices. Your candid responses will be used to enhance educators' understanding of classroom behavior. Participation is voluntary. Thank you.

**1. Please indicate the grade levels you teach or have taught.**

- 1.  1<sup>st</sup> grade
- 2.  2<sup>nd</sup> grade
- 3.  3<sup>rd</sup> grade
- 4.  4<sup>th</sup> grade
- 5.  5<sup>th</sup> grade

**2. If *noncompliant behavior* includes, acting out verbally and/or physically, getting out of seat, speaking out, argumentative, disruptive actions, inattentiveness, and lack of motivation; then what percentage of your students (over the years of your experience) could be identified as noncompliant or difficult students?**

- 1.  0%
- 2.  1% - 5%
- 3.  6% -10%
- 4.  11% -15%
- 5.  15% - 20%
- 6.  More than 20%

**3. Please list the noncompliant behaviors you deal with in your class.**

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**4. During a typical school day, how many times do you address noncompliant behavior?**

- 1.  None
- 2.  up to 3 times
- 3.  4 – 6 times
- 4.  7 – 9 times
- 5.  10 or more times

**5. Is your response to item #3, reflective of the past year as well? yes no (Briefly explain the differences).**

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**6. Indicate the classroom management strategies used in your classroom. (Check all that apply)**

1.  Reward system
  2.  Office referrals
  3.  Time out in classroom
  4.  Time out in another classroom
  5.  Parent notes or emails
  6.  Parent telephone calls
  7.  Notes in agendas
  8.  Referral to school counselor
  9.  Seating arrangements
  10.  Name on board
  11.  Detention or after school consequence
  12.  Verbal reminders of appropriate behavior
  13.  Ignore misbehaviors
  14.  Contracts
  15.  Loss of privileges (recess, etc)
  16.  Other, specify \_\_\_\_\_
- 

**7. Please name and rate your top three strategies.**

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_

**8. How would you rate the effectiveness of your classroom management strategies in general?**

1.  Very effective
2.  Effective
3.  Sporadic effectiveness
4.  Inconsistent
5.  Ineffective

Please indicate your opinion to the following statements. Circle the best choice. The choices are **SA** (Strongly Agree), **A** (Agree), **N** (Neutral), **D** (Disagree), and **SD** (Strongly Disagree).

**9. Disruptive student behavior interferes with teaching quality lessons.**

SA      A      N      D      SD

**10. Disruptive student behavior interferes with learning.**

SA      A      N      D      SD

**11. Disruptive students negatively affect the overall classroom climate.**

SA    A    N    D    SD

**12. Student achievement scores would increase if there were fewer discipline issues in the classroom.**

SA    A    N    D    SD

**13. Instructional time is lost due to student behavior problems.**

SA    A    N    D    SD

**14. There is a relationship between time in learning and academic success.**

SA    A    N    D    SD

**15. All students lose opportunities to learn because of discipline problems.**

SA    A    N    D    SD

**16. Teachers experience stress because of daily interactions with noncompliant students.**

SA    A    N    D    SD

**17. Teachers can get discouraged because of ineffective classroom management strategies.**

SA    A    N    D    SD

**18. Teachers receive adequate training in dealing with difficult students.**

SA    A    N    D    SD

**19. Current strategies are effective in minimizing student disruptions.**

SA    A    N    D    SD

**20. Providing professional development opportunities in classroom management strategies is a good idea.**

SA    A    N    D    SD

**21. Allotting time for teachers to enhance classroom management skills through mentoring, collegial coaching, or study groups is a good idea.**

SA    A    N    D    SD

**22. A desktop reference manual with research-based classroom management strategies would be a beneficial tool for teachers.**

SA    A    N    D    SD

**23. Effective classroom management strategies would improve teachers' job satisfaction.**

SA    A    N    D    SD

**24. Improved classroom management strategies would improve student academic success.**

SA      A      N      D      SD

**25. What is the highest level of formal education you have achieved?**

1.  Bachelor's Degree
  2.  Master's Degree
  3.  Doctoral Degree
  4.  Other, specify \_\_\_\_\_
- 

**26. How many years of classroom teaching experience have you completed?**

1.  0 – 3 years
2.  4 – 6 years
3.  7 – 9 years
4.  10 – 12 years
5.  More than 12 years

Feel free to use this space to express your thoughts and feelings about classroom management issues and their influence on student achievement and teacher efficacy?

