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Academic Practices to Gain and Maintain Student-Teacher Connectedness and Classroom Behavioral Management, Related to Educator Demographics

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Classroom Behavioral Management, Related to Educator Demographics

by

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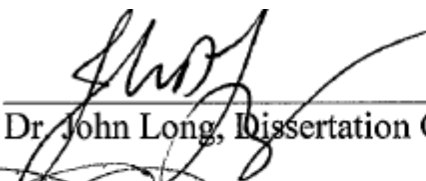
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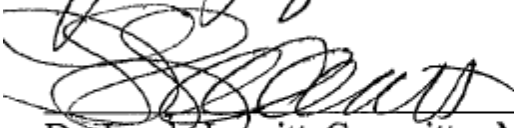
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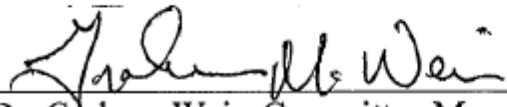
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Declaration of Originality

I do hereby declare and attest to the fact that this is an original study based solely upon my own scholarly work here at Lindenwood University and that I have not submitted it for any other college or university course or degree here or elsewhere.

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Acknowledgements

Abstract

Connectedness and classroom management has been defined as the ability to relate to students and keep order and maintain successful relationships with individuals. This qualitative study utilized surveys, questionnaires, interviews, and observations to examine the best practices implemented by educators to develop and maintain connections with students based upon the age, gender, ethnicity, and experience of a studied educator. The research investigated how classroom management positively and/or negatively affected the educator, students, and classroom environment, with respect to connectedness, as evidenced by behaviors such as off-task, aggressive, and non-academically productive behaviors. The research also examined how a teacher's intonation and delivery method affected behavioral management, as measured by on-task, academically productive, and nonaggressive behaviors. The research examined what was the self-perception of participants of effectiveness in the classroom, as related to the recorded characteristics of age, gender, ethnicity, and experience level. The research focused upon 12 educators in a suburban district and observed the interactions and practices throughout an academic school year. Classroom observations were conducted and results triangulated to determine how connectedness and classroom management was achieved in the classrooms of teachers who represented various ages, genders, ethnicities, and experience levels. The findings concluded that age and experience were crucial in the development and maintenance of connectedness and classroom management. Another finding was the practice in which African American and Caucasian teachers approached connectedness and classroom management varied.

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Chapter One: Introduction

In 2015, more was known about educating students and the benefits of formulating a sense of connectedness than ever before. Research showed that an educator's or teacher's actions in the classroom had twice the impact on student achievement as did school policies regarding curriculum, assessment, staff collegiality, and community involvement (Marzano, 2003). Subsequently, other researchers (Emmer, Sanford, Evertson, Clements, & Martin, 1981; Evertson, Emmer, & Worsham, 2003) identified important components of classroom behavioral management, including beginning the school year with methods for the teacher to develop and continue a connectedness with each student, as well as a positive emphasis on management.

One method educators used to place a positive emphasis on management was to arrange the learning environment in a system structurally conducive to effective classroom behavioral management. Equally important was the identification and implementation of classroom expectations, operational procedures, and continued student-teacher connectedness (Evertson et al., 2003). Throughout this research, the terms *educator* and *teacher* were used interchangeably and respectively.

Evolutionary Views of Student Connectedness

The educational views of student-teacher connectedness and classroom behavioral management evolved over the 100 years previous to this writing. Early in American history, students sat in wooden benches and desks, often of varying ages, awaiting the informational delivery from their female teachers, if they were female. However, the male students were typically educated by male teachers (Blackwell Museum, 2004).

In the early 1900s, female teachers wore long skirts with petticoats and blouses with puffy sleeves. Sometimes they wore jackets matching the skirts. They wore stockings and dark, ankle high lace-up shoes to complete the outfit. The male teachers wore suits with ties and dark, ankle high lace-up shoes with dress socks to match (Blackwell Museum, 2004).

The older children sat in wooden desks, while the younger children sat on benches. This classroom of often 60 or more students was tiered, which allowed the teacher the ability to see and interact with all of the students. The benches and desks were arranged in basic rows, and the classroom environment was simplistic. The students utilized chalk and slated tablets to complete and display their work. Students were focused on learning, and teachers were viewed as authoritative figures, serving as providers of educational knowledge (Blackwell Museum, 2004).

Building and Developing Student-Teacher Connectedness

The focus of building and developing relationships, or teacher-student connectedness, was not a primary concern (Pianta, 1999). Just as the exterior of the individual learning environment evolved, so did the views and importance placed upon formulating and forging effective connectedness between students and teachers. The educational world transformed in the area of classroom behavioral management within the classroom. Children in one-room schools were expected to behave, be productive and remain silent while they worked, unless they were reciting lessons, whereas students at the time of Blackwell Museum' writings were encouraged to interact with classmates and the classroom teacher (Blackwell Museum, 2004). Students who chose not to adhere to

the predetermined classroom expectations were punished as the teacher deemed appropriate.

As this researcher was growing up, she often knew parents of disciplined students often corrected the student once they returned home, due to the feeling of embarrassment placed upon the individual families. Students of the past lacked the opportunity to assist in the decisions associated with their educational process. The teacher was the sole determinant of the educational aspirations within the classroom and educational institution.

As of this writing, some teachers and students faced challenges that inhibited the continuity of the educational process. One of the classroom teacher's most important jobs was managing the classroom effectively (Marzano, 2003). There were some educators who developed and implemented effective strategies that assisted in maintaining behavioral management. The aspect of behaviorally managing a classroom caused concern for many educators (Miller, 2003). The art of identifying, developing, and implementing effective practices for behavioral management was a paramount action, to assist in ongoing academic achievement. Yet, some educators displayed a lack of effective practices focusing upon behavioral management. A common concern among beginning teachers was that they lacked the skills to address disruptive behavior (Jones & Jones, 2007; Oliver & Reschly, 2007). The researcher believed therefore, educators benefitted from effective strategies that assisted in developing methods for teacher-student connectedness and behavioral management.

Classroom behavioral management remained an important concern among many new teachers, and effectively managing the classroom was difficult for new teachers who

lacked sufficient training and were assigned to classes with a large percentage of at-risk students (Oliver & Reschly, 2007). Many pre-service teachers considered the amount of instruction they received on the topic to be insufficient. What instruction the pre-service teachers did receive, they tended to see as overly abstract or too divorced from a realistic classroom setting (Siebert, 2005).

