

THE INFLUENCE OF BUILDING POSITIVE STUDENT-TEACHER RELATIONSHIPS ON
CLASSROOM MANAGEMENT IN A SOUTH CAROLINA HIGH SCHOOL:
A PHENOMENOLOGICAL STUDY

by

Amanda L. Vipperman

Liberty University

A Dissertation Presented in Partial Fulfillment

Of the Requirements for the Degree

Doctor of Education

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APPROVED BY:

Dt. Tracey Pritchard, Committee Chair

Dr. Amy Jones, Committee Member

ABSTRACT

The purpose of this qualitative phenomenological study was to explore how secondary school teachers develop positive relationships with students and the resulting impact of these relationships on classroom management in South Carolina public secondary schools. An extensive review of the literature was conducted which included the topics of classroom management and teacher training. This study was based on a qualitative research design, combined with Glasser's theoretical framework to add more extensive information to the current body of research on classroom management components, design, and impact. Secondary students possess a human desire to belong and feel connected in the world; therefore, this desire drives their actions to meet these personal needs. This study explored the results of teachers acknowledging student needs, getting to know their students in a positive manner, and focusing on relationships as part of their classroom management. For this qualitative phenomenological study, data was collected and analyzed from individual interviews, focus group discussions, and participant questionnaires. This research study revealed that adding positive student-teacher relationships as a critical component of class management was a more effective means to establishing a safe learning environment and providing improved opportunities for academic achievement. This research study also showed that the impact of positive student-teacher relationships is cyclical in nature. Teacher attitude and effort in initiating the positive relationship with students directly correlates to student attitude and effort as related to behavior and academics.

Keywords: positive student-teacher relationships, behavioral management, classroom management, evidence-based practice, instructional management.

Dedication

This dissertation is dedicated to my husband and best friend, Stephen, who has always supported my educational endeavors over the years. Since you first stole my heart well over thirty years ago, there has never been a time that you were not by my side to love, support, and encourage me. I appreciate all that you have done for our family throughout the many challenges we have faced. I love you beyond measure.

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List of Abbreviations

Behavioral Management (BM)

Common Core Standards (CCS)

Current College and Career Readiness Performance Index (CCPRI)

Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA)

Instructional Management (IM)

National Center for Education Statistics (NCES)

No Child Left Behind (NCLB)

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

Overview

The learning process does not take place in a vacuum, but rather within a structured environment where every individual and component of the learning process has the capability to impact the other (Davis & Warner, 2018). The United States Department of Education reported that over two million suspensions occurred in American public secondary schools during the 2016-2017 school year (United States Department of Education, 2017). These suspensions did not occur due to incidents of violent crimes or any form of bullying, but instead represent non-violent offenses such as student disrespect and classroom disruptions (United States Department of Education, 2017). Secondary school teachers face a unique challenge of transforming standards, curriculum, lessons, and resources into learning opportunities. This challenge intensifies when teachers confront misbehaviors that create classroom disruptions, ultimately leading to instruction interruptions. Unfortunately, many students followed the misbehavior pathway to an out of school suspension. To reduce suspension numbers, engaging classroom environments should develop from the implementation of effective classroom management systems that can reduce non-violent offenses leading to disciplinary actions and expulsions (Alter & Haydon, 2017; Back et al., 2016; Shah, 2012). For this to happen, producing a supportive classroom learning environment requires teachers to meet the academic, social, emotional, and behavioral needs of students through the use of effective strategies, including positive student-teacher relationships.

This chapter provides an overview of this study, which explored positive student-teacher relationships and the impact they create on classroom management in secondary school settings. After discussing an overview of the problem, the research explores the situation to self.

Understanding the importance of positive student-teacher relationships as part of a comprehensive classroom management system is discussed in the theoretical framework. This chapter also includes explanations and key terms associated with the research study.

Background

Classroom management has been an issue since the first one-room schoolhouses opened their doors (Adeolu, 2017; Back et al., 2016; Kaur & Ranu, 2017). As part of the literature review, Glasser's (1998) Choice theory is foundational when considering effective classroom management strategies since it provides research-based evidence for meeting student needs. In addition, Operant Conditioning (Skinner, 1938), Social Development Theory (Vygotsky, 1978), and Social Learning Theory (Bandura, 1977) contributed to the examination of literature for a better understanding of impacts positive student-teacher relationships create as a critical component of an encouraging learning environment. An overview of the historical, social, and theoretical background provided structure for the research problem.

Historical

Classroom management encapsulates the skills and strategies teachers use to develop a safe, productive environment that enables student engagement, academic learning, and social development (Adeolu, 2017; Back et al., 2016; Collier-Meek et al., 2019; Dicke et al. 2015). Teachers use classroom management structures to accomplish two main goals: to establish a safe, structured, quiet environment conducive to learning, and to encourage each student's academic, social, and moral development in a positive manner (Cook, Grady, Long, Renshaw, Coddling, Fiat, & Larson, 2017; Postholm, 2013).

In the one-room schoolhouses of early American education, teachers expected students to maintain proper behavior and govern themselves (Blakemore, 2018). Even in the earliest

classroom settings, students demonstrated that they lacked restraint and self-discipline (Kaestle, 1978). For this reason, teachers through the first half of the 19th century received assistance from designated student monitors. The classroom teacher would share the lesson with the monitors, who were students that earned this position from high test scores and model behavior, who would then go back to teach the designated lessons to their younger peers separated into classrooms based on knowledge demonstration and not on age or gender (Blakemore, 2018). This monitorial system quickly died out with the advent of revolutionary ideas from Horace Mann.

Mann ignited sweeping reform in the American public education system with the introduction of the first normal schools established as early as 1839 (Biography editors, 2019). The normal school system relied on a process where well-trained teachers delivered direct instruction in a formal classroom setting to students separated by age and ability (Biography editors, 2019). Mann's ideas eventually led the American normal school system into the Common School Period of the 19th century, when education moved away from private ventures and into a completely public, government-funded organization (Brackemyre, 2020). In the new and improved version of public schools, teachers taught with authority, were revered as experts in their field, and instituted corporal punishment through the frequent threat of the disciplining rod (Kaestle, 1978).

During the 20th century, teachers maintained central control in their classrooms (Canter & Canter, 2013; Hennes, 2018). Each student was part of a teacher-focused classroom where curriculum, instructions, and assignments came in one form and all students learned the same way (Canter & Canter, 2013; Hennes, 2018). Teachers maintained control by keeping students in neat rows and making sure all learning expectations were the same (Canter & Canter, 2013;

Heness, 2018). Classroom management was dictatorial in nature and most classrooms did not vary much in schedule or environment as students moved from one subject to the next with changing of a bell (Canter & Canter, 2013; Henness, 2018).

Modern teachers in the 21st century are no longer the center of the room, but the facilitator of multiple levels of simultaneous learning (Canter & Canter, 2013; Henness, 2018; Palmer 2015). Educational technology transformed the secondary classroom into a dynamic collaborative learning environment where all students learn in their own ways and at their own speeds (Canter & Canter, 2013; Henness, 2018; Palmer 2015). Today's teachers must have a multi-layered management system in place to maintain a safe learning environment where all students can reach individual academic achievement goals according to their own timeline (Canter & Canter, 2013; Henness, 2018; Palmer 2015).

Social

Corporal punishment was the primary management system teachers used in American public classrooms through the late 20th century. Younger student's discipline issues brought about a ruler slap across their hand, while secondary level students received paddlings on their rear for any inappropriate behavior (Bluestein, 2012). By the early 21st century, public opinion on corporal punishment had drastically changed leading school system leaders to demand that teachers develop more complex and creative classroom management systems that moved away from corporal punishment ideas (Bluestein, 2012). The 21st century also saw the addition of added authoritative presence from school resource officers to handle higher level offenses (Bluestein, 2012). Most current classroom management systems focus on teacher expectations and learning differentiation to address student instructional needs (Bluestein, 2012; Hornstra, Stroet, van Eijden, Goudsblom, & Roskamp, 2018; Skiba et al., 2016). Today's teachers are

expected to deliver lessons on a very personal level to meet individualized student achievement scores while maintaining disciplined control (Bluestein, 2012; Shah, 2012).

Theoretical

Social cognitive theory asserts that people learn in a social environment where both the learning and the environment impact the other and the individual (Bandura, 1993). An individual's set of beliefs is the driving force behind their functions, behaviors, and experiences that will influence their chosen life activities (Bandura, 1993). Therefore, individuals respond to situations based on their needs, motivation, and ability (Bandura, 1993; Glasser, 1998).

Several current classroom management systems based on the theories of Skinner (1965), Glasser (1998), Canter (2006), and Marzano (2017) are in place in today's classrooms. However, secondary level teachers still struggle to maintain positive classroom environments that could create opportunities for higher academic achievement (Cook et al., 2017; Skiba et al., 2016). As public-school learning expectations and outcome demands rise, classroom management continues to resurface at the forefront of most educational reform ideas.

Since the passage and revision of No Child Left Behind (2001, 2008), and its replacement, the Every Student Succeeds Act (2015), Martin and Sass (2010) separated techniques for classroom management into two ideas of thought: behavioral management (BM) and instructional management (IM). These researchers explain that BM theory is similar to discipline in some areas since both involve focus on student correction and assigned punishments, but different in other ways because BM focuses more on the teacher's anticipation of classroom situations and pre-planning for these circumstances to avoid occurrences of inappropriate behaviors, as well as ways to neutralize them when they happen (Martin & Sass, 2010). Teachers who believe wholeheartedly in BM theory concentrate on daily management

practices that include repeated rules, expectations, relationships, and rewards (Krane, Karlsson, Ness, & Binder, 2016; Martin & Sass, 2010).

On the other hand, teachers who rely more on IM theory practices concentrate their efforts on their consistent daily routines, lesson delivery, guided practice, and independent activities (Krane et al., 2016; Martin & Sass, 2010). These IM focused teachers' trust that repeated structures can lead to better engagement and higher academic achievement; in other words, as the teachers continue to be consistent in implementation, controlled discipline is anticipated as a natural result (Krane et al., 2016; Koçak & Burgaz, 2017).

Best classroom management practices include an effective combination of both BM and IM theories and applications. Unfortunately, most public-school teachers use IM concepts effectively, but lack experience in BM skills, which concentrate more on meeting student needs as a foundational component of classroom management and academic learning (Alter & Haydon, 2017; Koçak & Burgaz, 2017; Krane et al., 2016; Martin & Sass, 2010; Skiba, Ormiston, Martinez, & Cummings, 2016).

Glasser (1998) wrote extensively about students being prone to make poor behavior choices when their basic needs are unmet; these unfortunate decisions will negatively impact learning in any classroom environment. Appropriate social relationships are essential to meet these basic needs at all stages of education but tend to become even more significant with age (Glasser, 1998). Relationships at the secondary school level are more important for student growth and development than at the elementary school level (Krane et al., 2016; Krane & Klevan, 2019). Elementary students tend to possess more natural excitement about learning; whereas, secondary students struggle more with self-identity and their place in the world, making them more interested in supportive social structures before they will make a concentrated effort

in learning (Krane et al., 2016; Krane & Klevan, 2019). When teachers fail to recognize and meet student social needs, classroom management systems are found lacking, and learning goals fall far short of potential academic outcomes.

Situation to Self

This study consisted of an ontological approach to understanding positive student-teacher relationship development and outcomes by connecting Glasser's (1988) Choice theory with the five basic needs of secondary students. My ontological assumption was based on observed experiences where teachers have placed effort into creating effective student-teacher relationships, which have given them the opportunity to meet student needs, establish a safe learning environment, and create more significant opportunities for learning with fewer classroom misbehaviors. From an epistemological perspective, I assumed that through careful study of student-teacher relationship development, I could clearly show how positive student-teacher relationship development could improve all areas of school life for a student including academic achievement, behavioral choices, consistent attendance, and school involvement. The research was addressed from a transformative perspective guiding the study so that teachers could integrate their actions and reflections into their classroom practices in a way that improved student-teacher relationships, classroom management, and ultimately, academic learning.

Based on my educational experiences, I assumed that teachers do not understand the importance of student relationships, or they would put more time and effort into making them a priority. My passion is meeting the basic needs of students, motivating my students to positively mature and develop, and enabling them to reach their highest academic potential. I believe that positive student-teacher relationship development connects all of these desires. This research clarified the importance of relationship development as a crucial component of classroom

management that will help me to improve teacher education and preparedness in the classroom that will impact students for generations to come.

Problem Statement

President George W. Bush signed the No Child Left Behind Act into federal law in 2002 (No Child Left Behind [NCLB], 2002) updates and revisions followed in 2008 (United States Department of Education, 2008). In 2016, President Barak H. Obama signed its replacement legislation with the Every Student Succeeds Act (United States Department of Education, 2016) clearing the way for new public-school mandates. Focus on the NCLB Act (2002), its revision (2008), and the ESSA Law (2016) brought classroom management into the spotlight because teachers were required to successfully manage classrooms in such a way that produce opportunities for best practices in instruction, higher levels of learning, and excellency in standardized testing scores (NCLB, 2008; United States Department of Education, 2016). Added to these federal laws, in 2015, South Carolina public schools replaced Common Core Standards with the current College and Career Readiness Performance Index (CCPRI) which included comprehensive yearly evaluations designed to determine a school's effectiveness rating as excellent, good, average, below average, or unsatisfactory (South Carolina Department of Education, 2020). Therefore, teachers must consider the impact of positive student-teacher relationships as a foundational social component of effective classroom management that will reduce discipline issues and ultimately improve achievement outcomes.

A more inviting classroom environment is beneficial in helping students achieve higher outcomes in academics, athletics, the arts, and social contexts, assisting schools in scoring higher on the CCRPI scale (Krane et al., 2016; Krane & Klevan, 2019). Students value a teacher's willingness to be there for them by listening, encouraging, and demonstrating concern for their

academic and personal success (Egeberg & McConney, 2018). Krane and Klevan (2019) acknowledged that the student-teacher relationship or lack thereof is a significant component in student motivation, learning, and achievement. Research also indicated that there is still a lack of classroom management training in current teacher preparation programs and that methods practice for relationship building and conflict-resolution are needed before teachers enter their first year in the classroom (Dicke et al., 2015; Krane et al., 2016; Krane & Klevan, 2019; Skiba et al., 2016). The problem is that some teachers build relationship development into their effective classroom management system, but many teachers fail to do so because they do not recognize the influence of these effective relationships on classroom management, and their long-term effect on instruction and achievement outcomes. This study contributed new information regarding the importance of positive student-teacher relationship development.

Purpose Statement

The purpose of this phenomenological study was to understand student-teacher relationship development and its impact on classroom management and academic achievement for teachers at two secondary level schools in the coastal region of South Carolina. The development of positive student-teacher relationships was the focus of the study as these relationships affect classroom management and connect to improved academic learning (Back et al., 2016). The primary theory that guided this study was Glasser's Choice theory (1988), which brought to the forefront meeting students' basic needs of love and belonging, power, fun, survival, and freedom as the foundation for effective classroom management and positive academic achievement.

Significance of the Study

School report cards grade today's public schools through a comprehensive result of statistical evaluations in multiple types of student achievement. Effective classroom management plays a significant role in all categorical areas used to generate this published yearly report card score. Teacher training programs primarily focus on negative forms of discipline for minor student offenses which can produce low student achievement according to school report card data (Valente, Monteiro, & Lourenco, 2019). According to Krane and Klevan (2019), meeting student social needs is critical for secondary level classroom management systems to work well, especially for improving student motivation, learning, and achievement; therefore, teachers need to learn how to provide genuine student care and opportunities for learning simultaneously.

Empirical Significance

A great deal of research exists on classroom management and individual evidence-based skills to help teachers create a safe, engaging learning environment, but there is little research on student-teacher relationship development and how it impacts learning. Due to the lack of research in this area, positive student-teacher relationship development was worth investigating due to the potential impact these relationships could have on classroom management and, as a result, on overall academic learning.

Effective classroom management combines many different techniques that assist teachers in managing instruction and encouraging positive behaviors in the classroom (Alter & Haydon, 2017; Back et al., 2016). When teachers practice these techniques consistently, classroom management can effectively increase positive outcomes and create a more conducive environment for academic engagement (Kaur & Ranu, 2017). When teachers dismiss important

classroom foundations and do not include relationship development as a part of their management system, it fails to provide the learning environment and social support that students need (Back et al., 2016; Hsieh, 2016; Koçak & Burgaz, 2017). All secondary level students have personal needs that require fulfillment before academic learning can take place; therefore, teachers must understand these needs and work to meet them (Glasser, 1998). Understanding the steps to positive student-teacher relationship development among secondary public schools and the impact these relationships can have on meeting student needs and improving classroom management for enriched academic learning was the focus of this phenomenological study.

Theoretical Significance

Every factor within a school climate can impact every other component positively or negatively. Therefore, there are several theories at work in any given classroom. The first theory, Skinner's (1938) Operant Conditioning, reveals that students learn from and respond to behavior modification. Teachers prove this theory as true every time they reinforce appropriate behavior and discourage inappropriate behavior. The second theory, Vygotsky's (1978) Social Development Theory, discloses the importance of social relationships and the desire of every individual to feel connected within a social context. Secondary school students prove this theory is at work every day as they seek to be part of their broader school environment by making friends with their peers and maintaining meaningful connections with their teachers and coaches. Third, Bandura's (1977) Social Learning Theory plays out within these relationships as well. A student's environment influences them to learn or to digress from learning based on their response to surrounding stimuli. Glasser's (1998) Choice theory effectively combined all of these theories into one streamlined thought that secondary level students will modify their behavior, seek to connect, and respond to stimuli based on their personal needs. The research

conducted in this study confirmed that Choice theory should be addressed in a secondary school classroom. Students at this level seek needs fulfillment, which propels their thoughts, words, actions, and behaviors (Glasser, 1998).

Practical Significance

Research data completed by Aldrup, Klusmann, Ludtke, Gollner, and Trautwein (2018) showed strong connections between effective classroom management and genuine social support that encourages secondary students to reach higher achievement levels, refine specific interests, and develop a more positive self-identity leading students to feel a more healthy sense of belonging. Back et al. (2016) also revealed that effective classroom management and positive relationships among students, teachers, and staff improved overall positive feelings regarding school climate in 38 different secondary schools. Likewise, students reported having genuine teacher support that improved their adjustment to education at the secondary school level, raised their level of self-esteem, and was the reason behind their desire to attend school consistently (Aldrup et al., 2018). Montuoro and Lewis (2018), showed that students who believe that their teachers have a genuine, supportive relationship with them are more satisfied in the learning environment, exhibit more positive behaviors, and are more likely to be engaged in academic lessons.

Mutual respect and positive relationships between secondary level teachers and their students can create sound classroom management, improve curriculum driven instruction, and maximize academic learning (Aldrup et al., 2018). Secondary school teachers were the primary stakeholders for this qualitative phenomenological study. Through the insight gained from the research in this study, teachers garner an awareness of the importance of building positive student-teacher relationships that is the basis for improved general teacher preparation classes

and refined current professional development expectations. The results from this research assist teachers in understanding basic student needs and the impact they can make on classroom management, and ultimately, academic achievement. College professors and school level administrators would be wise to create professional development opportunities that provide teachers with evidence-based examples for building positive relationships as part of an overall classroom management structure. With improved relationship development skills, teachers will satisfy student needs and stand to improve classrooms where misbehaviors can decrease, instruction can advance, and achievement can soar.

Research Questions

Research questions for this phenomenological study stemmed from the problem and understanding of the purpose statement. The questions generated significant personal knowledge and made social connections for teachers to gain insight into meeting student needs and as a critical component of their classroom management system. Three sub questions supported the central question for this study: How do secondary teachers in South Carolina describe the benefits of positive student-teacher relationships as they improve academic achievement and reduce behavior issues within the classroom?

How well teachers support their students is directly related to their relationship development ability and relational behaviors; therefore, when teachers genuinely connect with their students, they will be able to meet individual student needs, increase the likelihood of higher achievement scores, and positively impact overall cognitive development (Aldrup et al., 2018; Cook et al., 2017; Hornstra et al., 2018; Skiba et al., 2016). Understanding the needs of each student is critical in planning and implementing a classroom management system that is beneficial for all students (Glasser, 1998). Effective relationship development on the part of

classroom teachers implied that they must develop a genuine love for each learner in their classroom, commitment to helping each student succeed, and real dedication for seeing every student achieve overall development (Alter & Haydon, 2017; Kaur & Ranu, 2017).

SQ1: How do secondary level teachers understand basic student needs?

Glasser (1998) explained that all individuals are motivated by the pleasure experienced through satisfying needs; therefore, meeting students' needs is the foundation of a productive classroom environment. Teachers should consider the importance of developing positive relationships with each student as a means of maintaining a positive classroom environment where unencumbered instruction can take place (Lum et al., 2019).

SQ2: How do secondary level teachers in South Carolina implement relationship development strategies as part of their classroom management structure?

According to Glasser's Choice theory (1998), educators should recognize that enforcing external controls will not build up relationships but instead break them down; therefore, genuine relationships built on meeting student needs are the foundation for ensuring that all students have a safe, engaging learning environment that guarantees students a flexible opportunity to learn. Egeberg and McConney (2018) confirmed that teachers who spent time developing a positive relationship with their students reported more positive behaviors in their classrooms.

SQ3: How do secondary level teachers explain student relationship development and understand the impact of these relationships?

Montuoro and Lewis (2018) showed that when students first have a meaningful relationship with their teacher, classroom behaviors are more positive, and students react in a much more engaging manner to activities in the classroom environment. Valente et al. (2019) added that when teachers engage in positive relationships with students, devote their

management system to creating a positive classroom environment, and train students to practice self-responsibility, then disciplinary measures to address negative behaviors will decrease.

Definitions

1. *Behavioral management* – Is based on scientific research that explains skills connected to understanding, managing, and changing a student’s behavior (Chaplain, 2017; Conroy, Davis, Fox, & Brown, 2002).
2. *Classroom management* – Today’s highly effective teachers use a variety of skills and strategies to create a safe and secure learning environment, establish specific, measurable, achievable, realistic and time-bound (SMART) goals, deliver content-specific curriculum, organize learning materials, allocate time on task, provide for independent learning, and giving stimulating feedback to motivate students to seek academic achievement (Adeolu, 2017; Beard & Wilson, 2013).
3. *Effective* – Strategies and activities that produce desired results in the classroom (Alberto & Troutman, 2003; Alderman & Green, 2011; Kunter et al., 2007).
4. *Successful* – Classroom management structures that enable students to learn and reach higher academic achievement levels (Elias et al., 1997; Savage, 2010).
5. *Evidence-based practice* – Classroom instruction and practice adopts methods based on grounded educational principles and supported by extensive observed research (Chaplain, 2017; Gunner, Countihno, & Cade, 2002).
6. *Highly qualified teacher* – Teachers who hold a bachelor’s degree, earn a state-endorsed teaching license and demonstrate high levels of competence in the subject areas where they teach (South Carolina Department of Education: Highly Qualified Teachers, 2008; United States Department of Education, 2016).

7. *Instructional Management* – The repetitive methods and activities that teachers use to engage and motivate students in all aspects of the learning environment (Adeolu, 2017; Pianta, Stuhlman & Hamre, 2002).
8. *Novice teacher* – Classroom teachers with five years or less classroom experience who have misguided classroom expectations and lack correct depth perception in multiple classroom scenarios where they cannot respond effectively (Fajet, Bello, Leftwich, Mesler, & Shaver, 2005; Weinstein, Curran, & Tomlinson-Clarke, 2003; Wolff et al., 2016).
9. *Quality assurance* – Educational methods and activities that provide the most efficient process for reaching learning goals (Adeolu, 2017; Alberto & Troutman, 2003; Alderman & Green, 2011; Kunter et al., 2007).
10. *South Carolina College and Career Ready Performance* – Federally mandated requirements for students earning a South Carolina high school diploma indicating readiness for success in the college or career pathway of their choice (Southern Regional Education Board, 2008; United States Department of Education, 2016).

Summary

Chapter one provided an overview of the phenomenological study that sought to analyze and better understand positive student-teacher relationship development and the impact of these relationships on classroom management and, ultimately, on academic achievement. The problem is that all secondary level classrooms need an effective management system where students can learn in a safe, engaging environment, but many teachers do not see student needs as a relevant part of this structure. Development of positive student-teacher relationships, the impact of these relationships on classroom management, and their enduring impacts on instruction and

achievement outcomes is essential for effective learning to take place (Alter & Haydon, 2017; Pianta, 1999).

The experiences of secondary level teachers in two coastal South Carolina public schools revealed relationship development methods and their impacts through this phenomenological study. Understanding and implementation of Glasser's (1998) Choice theory provided a foundation for meeting student needs through positive student-teacher relationship development as a part of effective classroom management. Shared personal experiences directly connected me to the study. This chapter shared pertinent information associated with the research questions, related sub-questions, and relevant definitions. The goal of this study was to help secondary level teachers better understand the connection between meeting student needs through positive student-teacher relationship development as a part of classroom management, improved learning, and decreased disruptions.

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

Overview

A thorough literature review was conducted to understand a variety of evidence-based classroom management strategies and their impact. As a foundation for this study, this chapter provided an overview of the current literature. The first section includes a discussion of the designated theory as it connects to the theoretical framework for this study. A synthesis of related literature appears in the second section. The literature review considered the thoughts, behaviors, and actions of secondary school teachers based on their classroom management training, strategies, and implementation. Focus concentrated on whether or not these strategies include the development of meaningful student-teacher relationships to meet the daily needs of love and belonging, power, fun, survival, and freedom within the context of their classroom management system.

After careful consideration of the needs of secondary level students, attention focused on the goals of classroom environment, classroom management challenges, educational oversight expectations, secondary level teacher preparedness, and a series of eight most effective evidence-based classroom management strategies. The final sections discussed literature related to relationship development among students and teachers by connecting with student needs, classroom and behavior management, teacher's perspectives on classroom management, and professional development for classroom management strategies. Each section explored what teachers can do to meet student's needs as a critical component of classroom management that seeks to maintain a safe, secure learning environment where students are engaged and motivated to learn. After a careful analysis reviewing the current literature, an identified gap developed, suggesting the need for the focus of this study.

Theoretical Framework

Dependable research for a qualitative study relies on a theoretical framework enabling the researcher to build upon previous observations that are established by the founding theorists (Creswell & Poth, 2018). The framework for this phenomenological study was Glasser's Choice theory (Glasser, 1998).

Glasser's beginning stages of research in 1965 produced the initial ideas for his well-known theory (William Glasser Institute, 2010). Initially, Glasser (1998) gave his ideas the name control theory, and later, after a final name change his ideas became widely known as Choice theory. According to the William Glasser Institute (2010), Dr. Glasser wholeheartedly believed in the profound implications of Choice theory and dedicated his life to sharing the knowledge of his theory so that all individuals could function within social relationships that could grow and prosper. The basic foundation of Choice theory is the fundamental belief that all individuals desire to have daily control over the personal actions and life decisions they make (Erwin, 2020; Glasser, 1998). Choice theory teaches that all individuals chose their actions, reactions, and behaviors based on the individual's attempt to satisfy the five basic needs for love and belonging, power, fun, survival, and freedom (Glasser, 1998).

Choice theory does not focus on actions of the past but instead centers on the present where individuals make decisions about their behaviors and actions based on their current situation (Erwin, 2020; Henderson, Robey, Dunham, & Derner, 2013). Essentially, no one can force an individual to do anything; but instead, each individual makes their own decisions and follow chosen pathways based on the satisfaction of their own set of needs (Glasser, 1994).

Glasser teaches through his Choice theory that each day individuals make choices based on a common set of five basic needs (as cited in Bradley, 2014). Fulfillment or dissatisfaction of

these needs guides the decisions that all individuals make and ultimately directs their life's path (Bradley, 2014). Glasser (2011) stressed that each person is intrinsically motivated to choose behaviors based on the desire to fulfill these five critical needs without causing damage to meaningful relationships. As each person chooses their behavior, they are ultimately responsible for these personal decisions and their outcomes, but they are not liable for the decisions made by others (Akram, 2019; Bradley, 2014; Erwin, 2020; Henderson et al., 2013). Meaningful and productive relationships can meet several basic needs and therefore are a necessity in life (Akram, 2019; Henderson et al., 2013). Problems arise when these valuable relationships are missing (Akram, 2019; Henderson et al., 2013). Choice theory explained how valued relationships impact all behaviors and, in turn, how the chosen behavior affects the relationships and the individuals within them (Glasser, 1994). Therefore, relationship development as part of satisfying an individual's daily basic needs is the focus of life (Glasser, 1994).

Each person, including all secondary level students, possesses this genetically embedded set of needs; therefore, teachers should understand and address these needs daily (Erwin, 2020; Glasser, 1998; Hornstra et al., 2018; Skiba et al., 2016). The foremost critical need is for survival and the one that individuals seek after first; it is the most basic of all human instincts (Bradley, 2014; Glasser, 1998). Once this need is satisfied, an individual seeks fulfillment for the other essential needs. The need for love and a sense of belonging motivates an individual to choose behaviors and make decisions that will create feelings of care by those in the surrounding environment, making connections to those naturally included (Erwin, 2020; Glasser, 2011; Skiba et al., 2016). A feeling of love and belonging is the primary need of each individual (Bradley, 2014; Hornstra et al., 2018). Satisfaction of these needs must come first before a person can seek after the fulfillment of other vital needs (Bradley, 2014; Hornstra et al., 2018).

The second intrinsic need is a sense of power, which stems from demonstrations of respect, achievement, and acknowledgment (Bradley, 2014). Glasser (1998) explains that power can be both good and bad, and frequently social consequences may arise from the pursuit of power. For example, adolescents tend to make poor choices when they feel that they are in the throes of a power struggle (Erwin, 2020; Pincus, 2020). As a result, many teenagers, commonly referred to as well-behaved kids, will make bad decisions in an attempt to either assert or maintain their authority in a situation (Erwin, 2020; Pincus, 2020). Unfortunately, teenagers often make these poor choices with little regard for short or long-term consequences (Erwin, 2020; Pincus, 2020). Regardless of the positive or negative outcome, or the intensity of pursuit, satisfaction of power is a daily individual desire (Erwin, 2020; Glasser, 1998).

The final two essential needs are for freedom and fun. Being able to express one's ideas, choices, and creativity is common among all ages (Bradley, 2014). Only a small number of cultures view freedom as a negative entity, not something to be desired or permitted; therefore, worldwide freedom is more collectively accepted than discouraged (Erwin, 2020; Glasser, 1998). The equal desire for fun and freedom creates problems when trying to strike a balance between the two (Erwin, 2020; Glasser, 1998). In essence, placing one ahead of the other causes a great deal of misery at times (Erwin, 2020; Glasser, 1998). Fun most often wins out with adolescents, and work comes in at a long distanced second (Lynch & Hussung, 2018; Pincus, 2020). Secondary level students commonly pursue fun, and therefore put less effort into work demands, commonly resulting in classroom disruptions and misbehaviors (Erwin, 2020; Pincus, 2020).

When teachers do not understand or work to meet student needs, avoidance of an individual's five basic needs is just as futile as believing that relationships and environments have no impact on a person's decisions and behaviors (Akram, 2019; Glasser, 1998; Koenig,

2018). Just as relationships and environments create real impacts, all humans continuously demonstrate and choose behaviors based on the satisfaction or dissatisfaction of their essential needs (Akram, 2019; Erwin, 2020; Glasser, 2011). Behavior constitutes feeling, thinking, acting, and physiology; as a result, an individual's current needs and wants to control their final behavioral decisions (Glasser, 1994; Lynch & Hussung, 2018; Sailus, 2020). Feeling and physiology are involuntary actions while thinking and acting are voluntary responses (Glasser, 1994; Lynch & Hussung, 2018; Sailus, 2020). Outside stimuli do not dictate the choices made in behaviors, but instead, the drive to fulfill essential needs and wants dominates behavioral control (Glasser, 1994; Sailus, 2020). Research shows that a person's thinking and acting will ultimately control their feelings and physiology and that the reverse is also true, one impacting the other (Bradley, 2014; Erwin, 2020; Lynch & Hussung, 2018). Physiology and how an individual feels will ultimately impact their thoughts and actions (Bradley, 2014; Erwin, 2020; Lynch & Hussung, 2018). All four of these interrelated components combine to form an individual's chosen behavior as explained in Choice theory; therefore, a person's choices are their best attempt at meeting critical needs and maintaining control (Glasser, 1998; Koenig, 2018).