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**APPENDIX B**

## Interview Questions

1. What kinds of disruptive behavior do you see in your classroom?
2. Who engages in them?
3. How comfortable do you feel when you intervene with students who display disruptive behavior?
4. How do you manage disruptive behavior in the classroom?
5. Where did you learn these techniques?
6. How effective are they?
7. How do you feel when a child is disruptive in your class?
8. How do you handle these emotions?
9. What kind of training did you receive in classroom management?
10. Did you receive specific training in handling disruptive students?
11. How sufficient was your training in handling disruptive behavior for the situation you face in your classes?
12. Do you think you could benefit from more training?
13. Do you think your co-workers would be open or somewhat resistant to more training for dealing with disruptive students?
14. What kinds of training would be beneficial to you or your peers?

**APPENDIX C:**  
**Classroom Management Observation Checklist**

Appendix C: Classroom Management Observation Checklist

Teacher Letter \_\_\_\_\_ School \_\_\_\_\_

*Classroom Management Observation Checklist*

(Rating Scale is 0=None, 1=Some, 2=Extensive for observed behaviors)

Behavior Area	<u>None</u>	<u>Some</u>	<u>Extensive</u>
Students are on Task			
Students understand directions of assignment			
Class rules posted			
Rewards system evident or posted			
Classroom procedures are being followed			
Good use of student personal space			
Supplies readily available			
Smooth subject transitions			
Teacher has everyone's attention before beginning lesson.			
Teacher told students the lesson's objective			
Teacher calls on a wide variety of learners for answers			
Incorporates classroom leaders			
Teacher uses higher order thinking level questions			
Signals are used to get students' attention			
Students know and follow morning routine when entering classroom			
Students who finish			

## APPENDIX D

### Focus Group Session Protocol

**Research Questions:** *For facilitator's use*

R1: How did elementary teachers select, develop, and implement classroom management strategies to use in class?

**Focus Group Session Guide:**

Following introductions and goal setting statements, the focus group sessions began with the use of a digital voice recorder. Field notes were taken.

**Questions and Prompts:** Focus Group Session...Leading Questions

Please take a few minutes to contemplate these questions prior to the session. In this way, you can formulate responses in advance. Thank you.

1. Can you speak to the topic of classroom management in your classrooms?
2. Explain the relationship, as you understand it, between students' noncompliant behaviors and teachers' stress, student achievement, and teacher efficacy.
3. Describe the classroom management strategies you employ. How effective do you think they are with which types of behaviors? Can you offer an example of a classroom behavior experience, in your tenure that caused you great stress?
4. Explain how your ability to execute effective instruction is influenced by student behaviors.
5. Do you feel your students are affected by the noncompliant behavior of the few disruptive students and your need to address the behaviors? In what ways?
6. How can effective classroom managers meet the needs of difficult students?
7. What impact does effective classroom management behavioral interventions have on overall student achievement?
8. Given your personal experiences, how do you think AYP scores might be affected by improved classroom management practices?
9. Would you embrace a professional development opportunity to build a repertoire of research-based proactive classroom management strategies? If so, how would you like the training delivered? (mentoring, collegial coaching, study groups)
10. How might a desktop reference manual be helpful in building and sustaining your proactive responses to student noncompliance?

**Synthesis Activity:**

Please respond to following prompt by answering: "Yes", "No", or "Unsure". Then briefly explain your response.

**Prompt:**

Given what we have heard and discussed about classroom management's role in teaching and learning, do you feel that teachers' acquisition of sustainable classroom management strategies via professional support, such as a desktop manual of research-based strategies could have a positive impact on academic outcomes?

**APPENDIX E:**  
**Site Approval Letter**



**BRISBANE ACADEMY PREPARATORY SCHOOL**

*"If You Love Them, They Will Learn."*

December 12, 2012

Office of Academic Research  
 Grand Canyon University  
 College of Doctoral Studies  
 3300 W. Camelback Road  
 Phoenix, AZ 85017  
 Phone: 602-639-7804

Dear IRB Members,

After reviewing the proposed study presented by Deonte' J. Alexander, I have granted authorization for Deonte' J. Alexander to conduct research at Brisbane Academy Preparatory School. I understand the purpose of the study is to explore how elementary school teachers select, develop and implement classroom management strategies. An additional focus is on how teachers define an effective classroom manager and the training and support that teachers perceive they need in order to feel more confident in their approach to classroom management. Deonte' J. Alexander will conduct the following research activities: teacher interviews, focus groups, and classroom observations throughout the investigation period. Please be advised the interviews will be audio taped for data transcription accuracy. It is understood that this project will end no later than May 31, 2013.