As of this writing, many school districts were investigating, piloting, and adopting various behavioral initiative programs that strengthened behavioral awareness and strove to eradicate undesirable classroom and school behavior (Cawelti & Protheroe, 2001). Students were encouraged to assume ownership in their learning process. This internalized ownership and often developed into pride and confidence while educational and academic endeavors were pursued and achieved. Students who had the opportunity to pursue their academic achievements may have gained a stronger sense of confidence and self-reliance (Bandura, 1997).

A primary reason that caused some educators to abandon the field of education was the inability to manage various student behaviors. According to a 2006 survey of Pre-K through 12th grade teachers conducted by the American Psychological Association (APA), teachers identified help with classroom management and instructional skills as their top need (as cited in Brophy, 2006). Educators were challenged with the task of successfully introducing and garnering academic success. The focus on educating the student seemed to have shifted to monitoring, policing, and extinguishing undesirable and detrimental behaviors (Brophy, 2006). Yet, this was possible with the ability to productively manage a classroom environment. Education and the expectations of students evolved throughout the years. A student's ability to comprehend and interact

with classroom instructors as well as peers became a focus for many school districts (Thijs & Koomen, 2008). The state mandated assessments and learning targets that various school districts implemented encouraged and required students to display the ability to positively interact with various cohorts, peers, and teachers.

Schools and educators were charged with the tasks of encouraging students academically, maintaining their attention, and developing lessons that supported and encouraged their desired learning modalities. Students were expected to demonstrate the ability to academically perform and display their conceptualization and comprehension of various building and district learning expectations (Thijs & Koomen, 2008).

According to Bean (2001), the ability of students to effortlessly interact with cohorts and peers must occur with guidance and precision. Teachers must introduce and implement classroom behavioral management techniques that involved support, compassion, and specific expectations. As students developed various skills and strategies to complete multitudes of learning targets and goals, their ability to successfully display management was mandatory (Bean, 2001).

Teachers who took the time to develop positive academic relationships with students yielded a more successful academic school environment (Klem & Connell, 2004). However, an educator developed and implemented strategies that conveyed to students that a sense of respect, care, and concern was the essential purpose of their being. Students who did not feel confident that their basic needs were being met often caused a disruptive concern within the school setting, climate, and culture (Cohen, 2006). This behavioral concern was detrimental to the learning expectations and outcomes of the student and the individuals within the learning community.

Purpose of the Dissertation

The purpose of this dissertation was to attempt to compile information to assist educators with the development and implementation of connectedness with the students they encountered. The research began by investigating the best practices teachers utilized to maintain classroom management with the connectedness that had been formulated. This was followed by an examination of how the characteristics of an educator's age, gender, ethnicity, or experience positively or negatively affected the ability of teachers to formulate connectedness, if at all.

Rationale

As school districts implemented professional development opportunities for all staff members to improve staff performance and increase student learning, this research on connectedness between teachers and their students suggested that specific training choices were needed. Colleges and universities may have implemented courses and professional development opportunities focused upon the importance of and strategies involved in developing teachers who focused upon forging a strong connectedness as a correlation to student academic success. The rationale associated with this qualitative research was to determine how teachers formulated connectedness with students, based upon specific teacher characteristics. This qualitative case study was explorative in nature and focused on whether the characteristics of an educator's age, ethnicity, gender, and experience played a role in the ability to develop and maintain connections and classroom management.

Research showed that one-in-four African American and nearly one-in-five Hispanic students attended high schools where graduating was not the norm (Balfanz,

Bridgeland, Bruce, & Fox, 2013). Research also showed that graduation rates were uneven for students of different races, ethnicities, family incomes, disabilities, and English proficiencies (Balfanz et al., 2013). These "graduation gaps" imperiled progress, and no state where the graduation rate for African American, Hispanic, or economically disadvantaged students was above 89%, but there were 11 states where this was true for White students (Pleis, Lucas, & Ward, 2010, p. 242). The anticipated benefit of this study was to potentially bring awareness to educators and school districts that educators with specific characteristics may approach developing and maintaining academic connections with students differently. This study could be used to assist in implementing best practices by educators who vary in age, ethnicity, experience, and gender. In conclusion, the intended outcome was to observe best practices used by educators that could be shared amongst grade-level colleagues, vertical-team colleagues, and schools within the district, to assist teachers in connecting with and managing students.

This dissertation was designed to explore the research questions, with the assumption that teachers who took the time and made the effort to successfully build and maintain empathetic and academic connectedness with students were perceived as having more observable rapport with students and better classroom management. The hope was also to encourage then-current and aspiring teachers, teaching colleges and universities, as well as school districts to support and strengthen the process in developing connectedness with students.

The aim of the researcher was to encourage educators to assume the responsibility for building personal and positive connected relationships with students and to provide information to assist them as educators in guiding students through educational tasks. A

student's emotional state as he entered class affected the way, and how much, he learned. Educators must be able to connect to and understand their students in order to best serve those students' needs while "focused on nurturing learning rather than judging performance" (Hinton, Miyamoto, & Della-Chiesa, 2008, p. 91).

Research Questions

There were multiple research questions that guided this research.

RQ1: With regard to teacher characteristics of age, gender, ethnicity, and experience, what similarities and differences are found in the steps and procedures implemented by participating teachers to deliberately develop student-teacher connectedness and maintain a successfully managed learning environment?

RQ2: How does classroom management positively and/or negatively affect the educator, students, and classroom environment, with respect to connectedness, as evidenced by behaviors such as off-task, aggressive, and non-academically productive behaviors?

RQ3: How does a teacher's intonation and delivery method seem to affect behavioral management as measured by on-task, academically productive, and nonaggressive behaviors?

RQ4: How does the age, gender, ethnicity, or experience of an educator seem to affect the ability to develop and maintain connectedness and behavioral management within the classroom environment?

RQ5: What is the self-perception of participants of effectiveness in the classroom, as related to the recorded characteristics of age, gender, ethnicity, and experience level?

Definition of Terms

Classroom Behavioral Management - Classroom behavioral management was defined by Kratochwill (2006) as being the same as "classroom discipline" (p. 3).

Classroom Peers - According to Burke and Sass (2008) classroom peers were "individuals within the same classroom or learning environment" (p. 3).

Connectedness - According to Blum (2005), "School connectedness refers to the belief by students that adults in the school care about their learning and about them as individuals." (p. 4). For the purpose of this research, connectedness exhibited by students and adults was related to observable items, such as body language, tone of voice, manner of teacher addressing student, and manner of student addressing teacher.