Teachers can improve the learning environment in their classrooms by utilizing the knowledge Choice theory provides (Glasser, 1998; Koenig, 2018; Lynch & Hussung, 2018; Universal class editors, 2020). Secondary level students need fulfillment of their essential needs and to know that the work they complete is meaningful in helping them reach their achievement goals (Hornstra et al., 2018; Universal class editors, 2020). Students function the same both inside and outside of the classroom in the sense that they are continually trying to fulfill their essential needs or wants, but their efforts and results may look starkly different depending on the environment (Glasser, 1998; Hornstra et al., 2018; Universal class editors, 2020).

In the classroom, applying Choice theory is quite practical, resulting in positive benefits (Akram, 2019; Erwin, 2020; Koenig, 2018; Lynch & Hussung, 2018; Universal class editors, 2020). Applying Choice theory for teachers ultimately means giving students a choice in their behavior as they seek to satisfy a need within the confines of an engaging learning environment (Akram, 2019; Erwin, 2020; Koenig, 2018; Lynch & Hussung, 2018; Universal class editors, 2020). Secondary level students, just like all other student age groups, can only control their behavior and not the behavior of others (Sailus, 2020; Universal class editors, 2020). Therefore, an individual student may go to great lengths to meet a current need or want; if they cannot fulfill a need appropriately, then the student may attempt satisfaction using inappropriate methods (Akram, 2019; Erwin, 2020; Lynch & Hussung, 2018; Sailus, 2020; Universal class editors, 2020). What may constitute an inappropriate behavior in the classroom may be acceptable in an extra-curricular activity (Sailus, 2020; Universal class editors, 2020). The desire and effort to meet a current need or want may begin the same, but the results will look different whether a student is inside or outside of a classroom (Koenig, 2018; Lynch & Hussung, 2018; Sailus, 2020; Universal class editors, 2020).

Teachers should provide motivation as a part of their classroom structure to meet student needs and encourage a self-controlled desire to behave appropriately, learn competently, and work efficiently (Glasser, 1998). Student misbehaviors that lead to disruptions in the learning environment occur most when students find themselves in a situation where their needs go lacking (Glasser, 1998). When a student displays inappropriate behavior, the teacher would be wise to observe which of the five needs the student currently pursues and seek to fulfill the need in an appropriate manner (Hornstra et al., 2018; Koenig, 2018; Sailus, 2020; Universal class editors, 2020). Teachers should express understanding of the root cause of the situation and

explain that appropriate behavior can adequately meet the desired need (Koenig, 2018; Sailus, 2020; Universal class editors, 2020). This part of the conversation follows with a suggested alternate behavior (Koenig, 2018; Sailus, 2020; Universal class editors, 2020). Teachers should lead the student in implementing the more positive, pro-active response to the current need as a better behavior option (Cook et al., 2017; Erwin, 2020; Koenig, 2018; Lynch & Hussung, 2018; Sailus, 2020; Universal class editors, 2020). If the student refuses to try the suggested alternate behavior, then the teacher should offer a choice of appropriate behaviors without exception (Koenig, 2018; Sailus, 2020; Universal class editors, 2020).

Consistent motivation can drive secondary students each day to develop self-control in meeting their own needs (Akram, 2019; Erwin, 2020; Hornstra et al., 2018; Universal class editors, 2020). Teachers can seek to meet student needs ahead of misbehavior or offer choices to correct it once it occurs; either way, the emphasis should be on reminding students of ownership over their behaviors and choices in appropriate responses (Hornstra et al., 2018; Koenig, 2018; Lynch & Hussung, 2018; Sailus, 2020; Skiba et al., 2016; Universal class editors, 2020). Researchers indicate that Glasser asserted that as more teachers understand and give credence to each student's basic set of needs, they can teach much more effectively with Choice theory as a part of their overall instructional design for the classroom (Akram, 2019; Erwin, 2020; Glasser, 1998; Hornstra et al., 2018).

All actions by an individual connect to chosen behaviors in a daily attempt to satisfy the five basic needs; therefore, an individual maintains responsibility for their behavior, whether it is a conscious or an unconscious action in pursuit of these needs (Glasser, 1998; Koenig, 2018; Lynch & Hussung, 2018). Teachers, especially those at the secondary level, should base classroom management and instructional activities on Choice theory to meet student needs and

improve learning (Akram, 2019; Erwin, 2020; Glasser, 1994; Lynch & Hussung, 2018).

Teachers who manage their classroom using Choice theory applications can become excellent managers who guide students in hard work, help students understand positive benefits of learning, and create learning experiences that meet student's needs (Cook et al., 2017; Erwin, 2020; Hornstra et al., 2018; Lynch & Hussung, 2018). In Choice theory classrooms, teachers limit coercion strategies since these types of strategies do not create valuable responses (Erwin, 2020; Lynch & Hussung, 2018). Instead, Choice theory teachers focus on student demonstration of competence in high quality work and student reflection and responsibility for behaviors and learning (Erwin, 2020; Lynch & Hussung, 2018). Students at the secondary level would feel a stronger sense of love, belonging, power, freedom, and fun, would have their needs met more consistently and would be less likely to resort to inappropriate behaviors when teachers understand and implement Choice theory in this manner (Glasser, 1994; Hornstra et al., 2018; Lynch & Hussung, 2018).

Choice theory establishes the essential need for teachers to develop effective relationships with students and how these relationships can impact each student's behavioral, social, and academic development (Glasser, 1998). As a result, meeting student needs based on Choice theory created the structure for this phenomenological study. This study's research focused on analyzing how teachers understand, perceive, and experience their classroom management structures, including the fulfillment of student needs and the development of effective working relationships. The impact these relationships create as an essential part of classroom management and their influence on the student's learning environment and desired behaviors was a concentrated part of this study's foundation.

Related Literature

Teachers can more successfully meet secondary level student needs to satisfy a sense of love and belonging, power, fun, survival, and freedom, and motivate their thoughts, behaviors, and actions positively with proper implementation of an effective classroom management system (Adeolu, 2017; Back et al., 2016). Classroom management is a foundational component of education; unfortunately, many teachers perceive management as a list of concisely written rules instead of viewing it as a more comprehensive system that should include developing meaningful relationships that will enable them to learn about their students and help them meet each student's unique set of needs (Aldrup et al., 2018; Beard & Wilson, 2013; Hornstra et al., 2018; Pianta et al., 2002; Skiba et al., 2016). Currently, classroom management research makes minimal connections between overall school climate and teacher professionalism but does not address positive relationship development and its impact on student achievement that could result in revolutionary improvements to teacher education and training (Adeolu, 2017; Back et al., 2016; Fajet et al., 2005). Teachers should understand and implement effective classroom management systems to accomplish two main goals: meeting the needs of each student and creating an engaging learning environment (Adeolu, 2017; Back et al., 2016; Hornstra et al., 2018). The current literature study on the challenges of creating a safe, engaging learning environment and development of effective classroom management is critical for understanding the connection between the two.

Classroom Environment

The classroom setting is much more than desks set up in groups or decorative bulletin boards; the physical organization of a learning environment reflects a teaching style positively or negatively (Shalaway 2020; Whittaker & Hayes, 2018; Young 2020; Zacarian, Alvarez-Ortiz, &

Haynes, 2018). Qualitative case studies analyzed the physical layout of a classroom, focusing on a variety of teaching methods used to implement direct instruction, quiet study, collaborative opportunities, and personal teacher workspace (Perle, 2016; Shalaway 2020; Young 2020). The consequent research showed that the way a teacher creates the physical classroom could direct students to needed resources, remind students of important announcements and schedules, clarify student learning objectives, and improve motivation for students to learn (Perle, 2016; Shalaway 2020; Traynor, 2003; Young 2020). Students learn more efficiently when the classroom environment is positive and engaging; therefore, the physical classroom should be a place where students can see material easily, have opportunity to move around, have ease of access to the teacher, feel comfortable with a reasonable temperature, and feel safe so they can focus on learning (McLennan, Sampasa-Kanyinga, Georgiades, & Duku, 2020; Young, 2020). Within the physical context of the classroom, students learn better when meaningful relationships among teachers, staff, and students are visible, students can enjoy voice and choice in what they learn, teachers convey lessons in a meaningful context, and teachers maintain consistent class expectations (Perle, 2016; Zacarian, Alvarez-Ortiz, & Haynes, 2018).

The ability of every student to learn relies heavily on the teacher's desire to understand student needs and adjust the classroom environment to meet those needs (Alderman & Green, 2011; Aldrup et al., 2018; Davis & Warner, 2018; Fajet et al., 2005; Hornstra et al., 2018; McLennan et al., 2020). Classroom management has always been a component of teacher training programs but came to the forefront of educational training after the implementation of academic expectation laws (NCEE, 1983; ESSA, 2016). However, in recent years, little has changed in teacher training programs for improving or understanding classroom management from a more needs-driven perspective that can better assist students (Back et al., 2016; Beard &

Wilson, 2013; Fajet et al., 2005; Perle, 2016; Traynor, 2003).

A mixture of qualitative and quantitative studies conducted among current secondary school level teachers showed that most novice teachers with fewer than eight years of classroom teaching experience did not possess needed skills to develop effective working relationships with their students, which is a critical component of effective classroom management (Aldrup et al., 2018; Alter & Haydon, 2017; Conroy et al., 2002; Davis & Warner, 2018; Pianta et al., 2002; Perle, 2016). These same novice teachers also lacked the skills needed for creating classroom management systems that could reduce disruptive behaviors and positively impact student achievement (Back et al., 2016; Beard & Wilson, 2013; Fajet et al., 2005; Perle, 2016; Traynor, 2003). Developing effective relationships with students as a critical component of classroom management can improve student behaviors and ultimately improve their academic achievement, but research is lacking in this area (Davis & Warner, 2018; Elias et al., 1997; Perle, 2016; Traynor, 2003).

Classroom Management Challenges

Negotiating policies, expectations, and student relationships within a learning environment can quickly turn classroom management into a challenge and a source of high levels of frustration and stress for the teacher (Beaman, Wheldall, & Kemp, 2007; McLennan et al., 2020; Morgan 2020). Classroom management is a daily balancing act that involves keeping engaging lessons on track, maintaining a standards-driven curriculum, and dealing with a variety of student needs that can range from minor to serious (Beaman et al., 2007; Zacarian, Alvarez-Ortiz, & Haynes, 2018). The challenge of classroom management intensifies during the first five years of teaching since practical management application is not something that novice teachers

can learn from a book but only through repeated classroom interactions (McLennan et al., 2020; Morgan, 2020; Whittaker & Hayes, 2018).

Classroom management is a foundational priority for every classroom in secondary schools across the United States, and one that requires frequent, consistent practice before a teacher can develop mastery level skills (Aldrup et al., 2018; Davis & Warner, 2018; McLennan et al., 2020). Classroom management is an overlapping construct of a variety of interactions, lessons, challenges, and learning in an educational environment (Aldrup et al., 2018; Beard & Wilson, 2013; Conroy et al., 2002). Effective teachers do not merely teach, but instead help each individual grow in academic, physical, social, and emotional areas of life through the way they relate to each student and manage their classroom environment (Alberto & Troutman, 2003; Alderman & Green, 2011; Davis & Warner, 2018; McLennan et al., 2020; Pianta et al., 2002; Skiba et al., 2016). Students can come into a classroom in a variety of ways: hungry, upset, angry, anxious, or tired (Zacarian, Alvarez-Ortiz, & Haynes, 2018). Until teachers can effectively address and manage these needs, very little, if any, learning will take place in the classroom (Beaman et al., 2007; McLennan et al., 2020; Morgan 2020, Zacarian, Alvarez-Ortiz, & Haynes, 2018).

If teachers intend to teach their students effectively, then they must consistently utilize meaningful behavior management strategies, implement consistent instructional strategies, and execute a strong curriculum (Back et al., 2016; Fajet et al., 2005; McLennan et al., 2020). Managing instruction in a secondary level classroom is challenging, similarly, so is the refined skill of managing student behavior (Aldrup et al., 2018; McLennan et al., 2020; Saffran & Oswald, 2003). Effectively managing student behavior is the more critical part of the classroom, since student behaviors directly impact teacher instruction, student learning, and academic

achievement (Aldrup et al., 2018; Alter & Haydon, 2017; Davis & Warner, 2018; Fajet et al., 2005; McLennan et al., 2020). Additional research is needed to address today's current classroom management challenges.

Educational Oversight Expectations

Classroom management has always been an important area of focus in the public school system. Educational training and professional development placed management systems in the spotlight after new mandates passed that accompanied the NCLB (No Child Left Behind) federal law, the ESSA (Every Student Succeeds Act), the CCRPI (College and Career Ready Performance Index), and achievement-based initiatives such as Race to the Top (United States Department of Education, 2002; United States Department of Education, 2008; United States Department of Education, 2016; United States Department of Education, 2017). Teachers must have effective classroom management systems consistently in place to provide a safe learning environment where students can reach new levels of achievement as required by the NCLB expectations and CCRPI data that directly contributes to yearly school report cards (Elias et al., 1997; Pianta et al., 2002; United States Department of Education, 2016).

Generally speaking, teachers continuously try to provide a positive learning environment within their classrooms. Observations revealed that a significant cornerstone in reaching this daily goal requires improvements to the overall classroom management system (Lugrin et al., 2016; McLennan et al., 2020). When considering their classroom management system, most teachers fall under the motivation of one of two theories of thought: behavioral management (BM) or instructional management (IM). Teachers focused on BM most often concentrate on skills needed to develop positive relationships with their students as part of their overall management system, adhere to school expectations, pursue achievement outcomes, and address

student behavior, both good and bad (Saffran & Oswald, 2003). However, most BM theory driven teachers sorely overlook the importance of relationship development and concentrate their efforts on the other components of their system.

Interviews, observations, and focus group analysis indicated that BM focused teachers typically create a list of posted classroom rules to establish their expectations, but fail to address each student's need to belong as part of their management system (Beard & Wilson, 2013; Hsieh, 2016; Kaur & Ranu, 2017; Pianta et al., 2002). Qualitative research has shown that when students identify with being an essential part of their classroom, they felt more confident, they displayed improved overall behavior, and they were more likely to learn at a higher level; therefore, when these things are not addressed in a BM based classroom, the management system lacks effectiveness (Beard & Wilson, 2013; Hsieh, 2016; Kaur & Ranu, 2017; Pianta et al., 2002). Observation and immersion research from several qualitative studies revealed that students clearly distinguished between academic concern and personal caring from their teachers; the students who felt genuinely cared for by their teachers cared more about school and learning in return (Aldrup et al., 2018; Beard & Wilson, 2013; Egeberg & McConney, 2018; Montuoro & Lewis, 2018). Even with qualitative research studies such as these available to current and novice teachers, relationship development with students has not been a prominent part of most secondary school classrooms, and contemporary interventions need new research studies to promote more effective and engaging learning environments in today's classrooms (Hornstra et al., 2018; Lugin et al., 2016).

Multi-talented teachers or as many states label them, highly qualified teachers, must master content, refine delivery, and develop rapport, so students know that the teacher wants them to succeed (Koçak & Burgaz, 2017; Krane et al., 2016; Krane & Klevan, 2019; Saffran &

Oswald, 2003). Unfortunately, with pressing educational expectations to reach specific yearly goals, teachers tend to focus on academic results and place little emphasis on meaningful relationship development with their students (Koçak & Burgaz, 2017; Krane et al., 2016; Krane & Klevan, 2019; Saffran & Oswald, 2003). With class sizes increasing each year, teachers face more demanding challenges to meet academic expectations and address how they will effectively teach a more significant number of students (Lum et al., 2019). Over the last ten years, content analysis research suggested compelling evidence on both sides of the class size issue and the resulting impact on students, learning, and achievement (Montuoro & Lewis, 2018). As a result, some researchers reported that class size directly impacted student achievement negatively, while several others insisted that class size had no bearing on final academic results (Kaur & Ranu, 2017; Montuoro & Lewis, 2018). Qualitative observation research emphasized that teachers who lacked practical classroom experience and managed class counts higher than 25, showed marked increases in high levels of stress beyond that which is common to the typical secondary school teacher experience within their first five years of classroom experience (Collier-Meek et al., 2019; Kaur & Ranu, 2017).

Due to increasing educational oversight demands, most secondary school teachers do not have the desire or sufficient time set aside for relationship development because more pressing academic demands consume their planning and instructional time (Montuoro & Lewis, 2018). As a result of increased educational achievement expectations, teachers cite higher levels of burnout much earlier in their careers than teachers did ten years ago (Montuoro & Lewis, 2018). Adding another task, such as relationship development, to an already demanding set of career expectations is not something most teachers are willing to consider (Kaur & Ranu, 2017). Unfortunately, these extenuating factors mean that most teachers overlook the importance of

positive student relationships as they seek out other methods of helping their students learn and reach each year's set of educational achievement goals (Cook et al., 2017; Elias et al., 1997; Kaur & Ranu, 2017; Koçak & Burgaz, 2017). Teachers and school leaders could improve the overall educational environment from recognizing and responding to the vital connection between the two.

Secondary Level Teacher Preparedness

If professional development opportunities could include relationship training and related classroom applications, secondary school teachers could learn to maintain better control of their own emotions, develop a better understanding of student needs, create positive student relationships, and ultimately build these components into a solid foundation for an engaging classroom environment where higher levels of learning could take place (Alberto & Troutman, 2003; Alderman & Green, 2011; Fajet et al., 2005; Freeman, Kowitt, Simonsen, Wei, Dooley, Gordon, & Maddock, 2018; Hornstra et al., 2018; Valente, Monteiro, & Lourenco, 2019). Even though some classroom management best practice texts discuss student-teacher relationships, few studies extensively explored how teachers could develop these effective relationships and the resulting impact they can create on the classroom environment (Adeolu, 2017; Alter & Haydon, 2017; Hsieh, 2016; Krueger & Casey, 2014; Kunter, Baumert & Köller, 2007; McLennan et al., 2020; Solheim, Ertesvag, & Dalhaug Berg, 2018). Cohen, Manion, and Morrison (2018) reported in their grounded theory study that classroom management and its impact on school discipline and academic achievement are among the top three educational issues concerning secondary schools today. These are essential skills that teacher training for novice teachers and professional development for veteran teachers should address (Cohen, Manion, & Morrison, 2018).

Both teachers and researchers have agreed that the teacher is the main stakeholder when it comes to classroom management; in essence, the teacher establishes the classroom environment by creating student expectations, defining classroom rules, leading engaging activities, and enforcing consequences for disruptions to the learning environment (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2018; Koçak & Burgaz, 2017; McLennan et al., 2020; Pianta et al., 2002). Researchers also suggest that student-teacher communication, or lack thereof, can have a significant impact on classroom climate and academic achievement levels (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2018).

A wide variety of phenomenology and case study research projects analyzed data on varying management strategies and the resulting impacts they have on classroom environment and student achievement (Adeolu, 2017; Dicke, Elling, Schmeck & Leutner, 2015; Hsieh, 2016; Kaur & Ranu, 2017; PBIS, 2020; Solheim, Ertesvag, & Dalhaug Berg, 2018). Most of these qualitative studies revealed the importance of a variety of classroom management components: the physical arrangement of the classroom, allowing students to help create a list of clear classroom expectations, consistent expectation follow through, actively supervising student learning, comparisons between corrections and discipline, encouraging student initiative, offering praise and constructive feedback, effective instruction delivery, gamification of instruction, connecting with parents and families, and the need for teachers to create a supportive work environment for themselves (Alber, 2010; Dunbar, 2004; Guido, 2018; Hogan, 2015; Terada, 2019). These pieces of classroom management are crucial, but the most critical form of meaningful relationship development, the one between the student and the teacher, received limited mention among these studies. Current grounded theory and phenomenological research literature focused more on the efforts of the teacher, the immediate impact of this work on the

learning environment, and the corresponding student achievement based solely on the teacher's choice of management style and implementation (Kaur & Ranu, 2017; Montuoro & Lewis, 2018; Valente, Monteiro, & Lourenco, 2019; Weinstein et al., 2003). Even though much qualitative research is available, most recent studies focused on evidence-based strategies that did not prioritize meaningful relationship development and its resulting impact.

Evidence-Based Classroom Management Strategies

Solheim, Ertesvag, and Dalhaug's (2018) observations revealed that teachers are the most important individual needed for shaping and positively changing any learning environment; therefore, they must master and employ effective classroom management skills based on evidenced based-classroom management strategies to lead productive classrooms. However, the connecting link for all of these strategies, meaningful student-teacher relationship development, is overlooked. Killian (2014) explained that evidence-based research strategies that are commonly successful among teachers are those with substantial supporting research. When teachers apply these evidence-based strategies, they are more likely to have a positive impact on each student and on the learning environment (Gunner et al., 2002; Killian, 2014; Finley, 2017; McLennan et al., 2020; Saffran & Oswald, 2003). A recent search generated well over 82,000 thousand pieces of information published in the last five years on secondary level classroom management. Considering the wealth of current classroom management research, this literature review focused on 28 of the most recent evidence-based classroom management case studies. Eight of these shared the most common and frequently discussed strategies shared by multiple classroom management articles, books, and websites. The specific details of each of these evidence-based strategies warranted a closer look.

Student Grouping

Out of the eight research studies reviewed in-depth, all of them discussed pairing students into both large and small groups to teach content and related strategies as an effective part of classroom management (Finley, 2017; Guido, 2018; Hayden, 2020; Killian, 2014; Koplick, 2003; Meador, 2018; Tingley, 2020; William, 2018). This evidence-based strategy builds on the importance of teacher modeling, necessary in any classroom, and especially important at the high school level (Hayden, 2020; Koplick, 2003; Tingley, 2020). Productive group time allowed students the opportunity to tackle content-related assignments as they discussed and solved problems together (Hayden, 2020; Tingley, 2020). Student discussion time scratched the surface of classroom relationships, but it still did not reveal the true importance of a meaningful relationship between a student and a teacher (Hayden, 2020; Tingley, 2020). Group time is an extension of guided practice that enabled teachers to carefully observe more than one student at a time and check for understanding (Hayden, 2020). Student discussion and feedback kept students focused on learning goals and aided with classroom management to establish and maintain a safe, productive learning environment, but the importance of developing positive student-teacher relationships is omitted (Koplick, 2003). Student grouping is a useful classroom management strategy that could be much more effective within meaningful student-teacher relationships.

Appropriate Time on Task

All eight evidence-based research studies mentioned time on task for students with variances due to age and skill level as an essential component of classroom management (Finley, 2017; Guido, 2018; Hayden, 2020; Killian, 2014; Koplick, 2003; Meador, 2018; Tingley, 2020; William, 2018). Four studies discussed in detail the need for flexible learning time to be a

consistent piece of classroom management (Killian, 2014; Koplick, 2003; Meador, 2018; Tingley, 2020). Not every student learns the same way or at the same time, so teachers should provide flexible daily learning opportunities within their classroom environment (Koplick, 2003). Flexible time to learn is also critical for meeting students' needs if teachers intend for mastery level learning to occur and not merely rote memorization for an upcoming activity (Killian, 2014). When students know they have ample time to learn and extend their current knowledge, they will be more likely to show genuine interest in learning, contribute to a positive classroom environment, and less likely to create disruptions to instruction (Killian, 2014). Again, teachers need to know their students well to address individual learning needs effectively through appropriate time on task. This evidence-based strategy is less effective when used in isolation from a meaningful student-teacher relationship.

Student Feedback and Praise

All eight evidence-based studies included the importance of giving students timely feedback and appropriate praise as an effective classroom management strategy (Finley, 2017; Guido, 2018; Hayden, 2020; Killian, 2014; Koplick, 2003; Meador, 2018; Tingley, 2020; William, 2018). All eight studies discussed the critical difference between praising students individually for who they are and specific feedback for what they have done and the importance of having a balance of both in the classroom (Finley, 2017; Guido, 2018; Hayden, 2020; Killian, 2014; Koplick, 2003; Meador, 2018; Tingley, 2020; William, 2018).

Three studies included extensive research on feedback, praises, similarities, and differences (Hattie, 1992; Killian, 2014; Meador, 2018). Killian's (2014) study shared extensive data regarding the impact of feedback and the direct correlation to improved student academic results based on a prior study. Several studies revealed that genuine feedback motivated students

to learn from mistakes, which can ultimately deepen their desire to know more (Hayden, 2020; Killian, 2014; Roache & Lewis, 2011; Saffran & Oswald, 2003). Simonsen, Fairbanks, Briesch, Myers, and Sugai (2008), asserted that praise is the most effective evidence-based strategy a teacher uses to create and maintain a positive classroom environment. Praise reinforces students in growth and development and, as a result, goes a long way in increasing desired behaviors and decreasing disruptions (Cavanaugh, 2013). When teachers use consistent forms of praise, where the student understands the behavior or actions that warranted the praise, student behavior improvements increase, and interest in learning multiplies (Kalis, Vannest, & Parker, 2007; Niesyn, 2009). All eight studies included praise and feedback as important parts of classroom management, but none of them tie these strategies in with having a meaningful relationship between the student and the classroom teacher.

Guided and Independent Practice

The eight studies consulted in the literature review shared the importance of giving students plenty of practice time for the knowledge and skills they have learned through reading, lessons, or modeling (Finley, 2017; Guido, 2018; Hayden, 2020; Killian, 2014; Koplick, 2003; Meador, 2018; Tingley, 2020; William, 2018). Three of these case studies focused on the importance of learning activities and skill practice in the secondary level classroom with teacher-guided assistance (Hayden, 2020; Koplick, 2003; Tingley, 2020). Teachers may think that younger students need more help with guided and independent practice, but research from several of these studies show that the opposite is true (Hayden, 2020; Koplick, 2003; Tingley, 2020). Secondary students tend to learn and apply more challenging material in shorter amounts of time since most American high schools operate on a semester schedule (Koplick, 2003). Effective classroom management at the secondary level must include practice related to the

knowledge or task embedded in the lesson's goal (Hayden, 2020). Secondary level students perform better when classroom settings embed multiple practice activities (Tingley, 2020). Secondary teachers must offer plenty of practice time in the learning environment as part of creating a reliable classroom management system (Hayden, 2020; Koplick, 2003; Tingley, 2020). Stronger learning connections develop from established guided practice first with the teacher and second as an independent entity; however, none of the eight studies mentioned relationship development at length as a prior context for learning in either scenario.

Lesson Review with Graphic Organizers

Several studies stressed the importance of summarizing new knowledge with graphic organizers, especially at the secondary school level (Hayden, 2020; Killian, 2014; Koplick, 2003; Meador, 2018; Tingley, 2020). Secondary students develop and change at a rapid pace; therefore, long-term memory storage is vital to retention of large sections of knowledge (Killian, 2014; Koplick, 2003). For this reason, secondary level teachers should provide students with ample time to practice with newly acquired knowledge, and graphic organizers are useful in summarizing a current lesson or reviewing a previous day's lesson to keep students on pace with learning (Tingley, 2020). Genuinely engaged students will be less likely to create disruptions to the classroom environment; therefore, the graphic review model can be an integral part of a classroom management system (Hayden, 2020; Meador, 2018). Consolidating new learning into a graphic organizer can extend and improve learning, but again the relationship between the student and the teacher can make this educational structure much more meaningful and productive.

Active Questioning

The third most common evidence-based classroom management strategy across all eight

studies involved keeping students engaged through the use of active questioning (Finley, 2017; Guido, 2018; Hayden, 2020; Killian, 2014; Koplick, 2003; Meador, 2018; Tingley, 2020; William, 2018). Four studies included detailed sections on the importance of random sampling questions to keep all students engaged before designating an individual speaker for the answer (Finley, 2017; Killian, 2014; Meador, 2018; Tingley, 2020). When teachers consistently use random questioning methods, all students are participating in learning review, all students engage in think time, and all students participate in positive classroom activities; thus, reducing time and opportunity for misbehaviors that could lead to class disruptions (Meador, 2018). Teachers should include active questioning as part of their classroom management system to maintain an efficient learning environment, the measure of student knowledge, and the areas of student weakness (Guido, 2018; Hayden, 2020). Keeping students engaged and learning, while focusing on long-term educational goals, makes this particular strategy quite useful (William, 2018). When a teacher knows each student, understands how learning occurs, and recognizes areas of struggle, having an effective working relationship with the student first could increase active questioning productivity.

Teacher Modeling

The second most effective evidence-based classroom management strategy across all eight studies was teacher modeling (Finley, 2017; Guido, 2018; Hayden, 2020; Killian, 2014; Koplick, 2003; Meador, 2018; Tingley, 2020; William, 2018). All eight evidence-based studies reiterated the fact that teachers must always seek to do more than tell their students what they want them to know; they must also show them (Finley, 2017; Guido, 2018; Hayden, 2020; Killian, 2014; Koplick, 2003; Meador, 2018; Tingley, 2020; William, 2018). Secondary level teachers should resist the urge to talk for the majority of any class session (Hayden, 2020;

Koplick, 2003; Tingley, 2020). It is not enough for teachers merely to espouse knowledge, but instead, they must model lesson components to keep students engaged and promote genuine long-term learning (Hayden, 2020; Koplick, 2003; Tingley, 2020). Through modeling instruction and activities, secondary level teachers should focus on the instructional goal for that lesson and garner a better grasp of student understanding to direct future lessons; this can lead to higher levels of student engagement and allow fewer disruptions through student misbehavior (Hayden, 2020; Koplick, 2003; Tingley, 2020). Consequently, making the student-teacher relationship a priority could strengthen the results of modeling for improved behavior and increased instruction.

Clear Learning Goals

All eight evidence-based research studies agreed that the most effective classroom management strategy involved establishing and communicating clear learning goals for students during each classroom session (Finley, 2017; Guido, 2018; Hayden, 2020; Killian, 2014; Koplick, 2003; Meador, 2018; Tingley, 2020; William, 2018). All eight studies also showed statistical evidence demonstrating that teachers who consistently established and shared clear learning goals saw an increase in achievement and a decrease in misbehaviors because students were more focused on learning and knew the expectations for each lesson (Finley, 2017; Guido, 2018; Hayden, 2020; Killian, 2014; Koplick, 2003; Meador, 2018; Tingley, 2020; William, 2018). The instructional goals explained in each study related to learning and were not necessarily differentiated to meet individual student needs (Finley, 2017; Guido, 2018; Hayden, 2020; Killian, 2014; Koplick, 2003; Meador, 2018; Tingley, 2020; William, 2018). Clear, common goals engage all students in the same expected behaviors and activities at the same time, leading to more concentrated learning efforts and higher academic achievement (Simonsen,

Fairbanks, Briesch, Myers, & Sugai, 2008; Sugai & Horner, 2002). Common goals, just like the other evidenced-based strategies, are little more than wishful thinking until they are grounded within the context of a meaningful relationship occurs.