I grant permission for Deonte' J. Alexander to contact and recruit our teachers and collect data at Brisbane Academy Preparatory School. I understand that classroom observations will occur for 1 hour during normal classroom instruction. This is a 2 day a week event lasting for 60 minutes each observation throughout the investigation.

I have informed to Deonte' J. Alexander that the school will assume the responsibilities for allowing the following research activities: onsite data collection with teachers (including classroom observations during instruction time and focus groups for interviews after instruction time), teachers will use planning time and/or after hours to fill out interview questionnaires, cooperation from classroom teachers during the investigation period, and what restrictions, limitations and/or responsibilities they are assuming.

To ensure the students and teachers are protected, Deonte' J. Alexander has agreed to provide to me a copy of an Grand Canyon University IRB-approved, consent document before he recruits participants at Brisbane Academy Preparatory School. I understand that Deonte' J. Alexander will not use any student participants for this study. Deonte' J. Alexander has agreed to provide a copy of the study results, in aggregate, to our school.

If the IRB has any concerns about the permission being granted by this letter, please contact me at the phone number listed below.

Sincerely,

*Principal*  
 Title: Executive Director

Printed Name  
 Christopher Crooks

December 12, 2012  
 Signature Date

5901 Statesville Road, Charlotte, NC 28269 ◆ Phone: 704-598-5208 ◆ Fax: 704-597-0792  
 E-mail: [baprep@bellsouth.net](mailto:baprep@bellsouth.net) ◆ Website: [www.brisbaneacademy.org](http://www.brisbaneacademy.org)

**APPENDIX F**

## Author Permission Letter 1

March 19, 2013  
To: Deonte' J. Alexander  
Doctoral candidate, Grand Canyon University

Re: Permission request

To Whom It May Concern,

I, Robin S. Gilpatrick, Ed.D., grant permission to Deonte' J. Alexander, for the use of the survey instrument and Focus Group protocols as written in my dissertation entitled, Classroom Management Strategies and Behavioral Interventions to Support Academic Achievement (Gilpatrick, 2010). These resources are accessible via the appendix of the document named above. The complete work is published at ProQuest.com. It is my understanding that the materials will be used to conduct research necessary for the completion of a doctoral study in classroom management at Grand Canyon University, under the direction of Dr. Jason Ward.

Best Wishes,  
*Robin Gilpatrick, Ed.D.*  
Robin S. Gilpatrick, Ed.D.  
[robingilpatrick@ymail.com](mailto:robingilpatrick@ymail.com)

**APPENDIX G****Author Permission Letter 2**

March 21, 2013

Dear Deonte':

I formally give you permission and approval to use the study instrument from my dissertation, Teacher's Perspectives of Disruptive Behavior in the Classroom.

Best of luck in your dissertation process!

Sincerely,



Pia Todras, PsyD

## APPENDIX H

### Informed Consent Form



Grand Canyon University  
 College of Doctoral Studies  
 3300 W. Camelback Road  
 Phoenix, AZ 85017  
 Phone: 602-639-7804  
 Fax: 602-639-7820

#### **INFORMED CONSENT FORM (SAMPLE FOR ADULTS MORE THAN MINIMAL RISK)**

##### **TEACHER UNDERSTANDING OF CLASSROOM MANAGEMENT AND APPLICATION OF METHODS FOR DEALING WITH STUDENT MISBEHAVIOR**

###### **INTRODUCTION**

The purposes of this form are to provide you (as a prospective research study participant) information that may affect your decision as to whether or not to participate in this research and to record the consent of those who agree to be involved in the study.

###### **RESEARCH**

Deonte' Alexander, Principal Investigator of College of Doctoral Studies, has invited your participation in a research study.