Cultural Bias - was be defined by Loewen (2007) as "teachers and administrators holding the belief that the dominant or mainstream cultural ways of learning and knowing are superior to ways of learning and knowing that do not reflect such a culture" (p. 6).

Empathy - According to Kratochwill (2006) a leading expert on youth, empathy was defined as being "about trying to see something from another person's perspective and trying to feel what they feel" (p. 4).

Gifted Students - The term provided by the National Association of Gifted Students best functions as the desired definition for this research report: "Those who demonstrate outstanding levels of aptitude or competence in one or more domains" (as cited in Reis & McCoach, 2000, p. 152).

Limitations of Study

Limited sample size, vague representation of ethnicities and gender, researcher-authenticated research questions, student availability to be observed, and scheduling

conflict, were limitations of this study. The first limitation was the number of available

participating educators for the observed sample size. According to Fraenkel, Wallen, and

Hyun (2012), the recommended number of participants in a qualitative sample is between

one and 20. The researcher worked with the building administrator in selecting educators

that displayed student-connectedness, according to the definition used for this study.

There may have been some educators who were not recruited, due to the building

administrator's view of student-teacher connectedness. The building in which the

researcher conducted the study consisted of fewer than 20 classrooms. While this

number fell within the range suggested by Fraenkel et al. (2012), an expansion of the

number of participants may have impacted the results.

 Another limitation of the study was the voluntary participation of several of the

19 educators within the suburban school building. Not all classroom educators were

willing to participate in the study. Therefore, the researcher studied only that portion of

the population that was considered willing. The unwilling participants may have behaved

differently in their classrooms than the willing participants behaved.

The study was completed at one school building in which a modest level of

diversity among the educators existed. The majority of the educators were Caucasian

female; therefore the selection process for teachers of different ethnicities was

challenging. Due to the moderate staff size in the school in which the research was

conducted, the sample size included the majority of one ethnicity, and therefore some

ethnicities were not observed or researched due to a lack of diverse ethnicity employment

in the researched building. For those who agreed to be observed, the researcher

conducted the observations in the educators' rooms, and those educators strongly

identified themselves as a specific ethnicity. Also, gender participation was a limitation. The building employed more of one gender than another; therefore, the research was only able to be conducted with the available consenting male-to-female gender ratio.

Another limitation of the study was represented by the questions formulated and provided to the participating teachers. The researcher formulated authentic questions for the interview, questionnaire, and survey. These questions may not have addressed in entirety information that may have been gathered in another manner, or with other questions. The time given to answer the questions may not have granted the participant ample time to complete the task. Subsequently, some educators may not have written their complete thoughts to a question, due to the desire to complete and submit the information.

There may have been students who were absent throughout the classroom observation of a given teacher. Some students present during the initial observation and data collection transferred away from the observed building or classroom, thus impacting the classroom management observed. This aspect of mortality, in which some students and teachers may transfer to schools within the district, as well as to unknown districts, may have altered the research. The students' input was not sought, due to their chronological ages and concern with authentic and actual awareness of the desired information.

Finally, the times in which observations occurred may have been a limitation. There were some students who may have been more academically enthused at different times of the academic school day. This may have been a factor throughout the research.

Teachers had the option to discontinue their participation in the research. There may have been teachers who assumed this research to be a personal attack or investigation into their individual performance abilities. There were some educators who expressed confidentially their concerns with the classroom behaviors of some students for the then-current school year, who did not want to participate.

Background of the Researcher

The researcher previously taught in two school districts. The first school district, a large urban district, was her employer for seven years. Throughout her tenure within that district the researcher had the opportunity to educate a variety of students, as well as collaborate with a variety of educators. During that time, she served as an elementary teacher for both a neighborhood school and a magnet school. The neighborhood school had a smaller school population, although the classroom sizes were comparable with the magnet school. As a teacher at the neighborhood school, the researcher began the process of formulating, developing, and implementing connectedness with the students she taught. After a period of time, the researcher transferred to a magnet school within the same district. This afforded the opportunity to remain involved with members of similar communities to those she served while at the neighborhood school. This position also afforded her the opportunity to witness the disparities between schools within the same district. After seven years of serving as an elementary educator within this district, the researcher decided to accept a classroom teaching position within another school district. Although, the new school district was a suburban school district, the student demographics were comparable to the urban district.

Summary

Classroom behavioral management and teacher-student connectedness were noted throughout the then-current literature as an essential component in attaining academic achievement (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2009). Teachers and students worked collaboratively as a form of school family to attain a cohesive, communicative, and productive classroom environment. As statewide assessments and occupational opportunities mandated a student's ability to succeed through synergy and the minimization of overly confident students, teachers must properly prepare students.

As teachers guided students through the academic experience, the researcher believed they must be armed with a myriad of effective managerial strategies. These strategies can best be implemented with the support of positive teacher-student connectedness that was begun and fostered over a period of time. Chapter Two will examine the age, gender, ethnicity, and experience of the classroom teacher and the potential influence these characteristics had on the teacher's ability to formulate connectedness with classroom students.

Chapter Two: Literature Review

A review of the literature was conducted regarding student-teacher connectedness and classroom management focusing upon the characteristics associated with the age, gender, ethnicity, and experience of educators participating in the qualitative study. This chapter included a historical overview, the varied definitions of connectedness, and classroom management provided by various educational researchers and theorists within the field of education. This chapter also focuses on the literature pertaining to connectedness and behavioral classroom management that delved into how the characteristics of the age, gender, ethnicity, and experience of the educator affected the education of students.

Potential Best Practices for Connectedness and Management

This chapter sought potential best practices outlined by educational researchers and theorists. These suggested practices honed in on the possible strategies that educators might have incorporated in the daily instruction of student learners. This literature review concludes with a theoretical framework outlined to develop and bring to fruition this qualitative research. This study focused upon the effects of connectedness, classroom behavioral management, and potential characteristics associated with the manifestation and ability to accomplish the aforementioned foci.

Defining and Exploring Student Connectedness

The literature review begins with the definition of connectedness. The literature provided information from educational researchers or theorists in support of the benefits of student connectedness. Several educational researchers provided definitions of teacher-to-student school connectedness, as well as the benefits that may have happened

once student connections were developed and established between teachers and students.

School connectedness could be built through fair and consistent discipline, trust among

all members of the school community, high expectations from the parents and school

staff, effective curriculum and teaching strategies, and students feeling connected to at

least one member of the school staff (Blum & Libbey, 2004, p. 232).