Even though all eight evidence-based studies agreed on several different effective strategies, they did not discuss strategies directly related to meeting student needs. One study briefly mentioned including student greetings as a part of a classroom management structure but did not address relationship development beyond this initial hello (Finley, 2017). Another study mentioned the importance of developing a strong rapport with students, suggesting that talking with students about activities they were participating in outside of class could help create a better learning environment (Meador, 2018). However, a clear gap in the literature emerged. Meaningful relationship development barely made the text in any of these recent case studies. Out of all 28 evidence-based case studies, 20 mentioned some of the same management strategies but focused on other skills not found among the eight used in the literature review. From the eight studies discussed at length, only one current study mentioned developing meaningful student-teacher relationships as an essential part of classroom management (Killian, 2014).

Connecting with Student Needs

For a classroom management system to be effective, teachers should use evidence-based strategies combined with meeting student needs; focusing on one or the other will leave something unmet (Alter & Haydon, 2017; Beard & Wilson, 2013; Fajet et al., 2005; Gunner et al., 2002; Kaur & Ranu, 2017). Teachers should connect with students as part of creating a more inviting and engaging classroom structure (Kaur & Ranu, 2017; Lugin, Latoschik, Habel, Roth, Seufert, & Grafe, 2016). Classroom management is an inclusive term used in educational

settings to represent a variety of methods and practices teachers use to forge a conducive educational environment that encourages students to focus on academic pursuits (Back et al., 2016; Elias et al., 1997; McLennan et al., 2020). Therefore, individual classroom management systems working together within a school create an overall climate that positively affects each student emotionally, socially, and academically (Davis & Warner, 2018; Skiba et al., 2016). Secondary school teachers should be aware of the powerful connection between meaningful student-teacher relationships and effective classroom management, but unfortunately, many current case studies overlook this topic or do not discuss it in-depth (Lugrin et al., 2016).

Secondary school teachers should recognize and address student social needs by including positive relationship development as part of their classroom management style to create a more conducive learning environment (Alberto & Troutman, 2003; Alderman & Green, 2011; Back et al., 2016; Elias et al., 1997; Skiba et al., 2016). Guido's (2018) phenomenological research suggested that teachers greet students to make an immediate connection to each student daily. Results showed that when this small connection was missing, learning interruptions occurred more often (Guido, 2018). Throughout the day's lesson, the teacher should extend this initial daily connection through supportive feedback and appropriate praise (Guido, 2018). These efforts are the beginning of relationship development, but the information presented in this study needs additional research.

Teachers whose use of an extensive array of management techniques such as new and creative seating arrangements, flexible assignment options, individualized lessons, differentiation of instruction, and any other educational resource can more successfully meet student social needs in a way that may improve the learning environment (Davis & Warner, 2018; Hsieh, 2016; Krane et al., 2016; Krane & Klevan, 2019; Painter, 2015; Skiba et al., 2016). Relationship

development could strengthen these efforts once teacher training develops in this area (Davis & Warner, 2018; Hsieh, 2016; Krane et al., 2016; Krane & Klevan, 2019; Painter, 2015; Skiba et al., 2016). Social support is a fundamental part of developing any effective classroom management system (Davis & Warner, 2018; Hsieh, 2016; Krane et al., 2016; Krane & Klevan, 2019; Painter, 2015; Skiba et al., 2016). The development of effective student-teacher relationships can solidify an overall positive tone in the classroom to the extent that teachers express acceptance, respect, and warmth for each student in their care. Everyone desires a sense of social acceptance or belonging; that includes secondary level students (Skiba et al., 2016). Grounded theory and case study research showed that students need positive social relationships with their teachers to feel safe and valued in a classroom before they can learn at high levels, but extensive information is still lacking in this area (Cook et al., 2017; Hsieh, 2016; Painter, 2015).

Qualitative research completed by Aldrup et al. (2018) analyzed scenarios where well-organized classrooms gave students the comfort of interacting socially with their teachers and peers. These classroom situations included students who confirmed satisfaction in meeting most if not all of their basic needs, felt that they could meet higher levels of learning, and achieved more considerable gains in student achievement outcomes (Aldrup et al., 2018). Positive social relationships among teachers and students create a more hospitable learning environment, which leads to stronger school relationships across subject and grade level areas contributing to overall school connectedness (Aldrup et al., 2018; Skiba et al., 2016). A positive school climate is essential for helping all students succeed; therefore, when learning happens in positive social settings created and maintained by effective classroom management, it is natural to anticipate that those students will experience an increase in their achievement levels (Aldrup et al., 2018; Davis & Warner, 2018; Elias et al., 1997; Hsieh, 2016; Koçak & Burgaz, 2017). Meeting

student social needs builds value and purpose into a student's life and can positively impact student development and maturity (Aldrup et al., 2018; Hornstra et al., 2018; Skiba et al., 2016).

When teachers do not address student social needs, classrooms lack a critical environmental piece, which negatively impacts students and their ability to learn (Conroy et al., 2002; Fajet et al., 2005; Hornstra et al., 2018; Skiba et al., 2016). Quantitative data analyzed by Lum et al. (2019) showed that a lack of positive social interactions in the classroom creates weak classroom management, fueling inappropriate behavior, and increasing learning disruptions. This frustrating situation not only impacts students but could lead to lost instructional time and potentially contribute to early burnout for teachers (Lum et al., 2019). Teachers who apply ineffective classroom management systems that do not meet students' social needs often experience a rise in typically well-behaved students participating and leading in corrupt behavior as well (Lum et al., 2019; McLennan et al., 2020). The lack of addressing social needs in the classroom has a gradual trickle-down effect, negatively impacting all aspects of the classroom learning environment (Hornstra et al., 2018; Lum et al., 2019; Skiba et al., 2016).

Today's educators cannot meet the higher achievement levels outlined in educational reform without consistent application of efficient management structures in their classrooms (Gunner et al., 2002). Extensive quantitative data derived from America's public school records confirmed that academic achievement had shown a significant decline in schools with an abundance of ineffective classroom management systems where student misbehavior goes unchecked (Aldrup et al., 2018; Davis & Warner, 2018; Hsieh, 2016; Koçak & Burgaz, 2017; Lum et al., 2019; Painter, 2015). When even just one student engages in misbehavior, this relatively small situation could negatively impact every other student in the classroom and cause damage to the learning environment (Lum et al., 2019). Extensive quantitative research reveals

that unchecked misbehaviors lead to negative patterns that encourage disruptive students to continue their inappropriate actions (Kaur & Ranu, 2017). Other students observing this type of permissible disruption, may also follow suit, falling into repetitive, disobedient patterns (Kaur & Ranu, 2017). When groups of disruptions consistently occur, the teacher's ability to correct the situation comes into doubt, adding additional stress to an already challenging situation that could contribute to early teacher burnout (Kaur & Ranu, 2017).

The negative impact of classroom misbehaviors and classroom disruptions resulting in noncompliant behaviors equaled an average of 5% of students in America's public secondary schools (Kaur & Ranu, 2017). This data is alarming that such a small percentage could create such a negative impact leading to continual disruptions in the learning environment and increasing causes of teacher stress and early burnout (Kaur & Ranu, 2017). These disobedient behaviors impede the teacher's ability to deliver instruction efficiently and consume a much larger part of the teacher's time and energy than should be required (Davis & Warner, 2018). Identifying, creating, and implementing effective classroom management systems into every secondary level classroom should be the cornerstone of teacher training programs and professional development opportunities before consistent improvement can alter these negative situations in America's public schools (Lugrin et al., 2016).

Classroom and Behavior Management

Classroom management is a combination of strategies and structures that should seek to do more than address student behavior and responses for student misbehavior; management systems should address student needs first, anticipating improved behavior as a by-product (Conroy et al., 2002; Fajet et al., 2005; McLennan et al., 2020). Classroom management is not a synonym for classroom discipline; instead, it should be a variety of effective strategies and

structures that teachers employ to maintain safe learning environments, meet student needs, develop meaningful relationships, encourage student motivation, and stimulate genuine learning (Barbetta, Norona, & Bicard, 2005; Hidden Curriculum, 2014; Lewis & Roache, 2013; Painter, 2015). Wang, Haertel, and Walberg (1993) explained that every strategy or skill teachers use to organize a student's time, environment, and materials so they can learn makes up classroom management. Martin and Sugarman (1993) connected any teacher-related or classroom procedure that contributes to a productive learning environment is a component of classroom management. Effective classroom management, when implemented correctly, leads to increases in student engagement levels and high academic achievement; so, developing a system that works well is of utmost importance (Akin & Akin-Little, 2009; McLennan et al., 2020; Pianta et al., 2002). Effective classroom management systems, when implemented successfully, can help teachers keep students motivated, minimize misbehaviors, and perpetuate instruction (Barbetta, Norona, & Bicard, 2005; Gunner et al., 2002; Wang, Haertel, & Walberg, 1993).

Current qualitative research defends the importance of effective classroom management strategies, and multiple case studies showcase that teachers with effective management structures in place have better learning environments and fewer behavior problems (Conroy et al., 2002; Evertson & Harris, 1999). Effective classroom management should be a primary concern for teachers since teachers directly control this part of the classroom (Kounin, 1970). Classroom management does not come in a one-size fits all method, and qualitative data shows that it is one of the top problems consistently faced by both novice and veteran teachers; therefore, educators need a new approach for skill development and effective implementation (Barbetta, Norona, & Bicard, 2005; McLennan et al., 2020; Rosas & West, 2009). With the correct perspective and necessary skills in place, classroom management does not need to be a stressor leading to

struggles for novice or veteran teachers, but instead, can be a useful tool for meeting students' needs and improving learning engagement (Friedman, 2006; Painter, 2015). To head off management issues for teachers, professional development and training should include education and training in addressing student needs (Fajet et al., 2005; McLennan et al., 2020). Recent case study research showed that novice teachers with less than seven years of classroom experience lack sufficient training for classroom management, setting them up to be ineffective classroom managers (Allen, 2010; Allen & Blackston, 2003; Fajet et al., 2005). Adverse effects of poorly designed management structures can decrease with new research and implementation strategies; therefore, training and modeling can create a positive change in this area (Allen, 2010; Allen & Blackston, 2003; Fajet et al., 2005).

Teachers' Perspectives on Classroom Management

Teachers' perspectives on classroom management and how it impacts the learning environment are essential when planning and implementing needed professional development (Englehart, 2012; Martino, Hernandez, Paneda, Campo, Man, & Gonzalez de Mesa, 2016; Roache & Lewis, 2011; Saffran & Oswald, 2003; Sammaknejad & Marzban, 2016). A teacher's attitude towards classroom management and beliefs about how successful their management system works will directly relate to consistent strategies that teachers use in the classroom (Barbetta, Norona, & Bocard, 2005; Martin & Baldwin, 1992; Martino et al., 2016; Sammaknejad & Marzban, 2016).

Studies of both pre-service and veteran teachers produced contrasting data results on classroom management (Fajet et al., 2005; Martin, Yin, & Mayall, 2006; Sammaknejad & Marzban, 2016). Teachers with more than eight years of classroom experience indicated their perceptions of classroom management, and their expected results were positive (Fajet et al.,

2005; Martin, Yin, & Mayall, 2006; Sammaknejad & Marzban, 2016). On the other hand, novice teachers with less than seven years of experience had a negative perception of classroom management and reported unforeseen results (Fajet et al., 2005; Martin, Yin, & Mayall, 2006; Sammaknejad & Marzban, 2016). In these studies, teachers shared their perceptions of establishing rules and expectations, communicating with students, relating to student's needs, and motivating students to be responsible for their learning. Teachers who had a negative perspective on classroom management indicated that their negative feelings came from insufficient problem-solving skills and unexpected classroom situations that often escalated into disruptions (Fajet et al., 2005; Martin, Yin, & Mayall, 2006; Sammaknejad & Marzban, 2016). With each passing year in the classroom these results revealed that teachers had more opportunities to try new strategies and as a result, their general perceptions of classroom management gradually moved from negative to positive (Fajet et al., 2005; Martin, Yin, & Mayall, 2006; Sammaknejad & Marzban, 2016).

The results of these phenomenological studies concluded that pre-service and novice teachers with less than eight years of classroom experience had fewer classroom skill options and unrealistic expectations of how classroom management would work (Fajet et al., 2005; Martin, Yin, & Mayall, 2006; Sammaknejad & Marzban, 2016). Veteran teachers practiced a variety of effective classroom strategies, had a much more realistic perspective about classroom environments, and knew how effective management systems work (Fajet et al., 2005; Martin, Yin, & Mayall, 2006; Sammaknejad & Marzban, 2016). These studies revealed that teachers did not begin their careers in the classroom with sufficient management knowledge, but after extended years of practice, classroom management skills, results, and perceptions improved (Fajet et al., 2005; Martin, Yin, & Mayall, 2006; Sammaknejad & Marzban, 2016).

Professional Development for Classroom Management Strategies

Effective classroom management strategies rank in the top five professional development needs among pre-service and novice teachers with less than eight years of classroom experience (Beard & Wilson, 2013; Fajet et al., 2005; Rosas & West, 2009). When asked in the course of two case studies, over 90% of novice teachers stated that they needed more classroom management training because the skills they had upon entering the teaching profession were insufficient, which made them feel underprepared to provide adequate classroom structure (Reinke et al., 2011; Rosas & West, 2009). In two additional case studies, 81% of veteran teachers stated they had received additional classroom management professional development training since entering the classroom, but that the information presented was still insufficient in addressing real classroom issues and providing new methods for how to reach more challenging students (Johansen, Little, & Akin-Little, 2011; Simonsen et al., 2008). These four studies reveal that current classroom teachers, both novice and veteran, need new and relevant research-based professional development sessions to support them in reforming ideas for classroom management strategy ideas and implementation (Johansen, Little, & Akin-Little, 2011; Reinke et al., 2011; Rosas & West, 2009; Simonsen et al., 2008).

For a new perspective on effective classroom management, professional development sessions should focus on instructing teachers about effective ways of meeting student needs (Simonsen, Freeman, Myers, Dooley, Maddock, Kern, & Byun, 2019). Teachers should be able to recognize their needs and then learn how to relate self-awareness to needs satisfaction for their current classroom students (Darling-Hammond, Hyler, & Gardner, 2017; Simonsen et al., 2019). Teachers should learn about the natural desire for the five basic needs, the pursuit of these daily needs, and how to meet the needs of others (Simonsen et al., 2019). Most student needs are

correlated to relationship development, which can directly impact the effectiveness of a classroom management system; therefore, needs based professional development should include evidence-based instruction, modeling, and scaffolding for the most effective methods of implementation (Hammond et al., 2017). With student needs and relationship fulfillment at the heart of management structures, the classroom becomes a more engaging learning setting that encourages higher levels of academic achievement and discourages more misbehaviors causing classroom disruptions.

Summary

This chapter identified the theoretical framework for this study. Choice theory (Glasser, 1998), the central theory of this study, provided initial knowledge of meeting student needs and supplied a foundation for how positive relationship development between students and teachers can meet student needs, motivate students to choose better behaviors and display concentrated effort in the classroom. Research on classroom environment, classroom management challenges, educational oversight expectations, secondary level teacher preparedness, evidence-based classroom management strategies, and connecting with student needs were studied.

A gap in the current literature emerged. The literature review revealed qualitative and quantitative research on classroom environment, classroom management challenges, educational oversight expectations, secondary level teacher preparedness, evidence-based classroom management strategies, connecting with student needs, classroom and behavior management, teachers' perspectives on classroom management, and professional development for classroom management strategies. Small amounts of research exist on the importance of relationship development, but very few connect this information as a part of an effective classroom in consideration of teachers' perspectives of this phenomenon. The purpose of this

phenomenological study was to understand the importance of positive student-teacher relationships as a part of making classroom management more effective so that class disruptions can decrease, and academic achievement can increase. With little research focused on student-teacher relationship development and its impact, this study addressed the lack of research discussing how meeting secondary student needs through student-teacher relationships can improve a classroom management structure and an overall learning environment. Teachers' perceptions of effective student-teacher relationship development are valuable in creating more effective support for future secondary school students through the implementation of more needs-based classroom management strategies.

CHAPTER THREE: METHODS

Overview

The purpose of this phenomenological study was to understand student-teacher relationship development and its impact on classroom management and academic achievement for teachers at two secondary level schools in the coastal region of South Carolina. Student-teacher relationships were the focused interactions that occurred in the classroom between the educational leader and the classroom learners. The theory guiding this study was Choice theory developed by Dr. William Glasser (1998) as it explains meeting student's basic needs of love and belonging, power, fun, survival, and freedom as the foundation for effective classroom management and positive academic achievement. Classroom management is a powerful component of the learning environment which increases classroom engagement, decreases class disruptions, and improves academic achievement (Adeolu, 2017; Back et al., 2016). This chapter is focused on the qualitative, phenomenological research design, research questions, settings, participants, procedures, and analysis for this study. At the conclusion of this chapter, the reader will understand the participant selection, participation procedures for the study, and the role of the researcher. Data collection will include interviews, a focus group, and a questionnaire. Research methodology concludes the comprehensive details given to allow for replicating the study (Wang, Haertel, & Walberg, 1993).

Design

I utilized a qualitative, phenomenological approach for the research design. The study was qualitative in nature to help teachers better understand the impact that positive student-teacher relationships have on classroom management and, ultimately, on decreasing class disruptions and therefore improving the learning environment. The study was transcendental to

better understand the functions of these relationships within a classroom environment and was grounded in a phenomenological process to understand the psychological impact these relationships create. Research data will be collected and analyzed from a focus group, multiple interview answers, and a completed questionnaire. Using a phenomenological approach was appropriate because it allowed for description and comprehension of the fundamental nature of secondary teachers' experiences when these relationships are positive, when these relationships are negative, or when these relationships are missing. This phenomenological study allowed me to analyze the influence of student-teacher relationships on building classroom management, minimizing inappropriate disruptions, and improving academic outcomes.

During the course of my research, I conducted the study without manipulating the participants' answers to understand, analyze, and report accurate data (Hale & Astolfi, 2011). To accomplish this, I dismissed all preconceived notions and prejudgments concerning the phenomenon that was studied and analyzed; Moustakas (1994) explained this process as *epoché*. It was crucial for me to employ the *epoché* process, which made the research study free from preconceived notions, anticipated beliefs, and expected outcomes described by Moustakas. When the *epoché* process was correctly implemented, then I will be more likely to I was able to conduct the study with an open and receptive mind. I carefully considered my own experiences with classroom management and made sure to set these ideas and preconceived notions aside before beginning my phenomenological study. Moustakas' qualitative studies look carefully at the stories behind the numbers, or in this case behind the experiences of classroom teachers. Phenomenological research studies seek to learn from an experience as it occurs in its natural environment (Moustakas, 1994). In this type of study, preconceived notions are set aside, so that the researcher studies the experience among multiple individuals in a designated group.

Therefore, using a transcendental phenomenological approach, I sought to help teachers better understand the importance of having a process for developing positive student-teacher relationships in the classroom as a means of meeting student needs and engaging learners through creating effective classroom management, minimizing inappropriate disruptions, and encouraging academic success aligned with meeting the requirements of the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA, 2016).

Research Questions

Central Question: How do secondary teachers in South Carolina describe effective classroom management strategies that improve the learning environment and dissuade inappropriate classroom behaviors?

Sub Question 1: How do secondary teachers in South Carolina incorporate relationship development within their classroom management system?

Sub Question 2: How are students in South Carolina held accountable for responsible behavior?

Sub Question 3: How do secondary teachers in South Carolina describe the benefits of positive student-teacher relationships as they improve academic achievement and reduce behavior issues within the classroom?

Setting

This study had two different school settings, Woodlands High School (pseudonym) and Collins High School (pseudonym), two public secondary schools in the coastal region of South Carolina. Woodlands High School currently serves 1,731 students in grades 9-12, maintains a student teacher ratio of 18:1, and has a minority enrollment of 33%. Collins High School currently serves 2,429 students in grades 9-12, has a student teacher ratio of 20:1, and has a minority enrollment of 32%. Participants from both school sites participated in a face to face or virtual

individual interview, focus group, and in a digital questionnaire. The two school sites were chosen for this study since they have a high recorded number of discipline issues in the county for the 2018-2019 school year (South Carolina Department of Education). The South Carolina Department of Education encourages effective classroom management as a crucial part of classroom learning in hopes of improving academic learning and reducing discipline issues throughout the school. A closer study was needed to identify the direct influence these positive relationships have on decreasing inappropriate behaviors and improving academic achievement in two schools with a consistently high number of student discipline records from the last three consecutive school years (South Carolina Department of Education, 2020).

Participants

After receiving Internal Review Board (IRB) approval (Appendix A), I contacted the district superintendent and both school principals. Initial contact enabled me to share information about my phenomenological study and included a district and school permission form regarding research (Appendix B) along with my IRB approval (Appendix A). After receiving district approval, I asked principals at Woodlands High and Collins High to recommend teachers who have excellent ratings in classroom management on their teacher evaluations at their school for the participant pool across all core subject areas including English, Math, Science, and Social Studies. I requested that the principals provide me with a list of their recommended sampling of teacher names and corresponding emails that was also representative of the school's demographics. All nominated teachers in the participant pool received an email participant recruitment letter (Appendix C). The first six or seven teachers from each school to respond in the affirmative to this invitation established the participant group at each school. Potential participants who did not respond to the first email also received a recruitment follow-up

email (Appendix E) one week after the initial invitation was sent that detailed the study's purpose, significance, and methods for research collection.

According to Creswell and Poth, 2018, in a phenomenological research study, the researcher must obtain participants' written permission before beginning a research study; therefore, after the six or seven participants from each school accepted the invitation, a written consent form (Appendix D), was secured from each individual before anyone participated in the study. The twelve participants in this study taught English, Math, or Science at one of the two secondary high schools approved for the study. All participants possessed a Bachelor's, Master's, or Doctoral degree, ranged in age from 25 through 54, and had between three and 31 years of classroom experience. Both sets of six or seven teachers combined to constitute the participant group who participated in answers provided to research questions, group discussions, and individual questionnaires (Cohen, Manion, & Morrison, 2018; Patton, 2015). All 12-14 participants were individuals who had experienced the same phenomenon in similar classrooms at the secondary level; therefore, this type of sampling worked well.

Procedures

After securing Institutional Review Board (IRB) approval through Liberty University, I contacted the coastal county district superintendent and the two principals from the secondary schools that consistently had a high number of discipline incidents in this coastal county (South Carolina Department of Education, 2020). This information came from public data shared over the last three years on the South Carolina School Report Card Score Reports (South Carolina Department of Education, 2020).

Once IRB approval was secured, the district superintendent and both secondary school principals received details regarding the study's purpose, significance, and methods via email,

telephone, and through a follow-up letter to secure written consent (Appendix D). Once consent was obtained from all three administrative leaders, I asked principals at Woodlands High and Collins High to nominate teachers at their school according to their school's ethnicity and gender demographics who hold excellent ratings in classroom management on their teacher evaluations at their school for the participant pool across all core subject areas including English, Math, Science, and Social Studies. I requested that the principals provide me with a list of their recommended sampling of teacher names and corresponding emails that was also representative of the school's demographics. All eligible teachers in the participant pool received a participant recruitment letter via email to participate in the study (Appendix C). The first seven teachers from each school that responded in the affirmative to the invitation were established as a member of the participant group at each school. Potential participants also received a follow-up invitation via email that detailed the study's purpose, significance, and methods for research collection. After 12-14 participants agreed to the invitation, I obtained written consent from these individuals. Triangulation was achieved by collecting interview data, answers provided through a questionnaire, and from shared experiences within a focus group. Each participant participated in a recorded face-to-face or Google Meet interview. All participants also participated in one of three recorded focus group discussions. Eleven of the 12 participants also completed a digital questionnaire. Transcription of the recorded interviews and focus groups, researcher notes taken during both types of research opportunities, and digital answers provided through the participant's questionnaire answers were used for data analysis. Data collection and analysis methods were conducted based on modifications of the Stevick-Colaizzi-Keen method (Moustakas, 1994). This study may be reproduced in the future by using high schools with higher than anticipated or desired discipline issues by obtaining IRB approval, district

superintendent approval, principal approval for included school settings, and consent form permission from the 12-14 teachers included in the study.

The Researcher's Role

Creswell and Poth (2018) reiterated that the researcher is the crucial component of all forms of qualitative research. I was the human instrument in this study who collected individual interview data, specific questionnaire answers, and focus group discussions. The instruments, included open-ended questions for this study, based on sources published and reviewed by educational experts, that were designed and implemented by me.

I am a 21-year classroom veteran, and I am biased that student relationship development is an essential part of classroom management and helping students succeed. During the course of my research, I implemented *epoché* making the case study free from my preconceived notions, anticipated beliefs, and expected outcomes (Moustakas, 1994); by setting aside my bias, I remained objective as I collected and analyzed data through the course of this study. In so doing, I approached my research with a fresh perspective as I analyzed this phenomenon. I am currently a secondary school educator in the coastal South Carolina district, the setting for this phenomenological study, but I do not have a professional or personal relationship with any of the research participants from either of the two school settings.

Data Collection

Data collection is effective for phenomenological studies that include individuals who have experienced a specific phenomenon (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Through the components of the research study, participants at Woodlands High (pseudonym) and Collins High (pseudonym), the schools with the high disciplinary issues for the 2018-2019 school year according to the South Carolina Public School Report Cards (South Carolina Department of Education, 2020),

provided answers resulting in research data. Data collection and triangulation was achieved through open-ended interview questions, questionnaire responses, and a focus group discussion. Creswell and Poth (2018) stated that “Triangulation occurs when researchers make use of multiple and different sources, methods, investigators, and theories to provide corroborating evidence” (p. 251). The method for data collection began with open-ended, semi-structured interview questions, followed by a discussion of experiences shared within a focus group, and concluded with an open-ended, semi-structured participant questionnaire.

Interviews were conducted first to encourage research participants to learn more about me and the study, and to help them to feel comfortable with me before answering additional questions in front of a peer group. By conducting the discussion forum with the focus group after the interviews, participants were much more relaxed and confident when they worked with the other participants involved in the discussion (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Holding the focus group sessions second, participants had more time to reflect on the open-ended questions and discussions from the individual interviews that provoked more thought and conversation during the focus group. Research concluded with open-ended questions on the questionnaire. After participating in the interview and the focus group, the participants had an easier time formulating their responses to the questionnaire based on prior questions and discussions that generated ideas during the interview or focus group (Creswell & Poth, 2018).

Interviews

Once written consent was granted from each of the 12 participants, I conducted an informal face-to-face or virtual interview with each member of the participant group. These initial, semi-structured interviews created one opportunity for qualitative data collection and was appropriate for this phenomenological study (Moustakas, 1994). Brenner (2006) explained that

using a semi-structured protocol goes a long way in helping participants feel comfortable in sharing answers to the same set of core questions, with the option of including follow-up questions, based on participant responses. These informal interviews, as opposed to formal interviews, created a relaxed environment, and helped participants feel comfortable with me before the focus group convened (Creswell & Poth, 2018). All 12 participants participated in a face-to-face or virtual interview during a time and at a location that was convenient for them; one that was free from distractions and allowed for audio recording. The initial, semi-structured interviews were recorded within a 60-minute timeframe. The interview consisted of ten open-ended questions for participants to answer. To ensure validity during the interview, questions were based on current, relevant literature from peer-reviewed, scholarly sources, and were piloted ahead of time (Seidman, 2012). As Creswell and Poth (2018) discussed research tactics, the authors explained that the use of a pilot test when creating a research instrument ensures validity when assessing the degree of observer bias, framing questions for participants, collecting background information, and adapting procedures for accurate research analysis. The interview questions focused on the central and guiding questions of the research study. Participants understood that the interview questions would be repeated during the focus group sessions to allow for a collegial discussion on the topic of student-teacher relationship development as a part of classroom management.

Standardized Open-Ended Interview Questions

1. Please introduce yourself – tell me what degrees you hold, how long you have been teaching, and what grade(s) you are currently teaching.
2. How do you define a classroom management system?

3. Briefly describe your classroom management system including strategies, skills, and techniques that you use in your classroom consistently.
4. What specific classroom management training have you had and how has it helped you as a teacher?
5. What do you feel makes your classroom management system effective?
6. How would you characterize the relationship you have with each one of your students?
7. How does your student-teacher relationship affect your students and their ability to learn in your classroom?
8. What classroom measures do you use to encourage student self-responsibility for behavior and learning?
9. How could a student-teacher relationship impact student behavior and learning choices in the classroom?
10. When student misbehavior creates a class disruption, how do you respond?

Question one was used as a warm-up question to help each participant feel comfortable with me, the interviewer, to develop a professional rapport for further questions, and to prepare the participant for providing more extensive answers later in the study (Cohen, Manion, & Morrison, 2018; Foster, Rzhetsky, & Evans, 2015). Questions two and three established the foundation for discussing classroom management, how the participant understands and utilizes classroom management strategies and systems. The initial questions were designed to be straightforward, non-threatening, and utilized to clear the way for positive rapport between the participant and the researcher for the duration of the study (Foster, Rzhetsky, & Evans, 2015). Questions four through seven delved deeper into the participants' understanding and expectations of classroom management, including if positive student-teacher relationships factor

into creating an organized environment where all students could learn. Through these four questions, I desired to gather perceptions, thoughts, and explanations from secondary school teachers about their classroom management strategies and if or how student-teacher relationships factor into a classroom management structure. The perceptions that teachers hold indicate a future-minded belief that a teaching task may succeed and to what degree it will be successful (Foster, Rzhetsky, & Evans, 2015; Whittaker & Hayes, 2018). Participant responses helped in the refinement process for further guiding questions.

Question eight focused the participant on student-teacher relationships, training they have had in this area, and invited each teacher to share their perspectives on the importance of these relationships. Presenting this inquisitive question helped me discover a clearer perspective on classroom management and the role teachers believe that positive student-teacher relationships play in the learning environment. If positive student-teacher relationships had already been discussed during a previous answer, this question was not asked.

Questions nine and ten encouraged the participant to share their true feelings of classroom management and the resulting success and struggles presented in the classroom. The last two questions were intended to be asked in a non-threatening manner so that the participants were willing to share their deeper feelings and perspectives regarding the phenomenon of how student-teacher relationships do or do not influence classroom management and ultimately influence the learning environment. These questions were designed to keep the participant talking about personal experiences with successes and failures in classroom management; as these conversations continued, the participant had more opportunities to share experiences regarding the phenomenon.

Questionnaires

Questionnaires are a beneficial form of qualitative research data collection since they are an efficient way to collect experiences on a phenomenon and were employed during this research study (Creswell & Poth, 2018). The questionnaire for this study (Appendix H) included open-ended questions that collected teacher attitudes and values on classroom management. I was able to reduce personal bias by utilizing the questionnaire since there was not any visual or verbal cues that could influence participants as they provided answers. All 12 research participants received a questionnaire via email near the end of the research study. Participants could request a paper copy that was delivered to their school and then collected once they completed it. The questionnaire was created after the focus group exercise was complete and consisted of 10 open-ended questions based on recent literature that were peer reviewed and shaped by the results of the interview questions.

Document Analysis

During the course of this research study, I maintained notes during the interviews and focus group meetings. This type of record keeping provided valuable insight and identified epiphanies experienced when I reviewed transcripts from the individual interview data, focus group answers, and teacher questionnaire responses (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Second, with permission from each participant, I also studied personal documents such as blogs that the participant had made public that revealed additional information pertaining to this research study regarding classroom management strategies and impact on student results. Before, during, and after the study, this type of documentation of a teacher's own creation also revealed insights and clarified insights already gained during the course of the study. Finally, after securing permission from each participant, I examined organizational documents the teacher used as part

of his or her classroom management structure. These strategic plans, classroom management charts, and teacher evaluation documents provided additional data that was useful in the reporting and analysis of the research study (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Based on Glasser's Choice theory (1998), students need to feel that they are loved and that they belong; thus, positive student-teacher relationships help meet this need. Gaining a better understanding of the process teachers use to meet student needs through positive relationship development revealed new insight into decreasing classroom disruptions and improving academic learning.