###### **STUDY PURPOSE**

The purpose of the research is to explore how elementary school teachers select, develop and implement classroom management strategies. An additional focus is on how teachers define an effective classroom manager and the training and support that teachers perceive they need in order to feel more confident in their approach to classroom management.

###### **DESCRIPTION OF RESEARCH STUDY**

If you decide to participate, then as a study participant you will join a study involving research of questionnaires, interviews, focus groups and observations will be used to examine the different methods used by elementary school teachers in local southern North Carolina for handling student misbehavior in the classroom.

Instructions will be located at the top of the questionnaire. The questionnaire will have a section where teachers can report descriptive information (i.e. gender, educational degree earned, years of experience, and grade level that they currently teach). The questionnaire will consist of a series of questions. Some questions will ask to list methods and misbehaviors and some will ask general question regarding classroom management and their experience regarding student behavior. The questionnaires will take no more than 15 to 20 minutes to complete.

The researcher will also request an interview from 7 teachers at the school and schedule a time during the 4 to 6 week period. The interview will be facilitated either before or after the school day.

The observations will be collected within the school. Each of the 7 teachers will be observed for 2 hour period during instruction and transition times during the day. The researcher will sit in the back of the classroom, view, and record observations. During transitions times the researcher will move with the classroom, if necessary.

If you say YES, then your participation will last for 4 to 6 weeks, on-site, at Brisbane Academy. Approximately 10 subjects will be participating in this study within the school.

RISKS
There are no feasible alternative procedures available for this study
BENEFITS
The possible benefits of your participation in the research is the positive outcome is that the you, fellow teachers and school will be able to use the results needed and approach classroom management and student misbehavior accordingly within that school.
NEW INFORMATION
If the researchers find new information during the study that would reasonably change your decision about participating, then they will provide this information to you.
CONFIDENTIALITY
All information obtained in this study is strictly confidential unless disclosure is required by law. The results of this research study may be used in reports, presentations, and publications, but the researchers will not identify you. In order to maintain confidentiality of your records, Deonte' Alexander will not request a name for questionnaires and will be collected in an unmarked, sealed white envelope when returned to researcher. Neither the name of the school, teacher and principal name will be known to ensure data collected is safeguarded and all parties involved are comfortable with the study. The principal will be asked to make copies of the referrals being used and mark out the student name to ensure confidentiality. To assist in eliminating bias throughout the research the researcher will participants are given enough time to complete the questionnaire and the results are accurately recorded in literature.
WITHDRAWL PRIVILEGE
<p>It is ok for you to say no. Even if you say yes now, you are free to say no later, and withdraw from the study at any time.</p> <p>If applicable: Your decision will not affect your relationship with Grand Canyon University or otherwise cause a loss of benefits to which you might otherwise be entitled.</p>
COSTS AND PAYMENTS
There is no payment for your participation in the study.
COMPENSATION FOR ILLNESS AND INJURY
If you agree to participate in the study, then your consent does not waive any of your legal rights. However, no funds have been set aside to compensate you in the event of injury.

**VOLUNTARY CONSENT**

Any questions you have concerning the research study or your participation in the study, before or after your consent, will be answered by Deonte' Alexander at (919) 539-6560.

If you have questions about your rights as a subject/participant in this research, or if you feel you have been placed at risk, you can contact the Chair of the Human Subjects Institutional Review Board, through the College of Doctoral Studies at (602) 639-7804.

This form explains the nature, demands, benefits and any risk of the project. By signing this form you agree knowingly to assume any risks involved. Remember, your participation is voluntary. You may choose not to participate or to withdraw your consent and discontinue participation at any time without penalty or loss of benefit. In signing this consent form, you are not waiving any legal claims, rights, or remedies. A copy of this consent form will be given (offered) to you.

Your signature below indicates that you consent to participate in the above study.

Subject's Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Printed Name \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

Other Signature \_\_\_\_\_  
(if appropriate)

Printed Name \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

**INVESTIGATOR'S STATEMENT**

"I certify that I have explained to the above individual the nature and purpose, the potential benefits and possible risks associated with participation in this research study, have answered any questions that have been raised, and have witnessed the above signature. These elements of Informed Consent conform to the Assurance given by Grand Canyon University to the Office for Human Research Protections to protect the rights of human subjects. I have provided (offered) the subject/participant a copy of this signed consent document."

Signature of Investigator \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_