Student connectedness was known by various other phrases, such as school

attachment or school bonding (Blum, 2005; Hawkins, Catalano, & Miller, 1992).

However, for this research the primary definition utilized was provided by Blum (2005),

who defined connectedness as the belief by students that adults in the school cared about

their learning and about them as individuals. In comparison, the researcher Dufresne

(2005) stated that a "child who has a close connection with a caring responsible adult can

often overcome incredible odds" (p. 94). Educators may have benefited from observing a

classroom learning environment filled with learning and positive engagement by viewing

the roles of a teacher as a support network or symbiotic individual in the academic life of

the students being educated.

Formulation of Connectedness with Students

The student who formulated a connection with an educator or educators may have

had a better academic outcomes and stronger potential of academic success (Osterman,

2000). A student's ability to feel comfortable and connected to a classroom and the

teacher associated with the learning environment contributed to the educational

experience of students. Therefore it was imperative to connect with students on some

academic level, because students who were connected to school were more likely to

succeed academically (Blum, 2005; National Middle School Association, 2003; Wentzel,

1998). In addition, when young people felt connected to school, they were less likely to

skip school or be involved in fighting, bullying, and vandalism (Schapps, 2003; Wilson &

Elliott, 2003). As reported by Pianta, Hamre, and Stuhlman (2003), talking with students

about their lives outside of school was one way teachers could show an interest in and

appreciation for students. Yosso (2005) suggested that educators visit the restaurants,

parks, stores, churches, clinics, organizations, and agencies in the neighborhood to hear

firsthand the needs, fears, desires, and values of community members.

Positive Teacher-Student Connectedness

Stancato (2003) stated positive teacher-student relationships had positive effects

on students, including making students feel confident and accepted. Teachers who took

the time and energy to formulate a sense of connection and awareness toward the

individual students with which they daily interacted were beneficial. As McCombs and

Whisler (1997) noted, all students appreciated personal attention from the teacher. As

researchers showed, teachers who: met students at the door as they came into class,

greeted each one by name, complimented students on important achievements in and

outside of school, and greeted students outside of school, also displayed the development

of connectedness (Kerman, Kimball, & Martin, 1980). According to Rimm-Kaufman

and Chiu (2007), improving students' connectedness with teachers had important,

positive, and long-lasting implications for students' academic and social development.

Positive student-teacher connectedness drew students into the process of learning

and promoted their desire to learn (Rimm-Kaufman & Chiu, 2007). As well, students

who had a positive connectedness with their teacher, often displayed less disruptive

behavior in the learning environment (Lewis, 2001), were less disruptive when teachers

dealt with misbehavior, and generally acted more responsibly in that teacher's class. Conversely, students who did not feel an attachment to school staff had higher dropout rates and lower attendance than students with a strong sense of connectedness to the school and the adults within (Makkonen, 2004). Subsequently, student-teacher connectedness and classroom behavioral management were crucial components within the daily learning procedures inside an educational environment.

Classroom Management Concerns

For years, classroom management was a topic of concern in school districts and individual school buildings. Although there was not one specific definition of classroom management as of this writing, the framework offered by Evertson and Weinstein (2006) represented the then-current and widely accepted view. It not only "sought to establish and sustain an orderly environment so students could engage in meaningful academic learning, it also aimed to enhance student social and moral growth" (p. 4). Teachers echoed the public's concern about student behavior. In one study, 34% of teachers agreed or strongly agreed that student behavior problems interfered with their teaching (National Center for Education Statistics, 2004). Concerns about student behavior and classroom management did more than create stress for teachers and affect the number of teachers who entered or remained in teaching for an extended period of time. In addition, these concerns often caused teachers to limit their use of instructional methods that actively engaged students in the learning process (Lotan, 2006).

Teachers concerned with classroom management typically needed help with two issues: preventing discipline problems and dealing with then-current discipline problems. To address these concerns researchers established several systems (Crone & Horner,

2003; Crone, Horner, & Hawken, 2004). One such system was called Positive Behavior

Support (PBS). Crone and Horner (2003) described PBS

> as an example this system of positive behavior support, a multitiered model might
>
> look something like the following: At the universal level, schools establish
>
> expectations for behavior; students, staff, and families state these expectations to
>
> ensure that they are understood; schools operationalize positive behaviors and
>
> teach them to students; teachers have pro-social contacts with students; teachers
>
> receive formal training in behavior management; the school establishes a school-
>
> wide leadership team; and the school implements a systematic system of
>
> recording student behavior to facilitate decision-making regarding students
>
> behavior. (p. 26)

Dollase (1992) and Gordon (1991) echoed this in their contention that classroom

behavioral management had two distinct purposes; to establish routine and order, as well

as promote social growth and awareness. Both researchers contended that this was the

biggest challenge teachers faced.

Intonation and Rapport

Classroom behavioral management, according to some researchers, utilized

various approaches. The first approach was to focus upon clearly defined rules,

procedures, or expectations. Another approach was the intonation and rapport developed

between teachers and students. There were some educators who spoke in varying

intonations and displayed appropriate acts of dominance. Intonation used in the correct

manner could engage the listener into what was being said, hence provoking thoughts,

opinions, emotions, feelings and interest (Helfrich & Weidenbecher, 2011; Peretz, 2009;

Perry, Schonwetter, & Struther, 1993). Intonation, as defined by Ladd (1996), suggested

intonation was a suprasegmental feature of language, referring to syllables that were

accented compared to those which were not accented, but also referring to the rising

versus falling final pitch. Research by Helfrich and Weidenbecher in 2011 suggested a

low pitched voice was rated more positively. The importance of this skill as a teacher

was vital, as it would help to ensure the students stayed engaged in the subject (Holub,

2010). As provided by Brookfield (2006), trust between teachers and students was the

affective glue that bound educational relationships. As educators developed and

implemented classroom managerial techniques, the method of building rapport may be a

factor.

Rapport with Students and Teachers

Rapport was viewed and defined by leading researchers. Catt, Miller, and

Schallenkamp (2007) defined rapport as a feeling between two people encompassing a

mutual and trusting bond. Researchers (Giles, Coupland, Williams, & Leets,, 1991)

stated the building of rapport could have a positive effect within the classroom. Rapport

was developed and secured by connecting and interacting with students. In both

elementary and secondary classrooms, the start of the school year was crucial to effective

management. A significant aspect of this beginning was the teacher's establishment of

expectations for student behavior, which were expressed through rules and expectations.