Focus Groups

An additional qualitative data collection strategy used in this study was a focus group. Educational researchers explain that focus groups enable data collection using a small group discussion with the participant group (Carey & Asbury, 2016; 2012; Krueger & Casey, 2014). Out of the 12 participants, each individual was invited to participate in a focus group, where four different flexible meeting times for when each person participated. The focus group session followed the initial interview so that the participants had time to develop a rapport with and feel comfortable talking with me. During the focus group, the participants had more time to talk and feel more comfortable in sharing details of their classroom management strategies and implementation process. Creswell and Poth (2018) explained that using focus groups as a part of qualitative research was quite beneficial when participants are comparatively similar, willing to cooperate in the discussion, and more comfortable offering detailed responses than in a one-on-one interview.

The focus group sessions occurred during four different meeting times, two sessions at Collins High (pseudonym), and two sessions at Woodlands High (pseudonym). These sessions were outside of school hours, during a convenient time for the focus group participants, when the

area was free from noise and distractions, and when recording equipment was available (Creswell & Poth, 2018). The focus group discussion was recorded, and the conversation was limited to one hour to be respectful of the participants' time.

To ensure validity during the focus group, questions were based on current, relevant literature from peer-reviewed, scholarly sources, and were piloted ahead of time (Seidman, 2012). I created focus group questions following the completion of the initial interview phase to extend and more fully develop information shared during those responses. To ensure validity, the focus group discussion prompts were founded in recent scholarly and peer-reviewed literature (Krueger & Casey, 2014). The focus group discussion topics (Appendix G) were also centered on the primary intent of the research study.

Standardized Open-Ended Focus Group Questions

1. Please introduce yourself – tell me what degrees you hold, how long you have been teaching, and what grade(s) you are currently teaching.
2. How do you define a classroom management system?
3. Briefly describe your classroom management system including strategies, skills, and techniques that you use in your classroom consistently.
4. What specific classroom management training have you had and how has it helped you as a teacher?
5. What do you feel makes your classroom management system effective?
6. How would you characterize the relationship you have with each one of your students?
7. How does your student-teacher relationship affect your students and their ability to learn in your classroom?

8. What classroom measures do you use to encourage student self-responsibility for behavior and learning?
9. How could a student-teacher relationship impact student behavior and learning choices in the classroom?
10. When student misbehavior creates a class disruption, how do you respond?

Question one was used as a warm-up question to help each participant feel comfortable with me, the interviewer, and to develop a professional rapport with the other participants. Since participants knew the same open-ended interview questions would be repeated during the focus group discussion, participant offered more extensive answers during this portion of the study (Cohen, Manion, & Morrison, 2018; Foster, Rzhetsky, & Evans, 2015).

Questions two and three established the foundation for discussing classroom management and allowed participants to discuss similarities and differences in their current classroom management strategies and systems. These initial questions were designed to be straightforward, non-threatening, and extend positive rapport among the participants and the researcher for the duration of the study (Foster, Rzhetsky, & Evans, 2015). Questions four through seven delved deeper into the participants' understanding and expectations of classroom management, including if positive student-teacher relationships factor into creating an organized environment where all students could learn. Participants extended previous interview answers and offered more examples connecting relationship development to instructional outcomes (Foster, Rzhetsky, & Evans, 2015; Whittaker & Hayes, 2018).

Question eight gave participants time to share their student-teacher relationship knowledge and training as pertaining to classroom management. This question enabled participants to share the role they believed that positive student-teacher relationships play in the

learning environment. Questions nine and ten encouraged participants to share their personal understanding of classroom management and the resulting impacts. These questions kept participants talking about personal experiences with successes and failures in classroom management. These conversations gave extensive insight into shared experiences regarding the phenomenon.

Data Analysis

Procedures for data analysis followed Moustakas's (1994) modifications of the Stevick-Colaizzi-Keen method. In this manner, I was able to obtain a complete description of the experience and influence of the phenomenon from participants using the verbatim interview and focus group transcripts. I shared my personal experiences with the phenomenon of improving classroom management and student achievement through positive student-teacher relationships by using a research skill referred to as bracketing. This occurs when a researcher brackets herself or himself out of the study by discussing personal experiences with the phenomenon (Creswell & Poth, 2018). As I reviewed the transcripts, I took notes to keep track of major concepts as they were revealed. The coding process involved breaking down transcript text into smaller categories of information, discovering evidence for the code, and then assigning a label for the code to be consistent. Second, I created a list of significant statements from my notes and grouped them by thematic points. I identified significant statements as those that did not repeat and those that overlapped with another participant's answers. Third, I carefully reconsidered my personal experience of the phenomenon and developed a textual-structural description of the main principle and meaning from the data. Textural descriptions consisted of "what" participants have experienced regarding the phenomenon and incorporated transcript samples (Creswell & Poth, 2018; Tracy, 2013). Textural-structural descriptions focused on "how" the

phenomenon happened for this research study. I repeated the steps described above using the transcripts from the interview and focus group, and answers provided from the questionnaire responses. Finally, from the textural-structural descriptions of the research participant experience, I constructed a comprehensive description representative of the participant group. These composite descriptions included the textural and textural-structural descriptions from the participants' analysis of the data, which impacted continued data collection in the study. These analyzed descriptions were the main focus of the study and represented the culminating aspect of this phenomenological study (Creswell & Poth, 2018; Tracy, 2013).

Trustworthiness

Trustworthiness was ensured by employing Lincoln and Guba's (1985) description of a more natural form of research by using pseudonyms for reliability, validation, credibility, and transferability. Credibility is effective to the extent that the research findings accurately described the phenomenon in real settings. Credibility is dependent upon the completeness of the collected research information and on the researcher's analytical skills. Credibility was established through extensive engagement in the education field and triangulation of data collection (Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Cohen, Manion, & Morrison, 2018). Transferability refers to the possibility that what was found in one context applies to a different context. In-depth description was critical for developing transferability. Dependability is representative of consistency in research, critical details that must be guaranteed through the study's setting, and the precise details gathered about the phenomenon's context during the research study. I provided dependability by being prepared ahead of time for receiving responses from participants, by being certain to record all responses for accurate review and analysis, and by factually reporting all of my research findings.

Credibility

Member checking and peer review included having research participants review interview transcript copies taken during the interviews and focus group sessions, as well as review questionnaire answers. As participants reviewed the transcription, new experience details and feedback was revealed. In this manner, member checking was used to better understand participants' in-depth views of the credibility of the research data and its corresponding analysis. Member checks were a critical part of the research study because it ensured validity in the data that was collected and reported; all participants took part in member checking (Creswell & Poth, 2018).

According to Lincoln and Guba (1985) member checks and peer review opportunities are the most important components in establishing credibility for any attempted research data and resulting data analysis that will be published; therefore, peer reviews of the interview transcripts, focus group transcripts, and questionnaire answers were conducted and added to the data collection. Peer reviews were a necessary and essential part of the research process that revealed new insights and refined changes during the course of the research process; therefore, the researcher and participants retained notes of each debriefing session (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Triangulation was achieved by collecting and coding data from interviews, the focus group, and questionnaires. This process involved substantiating evidence from different methods that revealed and clarified thematic trends (Creswell & Poth, 2018).

Dependability and Confirmability

Research participants reviewed copies of interview data, copies of focus group transcripts, and copies of questionnaire answers. Research participants took part in member checking, to ensure a higher level of credibility for the research data. This process produced

validity during the research study and throughout the publication process. In addition, external checks of the research findings and peer debriefing sessions were also completed (Cohen, Manion, & Morrison, 2018).

The transferability in the future for a study similar to this one could be available in other content areas. Since the focus of this qualitative research study is on relationships and their resulting impact, there are no transferability limits because this phenomenon could be the focus of any other study (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Other school levels, or even business settings, where relationships could be a significant contributor to the overall environment could use this research structure effectively (Cohen, Manion, & Morrison, 2018).

Ethical Considerations

Regardless of the type of qualitative research being carried out, researchers face ethical issues that arise during data collection, review, and analysis; therefore, I conducted my research prepared to appropriately handle ethical issues (Creswell & Poth, 2018). One ethical issue that needed consideration was whether or not the benefits of the study would be greater than any potential risks the participant might incur (Creswell & Poth, 2018). The benefits of this research study provided both current and future secondary school teachers practical relationship development strategies and practices for improving classroom management, reducing class disruptions, and improving academic achievement. Therefore, there were no known risks for this study. Ethical considerations for this research study are provided below.

Consent forms (Appendix D) clearly explain the study's purpose, significance, and process and were secured from each research participant. Participants understood that participation in the study was completely voluntary and that each person could opt to withdraw from the study at any time. Pseudonyms were used to protect each school and all participants

involved in the study. Each participant clearly understood that their real name would always be protected by using pseudonyms throughout the course of the research study and corresponding analysis. All research related data was stored in a password protected computer. Transcript recordings were also coded with pseudonyms for school names and teacher names, and all printed data reports or files have been stored in a locked filing cabinet (Cohen, Manion, & Morrison, 2018).

Summary

To better understand the influence of positive student-teacher relationships on improving classroom management and their ability to decrease inappropriate behaviors, and increase academic achievement, a qualitative phenomenological study was completed in a coastal South Carolina public school district. I explained and identified the research design, setting, participants, and methods of this study. Triangulation was achieved for the research data collected through interviews, a focus group, and questionnaire answers. Data analysis was completed using Moustakas' (1994) modified version of the Stevick-Colaizzi-Keen method. The third chapter concluded by explaining how credibility, transferability, dependability, and conformability measures were implemented to ensure trustworthiness and high ethical standards throughout the study.

CHAPTER FOUR: FINDINGS

Overview

This chapter presents the participants' descriptions and how their shared, lived experiences highlighted themes that addressed the research questions. I analyzed the data using Moustakas' (1994) steps, as explained by Creswell (2013). I collected data from 12 participants who taught English, Math, or Science in two secondary schools in a coastal South Carolina district. I data coded thematically to answer the research questions. During the analysis, I bracketed out my own emotions and ideas to focus on participants' information to understand their shared experiences. I used the transcripts of individual interviews, the focus group discussions, and each participant's questionnaire answers to code for emerging themes common among all or most of the participants. This chapter describes the participants, using pseudonyms, the themes that emerged from the data, and a summary.

Participants

Twelve secondary school teachers participated in the study. I interviewed all twelve participants, and all twelve participated in a focus group discussion. Additionally, eleven of the twelve participants submitted answers on their questionnaire. To be eligible for this study, participants had to teach in a core content area in one of two secondary schools in one coastal South Carolina district. I sent study invitations to participate in the study to all English, Math, Science, and Social Studies teachers in these two schools; however, only twelve participants, six from each school, volunteered to participate. All participants signed the informed consent form, and I allowed all participants an opportunity to member check the transcripts of interviews and focus group discussions, as appropriate. A short description of participants, using pseudonyms, is listed in Table 1.

Table 1

Participants' Demographics

Participant	Secondary School	Age	Gender	Experience	Highest Degree
Jennifer	Woodlands High	39	Female	15	two Master's degrees
Charlie	Woodlands High	54	Female	31	Doctoral degree
Sandy	Woodlands High	48	Female	15	Master's degree
Everly	Woodlands High	40	Female	12	Master's degree
Allie	Woodlands High	52	Female	29	Master's degree
Faulk	Woodlands High	54	Male	23	Master's degree
Kate	Collins High	25	Female	3	Master's degree
Jim	Collins High	30	Male	9	Bachelor's degree
Lori	Collins High	36	Female	13	Bachelor's degree
Renee	Collins High	26	Female	4	Master's degree
Marilyn	Collins High	37	Female	8	Master's degree
Nicole	Collins High	30	Female	8	two Master's degrees

As follows, I describe each participant, including their age, years of experience, subject taught, other relevant educational work experience, and a personal view on their perspective of developing relationships with their students.

Jennifer

Jennifer (pseudonym), an International Baccalaureate [IB] English teacher at Woodlands High (pseudonym), is 39 years-old with 15 years of classroom experience. Jennifer has two Master's degrees, one a Master of Education and the other a Master of Arts in Teaching, with a

wide range of educational experience spanning different countries in Montessori schools, public-school settings, and the Peace Corps. Her IB classroom management perspective comes from real classroom experience and centers on team building relationships focusing on respectful communication between each student and the teacher and in class dialogue. Jennifer shared that when her classroom works more like a family, the environment is a much happier place for everyone, and more learning takes place. Currently, Jennifer teaches two AP English Language and Composition courses and IB-English III Honors.

Charlie

Charlie (pseudonym), an English teacher at Woodlands High (pseudonym), is 54 years-old with 31 years of classroom experience. Charlie earned her first teaching degree in English and Sociology, a Master's degree in Divergent Learning, and then a Doctorate in Curriculum and Instruction. Charlie has worked with various student skill levels, but currently, she is teaching an upperclassmen IB (International Baccalaureate) classes, a ninth-grade pre-IB class, and a class of English IV college preparatory students. Charlie is passionate about helping all students be successful, no matter their current skill level. Currently, Charlie teaches two pre-IB courses of English II Honors and one course of IB English Honors.

Sandy

Sandy (pseudonym), a core content teacher at Woodlands High (pseudonym), is 48 years-old with 15 years of classroom experience. Sandy started teaching as her second career. Her undergraduate degree was in Secondary Education and Journalism where she also earned her teaching certificate. Upon completing her undergraduate work, she began a career in print journalism and had a newspaper career. While working as a journalist, Sandy earned her Master's degree in Public Affairs Reporting and then found her way into a teaching career after

earning a second state teaching certificate. Sandy's teaching career began in a private Catholic High School where she taught history and religion. Sandy spent some time as a long-term sub in a nearby public-school system and eventually moved into teaching all English classes, including dual-enrollment courses. Throughout her teaching career, she has been able to share her journalism passion with students by creating an online student newspaper and a journalism class. Sandy enjoys helping kids succeed in all areas of reading, grammar, and writing. Currently, Sandy teaches the yearbook and newspaper staff, a journalism course, and one English II Honors course.

Everly

Everly (pseudonym), an English teacher at Woodlands High (pseudonym), is 40 years-old with 12 years of classroom experience. Everly holds a Bachelor of Arts degree in English and a Master of Arts degree in Teaching. She is currently in her sixth year at Woodlands where she just accepted the department chair position for the English Department. Everly is passionate about helping each of her students succeed and is excited about the new opportunity to assist other teachers in her department. Everly is a well-versed teacher who has taught every core subject and grade-level course at the secondary level. Her heart is grounded in English and she thoroughly enjoys teaching her honors and AP leveled classes. Currently, Everly teaches two AP English Literature and Composition courses [one virtual and one in a brick and mortar setting] and an English III Honors course.

Allie

Allie (pseudonym), an English teacher at Woodlands High (pseudonym), is 52 years-old with 29 years of classroom experience. Allie holds a Master's degree in English with an emphasis in Secondary Education. Allie has completed 30 additional hours beyond her Master's

and holds her National Board Certification. Allie teaches her English classes with the highest level of professionalism, holds a strong rapport with her students, and participates in writing and improving curriculum during each summer break. Allie pushes herself to be the best version of herself that she can be for her students, and the love her students have for her is a testament to her efforts. Currently, Allie is teaching all virtual courses in three different English courses: English III CP, English I H, and System 44.

Faulk

Faulk (pseudonym), an English teacher at Woodlands High (pseudonym), is 54 years-old with 23 years of classroom experience. Faulk has a Bachelor's degree in History, a second Bachelor's degree in English and Secondary Education, and a Master's degree in Language Arts. Faulk has his AP and Gifted and Talented certification as well. He has taught various English courses during his 23 years in the classroom and served as a lead soccer coach on two different campuses. Currently, Faulk teaches two English I CP courses and a co-taught English I CP course.

Kate

Kate (pseudonym), an English teacher at Collins High (pseudonym), is 25 years-old and is in her third year in the classroom. Kate holds a Bachelor's degree in English with a minor in creative writing and a Master of Arts degree in Teaching. Kate loves learning and enjoys spending her days helping her students love learning as well. Currently, Kate is teaching two courses of English III CP and one course of English I CP.

Jim

Jim (pseudonym), a Math teacher at Collins High (pseudonym), is 30 years-old and starting his ninth year in the classroom. Jim earned a Bachelor of Science degree in Mathematics

and Secondary Education. He has a wealth of varying classroom experience in those nine years. Jim is certified to teach AP courses but has also taught foundation level Math, taught alongside special education teachers, and taught undergraduate level Math courses which includes tutoring Math at the collegiate level. Outside of the classroom, Jim enjoys working as one of the head football coaches and challenging his players to become leaders in the classroom and on the playing field. Currently, Jim teaches two Probability and Statistics CP courses, AP Statistics and AP Research, as part of the AP Capstone Program.

Lori

Lori (pseudonym), an English teacher at Collins High (pseudonym), is 36 years-old and has 13 years of classroom experience. Lori has a Bachelor of Arts degree in Secondary English Education, and she is currently one semester away from finishing a Master of Arts degree in Instructional Technology. Lori desires for her students to understand their self-worth and treat themselves and others as valuable contributors to society. Her students may not love all of the content from her class, but if they learn to do life together, to work together, then she feels that she has accomplished her main goal as a teacher. Currently Lori teaches two courses of English III Honors and one course of English IV Honors.

Renee

Renee (pseudonym), a Science teacher at Collins High (pseudonym), is a 26 year-old teacher with four years of classroom experience. Renee has her Bachelor of Science degree in Marine Science and her Master of Arts degree in Teaching. She is currently certified to teach gifted and talented students and recently completed her certification to teach AP level courses this school year. Currently, Delanie is teaching two courses of AP Environmental Science and one courses of Biology Honors.

Marilyn

Marilyn (pseudonym), an English teacher at Collins High (pseudonym), is 37 years-old and is beginning her eighth year in the classroom. Marilyn holds a Bachelor of Arts degree in English and a Master of Arts degree in Literature and Teaching. She is certified to teach at both the middle and secondary levels. Marilyn avidly develops strong relationships with each student in her class because she has seen the difference these relationships can make on each student and their ability to do excellent work. Currently, Marilyn teaches two English I CP courses [one independently, and one co-taught with a second teacher] and one course of English I Honors.

Nicole

Nicole (pseudonym), an English teacher at Collins High (pseudonym), is 30 years-old and in her eighth year of teaching. Nicole holds a Bachelor of Arts degree in English, a Master of Arts degree in Teaching, and a second master's in Instructional Technology. Currently, Nicole is pursuing an additional master's degree in educational leadership. She was a top 10 district finalist for Teacher of the Year in 2019-2020 and credited the relationships she has built with her students for that accomplishment. She truly believes that learning cannot happen without strong classroom management and authentic relationships. Currently, Nicole teaches two AP English Literature and Composition courses and English II Honors.

Results

For this qualitative phenomenological study, I collected data via individual interviews, focus group discussions, and participant questionnaires. Study themes emerged from the interviews and focus group data, which I triangulated with data from participants' questionnaires. Data analysis followed the steps presented by Moustakas as described by Creswell (2013).

This section outlines the significant codes, categories, and themes that emerged from the individual interviews, focus group discussions, and participant questionnaires. Participant answers and notes were reviewed numerous times to identify the significant themes that were important in defining the substance of the phenomenon. As a result, participants' responses reflect the potential impact of student-teacher relationship development on behavior and learning in public secondary schools in the coastal region of South Carolina. Answers given to the research questions were the focus of the coding.

Coding was completed on participants' interview transcriptions, interview notes, focus group transcriptions, and individual questionnaires to identify common themes for providing answers to the research questions and determine the motivational factors and resulting impacts of student-teacher relationship development as part of an effective classroom management system. Common themes transpired during the data collection process. The collected data was analyzed for frequency of commonalities and separated into themes that described the phenomenon of potential impact in student-teacher relationship development on behavior and learning as part of a classroom management system.

Direct quotations from in vivo coding of specific phrases and words were documented for each participant. Teacher likability, relationship focus, learning, respect, and behavior were the most repeated words and phrases throughout the 12 interview sessions. Figure 1 shows the frequency of these repeated words and phrases.

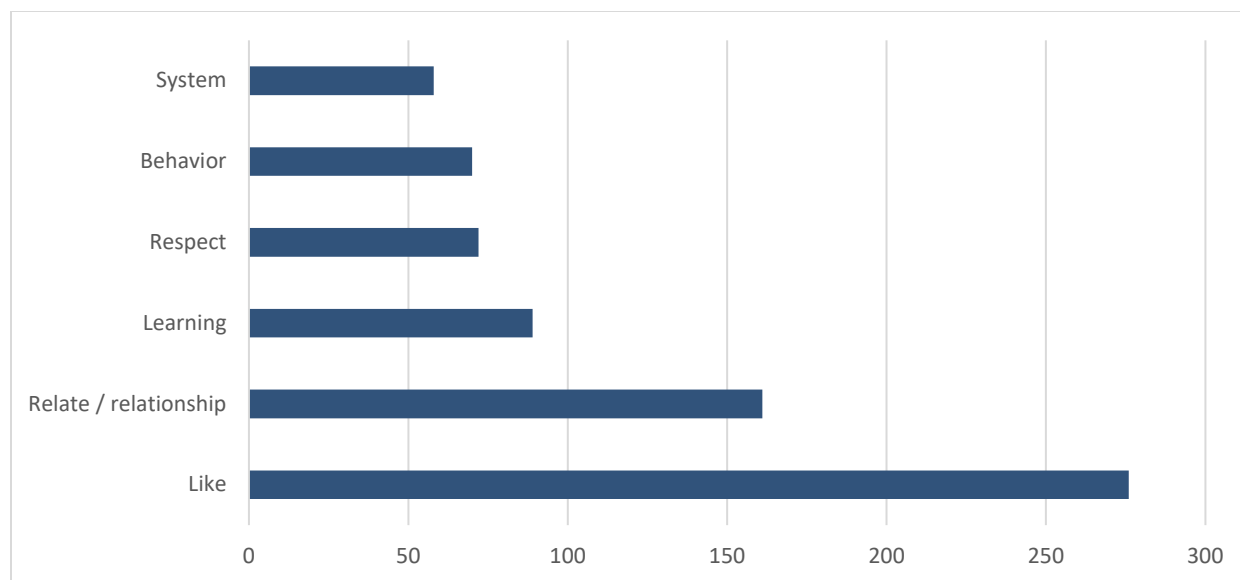


Figure 1. Frequency of repeated words and phrases.

Next, structural coding was completed on the interview transcripts, interview notes, focus group discussions, and participant digital questionnaires. During the structural coding, a more in-depth review of participants' answers, and the completed context of each stated word or phrase was completed. Similarities in participants' answers were also analyzed during the structural coding. Specific codes were developed during the structural coding that will be utilized in the development of categories. A coding frequency table was generated (Table 2), indicating how often an idea, thought, or term was cited by a participant throughout the interviews, focus group discussions, and questionnaires.

Table 2

Coding Frequency of Cited Ideas and Thoughts

Term / Phrase	Frequency
Like / likability	276
Relate / relationship	161
Learning	89
Respect	72
Behavior	70
System	58
Expectations	52
Personal / able / ity	36
Respond / response	34
Experience	29
Understanding	28
Rules	26
Consistent / cy	23
Choice	20
Effective	20
Strategy	19
Individual	17
Parents	17
Connect	13
Engage(d) / ment	13
Professionalism	13
Content	12
Matter	11
Structure	11
Accountability	10
Communicate	10
Distracted	10
Honest	10
Fair	9
Loving	9
Organization	9
Self-sufficient	9
Community	8

After completing in vivo coding and structural coding, categories were formed by grouping similar general codes. Table 3 shows the created categories from a group of similar codes.

Table 3

Categories and Codes

Category	Codes
Action of students	Like their teacher Relationship development Learning Respect Good behavior
Action of teachers	Likability Relationship development Established system Clear expectations Be personable
Classroom management expectations	Clear rules Consistency Uniform strategies Accountability Effective communication
Instructional delivery	Academic / activity choices Effective lessons Keeping students engaged Real world application that matters Honorable examples

Once categories were created, themes were developed from the category groupings. The purpose of theme development is to assist with deeper understanding and analytical clarification of meaning shared from the experiences of the participants (Kline, 2008). Table 4 identifies the derived themes and the corresponding categories from this research study.

Table 4

Themes with corresponding categories

Theme	Corresponding Categories
1. Teachers set the tone.	Teacher likability Initiate relationship development Establish an effective management system Establish clear expectations Be personable and relatable
2. Consistent classroom expectations.	Clear, consistent rules and expectations Uniform strategies Teachers must be honest, fair, and organized Hold students accountable for behavior and learning Communicate effectively
3. Encourage student self-responsibility.	Offer academic and activity choices Effective and engaging lessons Real world application that matters Honorable examples High standards for performance
4. Positivity impacts learning.	Students like their teacher Relationship development matters to them More effort for learning Give and get respect Demonstrate good behavior

The development of themes provided a meaningful framework that showcased the benefits and resulting impact of positive student-teacher relationship development as part of an effective classroom management system.

Theme Development

Organizing the triangulation of collected data is an essential component of understanding the participants' phenomenon experiences (Moustakas, 1994). This researcher used the *epoché* process to bracket experiences relating to student-teacher relationship development as part of a

classroom management system to prevent personal bias that would influence the data collection, analysis, and reporting. All semi-structured, open-ended interviews and focus group discussions were transcribed and returned to each participant for member checking. Individual questionnaires were completed and returned with verbatim answers to the researcher. These procedures allowed for accuracy in interpretation of the participants' experiences with the phenomenon of student-teacher relationship development.

Major Theme One: Teachers set the tone.

The category of classroom tone and the resulting impact on learning stemmed from phrases related to the participants' perceptions of the classroom atmosphere and reiterated the fact that high expectations for learning are established and maintained by the teacher. Teacher likability, initiating student-teacher relationship development, establishing an effective management system, establishing clear expectations, being personable and relatable, and giving timely responses are some of the repeated words and phrases that are included in the teacher's connection with establishing a positive, inviting attitude in the classroom environment.

Nicole shared that her initial thought, when she hears the term classroom management, is that her mind immediately goes to relationships. For her, classroom management means developing relationships. Nicole feels that anything positive in a classroom is founded on the strong relationships a teacher develops with her students; then, classroom management follows. Nicole and Sue also mentioned that within the confines of their district's hybrid model of instruction this year, more effort was needed to develop relationships with students through Google Meet. This year, more than ever, students need to know that their teachers are genuinely interested in who they are as individuals. Marilyn added that having positive relationships with her students was her most important priority. She explained that she put just as much time into planning what

to share with them instructionally as she does in developing relationships with them. When her students know that she cares about them beyond what happens in her classroom, they will behave better and learn at higher levels. Renee and Charlie agreed that students who like their teachers consistently work better in that teacher's classroom. When students know the teacher cares, they put more effort into those classes both behaviorally and academically. Students more naturally excel with teachers they like. Charlie and Sue stated that they often have repeat students in English courses from year to year, so relationship development for them is not just for one semester or one year, but for the long-term. They also shared that they often encourage students to show their faces during Google Meet sessions to work together face-to-face, even through a screen. Charlie felt this was important in helping her recognizing understanding through her student's facial expressions. Faulk gave the example of connecting with his current students through gaming. He shared that each teacher could develop genuine relationships with their students in their own unique way, and gaming is his chosen pathway. Kate concluded that when teachers have strong, positive relationships with students, then they work more diligently on class assignments. They care about what the teacher thinks and do not want to let them down. Students are more likely to work hard because they want the teacher to be proud of them. These same students are less likely to create behavior problems in the classroom. There is a clear distinction between students who know their teacher cares and those who know their teacher does not genuinely care about them.

Major Theme Two: Consistent classroom expectations.

Consistent repetition of phrases such as maintaining clear, consistent rules and expectations, implementing uniform strategies, the need for teachers to be honest, fair, and organized, holding students accountable for behavior and learning, effective communication,

maintaining order and discipline, offering tangible rewards, and developing a genuine rapport among students led to the category of the essential need for consistent classroom expectations.

Nicole explained that consistency was the foundation for establishing all procedures, processes, and structures; relationships are where everything positive begins. Classroom structure is all important, but it will not automatically happen; teachers must begin with a stable relationship with students, and then the consistent classroom expectations will follow. Kate and Lorraine added that respect was also key between students and teachers and among all students in the classroom. When the teacher promotes respect, students are more likely to follow the established example. A teacher's classroom expectations will be much easier to put in place if a positive relationship within the classroom family is built first. Marilyn further explained that when classroom disruptions occur, teachers should rely on student relationships to handle those situations and make corrections on an individual level. It is so much easier to speak with a student where a good relationship already exists; a classroom disruption is much easier to deal with in this situation. When students know that the teacher genuinely cares about them, they are much more willing to listen when she speaks with them about misbehavior. Classroom expectations can be returned to the proper track instead of things continuing to get out of control; everything hinges on that all-important relationship. Jennifer mentioned that scaffolding classroom instruction and activities are much easier to accomplish when teachers know their students personally. Part of keeping a classroom effectively functioning involves teaching students positive socializing techniques. Relationships are the foundation for making this happen. Jeff concluded that relationship development was critical since the first step in knowing the best ways to instruct students was to get to know them, their strengths, and their weaknesses. If a teacher does not know their students, then there is no way they can know the best method to

get a lesson across. Classroom expectations cannot be generic; they must be developed for the students that are currently in that room. That means that the teacher must initiate developing a relationship with each student to implement instructional strategies to meet my students' needs.

Major Theme Three: Encourage student self-responsibility.

The third, self-responsibility category came from repeated phrases such as: offering academic and activity choices, delivery of effective and engaging lessons, implementation of real world application that matters, setting an honorable example, establishing high standards for academic performance, maintaining a good sense of humor, and expecting student success.

Novice teacher, Kate, explained that she has quickly learned just how vital student relationships are and that they are the solid foundation for teaching expectations, processes, and procedures. When teachers begin the year with clear explanations for procedures, students can rise to meet those expectations, creating opportunities for students to demonstrate independent responsibility. Teacher expectations matter very little unless a student-teacher relationship is established first. Renee agreed that genuine care for her students and daily consistency in procedures and expectations are essential in developing and extending the relationship she has with her current students. Grounding student expectations in a stable relationship encourages students to function in the classroom responsibly. Nicole reiterated that building positive relationships with students right from the start of the year inspires students to perform better, both behaviorally and academically. When that relationship with the teacher is missing, students will find every reason not to do their work and look for opportunities to misbehave. Marilyn added that having a positive relationship with students also allows teachers to reasonably hold students accountable for their choices, which goes a long way in encouraging self-responsibility. Students cannot meet teacher expectations unless specific expectations have been clearly

explained. Extrinsic motivation to perform well in class is more likely to be evident when students have a good relationship with their teacher and want their teacher's approval. Lorraine also explained that when teachers do not make an effort to develop a relationship with their students, they will behave differently in that classroom. Kids like the teachers that they know want to be at school, and they know that they are putting forth an effort to get to know them and help them learn. Students want to know their teachers care about them, and then they are more likely to care about their teachers and their lessons in return. Students will not care how much knowledge a teacher has in any particular subject or what her classroom expectations are until the students know that the teacher cares about them as an individual. Jennifer concluded that one of the best ways to teach and encourage student self-responsibility is to make sure that each student knows that they are a valued member of the class and give each student a classroom role or responsibility. There will always be students who want to hide in the back of the group or the class and let everyone else do all the work. When teachers know their students well, they can build on each student's strengths and weaknesses to help them accomplish the task ahead of them. As a result, when students are successful, they feel empowered and look forward to the next opportunity to be independently successful, which is, after all, the best form of student self-responsibility and genuine learning.

Major Theme Four: Positivity impacts learning.

The fourth developed category reiterated the importance of positive student-teacher relationship development as part of an effective classroom management system through recurring phrases such as: students need to like their teacher, genuine relationship development matters to students, once a relationship is in place students naturally put more effort into learning when students get respect from their teacher, they are more likely to give it back, and students

are more likely to demonstrate good behavior in a classroom where they have a positive relationship with the teacher.