Rules and Procedures

Rules indicated the expectations for behavior in the classroom, and for how one

interacted with one's peers and the teacher. Procedures had to do with how things were

accomplished. Rules could be, and frequently were, developed with the students' help,

which increased the likelihood of compliance (Gump, 1982). Gump (1982) continued

with the need for both rules and procedures to be taught, practiced, and enforced

consistently. Included with the development of rules and procedures was the

accountability system of the classroom, which must have communicated to students how

they were held responsible for the academic work that they do.

Components of Classroom Management

Researchers Emmer et al. (1981), as well as Evertson et al. (2003), identified

important components of classroom management. These components included beginning

the school year with a positive emphasis on management; arranging the room in a way

conducive to effective management; and identifying and implementing rules and

operating procedures. According to two additional researchers, Stage and Quiroz (1997),

teachers should established clear expectations for behavior in two ways: by establishing

clear rules and procedures and by providing consequences for student behavior. Although

there was no specific definition for rules or expectations, educators and researchers

developed strategies to assist in educational processes.

Defining Rules and Procedures

However, for the sake of this project, the researcher used Gump's (1982)

definition for rules, which indicated the expectations for behavior in the classroom and

how one interacted with one's peers and the teacher. Procedures had to do with how

things were accomplished. Researchers also found that

teachers build effective relationships through such strategies as the following:

Using a wide variety of verbal and physical reactions to students' misbehavior,

such as moving closer to offending students and using a physical cue, such as a

finger to the lips, to point out inappropriate behavior. Cueing the class about expected behaviors through prearranged signals, such as raising a hand to indicate that all students should take their seats. Providing tangible recognition of appropriate behavior—with tokens or chits, for example. Employing group contingency policies that hold the entire group responsible for behavioral expectations. Employing home contingency techniques that involve rewards and sanctions at home. (Stage & Quiroz, 1997, p. 333)

In conclusion, teachers could establish clear expectations for behavior in two ways: by establishing clear rules and procedures and by providing consequences for student behavior (Crone & Horner, 2003, p. 395). However, Mayer (1995) pointed out that punitive systems without rewards for positive behavior and teachers' and administrators' inconsistencies in their responses to negative behavior actually augmented students' tendencies to engage in antisocial behavior, including vandalism on school grounds and truancy (Mayer, 1995).

Classroom Management Techniques

The classroom management approach used rewards and punishments to maintain classroom order. Stage and Quiroz's research (1997) showed the importance of a balance between teacher actions that provided clear consequences for unacceptable behavior and teacher actions that recognized and rewarded acceptable behavior. The management approach focused upon the student self-monitoring. This method allowed students to assume an intrinsic sense of accountability. The self-monitoring technique allowed students to make decisions about the methods in which their learning environment was monitored together. This form of classroom behavioral management granted the students

a sense of ownership, when allowed to participate in the decision-making process of the daily interactions within the classroom. Educators could have implemented a variety of instructional and management practices at the school and classroom levels that encouraged students to develop a sense of responsibility (Bishop & Pflaum, 2005). However, a teacher's classroom management decisions did not stop after the planning and establishment that was crucial to beginning the school year. As the school year progressed, classroom management involved maintaining the learning environment through conscientious decision-making concerning students and the classroom (Evertson, 1989).

Organizing the Classroom Climate

An essential part of organizing the classroom involved developing a climate in which teachers encouraged students to do their best and to be excited about what they were learning. There were two factors critical in creating such a motivational climate: value and effort. To be motivated, students must recognize the worth of the work they were doing and the work others did. A teacher's demonstration of value showed students how their work was worthwhile and was connected to things that were important for them, including other learning and interests. Effort tied the time, energy, and creativity a student used to develop the work to the value that the work held. One way that teachers encouraged effort was through specific praise, telling students specifically what it was that they were doing that was worthwhile and good. In combination, an understanding of the value of academic tasks and the effort necessary to complete these tasks motivated students to learn (Freiberg, Stein, & Huang, 1995).

Importance of Classroom Routines

Education and academic advancement was difficult to bring about if an established and effective classroom routine was not followed. In a meta-analysis of more than 100 studies (Marzano, 2003), found that the quality of teacher-student relationships was the keystone for all other aspects of classroom management. However, the quality was best if the act of achieving classroom management was acquired with willing participants. Most children responded to order and routine. This granted a sense of familiarity and comfort. Yet, successful educators attained their ability to manage the classroom with skill and acceptance. A student would respond, in general, once the feeling of security was established. Therefore, it was imperative that educators set the precedent during the initial meeting of the school year.

Historic Overview

Classroom management, often called classroom discipline, was a priority for teachers for nearly 40 years prior to this writing, or for as long as there were opinion surveys of educational priorities (Kratochwill, 2014). Classroom behavioral management, or classroom management was defined as the methods and strategies an educator used to maintain a classroom environment conducive to student success and learning. These methods and strategies must be implemented to ensure academic productivity within the classroom.

In the early 1970s, classroom management was viewed as separate from classroom instruction. Teachers' management decisions were viewed as precursors to instruction and were treated in the literature as if they were content-free. The image was of a teacher first attending to classroom management, and then beginning instruction

without further reference to management decisions. Research in the 1980s, however,

demonstrated that management and instruction were not separate, but were inextricably

interwoven and complex (Brophy & Good, 1986).

Introducing and Implementing Classroom Management

The educator or teacher developed a method of introducing, modeling, and

implementing behavioral strategies, known as classroom expectations, or rules, while

allowing the student population a sense of ownership and respect in determining the

established classroom expectations. As stated by DeVries and Zan (1994), rules should

be specific responses to problems or potential problems that arose in the classroom.

DeVries and Zan (1994) continued:

> Through involving children in actually making the classroom rules, children have
>
> the chance to understand why they have particular rules. This also leads to
>
> feelings of ownership of the rules. When children participate in deciding how
>
> their classroom is run, they are more likely to feel a sense of obligation to follow
>
> the rules they have made. (p 64)

These methods had the potential to be accomplished, in alignment with the

established school culture. Displaying respect and formulating positive academic

connectedness with students began from the initial meeting. As students began to interact

with teachers a connection began to formulate. At this stage, the intonation a teacher

used with his or her students served as the potential road map for long-term interactions

and instructional opportunities. Teachers needed to maintain a demeanor that conveyed

respect, compassion, and consistency. These elements were crucial in developing and

maintaining behavioral management.

Building Student-Teacher Connectedness

The act of building connectedness with students was about being open to communicate, attempting to understand and develop connections. Teachers needed to be knowledgeable about how minority children perceived the world, and processed and organized information (Irvine, 1990). According to one researcher, one-in-three youths served by schools in urban settings with populations greater than 500,000, was a person of color, lived in poverty, or had multiple learning handicaps (Haberman, 1987). Since the passage of civil rights laws associated with integration of schools and school districts, many educators of various cultures found themselves educating students from cultures different from their own. Teachers who varied in age, gender, ethnicity, experience, and individual identification had the opportunity to work with students on a daily and routine basis. These educators brought to the classroom their ethnicity, life experiences, and racial identification. There was research surrounding the impact of students and teachers with contrasts in age, comparable ethnicities, cultures, similar life experiences, and personal identifications. This research involved how these characteristics were associated with the education, connectivity, and management of the child holistically.

Origin of Teaching

From the Colonial era through the mid-nineteenth century, the vast majority of teachers in America were young, White men (Rury, 1989). However, there was a drastic decrease in the number of male teachers within the American public school system. Male teachers were always a minority in elementary schools (Martino, 2006).

There were efforts implemented to reverse the trend of male graduates entering and not remaining in the field of education. Pepperell and Smedley (1998), for example,

argued that calls for more male role models in elementary schools "are often couched in

dramatic terms and are being transformed into policy proposals" (p. 341).

At the National Education Association's (2003) 2002 Representative Assembly,

its members approved a measure to identify, recognize, recruit, and retain more male

teachers, with an emphasis on elementary and minority teachers. There were various

reasons for the decline in the number of male individuals pursuing roles within the realm

of education. According to Cushman (2005), working in a predominantly female

environment and in physical contact with children were factors that contributed to the

decline in the number of males enrolling in teacher education programs.

Decline in Male Teachers

Additional research indicated that roughly one quarter of all classroom teachers

were male, and the proportion plummeted to approximately 10% in the elementary grades

(Johnson, 2008). It was widely reported that the proportion of male teachers in public

schools was at its lowest in decades, hovering at just one quarter of the nation's

approximately three million teachers (National Education Association, 2003). As male

teachers implemented strategies to develop and incorporate connectedness with students,

the gender of a teacher may have been a factor. Researchers noted it was difficult for

boys to develop a healthy masculinity with a preponderance of female teachers

(Carrington & Skelton, 2003).

Perceived African American Classroom Behaviors

Unfortunately, substantial scholarly evidence indicated that teachers - especially

White teachers - evaluated Black students' behavior and academic potential more

negatively than those of White students (Alexander, Entwisle, Cadigan, & Pallas, 1987;

Downey & Shana, 2004; Ehrenberg, Goldbaber, & Brewer, 1995; Hamre & Pianta 2001;

Morris, 2005). Teachers, according to these researchers, had for decades more negative

views of African American students. However, schools tended to rely heavily on

exclusion from the classroom as the primary discipline strategy (Arcia, 2006). This

practice often had a disproportionate impact on Black, Latino, and American Indian

students. The use of school exclusion as a discipline practice may have contributed to the

well-documented racial gaps in academic achievement.

Disproportionate Disciplinary Consequences for African American Students

A large body of evidence showed that Black students were subjected to a

disproportionate amount of discipline in school settings, and a smaller and less consistent

literature suggested disproportionate sanctioning of Latino and American Indian students

in some schools. The Children's Defense Fund (1975) first brought the issue of racial

disproportionality to national attention. Their research showed that Black students were

suspended from school at a rate two-to-three times greater than their enrollment rates in

localities across the nation. National and state data showed consistent patterns of

students identified as Black being disproportionality disciplined over the 30 years

previous to collection, specifically in suspension (McCarthy & Hoge, 1987; Mendez,

Knoff, & Ferron, 2002), expulsion (Kewal Ramani, Gilbertson, Fox, & Provasnik, 2007),

and office discipline referrals (Skiba, Michael, Nardo, & Peterson, 2002). The research

did not address the data associated with individuals who would be classified as belonging

in another ethnic culture.

These, perhaps unintentional, biases contributed to the development of the

connections and behavioral management then-present in classrooms. However, students

who were identified as Asian received accolades and acknowledgement as being more

positive and compliant, and academically astute. Conversely, students identified as

Hispanic or perhaps Latino, were viewed in a less favorable way. For example, Asian

American children were sometimes held to be a model student stereotype (Rosenbloom &

Way, 2004; Wong, 1980), and some Hispanic children were perceived as uninvolved and

having lesser ability (Valdes, 1996).

Stereotyping Students

While students who were categorized as minority were stereotyped as subpar,

students classified as a member of the majority culture were more likely stereotyped as

aspiring to achieve academically. Students taught by educators that 'look like them' were

assumed to fare better academically. Therefore, some research attempted to answer

whether nonwhite students fared better in terms of how they were perceived if they were

taught by nonwhite or same-race, rather than White teachers (Downey & Shana, 2004, p.

277).

Cultural Competence

Teachers of all races, ethnicities, personal identifications, and ages were required

to find the positive nature in students (Milner, 2011). Teachers approached the idea of

achieving connectedness and classroom behavioral management through a variety of

instructional styles. Teachers had to gain cultural competence, that is, the ability to

function comfortably in cross-cultural settings and to interact harmoniously with people

from cultures that differed from their own. Diller and Moule (2005) defined cultural

competency as "the ability to successfully teach students who come from different

cultures other than your own" (p. 19). As research provided a more in depth definition,

according to the National Association of Social Workers (2000) cultural competence was also defined as

> an ongoing process by which individuals and systems respond respectfully and effectively to people of all cultures, languages, classes, races, sexes, ethnic backgrounds, religions, sexual orientations, abilities and other diversity factors in a manner that recognizes, affirms, and values the worth of individuals, families, and communities and protects and preserves the dignity of each. (p. 59)

Based on the research on effective intercultural communication, culturally competent individuals (a) coped effectively with the psychological and emotional stress of dealing with the unfamiliar, (b) quickly established rapport with others, (c) sensed other people's feelings, (d) communicated effectively with people from varying backgrounds, and (e) responded adequately to miscommunication (Giles et al., 1991). Teachers recognized that students learned through the implementation of hybrid instructional methods, as well as connecting through Irvine's (2002) method of warm demanders. According to Irvine (2002) warm demanders enacted care by working tirelessly to connect with students and families (Irvine, 2002).