Marilyn explained that when students know that a teacher cares about them and is passionate about their content, everything changes. Once a positive relationship between a teacher and student is established, students will consistently work better for and with that particular teacher, reiterating that positive relationships are the foundation for creating an atmosphere of positivity. Renee added that when students have a positive relationship with a teacher, they no longer dread coming to that particular class. A positive relationship with a student helps them start each class with a positive attitude; thus, positively impacting the classroom atmosphere. Nicole continued that her students also understand through their relationship that her assignments each have a purpose. When students know their teachers are genuinely focused on helping them learn and prepare for their future, they are more willing to complete the assignment diligently and are less likely to create disruptions or lose interest in the class. A focused student will fuel their learning in a much more positive, persistent manner. Jennifer concluded that it is evident that when a teacher has a positive relationship with a student, it impacts their learning for the better, but the reverse is also true. When students do not feel that a teacher cares about them, they tend to lack enough confidence to ask a question or pursue the teacher for assistance when they are struggling with the material. These types of negative feelings impact their success or failure in that class.

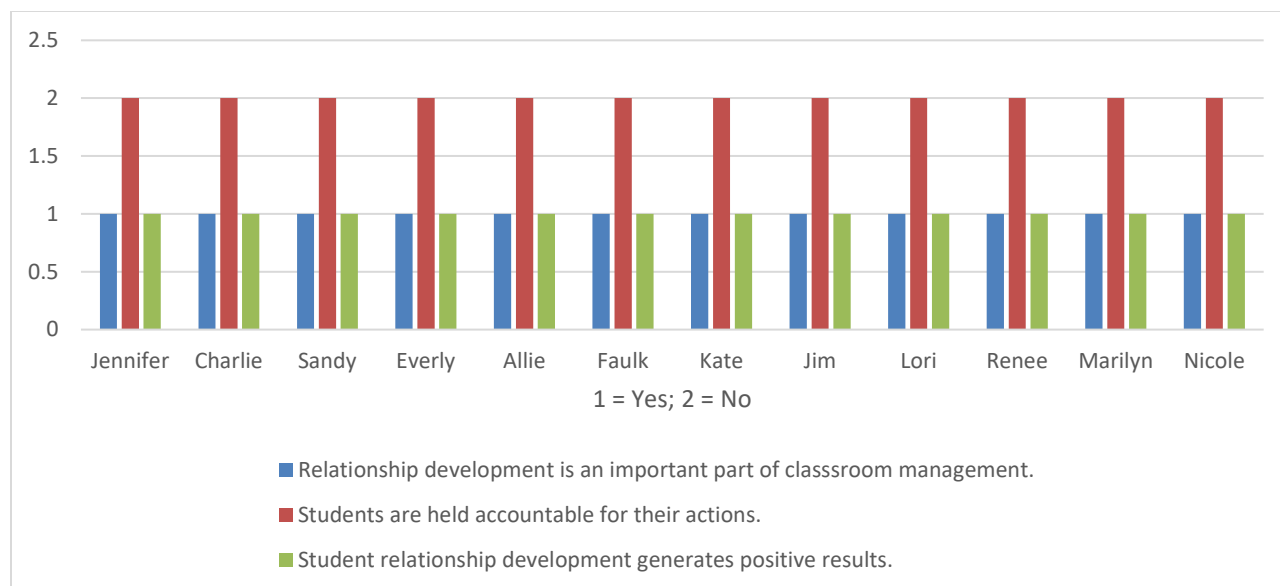


Figure 2. Participants Sub-question Answers

Research Question Responses

The research questions presented in this study were designed to provide information not found in the current literature on the impact of positive student-teacher relationship development on classroom management. The questions were grounded in the guiding theoretical framework. The central question explored how secondary teachers in South Carolina describe effective classroom management strategies that improve the learning environment and dissuade inappropriate classroom behaviors. This broad question was supported by three sub-questions designed to focus participants' responses and provide rich descriptions of their lived experiences of positive student-teacher relationship development as a part of an effective classroom management system. The following sections analyze each question's findings.

Central Research Question

The central research question of this study was: How do secondary teachers in South Carolina describe effective classroom management strategies that improve the learning environment and dissuade inappropriate classroom behaviors? The central question was

designed to provide the broadest level of understanding of the shared experiences of secondary school teachers as they develop positive, working relationships with their students as an effective part of their classroom management system. While responses from the 12 participants provided a wide variety of answers, coding revealed common major themes that answered the question. These major themes were supported by answers to the sub-questions and were further investigated until supporting subthemes emerged. The central research question was answered by the themes that teachers set the tone of the classroom and the expectation for learning, consistent classroom expectations are essential, instructional delivery and academic activities encourage student self-responsibility, and that positive student actions and responses have an influential impact on learning. The central research question was also answered by the subthemes that teachers set the tone of the classroom and the expectation for learning, consistent classroom expectations are essential, instructional delivery and academic activities encourage student self-responsibility, and that positive student actions and responses have an influential impact on learning.

Many participants attributed relationship building with students as the most essential and most prioritized portion of classroom management. All participants overwhelmingly cited teacher likability as the most crucial aspect of a student's desire to learn, the choice to behave appropriately, and perseverance for success. Jennifer, Charlie, Faulk, Kate, Marilyn, and Nicole shared that the benefits of positive student-teacher relationships were virtually limitless and were quick to point out that building relationships is the best way to have positive student behaviors and genuinely improve student learning. These relationships' beneficial results include higher levels of student respect, confidence, responsibility, improved self-esteem, motivation, and perseverance on top of better behavior and improved academic learning.

Sub-Question One

The first sub-question for the present study was: How do secondary teachers in South Carolina incorporate relationship development within their classroom management system? All participants felt that relationship development was a crucial component in any classroom management system, but how those relationships develop is personalized based on each teacher. Faulk, Jim, Jennifer, Sandy, and Nicole agreed that getting to know the students in their classroom was the very first thing they did at the start of a new year. Kate and Renee believed that it was essential to establish classroom expectations and procedures and then move into the relationship development phase of getting to know each student; nonetheless, all participants emphasized student relationship development right from the beginning of a new school year or semester. Both Jennifer and Charlie stressed the importance of positive communication with students right from the beginning of a new semester. These teachers emphasized getting to know students, sharing class expectations, and getting positive conversations started from the first day to help ensure that all expectations were clear. All participants contributed examples about the importance of genuinely getting to know each student to individualize learning opportunities to meet student needs. Sandy and Everly detailed a strong connection between positive communication with students and the impact it has on the respect and management present in the classroom. This creates a foundation for helping students on a personal level, so instruction is more meaningful for each student. Positive communication right from the start sets up an effective classroom management system that is easy to maintain. As a result, students are actively engaged, appropriately challenged, and learning focused. Several participants stated that they knew positive relationships with students were essential and felt that many of the colleagues

in their school tend to brush off the importance of developing connections with kids; instead, they rely on rules and focus on teaching their content.

Clear, consistent classroom procedures and expectations are vital, but participants explained that they are fruitless without a positive individual relationship with each student. Several participants commented that when fellow teachers complain about how students do not behave or refuse to do their work, those are teachers who typically do not have a good relationship with the students mentioned. Allie and Renee explained scenarios where a student worked well for one teacher but had little motivation for another teacher. They explained that the difference was all in the positive relationship supported by one teacher and not by the other. Many teachers who struggle with classroom management would be so much better off to build genuine relationships with all of their students because, many times, classroom rules are just not enough and inconsequential at best at driving instruction and encouraging learning. As an added benefit, participants added that respectful communication between teachers and students is part of the relationship building process. Once students see that they are respected, their level of respect for the teacher and classmates increase. Respectful attitudes and behaviors go a long way in eliminating classroom disruptions. Ultimately, participants shared that building relationships with students should be a natural part of presenting and maintaining classroom expectations right from the first few moments a student is new to a classroom. Most participants agreed that it is more important to establish relationships with students before entering the classroom. Faulk and Jim suggested that teachers begin relationship development with every encounter, even before a student is a member of a particular class. Speak to students at open house, when they pick up schedules and books, during an online gaming club, and when they head off to football practice. When the student is assigned to your class, speak to them in the hallway, as they approach the

classroom, and then continue those get to know you type conversations on the very first day to make sure students know you are interested in them, that they have value, and that they are the priority in your classroom.

Sub-Question Two

The second sub-question for the current research study was: How are students in South Carolina held accountable for responsible behavior? Participants discussed the importance of accountability and knowing when more relationship development is needed and when to draw the line and hold students accountable. In both school settings, teachers expressed that more needed to be done to hold students accountable for their actions in a consistent manner. Jennifer and Sandy from Woodlands High (pseudonym), and Charlie and Nicole from Collins High (pseudonym), expressed their concerns that there was not necessarily a lack of accountability, especially where discipline issues were concerned, but rather a lack of consistency for similar offenses by different students. These four teachers also stated that positive student relationships need to be extended and remain connected, primarily through the necessary discipline situations that arise. Students should understand that disciplinary action is necessary based on the offense they have committed; regardless, the relationship still stands, and both teachers and administrators still care about the student once he has returned from a suspension.

Three participants shared examples of adverse changes in their school's disciplinary process. Charlie, Allie, and Faulk cited several examples where students were not held accountable for their grades and behavior as compared to disciplinary actions administered twenty, even ten years ago. Many participants expressed concerns regarding student responsibility being incorrectly and solely placed on the shoulders of the teacher. Participants from both schools agreed that the district office's parent complaints appeared to unfairly sway

grading and behavioral outcomes for students in their district. These same participants expressed a more profound concern for the disservice committed against these students. Students do not have the same opportunities to overcome challenges and rise to their highest potential when they are inconsistently held accountable or never given the reins of responsibility and self-independence. Sandy, Everly, Allie, and Lori shared concerns about the lack of accountability in each student's home life. Whether a student is held accountable at home or not should not be reflective on the accountability requirement level at school. All participants agreed that expectations for academic learning and appropriate behaviors needed to be correctly placed back on students' shoulders. When teachers and administrators consistently place value on responsible learning and actions in the classroom, students achieve more significant benefits in both areas and more importantly, be on track to become educated, contributing members of society as an adult.

Sub-Question Three

The third sub-question for the current research study was: How do secondary teachers in South Carolina describe the benefits of positive student-teacher relationships as they improve academic achievement and reduce behavior issues within the classroom? One participant stated that positive relationships with students are what makes teaching enjoyable. All participants gave examples of improved classroom behaviors and higher academic learning levels in classrooms where the teacher had a positive relationship with each student. Several participants expressed the negative parts of teaching, especially in the hybrid model of school, since the onset of COVID-19 and how much more diminished these negative parts became in light of the positive relationship with students. A few teachers shared specific examples of meaningful

learning and genuine appreciation they experienced as a byproduct of positive relationships with their students.

Lori shared the benefits of positive relationship development by saying some days there will be kids you just cannot reach or teach, but you can still love them and encourage them, and then maybe tomorrow you can teach them. In the long run, that day of genuine encouragement and little to no teaching will be the day that mattered most for that student. It may be the first day that he or she recognizes their value and self-worth; it may be the day that a student decides to walk in a positive direction toward their future instead of the negative pathway they previously followed. That one day of loving that student can mean everything to that student and alter their immediate and continuous future positively in a manner that neither the teacher nor the student ever thought possible.

When specifically questioned about the most crucial part of classroom management, several participants shared that having a good, working relationship with a student can make or break a classroom. With a good relationship in place, Jennifer, Charlie, Lori, Renee and Nicole shared that more students in the class want to participate, want to please the teacher, and want to do better with their learning because the students are more likely to express genuine interest in class instruction and activities. These same participants expressed that when positive relationships are absent, the reverse prevails and more students in the class will be likely to tune out, chose disruptive behaviors, and give little if any effort into genuine learning. Novice teacher Renee shared that in her observations, she had watched a student perform well academically and earn a high score on the EOC for her class; however, she also witnessed this same student fail a different EOC course and score poorly on the final exam. All participants agreed that developing those genuine relationships with students on a scale of one to ten always earns a ten! The other

theme categories that emerged from the responses were clear communication, genuine interest, the importance of one-on-one relationships, and needed professional development.

Clear communication. Relationships and communication go both ways for the teacher and the student. Renee, Marilyn, Kate, Jennifer, Jim, Charlie, Allie, Faulk, and Lori all addressed the importance of clear communication and resulting impact in the classroom. Specifically, these teachers mentioned the importance of beginning the year by implementing clear communication to the students and continuing to expect them to be followed throughout the year. Clear communication from the teacher to the student regarding clear classroom expectations is essential, but just as important or even more so is the student's communication back to the teacher. Marilyn asserted that rapport with her students, included the crucial ability to listen to not only what a student says, but what their body language conveys and signs of a pressing need that they may not mention. A teacher's willingness to listen intently to students can be the positive catalyst needed for their good behavior and academic choices. Novice teacher Kate shared that she learned the importance of clear procedures and consequences right away and that those things cannot be accomplished without clear communication first. Jennifer and Jim both explained that clear communication with students daily was essential for deterring misbehaviors before they escalated into bigger problems. When students know that the teacher and procedures are consistent, it adds a layer of trust between the student and the teacher. Veteran teachers Charlie, Faulk, and Allie stressed the importance of being flexible but remaining consistent and fair with procedures and expectations. Students must follow daily expectations, but sometimes all a student needs is a little bit of grace, flexibility, and patience, and the next can be a fresh start for them when they can achieve better. Lori asserted that clear communication comes second only to good relationship development in the classroom. When

students know the teacher cares, and they understand her expectations, classroom management falls into place.

Genuine interest. Relationship development will fall flat if it is not driven by genuine interest and effort on the teacher's part. Renee, Marilyn, Jennifer, Jim, Lori, and Everly gave examples regarding the profound difference between teachers who show genuine interest in their students and teachers who attempt to fake it or just do enough to get by in their classrooms. Renee discussed her genuine efforts in relationship development by stating that students feel valued both inside and outside of class. Students can tell when teachers are genuinely interested in them as individuals and when they are just in the classroom to do a job. Veteran teachers, Marilyn and Jennifer discussed the increasing importance of genuine relationship development by pointing out that the recent pandemic and new hybrid learning model has been fraught with an increase in more emotional issues, like kids shutting down or experiencing severe anxiety. All students need to know they have value, self-worth and that they are respected. These feelings are easily conveyed through a positive relationship with the classroom teacher and can go a long way in helping students fight off depression and anxiety. Jim summarized that classroom management and positive relationships with students do not just happen for some teachers or fail to occur for others; instead, genuine interest in students develops from the intentional effort teachers make to get to know their students individually. When teachers consistently display who they are in front of students and build a genuine relationship with their students, the students will feel supported in the classroom and learn better from that teacher, no matter the content. Lori wants to make sure she reaches every student every, so she tries to continually remind students that she wants her students to ask for help and that she has a genuine interest in supporting them beyond what they are doing in the classroom. Everly summarized the

importance of genuine interest in students by explaining that students can certainly tell the difference between a teacher spending time getting to know their students because they feel like they must and those teachers who want to know their students. Genuine interest and genuine relationships with students matter!

The importance of one-on-one relationships. Every student in every classroom has value and deserves the opportunity for an excellent education; therefore, student relationships must be one-on-one, individualized to meet the needs of that student. Marilyn, Kate, Nicole, Charlie, Faulk, Lori, and Everly discussed the importance of reaching every student. Student needs constantly change and become increasingly more demanding; therefore, today's classroom teacher must possess a new skill set to reach today's students. What may have worked in the classroom worked five years ago does not necessarily work the same today. Charlie, Kate, and Nicole mentioned that the addition of frequent one-on-one conversations with each student allows her to provide extra academic and behavioral support. These quick but meaningful conversations made a marked improvement in her overall classroom environment. More training and opportunities for practice and strategies on building time in the classroom to have these one-on-one conversations with students are needed so that all teachers can have the opportunity to develop and hone their skills in this area. Veteran teacher Faulk explained that after 22 years of classroom experience anyone worth their weight in gold as a teacher knows that success in the classroom is driven by relationship building, one-on-one with each student. Teachers who connect with students are sought after; others are short to the career. If students could choose their teachers in public education, it might shed a revealing light on some of the problems education struggles to correct. Lori wholeheartedly agreed with these comments and added that the student-teacher relationship development is the most critical part of teaching. Mastering

content in a subject area is essential, but if you do not love kids, all kids, this is not the profession to join. Kids need to know they are cared for and about, and then you can teach them. In today's hybrid and virtual learning environments, Everly spoke about the added importance of providing individual attention and consistent reassurance for each student, which tends to be more challenging through a google meet screen. Each student needs to know that their teacher has a willingness and a desire to help them, or genuine learning will not occur. Teachers must have a real connection with the students first.

Needed professional development. Classroom management and relationship development theories are not sufficiently taught in teacher education classes; therefore, more observations and modeling from exemplar teachers are necessary before a student teaching commitment and a teacher's novice year in the classroom. Marilyn, Kate, Nicole, and Everly stated that most current teachers will share some knowledge of relationship development and its possible link to classroom management, but effective ways to put this into practice in the classroom are missing. Marilyn explained that there are just not enough teachers that believe in the importance of student-teacher relationships. Veteran and novice teachers, but new teachers in particular, need guidance and examples in structure and routines to help make the management of a classroom as seamless as possible. Teachers need to see and practice relationship development in action so that it is a thriving, natural part of their classroom management. Novice teacher Kate stated that she had had some training for classroom management but desired more opportunities to watch experienced teachers deal with various situations in their classrooms and how they develop or rely on their relationships with their students. Nicole encapsulated her thoughts, describing a circular strength where relationships create good classroom management, and at the same time, effective classroom management

encourages student participation and learning; these build naturally on each other. Everly concluded that understanding and applying effective relationship development is an aspect of teaching that helps everything become better in a teacher's connection and ability to reach students. Relationship development is just like anything else; it an acquired skill that needs to be learned, modeled, and practiced. The more effective classroom teachers become in relationship development, the more effective they teach their students.

Summary

Chapter Four of this study provided a detailed description of the participants of the study. Study participants included 12 secondary school teachers in English, Math, and Science from two different high schools in a coastal South Carolina district. This study explored secondary school teachers' shared experiences who use positive student-teacher relationship development as part of an effective classroom management system. Major themes developed through coding transcripts of the individual interviews, the focus group discussion transcripts, and answers provided through the participant questionnaires. Four major themes and four subthemes emerged from the data analysis. Analytical results were used to address the research questions. The following chapter provides a discussion of the study's findings.

CHAPTER FIVE: CONCLUSION

Overview

The purpose of this qualitative phenomenological study was to understand student-teacher relationship development and its impact on classroom management and academic achievement for teachers at two secondary level schools in the coastal region of South Carolina. The study results detailed teacher perception of benefits, influences, advantages, disadvantages, and situations related to student-teacher relationship development as part of an overall classroom management system. In Chapter Four, a summary was presented of the research findings and how the research questions were answered. The relationship of the research found in the literature will be reviewed in Chapter Five. Implications, delimitations, limitations, and recommendations for future research are outlined in this chapter as well.

Summary of Findings

This research study on the impact of positive student-teacher relationship development on an effective classroom management system included data from individual interviews, focus group discussion transcripts, and participant questionnaires. The research results provided insights into participants' lived experiences and allowed me to develop a broader view of the major themes. Audio recordings from individual interviews and the focus group discussions were kept and transcribed, coded, and analyzed. Responses given on the participant questionnaires were also coded and analyzed. Keywords and phrases were identified from each setting and organized around the major themes. Four overarching themes emerged from the analysis, including that teachers set the tone of the classroom and the expectation for learning, consistent classroom expectations are essential, instructional delivery and academic activities encourage student self-responsibility, and that positive student actions and responses have an

influential impact on learning. Subthemes included that teachers set the tone of the classroom and the expectation for learning, consistent classroom expectations are essential, instructional delivery and academic activities encourage student self-responsibility, and that positive student actions and responses positively impact learning.

The research questions guided my examination of the phenomenon of positive student-teacher relationship development as an essential part of an effective classroom management system. The central research question of this study was: How do secondary teachers in South Carolina describe effective classroom management strategies that improve the learning environment and dissuade inappropriate classroom behaviors? This question sought to understand how secondary school teachers develop positive relationships with students and its resulting impact on classroom management. Participants' lived experiences indicated that positive student-teacher relationship development was a significant part of an overall classroom management system that reduced student misbehavior and improved academic achievement. All participants identified at least three lived experiences that positively reinforced the need to develop positive student-teacher relationships with each student in the classroom. One of the most noted experiences was teacher likability and how much better students learn from and how much harder students work for a teacher they believe likes them and is invested in them.

The first sub-question for the present study was: How do secondary teachers in South Carolina incorporate relationship development within their classroom management system? All participants felt that relationship development was an essential part of classroom management but that these relationships are developed personally and not in a uniform fashion. Most participants agreed that genuine relationship development with students needed to begin at the start of a new year. Participants shared examples about the importance of getting to know their

students to meet their learning needs better. Unfortunately, several participants shared that colleagues downplayed the importance of relationship development; instead, relying on a failing attempt to create an effective classroom environment based solely on rules and regulations.

The second sub-question for the current research study was: How are students in South Carolina held accountable for responsible behavior? Participants shared concern over the lack of consistent accountability for similar student behavior issues and that more reliable administrative responses were needed. Participants also expressed concern regarding relationship development and relationship maintenance when students were out of class due to discipline issues. Participants shared that students should understand that disciplinary action is sometimes necessary, but that the relationship remains so the student feels welcome to return to class.

The third sub-question for the current research study was: How do secondary teachers in South Carolina describe the benefits of positive student-teacher relationships as they improve academic achievement and reduce behavior issues within the classroom? All participants gave examples of improved classroom behaviors and higher academic learning levels in classrooms where they had a positive relationship with each student. Reiterating this same point from a different perspective, participants shared experiences about students who had more problems in certain classes, struggled with learning content, and faced an overwhelming number of failing grades, where the student either shared that the teacher did not like them or the teacher did not have a relationship with them or care about them in any manner. Since the onset of COVID-19 and the resulting alternate form of hybrid instruction at both schools, all participants agreed that the importance of positive student-teacher relationship development was heightened.

Discussion

This study yielded findings aligned with the empirical literature on relationship development and the theoretical literature on relationship development and its impact on academic learning and behavior choices. Previous researchers focused on the ability of teachers to positively shape and change any learning environment through mastery of practical classroom management skills based on evidenced based-classroom management strategies such as student grouping, appropriate time on task, student feedback and praise, guided and independent practice, lesson review with graphic organizers, active questioning, teacher modeling, and establishing clear learning goals (Solheim, Ertesvag, & Dalhaug, 2018). However, the connecting link for all of these strategies, meaningful student-teacher relationship development, was overlooked. This study was grounded in Glasser's (1998) Choice theory. Major themes of this study paralleled the related literature. An exploration follows how this study adds to the empirical and theoretical literature and provides a view of secondary high school teachers' lived experiences with positive student-teacher relationship development and its resulting impact on classroom management.

Empirical Literature

The literature reviewed in Chapter Two was primarily supported by findings that emerged in the current investigation. Participant responses revealed major themes in student-teacher relationship development, instruction, and overall classroom environment, which mirrored many of the literature's topics. Notably, participants focused on the likeability of a teacher from a student's perspective and how genuine effort in positive relationship development becomes circular. Teachers make the concerted, initial effort to get to know their students, and their actions reciprocate in kind. The existing literature focused on classroom management

strategies and outcomes but lacked examination of the influence of positive student-teacher relationship development as an essential part of classroom management. This section described how findings from this study relate to the previous literature, challenge previous research, and filled the literature gap about secondary teachers' perspectives on the impact of positive student-teacher relationship development.

Classroom environment and classroom management challenges were the first two topics covered in the literature review; studies focused on establishing and maintaining the classroom's physical environment. When teachers do not understand or work to meet student needs, avoiding an individual's five basic needs is just as futile as believing that relationships and environments have no impact on a person's decisions and behaviors (Akram, 2019; Glasser, 1998; Koenig, 2018). Choice theory is founded on the positive effects resulting from positive working relationships between students and teachers. Previous researchers indicated that a person's thinking and acting will ultimately control their feelings and physiology and that the reverse is also true, one impacting the other (Bradley, 2014; Erwin, 2020; Lynch & Hussung, 2018). Several participants described the importance of positive student-teacher relationships and how they serve as intrinsic motivators for students to pursue academic achievement with greater intensity and make good behavioral choices. Participants believed that genuine effort on the classroom teacher's part to develop these positive relationships was an essential part of classroom management that too many classroom teachers overlook. All participants agreed that positive student-teacher relationship development was necessary for a positive classroom environment, enhanced academic success, and improved student behaviors.

The next two topics addressed in Chapter Two of the present study were educational oversight expectations and secondary level teacher preparedness. Participants discussed that

with local, state, and federal educational expectations consistently on the rise, secondary teachers must continuously provide a positive learning environment within their classrooms that encourage improved academic achievement. Improvement to overall classroom management systems must be a daily focus for every teacher (Lugrin et al., 2016; McLennan et al., 2020). Unfortunately, with pressing educational expectations to reach specific yearly goals, teachers tend to focus on academic results and place little emphasis on meaningful relationship development with their students (Koçak & Burgaz, 2017; Krane et al., 2016; Krane & Klevan, 2019; Saffran & Oswald, 2003). Participants reported that developing genuine, positive relationships with each student was the best way to improve all areas of classroom management.

The fifth topic addressed in Chapter Two was the top eight evidence-based classroom management strategies, defined by several recent studies on the subject. All participants agreed that positive student-teacher relationship development was a sorely overlooked topic for most current classroom teachers, especially those with less than seven years' experience. Most participants suggested that professional development opportunities should include relationship training and related classroom applications. Secondary school teachers need to develop a better understanding of student needs, create positive student relationships, and ultimately build these components into a solid foundation for an engaging classroom environment where higher levels of learning can take place (Alberto & Troutman, 2003; Alderman & Green, 2011; Fajet et al., 2005; Freeman, Kowitt, Simonsen, Wei, Dooley, Gordon, & Maddock, 2018; Hornstra et al., 2018; Valente, Monteiro, & Lourenco, 2019). Even though some prior research studies discuss student-teacher relationships, few studies extensively explored how teachers could develop these effective relationships and the resulting impact they can create; therefore, the current studies' results revealed teacher perspectives on relationship development, resulting impact, and lived

experiences revealing a distinct difference where positive student-teacher relationships were and were not present in classroom environments.

The next two topics addressed in Chapter Two shared the importance of connecting with student needs and classroom and behavior management. Each person, including all secondary level students, has a genetically embedded set of needs for love and belonging, power, fun, survival, and freedom (Glasser, 1998). The desire for feeling that an individual is loved and valued within their immediate group is a foundational need that must be met before others' fulfillment can be ascertained (Bradley, 2014; Hornstra et al., 2018). Many participants considered individual relationship development to be the most prioritized strategy they used at the beginning of each semester. Teachers repeatedly pointed to improved student engagement, higher academic achievement, and improved classroom behaviors when positive student-teacher relationships were developed right from the beginning of a new semester.

The final two sections of the literature review discussed teacher perspectives on classroom management and professional development strategies. Teachers can improve their classrooms' learning environment by utilizing the knowledge Choice theory provides (Glasser, 1998; Koenig, 2018; Lynch & Hussung, 2018; Universal class editors, 2020). Secondary level students need fulfillment of their essential needs and to know that the work they complete is meaningful in helping them reach their achievement goals (Hornstra et al., 2018; Universal class editors, 2020). The literature review portion of teacher perspectives on classroom management was the only significant section of information for the literature review from current classroom teachers. The overwhelming majority of the literature review texts were written from classroom observers' perspectives, educational oversight committee members, educational instructors, professional journalists, and school administrators. The research from the current study fills the

literature gap about secondary teachers' perspectives on the impact of positive student-teacher relationship development from participants who shared their recent, lived experiences on positive student-teacher relationship development and reflections on colleagues who dismissed this potential benefit. In the current study, all participants agreed that the most effective way to reach all students, especially those in at-risk situations behaviorally and or academically, was for teachers to place genuine interest into developing a relationship with each student. These relationships improve engagement and interest in learning.

Theoretical Literature

The current study was grounded in Glasser's (1998) Choice theory. Meeting a student's five basic needs through social interactions and relationship development was directly related to their chosen behaviors and effort in academic learning opportunities. Several current classroom management systems based on the theories of Skinner (1965), Glasser (1998), Canter (2006), and Marzano (2017) are in place in today's classrooms. However, secondary level teachers still struggle to create and maintain positive classroom environments, creating opportunities for higher academic achievement (Cook et al., 2017; Skiba et al., 2016). Glasser (1998) wrote extensively about students being prone to make poor behavior choices when their basic needs go unmet; these unfortunate decisions negatively impact learning in any classroom environment. Appropriate social relationships are essential to meet these basic needs at all stages of education but tend to become even more significant with age, especially at the secondary level (Glasser, 1998). Relationships at the secondary school level are essential for student growth (Krane et al., 2016; Krane & Klevan, 2019). When teachers fail to recognize and meet student social needs through relationship development, classroom structures are lacking, and learning goals fall far short of potential academic outcomes.

Analyses of the participants' answers from the interviews, focus group discussions, and questionnaires supported the importance of positive student-teacher relationship development as an essential component of classroom management, student motivation in academic learning opportunities, and reduction of inappropriate classroom behaviors. Participants shared their lived experiences with students who had positive working relationships with their teachers and with students who did not have that positive relationship in place. All participants' answers reiterated the importance of effective relationship development with students through their shared experiences.

Choice theory established the essential need for teachers to develop effective relationships with students and how they can impact each student's behavioral, social, and academic development (Glasser, 1998). In participant responses, the impact these positive relationships create was shared in the form of lived experiences. Similarly, participants also shared very different classroom outcomes when a positive student-teacher relationship was not in place, and the teacher failed to establish a genuine connection with her students.

Implications

A gap exists in the literature regarding teacher perspectives and experiences with positive student-teacher relationship development and its resulting impact. The present study addressed this gap by exploring secondary teachers' lived experiences as they develop positive relationships with students. As follows, theoretical, empirical, and practical implications are presented.

Theoretical Implications

Several participants explained that developing positive relationships with students helped them gain and maintain higher levels of student engagement because students felt that the teacher

liked them and was interested in whether or not they were successful in her course. Teacher likeability among students and relationship development between the two were the two most repeated phrases in the participants' interview responses (Table 2) as participants shared the importance of these factors through their lived experiences. Participants committed to putting genuine effort into getting to know each of their students and forming a positive working relationship shared more positive lived experiences in working with students and higher rates of academic achievement among students with whom they had a positive relationship versus students with whom they did not know as well. Therefore, the interpretation of the data from the semi-structured interviews, focus group discussions, and questionnaires confirmed Glasser's (1993) Choice theory. Students at the secondary level have consistent daily needs of survival, love and belonging, power, fun, and freedom; many of these needs are addressed and met through positive relationship development. In the present study, participants explained through a combination of lived experiences that when students feel that a teacher likes them, values them, and knows them on a personal level, they are much more likely to have a positive attitude about that class, subject, and in turn, give more concerted effort towards class expectations and assignments.

The theoretical implications of the present study for stakeholders span several areas. Participants connected lived experiences with more positive outcomes when a student is part of a positive relationship with their current teacher, recognize that their needs are being met, and therefore exert more positive, genuine effort in that particular teacher's class. Meaningful and productive relationships can meet several basic needs and are necessary in life (Akram, 2019; Henderson et al., 2013). Choice theory teaches that individuals have a fundamental daily desire to control their actions (Erwin, 2020; Glasser, 1998). Choice theory is not focused on past

actions but instead is centered on the present, where individuals make decisions about their behaviors and actions based on their current situation (Erwin, 2020; Henderson, Robey, Dunham, & Derner, 2013). These valued relationships impact all chosen behaviors and, in turn, how the chosen behavior affects the relationships and the individuals within them (Glasser, 1994). Participants in this study agreed that teachers should understand and address life needs daily through a positive relationship with each student.