There were educators who utilized direct instruction, demonstration (practice or station), cooperative learning (reciprocal), facilitation (self-check), and delegation (problem-solving) as teaching methods to differentiate and achieve student-teacher connectedness and classroom behavioral management. These instructional styles could be found in various classrooms, yet the method of materialization within the classroom varied amongst educators. In essence, teachers needed to know how to adapt the content

of instruction and teaching style to students' cultural and individual preferences

(Croninger, 1991).

Summary

Student connectedness was known by various other phrases, such as school

attachment or school bonding (Blum, 2005; Hawkins et al., 1992). A student's ability to

feel comfortable and connected to a classroom and the teacher associated with the

learning environment contributed to the educational experience of students. As provided

by Wilson and Elliot (2003) and Schapps (2003), when young people felt connected to

school, they were less likely to skip school or be involved in fighting, bullying, and

vandalism. Teachers who utilized personal time and effort to develop and implement

connections and student awareness within the learning environment, provided

opportunities for students to display positive behaviors. Students who were associated

with learning environments that featured positive student-teacher connectedness and

classroom behavioral management should thrive through this learning environment.

Ironically, teachers in the distant past were males, yet the world of education has declined

in the presence of male teachers. Although the world of education evolved, the number

of teachers of the male gender declined. However, teachers who implemented cultural

competency interacted positively with students from cultures that differed from their

own. Chapter Three will examine the methodology implemented to determine a teacher's

ability to formulate connectedness with classroom students.

Chapter Three: Methodology

The Research Site

The research setting for the study was made confidential for the purpose of this research project. Therefore, the school and school district were given pseudonyms. The elementary school is referred to as Allen Elementary School in the MaBella School District. The MaBella School District educated more than 18,000 students, and spanned over 89.7 square miles (MaBella School District, 2014). Allen Elementary School educated approximately 400 students (MaBella School District, 2014). The ethnic population consisted of 96% African American, 3% Caucasian, 0% Hispanic and Latino, 0% Asian, and 1% Other (MaBella School District, 2014). The school district and individual school received allocated funds for structural improvements and the addition of classrooms, an elevator for accessibility, and the updating of technological resources throughout the building.

The student population of Allen Elementary was comprised of kindergarten through fifth grade. There were, traditionally for this school, three classrooms of each grade level. However, during October of the year the research was conducted, an additional second grade classroom was added to the grade-level units. This changed the grade-level classroom number to four classroom units for second grade.

During the year the research was conducted, the Allen Elementary faculty consisted of two African American male teachers, two Caucasian male teachers, nine African American female teachers, nine Caucasian female teachers, and one Hispanic female teacher. There were 12 teachers from the staff who served as participants for the qualitative research piece of this project. In addition, the elementary school had one

librarian, one school counselor, one building administrator, two full-time reading

specialists, and one full-time instructional specialist. The additional building staff

consisted of a full-time secretary, two teacher clerks, and two teacher assistants. Also,

the building employed a safety resource officer and two special school district educators.

The building was served by a custodial staff that was staggered throughout the day. The

custodial staff's occupational day began at 6:30 a.m. and ended at 11:00 p.m.

Researcher and Participants Discussion

Interested teachers had an opportunity to meet with the researcher before or after

school to discuss and ensure that anonymity would be provided during their participation

in the research. The researcher met with individual teachers and reviewed the purpose of

the study. Those who decided to participate in the study were assigned a number and a

pseudonym. The number was utilized when submitting various written documents, to

ensure and maintain confidentiality and security. The pseudonym was given to ensure

confidentiality and security when the researcher provided the results of the study.

Participating Educators

There were 12 participating educators. The educators ranged in age, gender,

ethnicity, and experience. There was a varied range in student achievement abilities in

their classrooms. Each participating teacher varied in the number of years of employment

within the school district. Also, each teacher's classroom varied in the presence and

implementation of technology within the classroom environment. The researcher noted

the teachers who displayed the classroom and building expectations, consequences, and

learning targets within their classroom environments. Many of the participants had the

opportunity to teach within another school district within or outside of Missouri during

their careers, at that point in time. The participating educators varied in the answers and time they provided during the interview portion of the research study. One participating educator provided information for more than 60 minutes. Whereas, another educator provided information for less than 30 minutes.

Table 1 was created to provide demographic information about the educators in the researched building. The information on the table consists of the age, ethnicity, years of service in education, highest degree earned, and gender. The majority of the respondents were in the age range of 40 to 58. Table 1 shows the ethnicity that represented the majority of the teachers in the researched population as Caucasian. In regard to education, there was an equal representation of respondents possessing a bachelor's degree and a master's degree. The majority of the teachers were female. In conclusion, Table 1 shows that the average classroom consisted of 26 students or more. The tables that follow show the data gathered with the usage of a Likert Scale. The Likert Scale was developed by Likert (1932). Likert scales are a popular method for measuring attitude (Anderson, 1981; Crano & Brewer, 1973; Oppenheim, 1966). A benefit was that questions used were usually easy to understand and so lent themselves to consistent answers. Multiple researchers (Anderson, 1981; Crano & Brewer, 1973; and Oppenheim, 1966) suggested this was the most efficient and effective method of developing highly reliable scales used for gathering research data.

Table 1

Teacher Demographics (Building)

Age	21 - 39	40 - 58	59 +	
	7	4	1	

Ethnicity	African American	Caucasian	Other	
	6	6		

Years of Service in Education	1 - 10	11 - 20	21 - 30	
	5	5	2	

Highest Degree Earned	Bachelors	Masters	Masters + 30	Doctorate
	6	4	2	1

Gender	Male		Female	
	3		11	

Students in Classroom	1 - 15	16 - 25	26 +	
	1	4	7	

Educator One: Ms. Allen

Ms. Allen, middle 40s, was a female African American teacher who was a teacher

for 16 years, and a veteran teacher. This educator ranged in the grade levels taught, as

well as teaching in varying states and school districts. Ms. Allen displayed pictures of

her family, as well as certificates and awards she received. There were 25 students in the

classroom. Of the 25 students, 13 were male, and the remaining were female. The

seating arrangement placed the students in cooperative groups. Each cooperative

grouping housed four students. Within the classroom, the learning targets and student

expectations were posted. As well, the consequences were visible. The teacher utilized

technology throughout the lessons and involved the students throughout the lessons and instructions. Ms. Allen displayed two samples per student of student work inside and outside of the classroom. Ms. Allen routinely attended outside events featuring her students. The students and parents were encouraged to contact the teacher outside of the classroom through e-mails or telephone calls before, during, and after school.