Both students and teachers can benefit from the information and analysis of the data in this study on positive relationship development. If a secondary school student struggles in a course, has an apathetic approach to learning, and often makes inappropriate behavior choices, the recollection from the participants' lived experiences in the interview, focus group, and questionnaire data could be enlightening to the teacher who is working with that student. Reviewing the data provided through this study offers insight into a student's perspective on a particular classroom environment and why appropriate decisions are made or dismissed. Therefore, developing positive student-teacher relationships is an obvious benefit for stakeholders, including students, teachers, administrators, and the extended school family. Positive relationships cause students to feel welcomed, liked, and valued as members of that particular teacher's class. Meeting the need for belonging encourages students to display a positive attitude, engage in course activities, participate in genuine learning, display higher levels of academic achievement, and exhibit constructive classroom behaviors. Furthermore, when students feel valued in a classroom and are more engaged in learning, fewer undesirable behaviors also benefit parents who will not have to make arrangements for students who receive discipline and for administrators who can focus on instruction rather than discipline when positive student-teacher relationships are in place.

Applying Choice theory is very useful, as students' needs are met through positive student-teacher relationship development, better behavior and academic choices will occur. Motivating students in positive engagement and achievement begins with the teacher and can create many positive results. Consistent motivation can also encourage secondary students each day to develop self-control in meeting their own needs. As more teachers understand and give credence to each student's basic set of needs, they can teach much more effectively, encouraging more consistent positive classroom behaviors and higher academic achievement levels. Administrators and teachers should understand and encourage effective classroom management systems to meet each student's needs and create an engaging learning environment. The data from this research study showed that when administrators and teachers create and maintain a safe, engaging, valued learning environment for each student through positive relationship development, students are more likely to display positive behaviors and demonstrate genuine effort conducive to higher learning levels.

Empirical Implications

Much of the current literature on classroom management focused on best practice skills and strategies while overlooking the importance of positive student-teacher relationship development. Other observers and researchers focused on the teacher's relationship with administration and colleagues without emphasizing the classroom relationships between the teacher and the students. A gap existed in classroom teachers' perspectives regarding relationship development with students as an essential part of an effective classroom management system. Many participants shared specific details describing the ways they built relationships with their students. According to participant responses, relationship development does much more than meet student's basic needs.

Participants shared that classroom management and academic achievement were much less successful when these positive relationships were absent. Participants shared their perspectives on how little students would care about a subject or the work assigned within a class when they feel that they are not valued first. Participants identified teachers as the initiators of the classroom environment and learning expectations. As an English department chair and classroom instructor, the researcher agrees that teachers create their classroom setting. In dealing with students, it has become increasingly important for the teacher to develop positive relationships with as many students as possible. When students know a teacher cares about them as an individual, they will be more receptive to what that teacher knows about their given subject and more likely to work hard to achieve academic success in that classroom.

Participants reported that the strongest motivator for developing positive relationships with students was improved student achievement and, as a result, higher levels of teacher job satisfaction. When students know the classroom expectations, they are much more likely to rise to meet them. When students have a positive connection with their classroom teacher, they will be much more likely to engage in genuine learning through instructional delivery of content and pursuit of academic activities resulting in higher achievement levels. Many participants shared that in their lived classroom experiences, students developed more self-responsibility for good behavior choices and higher academic learning when positive student-teacher relationships were in place, giving teachers a much more satisfying feeling regarding their chosen career and improved desire to continue teaching long-term.

Various stakeholders stand to benefit from the empirical implications of this study. As a veteran teacher of 22 years, the researcher recommends that all teachers put genuine effort into developing positive student-teacher relationships in their classrooms. These relationships

encourage more positive student actions and have an influential impact on learning. Teachers who do not understand or work to meet student needs create more negative impacts in their classroom and convey a condescending attitude toward student ability. Teachers can improve their classrooms' learning environment by utilizing the knowledge Choice theory provides by meeting student needs through relationships. I further recommend that administrators emphasize and model relationship development strategies as part of ongoing professional development. I also recommend that administrators and teachers put genuine effort into maintaining a collegial environment in their school and building and maintaining positive working relationships with parents and extended family members.

Practical Implications

This study's findings provide several practical implications concerning the development of positive student-teacher relationships by secondary school teachers. Participants detailed how they got to know their students right from the beginning of the semester, laying the foundation for positive relationship development for high school teachers. Many of the relationship conversations and strategies shared during the present study could be implemented with no professional training and minimal planning. Participants shared that positive relationship development with students aided them in more effective classroom management and enabled them to provide more meaningful instruction.

Secondary level administrators should strive to recognize and educate teachers on their students' essential needs; relationship development is an effective way to meet these needs. One participant shared multiple details regarding the importance of assigning meaningful academic work to help students reach their achievement goals. Teachers create more meaningful assignments and activities when they get to know their students and develop a positive

relationship. Students benefit from these relationships by having their needs met, understanding content on a deeper level, desiring more positive behaviors, and reaching higher academic goals.

Several participants explained that positive relationships with students enabled them to diffuse and more easily remedy minor disturbance issues, misbehaviors, and conflicts in the classroom when they occur. All participants shared at least one example of how they relied on the positive relationship with a student to speak with that individual about a negative attitude or behavior. Several participants stressed the importance of speaking to the student immediately after the classroom disturbance occurs, handling the situation in a confidential manner, and not using sarcasm when diffusing the conflict.

Another essential practical implication of positive student-teacher relationship development is the communicative foundation it supplies. Developing positive relationships with students create and maintain solid lines of communication. Students who believe their teacher likes them, sees them as a valuable member of the class, and genuinely wants them to be successful with the class content are much more willing to talk to the teacher when they have questions and need extra help.

The benefit of maintaining open communication through meaningful connections with students in a positive relationship was a practical implication of the present study. Multiple participants shared that they had students who consistently came to them for help in their class and other classes, and sometimes for family or friend situations. Because students prefer talking to likable teachers, developing positive relationships with students is essential, and teachers should place genuine effort into relationship development as soon as a student enters her class. Meaningful connections and open communication with students are important in handling situations that arise in class and their lives.

Positive relationships with students also provide a practical means of accessing and mastering instructional material. Participants indicated a higher level of student engagement with instructional activities when positive relationships between the teacher and the students are in place. Relationships provide a framework for improving and maintaining student attention. If classroom teachers put genuine effort into developing positive relationships with each student, they may improve student engagement. The potential to improve student engagement is another practical implication of the present study.

A final practical implication from this study was building positive relationships with students and using that foundation to improve student learning. Participants reported that students better remembered material and were able to apply skills at a higher achievement level when they had a good, working relationship with the classroom teacher. Teachers need to develop positive relationships with students through genuine effort and concern. Relationships with students provide a meaningful way to communicate content instruction and activity expectations. By developing and maintaining positive relationships with students, teachers could improve student outcomes in the classroom.

Several stakeholders stand to benefit from the practical implications of this study. School administrators can develop professional development for teachers that focuses on establishing and maintaining positive relationships with students. When administrators encourage teachers to develop these positive relationships, and work to have positive working relationships with all students, it could result in fewer discipline referrals to the office. Teachers benefit from this study's findings because they justify putting time and effort into positive relationship building with students as part of an effective classroom management system. As a result, students benefit from this study's findings since positive relationship development can go a long way in meeting

their needs, help them make more productive behavior choices, and encourage them to give more effort towards learning and instructional activities.

Delimitations and Limitations

Decisions about how to conduct the research created delimitations and boundaries in the present study. I utilized a qualitative phenomenological design for this study; this was the most appropriate design for exploring the shared, lived experiences of secondary school teachers regarding positive relationship development with students in a coastal South Carolina public school district. Phenomenology allows researchers to collect data from individuals to see if their lived experiences have similar characteristics that define and inform the research phenomenon (Creswell, 2013). A qualitative phenomenological approach allowed for understanding personal, individual experiences and provided a framework to understand the phenomenon better.

The participant selection process was another delimiting factor for this present study. Participants were required to be secondary level English, Math, Science, or Social Studies teachers in one of the two public high schools selected in a coastal South Carolina district. Participants were required to have a positive evaluation regarding their classroom management system from their current administrator. Participants included six teachers from each school, encompassing both male and female teachers, who had between three and 31 years of classroom experience. Female teachers made up a larger portion of the participant pool. More English teachers responded to the research invitation and participated in all three research data collection levels than did teachers from the other core content areas. The variability of participants' gender, educational degrees earned, and years of classroom experience helped account for individual experiences while still encompassing enough similarities to examine their collective experiences.

Several limitations also affected the present study. While 12 out of 13 secondary schools were considered for the study, only two secondary schools met district level participation requirements. More data collection would be available if more secondary schools had received district approval to participate in the study. The participant content area of instruction was unbalanced as well. Ten of the participant volunteers are English teachers, while only one Math and one Science teacher volunteered for the study. The minimum sample of 12 secondary core content teachers was obtained; however, had more participants volunteered, a clearer picture may have emerged regarding developing and maintaining positive relationships with students as part of an effective classroom management system. Another limitation emerged as the study developed. Several administrators at both schools communicated that they practiced positive relationship development with their students and encouraged their teachers to do so. Because the study was restricted to current secondary level classroom teachers, I excluded these possible participants from consideration in the present study.

Recommendations for Future Research

I sought to determine how secondary core content teachers in two coastal South Carolina high schools used positive student-teacher relationship development as an essential piece of their effective classroom management system. The study provided me with insight into the methods of student relationship development, but it also allowed me to think about other questions regarding benefits that arise from these relationships. The current study's findings pointed to several areas where further study may provide insight into the reasons teachers should include positive student-teacher relationship development in their classroom management system.

One of the delimiting factors of this study was the selection of participants. All participants of this study have three or more years of classroom experience and were current core

content teachers, which provides an opportunity for studies involving educators beyond this study's scope. One area for future study would be a phenomenological study on positive student-teacher relationship development within a teacher's first three years of classroom experience. An additional phenomenological study of this nature could provide an extensive focus on implementing positive student-teacher relationship development by teachers within their first three years of teaching. Another phenomenological study addressing a delimiting factor of the present study would be to examine the phenomenon of administrators who develop positive relationships with students and consistently encourage their teachers to do the same. Administrators are often responsible for designing and implementing professional development learning opportunities and guiding development of the instructional practices in their building. Integrating how teachers can positively establish and maintain relationship development with students could provide further insight into the impact these relationships have within the school's climate. A phenomenological study of administrators' use of positive relationship development in school could provide insight into those types of experiences.

One of the current study's implications was that the participants viewed positive student-teacher relationship development as an essential part of an effective classroom management system. To further explore this form of relationship development, one recommendation would be to conduct a case study on an administrator or teacher who prioritizes positive relationship development with students and conduct a separate case study on an administrator or teacher who does not prioritize positive relationship development with students. Case studies can provide a more in-depth form of data analysis, extending the research volume surrounding the motivations and results of positive student-teacher relationship development in classrooms where they are and where they are not a priority. These proposed case studies could provide an understanding

of the different positive relationship building with students has on students and their instructional learning. A correlational study comparing teachers who emphasize positive relationship development with students and teachers who do not could also add to the literature on the importance of positive relationship development. In the current study, teachers acknowledged higher levels of job satisfaction where they maintained positive relationships with their students.

This study focused on teachers' phenomenon focusing on positive student-teacher relationship development, but these relationships affect several stakeholders. Future research opportunities exist that examine relationship development with students in the classroom and other stakeholders. One such study could be a quantitative correlational study comparing state testing score outcomes in a classroom where a teacher emphasizes positive relationship development with her students and a classroom where the teacher does not prioritize relationship development. By examining the difference in test scores, positive relationship development might prove to be a useful tool that could contribute to higher student achievement levels as measured by state testing. Understanding student perspectives in classrooms where they have a positive relationship with their teacher would also add valuable insight to the field of classroom management literature. A phenomenological study exploring the different experiences of students in classroom where positive relationship development was a priority would extend the understanding of relationship development in the classroom. Examining the phenomenon from the students' perspective in the classroom would further define the importance of positive relationship development in the classroom. Additionally, research to understand parents' perspective on the importance of positive relationship development would extend understanding of the phenomenon. A phenomenological study from the parents' perspectives would explain

relationship development from multiple views and help extend the understanding of the phenomenon.

Another theme that emerged from the present study was that participants relied on positive student-teacher relationship development to manage their classroom more effectively, specifically to defuse potential behavior issues before they result in the need for corrective discipline. One area for future research could be a correlative study between the number of discipline issues from a classroom teacher who emphasizes positive relationship development and one who does not. Such a study would provide insight into the effect of these positive relationships on student behavior and how teachers approach discipline. Similarly, researchers could also conduct a phenomenological study on the experience of using positive relationship development to address student behavior from administrators' perspectives. Since administrators typically have the final decision in disciplinary matters and see the issue from a school-wide view, their perspective on teachers' ability to use positive relationship development and how teachers handle discipline could provide additional insight into the larger phenomenon.

Finally, one implication of this study is that positive student-teacher relationship development helps with student attention and engagement. Relationship development is not the only tool that can improve attention and engagement. A correlative study to compare the outcomes of relationship development versus other management tools could provide useful data as to the efficacy of relationship development as a useful management tool. Another possible study based on the implication that positive student-teacher relationship development improves student learning would be a case study focused on Faulk. Faulk has a largely positive relationship base with his students in all classroom settings, both face-to-face and virtual. By delving into an intensive study of Faulk, researchers may be able to gain more understanding of

the process and impact of positive student-teacher relationship development by studying Faulk's practices.

Summary

Students face immense instructional and societal pressures in the high school setting; they have high-stakes testing and are almost incessantly connected to the Internet. Teachers must create safe environments that are as stress-free as possible for students to engage in high levels of learning. One tool that teachers can use to help achieve these goals is to develop genuine, positive, working relationships with each of their students. Secondary core content teachers from two public high schools in a coastal South Carolina district participated in the present study through individual interviews, focus group discussions, and individual questionnaires. The information collected in this study aligned with previous studies about positive relationship development in the classroom and provide greater insight into the lived experiences of the participants. Findings from previous research and this study confirm that building and maintaining positive student-teacher relationships is one way to increase attention, engage students, dissuade misbehaviors, and improve learning.

Teachers in the current study reported that prioritizing positive relationship development with students has helped more students succeed academically. Participants explained that students were more engaged with content and activities in the classroom when they had a positive relationship with them. Participants shared positive experiences with students who had an effective relationship with a classroom teacher and negative experiences with students where these relationships were lacking or absent altogether. Many may hypothesize that once a student reaches the secondary school level, that they are no longer people pleasers or that relationships with peers and not teachers are the driving force behind their behavioral and academic choices.

While peer relationships do substantially impact students at the secondary school level, the primary motivating factor behind positive behavior choices and academic perseverance was teacher likeability contributing to positive relationship development. Furthermore, better scores on assignments and state mandated testing were reported by teachers who prioritized positive relationship development in their classrooms. Classroom management was much more positive, and teachers could deescalate conflict situations when positive student-teacher relationships were in place right from the beginning of the semester. Finally, teachers observed that these positive relationships met students' needs, reduced student stress, and created an overall more positive classroom environment.

This study's findings also revealed the substantial influence positive student-teacher relationship development could have on a student's motivational level regarding genuine academic learning. Public school administrators can use this study's findings to emphasize the importance of positive student-teacher relationship development. These findings might also expose other weaknesses in a struggling teacher's classroom management system. Missing relationships between students and teachers can convey a lack of student value, leading to a lack of motivation that can produce inappropriate behaviors and lead to a lack of motivation to learn. Extensive professional development and administrative leadership on the importance of positive relationship development could encourage secondary school teachers to recognize and implement this viable connection to students that can positively influence classroom behaviors, academic achievement, and the teaching profession. If a student is struggling in one classroom much more so than in another classroom, administrators should analyze the difference in the relationship that student has with these two teachers; redirecting a teacher in the profound efforts of relationship development could go a long way in addressing classroom management

problems, behavioral issues, and academic concerns. Teachers' lived experiences in this study and the themes developed from the resulting data analysis will help teachers and administrators make decisions regarding classroom management and assist teachers in reaching all students, especially those who may appear otherwise obstinate and unreachable. While positive relationships with students are not the cure all for every educational goal, they can be a very effective tool in improving many areas of modern education.

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APPENDIX A: INTERNAL REVIEW BOARD PERMISSION FORM

irb@liberty.edu
Tue 8/11/2020 2:09 PM

August 11, 2020

Amanda Vipperman
Tracey Pritchard

Re: IRB Exemption - IRB-FY19-20-485 THE INFLUENCE OF BUILDING POSITIVE STUDENT-TEACHER RELATIONSHIPS ON CLASSROOM MANAGEMENT IN A SOUTH CAROLINA HIGH SCHOOL: A PHENOMENOLOGICAL STUDY

Dear Amanda Vipperman, Tracey Pritchard:

The Liberty University Institutional Review Board (IRB) has reviewed your application in accordance with the Office for Human Research Protections (OHRP) and Food and Drug Administration (FDA) regulations and finds your study to be exempt from further IRB review. This means you may begin your research with the data safeguarding methods mentioned in your approved application, and no further IRB oversight is required.

Your study falls under the following exemption category, which identifies specific situations in which human participants research is exempt from the policy set forth in 45 CFR 46: 101(b):

Category 2.(iii). Research that only includes interactions involving educational tests (cognitive, diagnostic, aptitude, achievement), survey procedures, interview procedures, or observation of public behavior (including visual or auditory recording) if at least one of the following criteria is met:

The information obtained is recorded by the investigator in such a manner that the identity of the human subjects can readily be ascertained, directly or through identifiers linked to the subjects, and an IRB conducts a limited IRB review to make the determination required by §46.111(a)(7).

Your stamped consent form can be found under the Attachments tab within the Submission Details section of your study on Cayuse IRB. This form should be copied and used to gain the consent of your research participants. If you plan to provide your consent information electronically, the contents of the attached consent document should be made available without alteration.

Please note that this exemption only applies to your current research application, and any modifications to your protocol must be reported to the Liberty University IRB for verification of continued exemption status. You may report these changes by completing a modification submission through your Cayuse IRB account.

If you have any questions about this exemption or need assistance in determining whether possible modifications to your protocol would change your exemption status, please email us at irb@liberty.edu.

APPENDIX B: DISTRICT AND SCHOOL PERMISSION FORM

Date:

Recipient:

Title:

Company:

Address 1:

Address 2:

Address 3:

Dear Recipient:

As a graduate student in the School of Education at Liberty University, I am conducting research as part of the requirement for a doctoral level degree in Educational Leadership. The title of my research project is: The influence of building positive student-teacher relationships on South Carolina High School classroom management based on classroom experiences. The purpose of my research is to understand how secondary school teachers in a South Carolina public school district develop positive relationships with their students and the impact these relationships have on improving classroom management, reducing classroom disruptions, and increasing academic achievement.


I am writing to request your permission to conduct my research in / at school district / school name.

Participants will be asked to contact me to schedule a face to face or virtual interview, a face to face or virtual focus group, and complete a digital questionnaire. Participants will be presented with informed consent information prior to participating in research. Taking part in this study is completely voluntary, and participants are welcome to discontinue participation at any time.

Thank you for considering my request. If you chose to grant permission, please provide a signed statement on approved letterhead indicating your approval.

Sincerely,

Amanda L. Vipperman, M. Ed.
Doctoral Student at Liberty University



APPENDIX C: PARTICIPANT RECRUITMENT LETTER

Date:
Recipient:
Title:
Company:
Address 1:
Address 2:
Address 3:

Dear Recipient:

As a graduate student in the School of Education at Liberty University, I am conducting research as part of the requirement for a doctoral level degree in Educational Leadership. The title of my research project is: The influence of building positive student-teacher relationships on South Carolina High School classroom management based on classroom experiences. The purpose of my research is to understand how secondary school teachers in a South Carolina public school district develop positive relationships with their students and the impact these relationships have on improving classroom management, reducing classroom disruptions, and increasing academic achievement.

I am writing to invite you to participate in my research study.

If you are a secondary school teacher in South Carolina, and believe that student-teacher relationships may or may not have an impact on classroom management, and are willing to participate in this study, you will be asked to participate in a face to face or virtual interview, participate in a face to face or virtual focus group, and complete a digital questionnaire. The interview should take approximately 60 minutes to complete; the focus group should take approximately 45 minutes to an hour to complete, and the questionnaire should take approximately 30 minutes to complete. Your name and other identifying information will be requested as part of your participation, but the information will remain confidential during and after the completion of the study.

To participate, please email me with your contact information so that we can schedule a time to complete the interview and questionnaire. I will also send you information on the focus group date and time in advance.

A consent document is attached to this letter. The consent document contains additional information regarding my research study, please sign the consent document and return it to me via email prior to the date of our interview or deliver your signed consent form to me at the time of our interview.

Sincerely,
Amanda L. Vipperman, M. Ed.
Doctoral Student at Liberty University



APPENDIX D: CONSENT FORM

Consent

Title of the Project: The Influence of Building Positive Student-Teacher Relationships on Classroom Management in a South Carolina High School: A Phenomenological study

Principal Investigator: Amanda Vipperman, Doctoral Student, Liberty University

Faculty Sponsor: Dr. Tracey Pritchard, Liberty University

Invitation to be Part of a Research Study

You are invited to participate in a research study. In order to participate, you must be 18 years of age or older and employed as a full-time English, Math, Science, or Social Studies teacher in a public high school in Horry County, South Carolina. Taking part in this research project is voluntary.

Please take time to read this entire form and ask questions before deciding whether to take part in this research project.

What is the study about and why is it being done?

The purpose of the study is to understand how secondary school teachers develop positive relationships with their students. The research will also study the resulting influence of these relationships on improving classroom management, decreasing class disruptions, and encouraging academic achievement.

What will happen if you take part in this study?

If you agree to be in this study, I will ask you to do the following things:

1. Personal interview – Participate in one face to face or virtual interview, lasting approximately 60 minutes that will be recorded using audio and visual equipment.
2. Focus Group – Participate in one face to face or virtual focus group discussion, lasting approximately 45 minutes to one hour, that will be recorded using audio and visual equipment.
3. Digital Questionnaire -- Complete one questionnaire, sent online or in hard copy format, that can be completed in approximately 30 minutes.

How could you or others benefit from this study?

The direct benefits participants may expect to receive from taking part in this study are the opportunities to hear from other teachers about their classroom management experiences during the focus group and heard about new and innovative relationship development ideas, classroom management systems, ways to improve academic achievement, and man for maintaining classroom behaviors conducive to learning from other participants.

Benefits to society could include understanding the influence these relationships may or may not have on classroom management strategies that could benefit teachers by giving them more skills to improve their classroom learning environment resulting in a more effective academic learning atmosphere and a more positive job experience.

What risks might you experience from being in this study?

The risks involved in this study are minimal, which means they are similar to the risks encountered in everyday life. However, if I am made aware of information that triggers the mandatory reporting requirements for child abuse, child neglect, elder abuse, or intent to harm self or others, I will need to report this information to a school official. If this situation arises, the involved participant will be terminated from the study and all recorded information for this participant will be deleted from the research.

How will personal information be protected?

The records of this study will be kept private. Published reports will not include any information that will make it possible to identify the subject. Research records will be stored securely, and only the researcher will have access to the records.

- Participant responses will be kept confidential through the use of pseudonyms assigned to each participant. Personal interviews will be conducted in a location where others will not easily overhear the conversation.
- All research data will be stored on a password-locked computer, hard copies of data will be stored in the doctoral student's personal locked filing cabinet and may be used in future presentations. After three years, all electronic records will be deleted, and all hard copy data will be shredded.
- The personal interview and focus group discussion will be recorded and transcribed. Recordings will be stored on a password-locked computer for three years and then erased. Only the researcher will have access to these recordings.
- Confidentiality cannot be guaranteed in focus group settings. While discouraged, other members of the focus group may share what was discussed with persons outside of the group.

Is study participation voluntary?

Participation in this study is voluntary. Your decision whether to participate will not affect your current or future relations with Liberty University. If you decide to participate, you are free to not answer any question or withdraw at any time, without affecting these relationships.

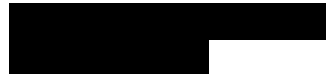
What should you do if you decide to withdraw from the study?

If you choose to withdraw from the study, please contact the researcher at the email address/phone number included in the next paragraph. Should you choose to withdraw, data collected from you, apart from the focus group data will be destroyed immediately and will not be included in this study. Focus group data will not be destroyed, but your contributions to the focus group will not be included in the study if you choose to withdraw.

Whom do you contact if you have questions or concerns about the study?

The personal information for the researcher conducting this study is listed below. You may ask any questions you have now. If you have questions later, you are encouraged to contact her at her university email or cell number listed below. You may also contact the researcher's faculty sponsor, Dr. Tracey Pritchard at tbpritchard@liberty.edu.

Amanda L. Vipperman, M. Ed.
 Doctoral Student at Liberty University



Whom do you contact if you have questions about your rights as a research participant?

If you have any questions or concerns regarding this study and would like to talk to someone other than the researcher, you are encouraged to contact the Institutional Review Board, 1971 University Blvd., Green Hall Ste. 2845, Lynchburg, VA 24515 or email at irb@liberty.edu.

Your Consent

By signing this document, you are agreeing to be in this study. Make sure you understand what the study is about before you sign. You will be given a copy of this document for your records. The researcher will keep a copy with the study records. If you have any questions about the study after you sign this document, you can contact the study team using the information provided above.

I have read and understood the above information. I have asked questions and have received answers. I consent to participate in the study.

The researcher has my permission to audio-record and video record me as part of my participation in this study.

 Printed Subject Name

 Signature & Date

APPENDIX E: RECRUITMENT FOLLOW-UP EMAIL

August 1, 2020

Participant Name
South Carolina Public School Teacher

Dear Participant:

As a graduate student in the Department of Education at Liberty University, I am conducting research as part of the requirements for a Doctoral degree. Last week, an email was sent to you inviting you to participate in a research study. This follow-up email is being sent to remind you to respond if you would like to participate and have not already done so. The deadline for participation is August 31, 2020.

If you choose to participate, you will be asked to participate in a personal interview, focus group discussion, and complete a digital questionnaire. It should take approximately two and half hours to complete all procedures listed above. Your name and other identifying information will be requested as part of your participation, but the information will remain confidential.

A consent document was provided in your invitation to participate email and is again included in this email.

To participate, please email or call me by August 31, 2020 to schedule your interview.

After your interview has been scheduled, please sign and return your consent form by email prior to your scheduled interview or bring your signed consent form to your interview sessions (in-person interviews only). sign and return your consent form by email prior to your scheduled interview or bring your signed consent form to your interview session (in-person interviews only).

Sincerely,

Amanda L. Vipperman, M. Ed.
Doctoral Student at Liberty University



APPENDIX F: INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

Individual Interview:

Date:

Place:

Interviewer:

Interviewee:

Position of Interviewee:

Description: This interview is being included in this research study to provide data for the study of how secondary school teachers develop positive relationships with their students and the resulting influence on improving classroom management, decreasing class disruptions, and encouraging academic achievement.

Script:

“I will be recording this interview with both audio and visual equipment. I will be using pseudonyms for your name and school name at all times during the interview. There are no right or wrong answers to any question. If you don’t want to answer or comment, you can simply state that you wish to skip the question. Please think about the questions a few moments before responding. I will be trying to clarify your statements as the interview progresses. I may also ask additional questions once you have finished your answer. All answers are confidential. Before I begin asking questions, do you have any questions for me?”

“Now, I would like you to take a few moments to think about your experiences regarding student-teacher relationship development and classroom management. Let’s begin.”

Standardized Open-Ended Interview Questions

1. Please introduce yourself – tell me what degrees you hold, how long you have been teaching, and what grade(s) you are currently teaching.
2. How do you define a classroom management system?
3. Briefly describe your classroom management system including strategies, skills, and techniques that you use in your classroom consistently.

4. What specific classroom management training have you had and how has it helped you as a teacher?
5. What do you feel makes your classroom management system effective?
6. How would you characterize the relationship you have with each one of your students?
7. How does your student-teacher relationship affect your students and their ability to learn in your classroom?
8. What classroom measures do you use to encourage student self-responsibility for behavior and learning?
9. How could a student-teacher relationship impact student behavior and learning choices in the classroom?
10. When student misbehavior creates a class disruption, how do you respond?

End of Script: “Thank you for your participation in this interview. I greatly appreciate you helping me conduct my research.”

Format adapted from Creswell & Poth (2018, p.165)

APPENDIX G: INTERVIEW QUESTION RESPONSES

Participant	Secondary School	Age	Experience	Highest Degree
A - Jennifer	Woodlands High	39	15	two master's degrees
B - Charlie	Woodlands High	54	31	doctoral degree
C - Sandy	Woodlands High	48	15	master's degree
D - Everly	Woodlands High	40	12	master's degree
E - Allie	Woodlands High	52	29	master's degree
F - Faulk	Woodlands High	54	23	master's degree
G - Kate	Collins High	25	3	master's degree
H - Jim	Collins High	30	9	bachelor's degree
I - Lori	Collins High	36	13	bachelor's degree
J - Renee	Collins High	26	4	master's degree
K - Marilyn	Collins High	37	8	master's degree
J - Nicole	Collins High	30	8	two master's degrees

Research Question Responses

Research Question 1

Participant	What educational degrees do you hold, how long have you been teaching, what grade(s) you are currently teaching, and what other educational information would you like to share?
A	[00:00:19] "I have a Bachelor of Arts in English, a master's of Education in Secondary and Language Arts, and a second Master of Arts in English."
B	[00:00:30] "I got my first teaching degree in English and sociology. I have a master's in Divergent Learning, and then I have a doctorate in curriculum and instruction."
C	[00:00:50] "I came into teaching as a second career, so my undergraduate degree, was in secondary education and journalism and I did get certified to teach, but I did not go into teaching right away. Instead, I went into print journalism and I had a newspaper career. During that time, I earned a master's degree in Public Affairs Reporting, and then I went teaching. After I moved to Pennsylvania, I had to get certified, so it took me a couple of years to get everything caught up, so I was certified to teach."
D	[00:00:28] "I earned a Bachelor's degree in English and a Master of Art in Teaching. Currently I am in my sixth year of teaching at my current high school. Before this school, I taught six years at a different high school in the same district. This year I will teach AP Literature, English honors, and a virtual

class. In previous years I have taught every other grade level and core subject area.”

- E** [00:00:25] “I have my bachelor’s degree and a master’s degree plus 30 hours beyond my master’s. I am also National Board Certified this year. I’m teaching English and System 44 classes, some virtual and face-to-face.”
- F** [00:00:27] “I have a bachelor’s degree in history, a second bachelor’s degree in English and secondary education, and then a master’s degree in Language Arts. I am also certified to teach AP and Gifted and Talented courses.”
- G** [00:00:23] “I have my bachelor’s degree in English, with a minor in creative writing as well as a Master of Art degree in teaching.”
- H** [00:00:29] “I have a Bachelor of Science in Mathematics and secondary education. I am also certified to teach AP Math courses such as Calculus.”
- I** [00:00:18] “I have a Bachelor of Arts degree in Secondary English Education and I am one semester out from finishing my Master of Art degree in Instructional Technology.”
- J** [00:00:20] “I got my bachelor’s degree and then my master’s degree in teaching. I am also certified to teach gifted and talented students and just recently complete the AP Summer Institute, so I am now certified to teach AP level courses in my content area.”
- K** [00:00:21] “I have a Bachelor of Arts degree in English and then completed my Master of Arts degree in Literature and Teaching. I am certified for both middle and secondary regular education classrooms.”
- L** [00:00:23] “I hold a bachelor’s degree in English, a master’s degree in teaching, and a second master’s in instructional technology. I’m currently working on a third master’s in educational leadership.”

Research Question 2

Participant How do you define a classroom management system?

- A** [00:04:27] “I think it’s projecting the expectations from minute one through a parent and student handout that I give on day one covering all of the classroom rules so that expectations are clear. It’s really all about setting expectations and making sure everybody’s on the same page, parents and students. Parents are signing off on my expectations, so there is accountability; that’s the other part of it.”

- B** [00:01:20] “Classroom management to me is how a teacher interacts with students, both as a group and as individuals to maintain not only order but also fluidity, efficiency, and efficacy. I think these things look different for every instructor, and that’s ok because we are all different individuals and we teach differently.”
- C** [00:04:09] “I remember a long time ago a teacher told me that classroom management always goes back to your lessons. Basically, it starts with that. So, if you have a good engaging lesson, most of your classroom management should take care of itself. Classroom management is basically trying to manage the classroom to maintain an optimum environment for everybody to be able to learn.”
- D** [00:01:13] “I think, sadly, for most teachers it means discipline and keeping kids on task and not allowing them to be distracted. I think classroom management occurs in different ways and everyone has a different system, a different method. I personally like my students to be involved with classroom management so that they have a voice and a say in what happens in our classroom.”
- E** [00:00:59] “That phrase always gets me, because I don't feel like I have anything that specifically makes up classroom management. For me personally, it comes down to making those connections with the kids, one on one. I've found that when you're honest with them and you respect them, and you don't flip flop on your expectations all the time, you really don't have many disruptions in your classroom.”
- F** [00:03:35] “I think classroom management occurs when an instructor is able to cover the intended material for a class or a specific activity in their subject area. It could be an individual lesson, cross curricular ideas, or even life skills that covers their content material for that day. During the course of instruction, classroom management is in place if the majority if not all of the students are engaged in what's going on during that instruction.”
- G** [00:00:59] “A classroom management system means having a classroom that functions properly where people feel confident enough to be themselves which includes all students and teachers. A classroom that functions well is a place where there are high levels of respect from students and teachers and between everyone working together.”
- H** [00:01:33] “I think classroom management is a mutual respect between the teacher and the student. I think the breadth of expectations that were clearly communicated from day one and then holding the students responsible for them is a big part of classroom management. The teacher must be responsible for everything that was clearly explained from day one as well.”

- I** [00:01:02] “I think a good management system should incorporate the rules and expectations of your classroom and include your consequences or disciplinary actions. When I started off, I was worried that the students wouldn't see much of a difference between them and me. So, I started note cards for each of them. The first time something happened in my class, I would write the event on the note card and give that student a verbal warning. The second time I would add additional notes on the card, with a lengthier student conference. The third time, I would call home and then start with the school referrals for any further problems. That system worked really well for me because the kids knew I was being consistent and not messing around with inappropriate behaviors. As I progressed in teaching, I started to recognize that more of my desired behaviors from kids came from the relationship that I built with them from day one. I am strict. I have high level expectations in my classroom, but at the same time, it's been six or seven years since I've had to actually remove a student from my room. I really don't have behavior issues; I think that just because I have that relationship with them, and they know what I expect.”
- J** [00:01:10] “A classroom management system; I would imagine a classroom management system is starting with clear guidelines given to students from the very beginning to ensure that they understand what's expected in the classroom, and students developing a relationship with their teacher and vice versa. Teacher-student relationships, that is important and can help back up a teacher's expectations; when students know you and know how your classroom operates, they know that your expectations are there for a reason. Rules are put in place to be followed, students need to understand more of what you expect and why; it is not enough to just say these rules are in place and I expect you to follow them.”
- K** [00:01:00] “Classroom management of course begins with relationships. A classroom must also have structure, processes, followed with consistency. Students must understand what a teacher expects of them in each classroom each day, but you cannot get away from developing relationships with your students. That's the key for me with classroom management. Any teacher who wants to be successful in the classroom will understand that you must have a good rapport with the students. That is huge! You must have respect both ways; the students should respect their teacher and the teacher must respect her students. Respect in the relationship with your students is huge and definitely needed. It definitely goes a long way.”
- L** [00:01:32] “A classroom management system starts with relationships. Relationships with students and your expectations for what you want them to accomplish in your classroom go hand-in-hand. When you as the classroom teacher reach out and put effort in to establishing and maintaining those good relationships with your students, classroom management is not that difficult. But with that said, even with good relationships with your students, it is still important to have clear expectations and consistent routines established with your students.”

Research Question 3

Participant Briefly describe your classroom management system including strategies, skills, and techniques that you use in your classroom consistently.

- A** [00:05:24] “The main strategy of getting across the expectations is that parent letter from day one that kids and parents sign. My focus is on respecting the kids and they are respecting me and following the rules. That permits that give and take with the golden rule established and a system of rewards. That gives me the opportunity to tell the students they are doing a great job and they are welcome to any of my extra classroom equipment that not every teacher may have. Really it is just mental give and take; I never did sign on to Class Dojo or anything like that. If they're not following my rules, I'm not helping them out with extras. I focus more on the rewards.”
- B** [00:02:27] “I would say that my classroom management system is strict. But even after saying that, there are exceptions to every rule because people have many variables and that is especially true for our students. So, while I can be very strict and a stickler in some areas, I'm also kind of an old softy sometimes. What I try to do with my students, especially my seniors, in terms of management is simply trying to consistently hold them accountable and treat them as college students, even though I know they're not really there yet. So sometimes you really have to find a good balance between, being in charge, stating the rules, following the rules, but then also being willing to be compassionate and understanding about every individual situation. I tend to be the guide on the side person. I give students a lot of individual attention and I pride myself on having a classroom that is an accepting community for every individual. I teach students to help one another, and I think a lot of my management and my success in classroom management comes from the fact that everybody has a voice. My classroom is a safe place and my expectations are clear. I run a pretty tight, tight ship; although, it is a very loving ship.”
- C** [00:05:24] “I always try to start with developing engaging lessons. Class seating is a big part of it as well. My management system must start as soon as kids walk into my classroom. I try and do things like stand outside the door and greet each student as they come in. The lesson about management here is really establishing some kind of personal relationship with each student and that goes a long way in helping with classroom management. So just even saying, ‘Hi, Mike. I remember you had a game last night. How did you guys do?’ Even short conversations like that go a long way. I also try to always have a bell ringer, or the agenda written on the board to get students focused right away and not leaving room for downtime. Whenever they have that downtime, that's when things get harder to manage. As I begin teaching, I monitor and adjust as needed to maintain or improve the learning environment.”

- D** [00:02:12] “I usually have a pretty good rapport with my students, so I just simply use a system of strikes and everyone in class helps hold each other accountable. So, if someone tells me that there is another student creating a distraction, then we address it as a class and decide whether or not this situation is causing a disruption. In my classroom management system, usually each student gets one free pass, but I still document the situation. The second time a student is part of creating a class disruption, I create a parent email including the details of the first free pass and then the second class disruption. The student is allowed to read what I have typed and the email stays in my drafts folder so that they understand that the next time that they act up or the next time they create a disruption, they know that I'm going add the third distracting situation to the email and hit send. The recurrent disruptors have that hanging over their heads and they know that their behavior dictates whether or not I hit send today. It goes a long way in helping students hold themselves accountable for their own behavior.”
- E** [00:01:35] “The main thing is to be consistent. Once the kids realize that you are consistent, you love them and respect them, they're going to be ok. You have to take time to get to know the kids one on one. Every once in a while, you are going to have someone that will have a blow up, this coming from a student that is not normally disrespectful. Even in those situations, you can diffuse the behavior if you have already been consistent and let the kids know that you care. It's fun, but it's about how you connect with them individually. Like I said before, I don't really feel like I have a classroom management system, I just I think it goes back to establishing those important relationships with your kids. They need to know that you're there for them.”
- F** [00:04:26] “I think one of the biggest assets to the success of my classroom management system is that I'm patient. Most of my students find me as an easygoing, carefree person, who shows the kids that I care about them and that I respect them and their space. As a teacher, I want them to respect me and my space and I set the example for that in my classroom. Early on in my teaching career, I was always told to get to control of my classes early because it's much better to be stern in the beginning and not start off slack. I can say probably my first semester of teaching that was the approach that I used it and it seemed to help me. There have been years where beginning stern has been good, but in the end when students see me respect them, their space, and their time and they know that I expect them to do the same for me, that sets the tone for things will go in my classroom. I give them free time that they do whatever they need to do without me looking over their shoulder all the time, that builds that respect and it is a good management skill for me. One thing that is also very vital in helping my management system succeed has been having administration that are very clear cut in supporting me and my colleagues. In other words, you need to have rules and they need to be enforced fairly and consistently.”

- G** [00:01:44] “I in my classroom, I use five simple rules to guide my classes. Number one, ask questions; number two, be positive; number three, follow directions; number four, no excuses and work hard; and number five, treat others how you want to be treated. Those rules are the foundation for my basic classroom management system. In addition, students have our agenda on the board every day with directions for them when they first come in. Once class gets started, I use hand signals to get their attention, to speak, or to be quiet. All students are expected to stay in their seat and keep working until class is over.”
- H** [00:02:08] “I hold my kids to a high standard from day one that kids step foot in my classroom, whether it be on the first day of school or if they transfer in late. I always thoroughly go through all of my classroom rules and expectations, as well as the school policies, countywide policies, and everything within and from there on out. I continually hold the kids accountable for those same expectations and if they mess up, then they already know what's going to happen. They can expect the consequence of their actions from day one to the last day they are with me. By doing that, by being consistent, the kids understand how they need to act and what the expectations are in every situation. If teachers will be consistent all along, most problems will just kind of take care of themselves.”
- I** [00:03:44] “I think a big part of my successful classroom system was just more experience. Once a teacher gains more experience in building relationships with kids, and on setting and maintaining reasonable expectations, you have a better chance of being successful in what you want to accomplish. My number one and only rule on my syllabus is to be respectful. So if you respect me by not talking, when I'm talking, by not being on your phone, when I'm teaching, by not sleeping in my class, if you respect each other, by the way, that you speak to one another by watch the language that you say, watch the derogatory comments that you might make toward somebody, if you respect my classroom, and you pick up after yourself then we can eat, we can have chips, we can have pop and make class a little more interesting and fun. If a student makes a mistake, a bad choice, then the teacher also has to have flexibility in dealing with that situation. Once the recovery is there, then it's a new day, I'm over it and you should be too. We need to move on from this.”
- J** [00:01:54] “I feel like my classroom is very laid back. Because I kind talk about my classroom expectations from the very beginning. I tell my students that I like to work, and I like to work hard, and that I don't like to do anything if I'm not trying to be the best at it. I'm here because I want to teach them the information that they need to know and do it the best way possible. I also tell them that I want to know what they think is the best way for me to do that. I think that by me starting out my class this way, that from the beginning, they see a mutual respect that I have for them. They then in turn have that for me, too. Another thing that I do, and I really think is the biggest contributor to my classroom management is that we share good news in my class at the beginning of class after the warm up activity. We go over the answers to the warm up, and then we share good news

among the students in class. It only takes like between five and 10 minutes and each student is allowed to share whatever good that's happening in their life, whether it's that they got a good grade in class or that they had their favorite pizza for dinner last night. This just shows a personal aspect to each person that helps all of us start caring about what's happening in someone else's life. Somebody will say, 'I'm getting a dog after school' and then during the next day's class, several will usually ask, 'Do you have any pictures of your dog? We want to see pictures of the dog, you know.' So, this very short, simple sharing time creates my class into being more of a community. I have noticed over my last few years of doing this that students care more about each other and then they don't want to act out or give me a hard time because they care about me, they care about the other students, and they know that I care about them."

- K** [00:01:28] "My classroom management system includes consistent processes for the way students turn and work; everything includes a very specific way they're supposed to complete and turn in the activity. I try not to stray from that. I think that really helps with management, so there's no confusion about anything. They know exactly what they're supposed to do and how they're supposed to do it. Then, getting to know them; the respect part is huge. I do a lot to try to get to know my students on a more personal level and give them creative freedom, because that tends to give me some insight into them, so I can connect with them and give them choices with assignments, things like that. I feel like that personal relationship with students is huge. If there's ever an issue with missing assignment, poor behavior choices, or unexplained absences or tardies, I try to talk with the student individually first because sometimes they're just having a rough day or a rough time. I try not to treat them like they're just a child. I try to be on an individual basis with them and respect them like an individual. Of course, I reach out to parents if necessary, but first I want to rely on the relationship I have with my students and address things with them first."
- L** [00:02:55] "Once I have established good relationships with them, then if there are misbehaviors or any type of action that went outside of my classroom expectations, I am typically able to correct that through that relationship that I've established with them. Once the relationship with students is in place, my students do tend to care about how I perceive them. So, if I let them know that I have been disappointed in a certain type of way, then typically they care about that and that forms a consistent pattern. They know I care, so they in turn care about me, my classroom, and the work I require. Consistency matters so much, but you cannot have that without first having the relationship, so I really work on seeing my students as people and asking them questions about their lives and really working that relationship building into our academic context. I think that that's one strength or positive side about being an English teacher, is that it's very easy to work that human aspect into the content just because we're discussing literature and poetry and things that in itself lend discussions in that direction."

Research Question 4

Participant What specific classroom management training have you had and how has it helped you as a teacher?

- A** [00:07:33] “Kagan training that our school district has pushed has helped with classroom management. The point of classroom management is learning how to get all kids engaged. Student engagement activities that lend themselves to classroom management will help, because obviously, if a student's engaged, they're not doing other things. Part of my classroom management is the kinesthetic part for students, such as using whiteboards and markers so that everyone writes and displays an answer at the same time. Giving students a choice in learning and providing hand-on opportunities can help with classroom management.”
- B** [00:04:39] “I've had lots of coursework since I'm a professional student alongside being a teacher. I think the best way that we learn how to manage a classroom is just by doing it. Classroom organization and structural skills I think I learned through literal course instruction, but also through some of my guiding teachers. It's a process, really and I think most of classroom management is learned and through experience. But I am also a big believer in gifts, and I think my gifts are organization and teaching. So, some of ways that I manage my classroom kind of come naturally to me. My management system has developed more through trial and error than actual classroom training or professional development training. So, if I had to pick one, I would have to say experience is the best instructor of classroom management. I've been doing this a long time and I like to think I'm a little bit better at managing my classroom these days than when I was twenty three years-old.”
- C** [00:08:41] “My main classroom management training came from my undergraduate classes. Those are the only actual classes I have had on classroom management and along the way I have learned to be flexible with management expectations. At my school there has not been much professional development time spent on classroom management, so I don't think I've received a lot of formal school classroom management training.”
- D** [00:03:35] “I remember in my master's work taking a course entitled Classroom Management, but I also remember discussing many situations that the course just cannot prepare you for; there is no way to anticipate every situation that's going to occur. In fact, I've had some scenarios throughout my years of teaching that I'm not sure anybody could be prepared for. So that one class covered the basics, the professors tell you to establish your rules. They teach you to give the students input when you're creating those classroom rules as part of having that classroom management system. But there are definitely scenarios that a class like that cannot prepare you for, the rest comes from experience since you can learn to

basically sail a ship in a course, but you're going to have to make it through a storm before you really know what you're capable of. That one classroom management class definitely covered the basics, but you will still get hit you from left field and you will still have to respond; much of management is learn as you go.”

- E** [00:02:23] “I think the school of hard knocks of teaching has been the best classroom management teacher I have had. I know that I went through PBIS, Positive Behavior Intervention and Systems I think is what it was called, and yes, positive interventions are helpful, but they do not work if you don't first know your students. Twenty-nine years I've been through lots of classroom experiences and some things you just cannot be ready for them. Others you can be prepared, but it is all a matter of learning your kids, getting to know them, and the rest comes from classroom experience.”
- F** [00:08:22] “I am certain there probably was at least some course on this when I was in my university studies, but I found that sometimes university studies are often carried out by people who have either not been in the classroom or have been separated from the classroom so long that they don't remember the realities on the classroom that affect all of us. In other words, if you don't use it, you lose it. So, if I got that information, I don't feel like any of that type of training ever really helped me. I think the things that have helped me the most in classroom management training I've had would be on the job experience.”
- G** [00:04:00] “When I was working on my master's degree, I was an intern at a local school and that is really where I learned and developed my classroom management style. I had the opportunity to observe different teachers which gave me the opportunity to see different management styles and how they worked with students. So, I don't remember actually having a course on the topic, but my main classroom management training came from my student teaching experience.”
- H** [00:03:17] “I took a course in my undergrad during my student teaching that was a classroom management class. We dove into a lot of different things. The class was entitled Classroom Management, but that was really just a small part of the class. Much of what we discussed in the course was based on theory and when you come right down to it, you do have to have very, very good classroom management skills because the students will eat you alive otherwise. Most of my real classroom management training was on the job, kind of trial by fire. Sometimes we learn best that way.”
- I** [00:06:04] “I don't think I've had any specific classroom management training; my management style has developed more from experience. As a new teacher, early on, I used the note cards all the time. By about my third year, I didn't have to pull the cards out as much and I spent more time getting to know my kids and building that all-important relationship with them. I moved away from that

strategy on my own, but I don't think I've had any formal training except catching ideas from other teachers, reading blogs, or Twitter article feeds or, you know, things that other teachers mention and ideas from some books.”

- J** [00:03:50] “My biggest classroom management training that I had came in the form of on-the job training during my long term student teaching experience that I had during my final semester of grad school. I was placed to student teach under someone who was going out on maternity leave, which was a really weird situation., but I was committed to doing my best and making it work. So, my cooperating teacher was supposed to be with me in the room for about three weeks and wasn't supposed to leave until like February 6th or something for her maternity leave. Well, that's not how it happened at all. We had our first day together, and it was a really good first day, and then on my second day, early that morning, she called me and she was in labor and on the way to the hospital to have her baby. From that moment on, I was essentially on my own. The school did get the long-term sub in place quickly and she was with me in class, but I carried the class from then on. I really was just thrown into the fire and honestly, I think that, you know, that it that forced me to learn what to do in every situation. You learn by doing it. I was nervous, but that's the way it happened. In the long run, I'm glad that it happened that way because I got hired at my same school before I even finished my student teaching internship. That scary, trial by fire semester, allowed me to prove myself. I was forced to just dive in and I did and came out of it successfully.”
- K** [00:02:41] “I feel like I have not a whole lot of real classroom management training. I mean, you have a class or two here and there in the MAT program and I remember a class on classroom management theories, but I could not tell you a single one of those. So whatever classroom management classes I had, I really don't think they were very helpful in the long run. I just feel like classroom experience has really been the best teacher for practical application. Learning by fire. I do think we should have professional development sessions on classroom management, especially for new teachers, but currently, we don't.”
- L** [00:04:23] “I have done a little bit of professional development on classroom management, for instance, I have completed Kagan training through our district professional development sessions, which is really focused on collaborative structures. So, during that training, there is a great deal of discussion based and collaborative based classroom management structures. Also, I have had some training on gamifying the classroom by making behavior and management in the classroom kind of like a game with rewards. Most of my classroom management training before I started teaching was focused on setting expectations and being consistent in the classroom.”

Research Question 5

Participant **What do you feel makes your classroom management system effective?**

- A** [00:09:35] “Students know that I’m serious because I’m very quick to nip anybody in the bud who is trying to push me, so I really don’t have discipline issues very much. Effectiveness for me goes back to accountability. My class works on an honor system between the student and myself, and among all students. Effective classroom management works when it is a team effort.”
- B** [00:07:51] “This is one of the biggies for my instruction. I would say over the past 10 years, the physical environment of my classroom is different than most because I use tables, and because I change the physical structure of my classroom sometimes every day, sometimes every class. I rearrange the tables, create theater seating, or take away the tables completely depending on the learning activities for that day. Sometimes we have nothing because we’re going to stand and talk and walk around. My kids are immediately engaged when they walk in because they see the arrangement of the physical classroom for the day and immediately, they begin to wonder what class activities we will do that day. Then they’re ready to listen and follow my lead. So, I think the physical environment for my room has a lot to do with management. Everything is very orderly, and everything has its place. This is what is going to happen today, if you work together. Teaching in the lesson part is what should be fun!”
- C** [00:09:50] “I will emphasize that it’s taken a number of years for me to just getting my management system to match my personality. When I started out, I distinctly remember one day when I was student teaching and my classroom teacher wasn’t there one day and I just tried to be an authoritarian. By the end of the class, I think I had seven people sitting in the hall and they were just laughing at me because I’m not really an authoritarian and my attempt at classroom management that day just wasn’t working and I just came off this crazy lady. Over the years I have learned that giving students respect has been much more effective as well as established a personal relationship with them. Both of those go a long way in my favor, and I have learned to not overreact to things. I think those are the biggest keys to success. Organization is something else that I think is really key. When I’m organized, when I have my lessons planned, when I have my classroom ready, and when I’m standing outside the door, my day goes much smoother.”
- D** [00:04:54] “Clear communication makes a classroom management system work well, because once we have a comfortable atmosphere to work in, then the students don’t feel as though they can’t speak up about someone who’s a distraction or about someone who is being particularly annoying that day. So, for me, it is definitely having an appropriate comfort level and creating a positive atmosphere in the classroom. Once that is established and the students feel as

though they can speak up against one another and once they feel like they can speak to me about distracting situations, then I feel like my classroom management system is really working, but you have to develop good relationships with the students and among the class as a whole first for it to work.”

- E** [00:03:00] “I to keep repeating this same point, but I really don’t feel that I have a classroom management system, I have meaningful relationships with my students and the more you know them and they know you, things just continue to get better in the classroom. Part of the relationship development is about being organized. You have to be ready; you have to be prepared. You can't walk in the classroom and not know what you're doing, you have to show the kids you are ready and that you are prepared for them and for the day. Be organized and get to know those kids!”
- F** [00:10:54] “I’m going to say personality with the students. I know I've had very few moments where a student and I didn't have an understanding and get along. There are many more cases where my personality helps connect with students. From that first connection, we can work together, build a relationship, and we can always come back to that. I’ve had students in my classroom with a very short fuse and I have had administrators come to me and ask what I was doing differently for those particular students since they were getting sent out of every other classroom except mine. So, I'd say personality is where my connection with students gets it start.”
- G** [00:04:41] “One thing that I haven't said is that I try to make my students feel as much like an adult as possible instead of a child. I think that shows them that I value them as an individual and that I value their opinions. My students are important to me and that begins to help me form the foundation of a good relationship with each of them and that really helps the overall function of the classroom. I feel like we operate as a family in my classroom. If everybody's doing their part, then things work really well.”
- H** [00:04:24] “I do what I do, I am clear and consistent, and that's just my personality. I cannot try to be anybody else. I am who I am, and I expect what I expect. That's what works for me. If I were to try and be something different, I would probably fail if I were to try somebody else's approach.
- I** [00:07:42] “Students are people. They are young adult people. Going back to building that relationship, when they begin to see that I care about them, about what they have to say, that I'm here for them, for personal, emotional and academic issues and they know that relationship that you are building with them is important, then that’s what makes a classroom work effectively. They also know that what they can get away with, and what they can't get away with. They know that you love them, and they also know you are not going to allow them to get away with things. I expect all of my students to have great maturity skills and great classroom management skills and that I expect a lot of them academically,

so they're going to have to behave because they just don't have time to mess around. That consistency keeps things moving along well too. They know, hey, it's cool to laugh and joke around, but when it's time to get back to business, we need to get back to business.”

- J** [00:05:52] “One other thing that I do and as you can see around my room, I have like all these posters about just being nice, and that mean people suck. That is what I try to teach the students every day they are with me, just be nice, you know? I always just try to remind my students that we're in here to respect each other. If you don't want to respect the other person, quite frankly, I would rather you just keep your mouth shut. It is better to say nothing than to say something negative. We abide by the golden rule in here. Every student that comes into my room knows that that is the way that I feel and they don't want to test it. I start out the year by building that initial relationship with each student and work on getting the initial community built, and then we continue to build on it each day. By me having a good relationship with the students and teaching them to have good relationships with each other and living by the golden rule, the management system in here pretty much takes care of itself from there. During that first week, I do sometimes have a hard time with students wanting to be ridiculous with the good news or something, but I really just kind of try to brush it off and not give them too much attention for being ridiculous. After that, like I said, most of the time, the classroom management just takes care of itself.”
- K** [00:03:19] “I think it's the rapport I have with each one of my students. I definitely have a knack for building rapport with my kids and I try to make my classroom like a home setting. So even if that's the lights or music in here, I try to keep it upbeat, a positive, welcoming atmosphere. I try to build a really good rapport with my kids right from day one and I think I'm good at doing that. So, I feel like that has been the most positive and effective thing for me. Creating a warm classroom environment where students want to come in here and learn every day and building rapport with each of my students; I think that's what I do the best!”
- L** [00:05:55] “I think being very clear in setting my expectations high from the very beginning helps me be successful in what I want my students to accomplish. Setting a high bar for my students and telling them multiple through multiple methods and kind of what my expectations are as far as classroom management, for things like late work or the procedures for needing to leave the classroom or randomly asking a question during class, or things like that. They know my expectations for everything right from the beginning. Also, they simply need to know how to communicate with me when they need help or guidance. Starting things off in the right direction and being consistent with those expectations have helped me be most effective with classroom management. None of that can be accomplished without first building a relationship with your students, as I have discussed before.”

Research Question 6

Participant **How would you characterize the relationship you have with each one of your students?**

- A** [00:10:53] “I’m the mom to my students. I will be the one who says, hey guys, you’re really sunburned, wear your sunscreen! Humor is a major aspect of my relationship with students because that really helps me connect with them. Students also know that I’m involved in school and I’m constantly trying to pull them into being involved as well. If they know I want them involved, then they know that there’s this sort of reciprocal respect. They’re not just there to learn from me. I’m there to help them get engaged in class and in school as well.”
- B** [00:08:38] “Each relationship is different for each student because they are individuals; so, for me, I really try to find some way to connect with every kid. It might be because we both know how to knit, or it might be because the kid plays volleyball and I play volleyball, or it might be because that kid works at the local restaurant and I see them periodically at their place of work. Whatever the case may be, I find some way to connect with every kid and that goes a long way because everybody wants to matter. Everybody wants to think that even though they’re in a room full of people, that there’s something important about just them. So sometimes it’s hard when you have a big class and sometimes you really don’t realize that you have a very strong connection with the kid, but a good relationship with them is so much more important than you may realize. It is very important to find something, some way to connect with every student.”
- C** [00:11:16] “The relationship I try to develop with students first keeps things professional. Again, I have to match relationship development with my personality. The student relationships I develop are professional, but also personable. Having personable relationships with my students make a big difference in my classes. I really do get to know a little bit about my student’s lives and that helps me establish a personal connection with each of them.”
- D** [00:05:48] “I’ve always felt as though I had a really good relationship with my students. We definitely have a happier, more joking relationship in my classroom. I joke with them constantly and we have a lovely back and forth banter and wittiness with one another which lays the foundation for mutual respect. I respect their time in my classroom and they respect me and each other which usually helps everyone work very well together. Occasionally it doesn’t always happen like that, but I think that over my years of teaching, I’ve realized that the relationship that I build with my students which sets the tone for my class is probably the largest element to really having a great classroom for everyone. During my first week with students, I set the precedent, they come in here and we chat, and we talk, and we get to know one another. During those first couple of days of school they realize that they can be comfortable in here, I think that’s what

really gets that atmosphere of comfort started. I want them to look forward to coming to my class and that is a great thing!”

- E** [00:03:55] “I think I compare my relationships with my students to being the same as being a parent. You love them all, but sometimes you like one more than the other because of the current situation or their current choices. Sometimes one needs more attention than another, but at the same time, you're there for all of them. I tell my students, that I am not going to hover, they know where my room is, and they have my email. Most of them take my cell number straight off the syllabus ad they text me. I am very clear that I do my best to always try and make myself available to my kids. So, I tell them, you know I am there for you. I will help you anyway I can, just like a parent would. It's not that I'm playing favorites, but some days this student may need me more than this student, but I love them all and I always try to be there for them.”
- F** [00:12:40] “I try to be upfront about what I'm doing in class. I try to give warnings with students and if I have a problem, I hope that occurs at a point where I've gotten to know the student well enough to kind of pull them aside, talk to them for a little bit and find out if there is something else going on that is affecting them in my classroom. Being upfront and pretty clear cut with students works well for me. If they've got something going on, they know they can speak to me.”
- G** [00:05:26] “Most of my students would describe the relationship I have with each of them is built on trust. Trust is a big part of carrying on, not just in the classroom, but in life. Through the relationships I form with my students, they feel valued and they feel loved. My students respect me, and I respect them. Respect is so important as I build relationships with my students; they need to know that I can be trusted, I trust them and that I best interest at heart.”
- H** [00:05:03] “Good luck is the first thing that comes to mind, I think. I'm consistent and my kids know that I care about them a lot. I think that there's a fine line between teacher and friend and a lot of people will play a part of that one. I am the teacher first and foremost, but I do feel that it is important for my students to know that I care and that I care enough to hold them accountable.”
- I** [00:08:56] “I has always tried to be very open with my students. I don't want them to see me as their friend, but I do want them to see me as a caring, responsible adult. I try to share life experiences that I have had that may be different from experiences that they have had. I think my kids would say that I genuinely want to connect with them, even if it is something as simple as hey, here's some things I've experienced, and it is similar to your situation. That is a big part of getting to know them and them getting to know me as a person. I'm also very loud. I'm very sarcastic. I like to joke around and have a lot of fun. I try to make my classroom as fun as I can. So, I think I have a good professional working relationship with my students, but at the same time, I think there is an

element of a personal relationship in with that because they do know they can come to me if there's an issue or a problem.”

- J** [00:07:03] “I would describe it as more of a personal student-teacher relationship, because each relationship with each student is different, unique. I have always been careful not to seem like a friend to my students, especially since I am really close in age with them in high school. Last year was my first year having juniors and seniors, so I had to be even more careful to keep each relationship personal, but on a professional level. I try to have like a mentor type relationship with them where they see me as someone they can come to for advice. I do genuinely care about them and I want them to be successful, and my professional relationship with them can help facilitate that.”
- K** [00:03:57] “I think with the majority of my students that my relationship with them is really good, even in our current digital learning situation, I still get to know my kids and stay in touch with them in several different ways. I communicate with them by using the remind app. They get my messages and they respond; oftentimes, students’ text me back about assignments or just when something is on their mind. I keep a group open on remind for former students as well, because they always end up contacting me anyway when something is going well or when they are struggling. They know I will always respond to every one of their messages and that I’m always checking on them. These are those students that just really needed me in different ways when they were in my class, or maybe they were going through something really difficult. They are those students who really made a special connection with me or with my class and even though they leave me, they know that I will still keep up with them just to make sure they are ok. I try to keep in contact with all of my kids; them once they're my student, they're always my student, whether they're in my class or not.”
- L** [00:06:58] “I would characterize my relationship with my students as a close relationship, almost like a safe space, one where they feel comfortable and safe in my classroom and with me. I want my students to know that they can come to me with problems or concerns both dealing with academics and outside of our academic content. The relationship I have with my students goes beyond academics; I want them to feel like they can ask me for help with things going on personally. That allows for that sense of comfortability that then transfers over to the academic content I want them to learn.”

Research Question 7

Participant **How does your student-teacher relationship affect your students and their ability to learn in your classroom?**

- A** [00:11:44] “I think that if a student respects you for the knowledge that you have, the content, knowledge that you have, they're much more able learn. If you know your content well and if you're managing the classroom well, they respect what you're doing; they get a lot done and everybody's happy and learning. Everything comes back down to respect.”
- B** [00:10:22] “Kids don't like to learn from people they don't like. All of my favorite teachers were teachers that I liked, and I performed really well in those classes. So, going back to what I said earlier, I think you just have to find a way to connect with every student, even if it has to be a little bit forced. Sometimes as teachers, we have to try a little harder to make those connections just to encourage them, inspire them, and get them engaged. But honestly, who wants to learn from somebody that they don't really like? This is so important, a big part of getting kids to succeed is really trying to relate to them as people. One of the reasons I especially like teaching high school kids and even more so seniors is because they're really more like adults. I can relate to them on more levels so the relationship is even more important and has an even greater impact than it might have on say younger students.”
- C** [00:13:08] “I think it plays a huge part in how students learn, especially right now. With hybrid, distance, and online learning, teachers must remember the importance of the social and emotional connection with students. If students have a conflict with you or if there is not a good relationship in place, then when you are teaching, they're going to tune out. Relationships help motivate students to keep them engaged. If you don't have that relationship with them, they're not going to be engaged and they're not going to learn. So, relationship development has got to take priority. You can't just come in and be the teacher who says, ‘I'm just going to teach, you are going to sit there, and you have to listen to me.’ That is just not going to work, we have to have some kind of relationship to engage students, so they are open to learning.
- D** [00:07:23] “Because they look forward to coming to my class and they know it is not going to be sit in your seat, do your work, listen to what I say, but that it is going to be an engaging conversation, it makes a difference for my students. I remember what it's like to be in high school and it's not always easy; sometimes it's hard and they have hard things going on at home. The more I learn about those things that my students are going through and you recognize the fact that, yes, this child didn't get home till nine from football and then they had four hours of homework after practice, it changes a teacher's perspective . When you take time to understand what a student is going through and you reach out and offer to

help them because you know they're really trying, it changes everything. Students know you care, and that relationship can carry them through some tough situations.”

- E** [00:05:13] “I just think it's everything. When you have a good relationship with students, they know it. Once I had a big old football player who was in foster care for horrible reasons, and he came to me and literally stood in front of me and told me he wanted to be somebody. He wanted to matter, he wanted to make a difference. He felt comfortable coming to me and saying that. He knew that I cared, and he knew that I would help him figure out what he was going through and direct him in the right way. Relationships are just everything for a kid!”
- F** [00:14:26] “If students respect me and I respect them and we build that relationship, they seem to respect what I'm trying to teach. Students know that I teach a class that they have to have to graduate. They also understand that they don't have to like my class, but they do have to allow learning to take place a give everyone a chance to be successful. I do want my students to learn my content, but I am more interested in having them walk out of my classroom and be a better person every day. That's my number one goal. If they learn something in class, that's OK, if they pass my class, then that's a good thing because they are earning credits towards graduation. So, I try to put the onus of learning what I'm teaching on them and at the same time let them know that I am just as much interested in them being good people.”
- G** [00:06:10] “Relationships with students should definitely impact them and the way they learn. Relationships are very important in the classroom, because if the students don't feel like the teacher cares about them and they don't feel like they can trust you, they aren't going to put as much effort into anything they do. Having a good relationship with students helps increase their ability to learn.”
- H** [00:06:00] “Well, when I think in my experience, it is important that the students need to know what they're walking into every day, it's not a question of how the teacher is going to act or how they're going to react to certain things. That takes some pressure off of them because they don't have to deal with the uncertainty of not knowing what's expected of them. They need to know what to expect from me as the teacher. I want my students to feel that way, so then they can just sit back and relax and be themselves. I'm going to be myself and we'll work together. I think that kind of relaxes them and puts them in a safe setting when they can learn and take of the work that needs to be done.”
- I** [00:10:44] “I think that if kids know they're cared about, they're going to try a little harder, even if it's with something they're not interested in, they know you care about them and they care about you and making you happy by meeting your expectations. So, because they know that I care about them, and because they know that American literature is important to me, they want to participate in class. They want to do things that are going to make me happy. So, I think that that

really helps. If you have a teacher that's strict all the time and doesn't really care about the kids, it's not really going to get them anywhere and they are not going to really succeed in their classroom. I'm a big proponent of the growth mindset. My students may not be able to do something yet, but we'll get there. I am interested in their success. Whether they really get what I am trying to teach them in a text or not is really not that important to me, as long as they get that there's a life lesson in the lessons that I teach. They are still learning something that's going to help them later on in life.”

- J** [00:08:30] “I received a letter from a girl explaining that she was taking AP Environmental Science because she wanted to take another AP for the GPA and class rank boost. She indicated that she really didn't care about Environmental Science at all and didn't even have a stance on climate change or anything like that. Throughout her time with me in that particular course, she became much more open minded and learned the material and how relevant it was to the way that we live today. She told me later that this class changed her outlook on it. I think that a lot of times, if you can develop that solid relationship with students then you can get them more engaged in the content you cover. Once they know that they are important to you, they will buy in to your content whether it is something that really interests them or not. I have seen things work that way in my class many times. If I have a good relationship established with a student, they will work much harder in my class most of the time.”
- K** [00:04:44] “I think the relationship I have with my students is really, really helpful. Extremely helpful, because especially when they like you and they care about you, and they know that I like them and care about them, they don't want to disappoint you. So, when a good, solid relationship is in place, they have more motivation. Plus, they know they can come to you if they are having a rough day; they just feel more comfortable talking to you about pretty much everything. They can explain things to you, sometimes they want advice, and sometimes they just need you to listen. Maybe I can help them either work through the situation or figure out a way for them to still be successful, even in the midst of their bad days. So I think the relationship is critical because it helps students feel like they can come to me whenever they need to.”
- L** [00:08:11] “I definitely think that good relationships between a student and his teacher affects them directly to a point where it allows them to learn much more effectively than if we did not have a good relationship. I think that because we've established that layer of trust that they now are more invested into what I am teaching and what I want for them to accomplish. Even if it was nothing that they had an interest in before, because we have added that layer of trust and they respect me, when I introduce something to them that I say is interesting and very important for them to learn, they're just automatically going to listen to me more. They are not necessarily going to learn everything perfectly and do everything well, but they will listen to me more than if they did not have that established trust or layer of respect already established. So, I definitely think that students will not

learn from you as effectively as they want to if they trust you, respect you, and care about you and know that the same is in place from you, the teacher.”

Research Question 8

Participant What classroom measures do you use to encourage student self-responsibility for behavior and learning?

- A** [00:13:05] “Accountability is the foundation of my classroom management. I try and make them self-sufficient in terms of knowing what the expectations are. Part of it is teacher organization, as long as I know what we're supposed to be doing, then I can clearly communicate expectations to them. That goes back to my knowing the content, planning ahead, and knowing what I'm doing. I think three quarters of that battle is the teacher being on his or her game for students to be independent or work toward independence academically and behaviorally.”
- B** [00:12:38] “Sometimes this doesn't work in my favor, but for the most part, I'm brutally honest with my students and with myself. I'm always willing to apologize for something that I do wrong. I'm always willing to humble myself and eat my own mistakes. I tell my students if I don't know something, I'm not going to pretend to know the answer. If I don't know, I'm smart enough to know that I can go find out. I think if you're really honest with kids, they respect that. I also think that if you talk to kids on their level and if you're fair, that they respond well to that. I have found over and over and over again that kids really respect me because I'm willing to humble myself. When I tell a kid, gosh, I am so sorry I made a mistake, they respect you for that instead of that teacher who's always right or the teacher that pretends to know everything. You know, sometimes you have to be yourself and I'm ok doing that. When we model our own expectation for our responsibility, behavior, and learning, students respect that.”
- C** [00:15:57] “At the beginning of the year, I establish classroom expectations and classroom norms. I also distribute my syllabus and then discuss with the students what kind of learning environment they think is best. We make a list of things and then turn them into our classroom management rules for the year. Students are more likely to be responsible for their behavior and learning in a let's work together atmosphere, allowing them to build on their strengths. I also address my students as writers in my class instead of calling them my students. That sets the expectations high that I am treating them as young adults.”
- D** [00:08:02] “So once you realize what these students go through and you respect that and them and you say, hey, I know that you're really tired and I know that you've had a hard day, but I need you to pay attention and work with me, you are respecting one another. I really think that that's one of the greatest things I've learned in all of my years of teaching to have students see and show respect for

one another, it makes that classroom atmosphere so great. Having a good relationship with the teacher is important, but you cannot stop there, you need to extend that and help develop respect between students, so they have good relationships with each other. These relationships factor in and it makes a huge difference in how the year will go.

- E** [00:06:10] “Guidelines are really all that students need. You did not turn this assignment in on time, so I took points off. If there's a special situation, something else going on that I do not know about, let me know. I remind my kids all the time, you know I love you, but these are my guidelines, these are my expectations, so if you mess up there are repercussions. Consistent guidelines are key.”
- F** [00:15:56] “I like to teach using Project Based Learning strategies. I also try and give students a choice in some activities we do in class. I also like to give them projects that require them to work independently away from me, that give them time away from my classroom website, too. Sometimes I allow students to work in other areas of the campus during class time. I give them that trust and that opportunity to work independently or within a group and we use the structure of the project within their work as well.”
- G** [00:06:45] “One thing that I have repeatedly started doing is that I no longer accept any late homework. At beginning of the year, the students hate that, of course, but as time goes by in the semester, it teaches them to set deadlines and stick to them which promotes self-responsibility. Just having this one practice in place reminds them that they are accountable for their work and for being a being a young adult and for making things happen the way they want them to. So, at the beginning of the semester, I lay that foundation about expectations and then remain consistent with my strategies throughout the semester. That helps to keep my students accountable and teach them self-responsibility.”
- H** [00:06:51] “Again, it goes to the expectations, depending on what grade a student is in, my expectations for them would change. I'm not going to ask a senior who's been in a school for 4 years and who's getting ready to go out on her own into the real world, to have the same responsibilities of incoming freshmen who just came out and doesn't yet know how the high school setting works. As a teacher, I have to judge when to be or not be more lenient, but I really have to explain those classroom expectations from the get-go and then be consistent. Depending on the level of responsibility a student demonstrates, the consequences could change, because otherwise they're going to continue to keep doing the same thing over and over. As a teacher, you have to adjust your expectations based on what you already know.”
- I** [00:12:33] “I have policies in place that state that if assignments are not turned in on time the first day, they're going to lose 10 points, a second day, 20 points, the third day, 30 points and then I'm not taking the assignment at all. They have to do

their stuff in a timely fashion and get it things turned in on time. I also understand that this idea of a flipped classroom is great in theory. Most of my kids are not going to go home, read a chapter and then come in ready to discuss everything in detail; it's just not going to happen. So, I cover everything I want to in detail in my classroom. I get my kids engaged in fun, interactive project activities so that they're interested in what we're doing. They might not be really good at writing, but they're awesome in art. Using a great deal of choice-based learning helps cover content in detail and keep kids really engaged and learning."

- J** [00:09:39] "Students have to be held accountable for their choice both behaviorally and academically, so, I think we need to build off of the relationship that you have with them. If you have that good working relationship with each one of your students, they get to a point where they don't want me to be disappointed in whatever grade they're making or decisions that they make. I speak to my students directly; I write a note on their tests that they just failed. Such as, I know you can do better than this. Why did this happen? I'm not saying it as a rhetorical question. I want them to really tell me why it happened, what was going on that made them earn such a poor grade. They know that that's going to happen if they do more poorly than I think they should have done on any assignment, especially a test. If I know what is going on, such as they stayed around to hang out after the game or they have been allowing friends or significant others distract them, then I may say, you didn't do so good and it's probably because this happened, right? Probably because you were back there hanging out during class instead of being focused on what you're supposed to be doing, don't you think? So, I think that they know that I'm going to hold them accountable and many times they want to avoid the awkward conversations and they just try a little harder or a little sooner. They perform at a higher level and try to keep themselves accountable instead of having that awkward conversation with me because they know it is coming."
- K** [00:05:37] "I depend a lot on the relationship I have with my students. Because I build that relationship and depend on it a great deal, I try not to treat them like just children. So, I expect them to act like they're not just children. I feel like if I address them as young adults, then then they usually rise to the occasion. If I just treat them like they're little kids that don't know any better, that's usually how they respond. I expect them to act like responsible adults in my class, so that I how I treat them, and they usually rise to meet my expectations."
- L** [00:09:39] "Part of developing self-responsibility in your students involves bringing in real world application and talking about the connections to the content that I'm teaching. Things that they're doing in high school can relate to the real world and those connections to what they are learning is important. Making these connections can be a huge extrinsic motivator for them. The additional piece of helping students become more self-responsible to make good independent choices, goes back again to the relationship. I think they can be motivated to do well because they care about how I receive them and how I expect their very best

in all areas. That knowledge is also an extrinsic motivator. When you set those high expectations right from the start, they know they have to push themselves to meet them and they want to. Show them what they are working for in the future and then help them hold themselves accountable for getting there.”

Research Question 9

Participant How could a student-teacher relationship impact student behavior and learning choices in the classroom?

- A** [00:14:37] “I have to go back to the R word – students need to respect you. When respect is in place; they don't want to let you down. Once they respect you, they want to please you. Obviously when I respect my students, I want to do the best for them as well. The teacher should model respect, display their best examples of professionalism and the students will follow.”
- B** [00:14:35] “Sometimes we impact a student way more than we realize. I've had students that come back to me years later and say, you know what, you so inspired me and now I'm doing this and I'm thinking, I can't even remember your last name. We should put as much effort, and as much time as we can into every individual kid, but somebody will still get more out of a relationship than somebody else. But if you model, good behavior, good learning, and fairness and all those good things that we do in addition to teaching our content, then even if you don't have an incredibly close connection to one kid or another, I think that potentially they can still benefit from the connection they do have with us. Maybe even that kid that that you didn't realize was so inspired by you outperforms all of the other kids.”
- C** [00:16:56] “Students could basically just become apathetic when there is a lack of personal relationship between them and their teacher. Even when they do have a relationship, a connection with the teacher, there will still be days where they don't want to deal with this person or with the education system in general. It's just the reality, relationships need to be in place so hopefully students will learn, hopefully they will do their assignments, and their grades will not suffer.”
- D** [00:10:19] “Positivity is going to create a positive result. So, if you develop a positive relationship with your students, you're going to have a better opportunity to get that positive behavior. Even if behavior is not good one day, if you have that positive relationship first, you can say, hey, I really need you to do this today, just help me out, you help me out, I'll help you out; demonstrate that mutual respect even when students are having an off day. But it definitely begins by having that positive relationship with the students. That's where it starts, and it is going to have a positive impact on their learning. Having that positive relationship also allows you to give them a little more constructive criticism. That positive

relationship enables you to be honest with them about their behavior and about their learning. They are able to smile back, then they're a little more receptive to your criticism as well.”

- E** [00:06:40] “I can give us specific examples like the young man who got in trouble with me one time. Another student stood up and told him that students did not act that way in Mrs. Martin’s class, essentially, he told him we just don’t act like that in here. Essentially good relationships with teachers are important, but good relationships between students are essential as well. Students will help hold each other accountable when they know the teacher really cares.”
- F** [00:17:28] “I think this really gets right to the heart of good teaching or bad teaching. You can be one of the best at Mathematics when the best at writing or the best of any good discipline out there, and yet if you don't have the same kind of passionate relationship with the student, they're not going to buy into what you do and care about what you're teaching. I think that's important. We can see through history that building a relationship with people is almost more important than the message you're giving. Teaching is a great responsibility, but for me, I do not care as much about how much of my content that students learn; I care more about the fact that they need to learn to be good people. I am trying to teach my students to be nice, to be a good person. I think that's a very important thing.”
- G** [00:08:02] “Having a good relationship with students can both improve good behavior and choice and discourage bad choices. I can pretty much guarantee that if you do not take the time to develop relationships with your students, you are not going to be as impactful as a teacher. You are not going to have that opportunity to help kids make good choices and learn everything they can. Without that relationship, students will be more likely to make bad choices and the worst part is they won’t care because they don’t think the teacher cares either.”
- H** [00:08:14] “If they understand how the classroom works and they understand how the teacher is going to respond to their actions, no matter what the scenario is, then the student is set up to not have to test the waters right now. Students strive for that structure, and so when there's not a structure, they're going to see how much they can get away with. In the first couple of days, the first week, if you're not as consistent as you should be, can be very grueling because all the kids want to know where the limits are. They want to know the expectations and if I am going to be consistent every time every day. The more we can be consistent up from, the better off our relationship will be with our students and the more inviting our classroom environment will be.”
- I** [00:14:30] “I think having a good relationship with your students in place can make or break a classroom. With a good relationship, you are going to have students that want to participate, want to make you happy and want to do better because they're interested in what you're doing in class. They care about you and know that you care about them. If you don’t have that relationship in place, I

think not having it, you're going to have kids that shut down, tune you out, and just don't care. To some students, the content I teach is boring. But I try to approach those less than exciting lessons, with hey, just stick with the guys, trust me, because you will like it later on. So I think as long as use that relationship and build on it each day, with look at how fun this could be, look at what we can do with this, look at the fun things that we're going to do because of this, it will make a big difference. And I think, again, building on that relationship with anytime you can tie what they are learning back into something that they're into makes learning much more fun and much more real to them. In every situation, make those connections with them."

- J** [00:11:15] "I think that the biggest factor in how students perform in my classroom, is either the relationship I have with them, or the lack of a relationship. So just how important is having good relationships with my students in my classroom? If I had to rank it on a scale of one to ten, I would say a ten, because especially with teaching biology, an EOC course, one where all teachers have to cover the exact same content I've seen a biology teacher that wants to build those relationships and how their scores turn out and then I have seen those teachers who don't put the effort in to getting to know their students and establishing that relationship and I see how poorly their scores turn out. So basically, two teachers can cover the exact same material and get totally different results. If your students don't think that their teacher likes them, they don't care, they don't put forth effort, they don't want to learn."
- K** [00:06:36] "I think that relationship has a huge impact. When I see other teachers or hear about other teachers that the kids don't connect with or that they feel I like a teacher just does not like them, then they're not motivated to do the work, they dread going to that teacher's class and they will act out just because they're not interested and they don't respect the teacher. If students feel like a teacher doesn't respect them or care about them, then they're just going to act accordingly. They're not going to try and meet that teacher's expectations. If there is no relationship with a student and they think you don't like them, then they're just going to do what they want and usually it will end in disruptions."
- L** [00:11:21] "If the relationship with a student is in place, a good relationship, they will be excited to go to your class every day and they're excited to go to school in general. The relationship is so important, it gives them a purpose in their school day. If those relationships are not there, you never will never know what is going on in that student's life. I've had students tell me that my classroom is the reason that they are excited to go to school. So not having that relationship with them in the classroom is just detrimental to a student's success. I know that some teachers might not always see the value of it, especially in secondary education, which is what I teach. Sometimes it may seem that academic content is so much more important, but I firmly believe that you have to develop the relationship first for the academics to follow. That can change not just their entire day, but their entire life trajectory."

*Research Question 10***Participant** **When student misbehavior creates a class disruption, how do you respond?**

- A** [00:15:18] “I admit I'll try and deflect the behavioral incident, first infusing a little humor like ok, you've had your time. Now let's get back to work. I love a sense of humor, but there's a time and a place and in the classroom, we have a job to do. I also remind students when they want to try and get class discussions off topic, that it's not just I have a job to do, but they have jobs to do as well, because they have exams and things to prep for so those jobs must take priority. Everybody has to work together to get things done. It all goes back to the respect issue; build a positive classroom environment and the students form a group, a family, a team. This way the teacher is not always the one who has to pull anybody back from the edge of any classroom management issues. Many times, the other students will step in and do the same. So sometimes the teacher doesn't have to hold a student accountable for trying to create a class disruption, the other students will do it for you when you have spent time developing that community, group, team feeling in the classroom.”
- B** [00:16:39] “It's really hard, but after all these years, I have learned not to respond. It's really tough. It is. It's very hard when you're a younger teacher and you're still, you know, kind of pie-eyed and just not as experienced. But after all these years when I have somebody that just really digs their heels in with me, you know, I'm just kind of neutral, monotone and say, your behavior has broken a rule, you can apologize and we can forget about it or you can leave my classroom. I'm just kind of matter of fact, and I try not to get emotional. Many times the kids are teenagers, so they get emotional. What I have found is that either right away or maybe the next day, they come back the next day and apologize for their actions. I tell them it's all good and I don't hold grudges and that allows us to move on.”
- C** [00:18:04] “I try and address misbehaviors in a calm, quick way. Sometimes students just need attention, and giving them a quick direction, like refocusing them is all that it takes. Sometimes I say something like, ‘Let's get back to this,’ or ‘Could you please turn around?’ or ‘Could you please stop talking?’ Quickly and calmly, I do not allow a great deal of time to be taken up by misbehaviors.”
- D** [00:11:38] “ Teachers always perfect the teacher look, so you definitely start with the look. If you have a that strong relationship in place, they will know you have respect for them, but you may not respect their current behavior choices. Students can help hold each other accountable too. When they see the teacher look, they can help correct someone’s behavior and get them back on track. Sometimes the look or a little simple redirection does not correct the situation, so you may have

to say, 'Let's go out in the hallway we'll have a little conversation about this.' Many times, there is something else going on. Once you find out what is really going on you can deal with the source of the behavior problem."

- E** [00:07:30] "There will be times that you just have to go back to the rules of your classroom or the school rules. Bad behavior decisions are going to happen, these are still kids we are talking about here, even the big ones, or the ones that think they are grown. My relationship with them comes first, but when they mess up, they mess up. You redirect them to the rules they have broken, here is the consequence of that and then we move on because our relationship is more than just what happens today or tomorrow. Once you are my kid, you are my kid for life!"
- F** [00:18:56] "It really depends on what kind of disruption it is. If it's a low-level disruption, I can sometimes just give the student a look or tap on their desk in an attempt to communicate nonverbally or in a way that doesn't single them out from the crowd. Usually that works and I can bring class back into focus with the task at hand. If it's a mid-level offense, that will normally require a little more attention. If I've had the chance to be with my students and build a relationship with them, then it is usually productive to ask them to step out into the hall and discuss the root of the issue. I've also found that a big part in how I handle disruptions comes back to the fact that I've admitted more than once to my students that I was wrong, whether it was something I screwed up in the lesson or something that I did wrong. They see how I handle those situations and when necessary they have seen me apologize to students. I think that helps me continue to build a relationship with them. They can see that I'm fallible, too. When they see your human side, disruptions usually decrease, or at least they have in my experience."
- G** [00:08:29] "when disruptions occur, my response depends on the level of the disruption. If it's a major disruption, that could or has interrupted class, I usually send them out in the hallway, so I have to have a conversation with that particular student and not in front of the entire class. I feel like that helps with reducing the level of embarrassment for the student. I also know that if a student is acting out, sometimes it is done just for the sake of getting attention and I don't want that to be a reinforcer. If it's a small misbehavior and I don't feel like it warrants sending them out into the hallway, then I usually go over to their desk quietly to redirect them and make sure they are not taking attention away from the learning environment."
- H** [00:09:39] "First off, my response depends on how many times this disruption has happened because there's got to be levels. You can have the same consequence for repeated actions as well. I think that if it's an immediate threat to the learning environment, you have to remove that student for the betterment of the other students. If it's something that can be controlled with a very quick short look or short communication between the student and teacher, whether it be

verbal or nonverbal, then I think you should move as quickly as possible to handle the situation quietly. But in my experience, you know, you've got to clearly communicate with the kids because sometimes if kids don't understand what they are actually doing or the consequences their actions might create, then that can make the situation worse. If your expectations are clear and you have communicated with them, then disruptions should be minimal because they know the consequences.”

- I** [00:17:12] “It really depends on what the misbehavior is and who the offender is. In general, I would walk near their desk, get that close proximity to them, and attempt to redirect them into what they need to be working on. I also try to ask questions that will not be offensive but at the same time, get them to start paying attention. If the student seems extremely agitated or if it is a repeat offender, then I will usually say, hey, do you need to take a couple minutes, take a short walk down the hallway, go get a drink of water, and get back so you can get back on track and get your work done. I spent most of my time and effort in making frequent, memorable moments in class and trying to make my lessons as fun and as interesting as I can. If I relate well with my kids and keep my lessons engaging, then the kids are going to listen, pay attention, and you are just not going to have those issues.”
- J** [00:12:27] “I always try to talk to each kid individually when a disruption happens. During my first year of teaching, that was hard for me, because disruptions were something that I would address in front of the whole class. I found out the hard way that that would sometimes make each situation or disruption worse. Sometimes the whole point behind a student’s disruption is that they want attention, so I've learned over time to talk to them individually, which can be hard because you don't always have the opportunity to do that. As much as I can, I try to just talk to them privately, ask them to speak with me after class, or I address the situation online. My goal is always to get to the bottom of things, you know, why are you making class harder for you and for me? My job is to teach you, your job is to learn, and those jobs are hard enough without these additional issues. When I am upfront with them, I have found that they are honest with me. I always go back to focusing on the relationship with that particular student. Start with the relationship; it is a game changer.”
- K** [00:07:27] “If disruptions become an issue, I try to get the rest of the class to move on first, and then I pull that kid out because I don't want to draw everyone's attention to that kid, for several reasons. I do not want to embarrass them unless so I'll pull them out or have them go wait in a hallway for a second and then I will go out and I talk to them one on one. Maybe they're having a bad day, or there's some drama with another kid in class that I don't know about, so it's helpful for me to speak with them one on one and learn these types of things. Once we are having a quiet conversation in the hallway, I can address them individually. I don't want to make assumptions, ever. I always want to give the student a chance to explain to me what's going on, and then we can try and work through the

situation and figure out what needs to be done to improve the situation. Do I need to move them to another part of the classroom so they can work better? Do I need to allow them to sit alone today? Whatever the situation is, we need to find a way to work through it from there. If it's serious enough, then I'll reach out to the parent if I think the parent needs to be in the current situation. Usually if it's just like the first disruption or a weird fluke with them because this is coming from a normally well-behaved student, then I'll just address it individually and help them move on. My goal is to get them back in class and help them move on from that situation.”

- L** [00:12:43] “I try to maintain composure at all costs. I never call the student out in front of the rest of the room. I pull them aside and talk to them about the situation and handle that privately. I never want to embarrass the student, that can cause long term adverse effects to the student. I also do want to let other students know how each situation was handled. Each student deserves my respect and I expect that in return. Part of developing and building on that respect is handling every situation privately. Hopefully by treating students with respect and handling situations privately, that will correct the problem both in the present and in the future. I never want to call a student down, never let the rest of the class see what happened when we stepped out in the hallway, or ever think that the disruption was actually successful. Class content and activities will move on and I don't want to allow someone's words or actions to disrupt someone else's learning experience or make someone feel uncomfortable in my class.”

APPENDIX H: FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSION TOPICS

Focus Group Protocol:

Date:

Place:

Participants involved:

Facilitator:

Position of Participants:

Script: “Thank you for meeting with me today and for participating in my research study. All of you are considered co-researchers in this study. Even though we have all met individually, let me introduce myself again. My name is Amanda L. Vipperman and I am a secondary school teacher in a coastal South Carolina public school, and I am currently a doctoral student at Liberty University. I am conducting research on how secondary school teachers develop positive relationships with their students and the resulting influence on improving classroom management, decreasing class disruptions, and encouraging academic achievement. For the purpose of this study, classroom management will be generally defined as a variety of skills and techniques that teachers use to keep students safe, organized, focused, engaged, on task, and academically productive. I will be asking you the same questions regarding classroom management and student-teacher relationships that were used during our interview session so we may engage in a collegial discussion on the topic. I ask that you be honest in your answers and during our discussion. I want you to really think about your experience in this area, and do not worry about what you think I may want to hear or that your opinion differs from somebody else.”

“At this point, all of you have signed the consent forms, but I wanted to you give you a chance to ask me any questions you may have regarding the study or the focus group. I also want to make sure that all of you are still willing to take part in this study. Do you have any questions about the study? Is everyone still interested in participating in this study? If at any time you wish to no longer continue with the study, you can let me know.”

“I will be recording our focus group discussion both with audio and visual equipment. These cards have your pseudonym on them. Please take yours and place your card in front of you. I ask that you protect confidentiality of others in the focus group by referring to each other by their pseudonym on the cards and to also refrain from naming your school or another school by the real name. There are no right or wrong answers to these questions. If you don’t want to answer or comment, you can simply say that you wish to skip that question. Please think about the questions a few moments before offering your response. I will be trying to clarify your answers along the way. I may also ask follow-up questions once you have given your answer. Your answers are confidential. Before I begin asking research questions, do you have any questions for me?”

“Now, I would like you to take a few moments to think about your experiences regarding classroom management and student-teacher relationships. Let’s begin.”

Focus Group Discussion Topics

1. Please introduce yourself – tell me what degrees you hold, how long you have been teaching, and what grade(s) you are currently teaching.
2. How do you define a classroom management system?
3. Briefly describe your classroom management system including strategies, skills, and techniques that you use in your classroom consistently.
4. What specific classroom management training have you had and how has it helped you as a teacher?
5. What do you feel makes your classroom management system effective?
6. How would you characterize the relationship you have with each one of your students?
7. How does your student-teacher relationship affect your students and their ability to learn in your classroom?
8. What classroom measures do you use to encourage student self-responsibility for behavior and learning?
9. How could a student-teacher relationship impact student behavior and learning choices in the classroom?
10. When student misbehavior creates a class disruption, how do you respond?

End of Focus Group Script:

“That is all of the questions I have. Thank you again for participating and helping me conduct my research. I look forward to your responses on the questionnaire.”

APPENDIX I: QUESTIONNAIRE

Date:

Email:

Dear Participant,

Thank you very much for participating in the interview and / or focus group for my study. I now request that you complete a questionnaire. This will be the final source of documentation that I use for my study, and I would appreciate your time and responses. Attached to this email, you will find the questionnaire which is only 10 questions. You may choose to print out the questionnaire and respond in pen or pencil on a separate sheet of paper or type in your responses electronically. If you hand write your responses, please let me know once you have completed the questionnaire by contacting me via email or phone. I can either pick up your questionnaire or you can mail it to me. If you complete it electronically, please just email me back the completed questionnaire. Your responses do not have a specific length requirement. All that I ask is that you be thoughtful and thorough with each response. Please do not answer with what you think I want to hear; I sincerely want your honest responses. As always, your responses will remain confidential and will be protected during and after the study. Thank you again for participating in my study. I appreciate your time and effort, and I look forward to sharing the results of my research with you.

Sincerely,

Amanda L. Vipperman, M. Ed.
Doctoral Student at Liberty University



Questionnaire

1. If you have seen a rise in the number of students who create classroom disruptions, how has this impacted your classroom management?
2. For this study, classroom management will be generally defined as a wide variety of strategies, skills, and techniques that teachers use to keep students safe, orderly, organized, focused, attentive, on task, and actively learning in the classroom. Describe your classroom management style, strategies, and techniques.
3. On a scale of 1 to 10, with 10 being the highest and 1 being the lowest, how would you rate your classroom management skills and relationship skills with current students and why?
4. On a scale of 1 to 10, with 10 being the highest and 1 being the lowest, how would you rate your classroom management skills and behavioral support with students who consistently create classroom disruptions and why?
5. What type of support do you or does your school provide for teachers to improve relationship development and classroom environment?
6. How do you ensure that all students in your classroom feel supported?
7. What kind of training would you like to have for improving classroom management? If you feel like you have had adequate training for effective classroom management, what kind of training have you had?
8. Do you think your administration and school district will offer teachers in your area more classroom management training and support? Why or why not?
9. What else do you think would be important for me to know about student-teacher relationship development and classroom management?

10. Other than focusing on positive student-teacher relationships, what other component(s) of classroom management do you feel needs improvement?