Educator Two: Ms. Reeves

Ms. Reeves, middle 50s, was a Caucasian, specialty teacher, and veteran teacher. Ms. Reeves taught for more than 20 years in the same school district. Ms. Reeves taught the entire student population within the school. Technology was not utilized throughout the lessons taught. The seating arrangement placed the students in an interior and exterior circle, cooperative grouping setting. The classroom expectations and consequences were posted at eye range for the student population. Ms. Reeves displayed more than four samples per student of student work inside and outside of the classroom. Ms. Reeves did not attend outside events, but asked the students to report about the outcomes. The parents e-mailed or telephoned Ms. Reeves before and after school.

Educator Three: Mr. Thomas

Mr. Thomas, late 20s, was a Caucasian male, veteran teacher. Mr. Thomas taught for 11 years. Mr. Thomas' class had an enrollment of 22 students. Of the 22 students, 10 were boys, and the remaining students were girls. Mr. Thomas taught only within the researched district. The seating arrangement allowed the students to sit next to one learning partner in traditional classroom rows. Mr. Thomas utilized technology throughout the lessons and encouraged students to interact with the activities. The classroom expectations and consequences were posted. Mr. Thomas displayed two

samples per student of student work within and outside the classroom. Mr. Thomas

attended outside events of the students within the classroom. The parents were

encouraged to contact Mr. Thomas outside of school.

Educator Four: Ms. Austin

Ms. Austin, late 30s, was a Caucasian female, veteran teacher. Ms. Austin taught

for nine years within multiple school districts. Ms. Austin had 24 students. Of the 24

students, 11 were males, and the remaining students were female. The seating

arrangement allowed the students to sit in groups of four or five. The classroom

expectations, consequences, and learning targets were posted throughout the classroom.

Ms. Austin did not display student work inside the classroom, but displayed student work

in the hallway outside the room. Ms. Austin did not attend outside events and did not

receive contact from the students or parents outside of the classroom. The parents were

allowed to e-mail or call the school telephone number during the school day.

Educator Five: Ms. Swank

Ms. Swank, early 30s, was a Caucasian, novice teacher. Ms. Swank taught for

seven years. Ms. Swank taught in more than one school district within the Missouri area

before joining the suburban school district. Ms. Swank had 17 students. Of the 17

students, eight were males, and the remaining were females. The seating arrangement

allowed the students to sit at tables with three others. Ms. Swank did not utilize

technology within the classroom environment. The expectations, consequences, and

learning targets were posted throughout the classroom. Ms. Swank utilized the wall

space to include personal artifacts. Ms. Swank displayed more than four samples per

student of student work inside and outside of the classroom. The parents were allowed to

e-mail or telephone Ms. Swank outside of school.

Educator Six: Ms. Petty

Ms. Petty, late 40s, was an African American, experienced teacher. Ms. Petty had

been teaching for 20 years. Ms. Petty taught solely within the researched school district.

Ms. Petty had 23 students. Of the 23 students, 10 were males, and the remaining were

females. The seating arrangement provided the students the opportunity to work and sit in

cooperative learning environments. Ms. Petty utilized technology and incorporated the

student responses in the daily interactions. The expectations, consequences, and learning

targets were displayed in a central location in the room. Ms. Petty displayed more than

two samples of student work inside and outside of the classroom. Ms. Petty did not

attend outside activities focusing upon the students. The parents were allowed to e-mail

or telephone Ms. Petty outside of the class.

Educator Seven: Ms. Tyler

Ms. Tyler, early 30s, was a Caucasian, novice teacher. Ms. Tyler was a first-year

teacher within the suburban district; however, she had prior teaching experiences in

Missouri school districts. Ms. Tyler utilized technology while instructing the students.

Ms. Tyler had 24 students. There were 12 males and 12 females. The seating

arrangement had the students seated at tables and desks. The expectations, consequences,

and learning targets were displayed throughout the learning environment. Ms. Tyler

constructed rewards for each student to celebrate special occasions the students

encountered throughout the school year. Ms. Tyler displayed more than three samples of

student work inside and outside of the classroom. Ms. Tyler did not attend outside events

of the students in her classroom. The parents were able to e-mail or telephone Ms. Tyler outside of the classroom.

Educator Eight: Mr. Fox

Mr. Fox, middle 40s, was a Caucasian male, novice teacher. Mr. Fox, like Ms. Tyler had prior teaching within various Missouri school districts. Mr. Fox utilized technology while instructing the students. Mr. Fox was a learning specialist and serviced the entire learning environment. The seating arrangement provided the students the opportunity to sit cooperatively on a carpet or at tables. The expectations, consequences, and learning targets were displayed throughout the learning environment. Mr. Fox displayed more than two work samples of student work inside and outside of the classroom. Mr. Fox did not attend functions outside of school that featured his students. The parents were allowed to e-mail and telephone Mr. Fox outside of the class.

Educator Nine: Ms. Guinn

Ms. Guinn, early 20s, was an African American, novice teacher. This was the first year for Ms. Guinn. Ms. Guinn did not utilize technology within the learning environment. Ms. Guinn had 18 students. There were 10 males, and the remaining students were female. The classroom seating arrangement allowed the students to sit with a learning partner in a row format. The expectations and learning targets were displayed throughout the classroom. However, the consequences were not provided within the learning environment. Ms. Guinn displayed more than three samples of student work inside and outside of the classroom. Ms. Guinn did not attend events outside of the school that featured her students. The parents were allowed to e-mail or telephone outside of school.

Educator Ten: Ms. Franklin

Ms. Franklin, late 40s, was an African American, novice teacher. Ms. Franklin had the opportunity to teach within various Missouri schools prior to joining the researched school district. Ms. Franklin did not utilize technology while delivering lessons. Ms. Franklin taught 21 students. There were 10 males, and the remaining students were female. The students were grouped in sets of four or five per cooperative group. The expectations, consequences, and learning targets were displayed within the learning environment. Ms. Franklin displayed two samples of student work inside and outside of the classroom. Ms. Franklin attended the outside-of-class functions that she was able to attend. The parents were encouraged to e-mail or telephone outside of the class.

Educator Eleven: Mr. Roberts

Mr. Roberts, early 60s, was an African American, experienced teacher. Mr. Roberts had the opportunity to work for multiple Missouri school districts prior to joining the researched school district. Mr. Roberts was a learning specialist and serviced the entire learning environment. Mr. Roberts utilized technology while instructing the students. The classroom seating arrangement provided the students the opportunity to sit in a circle and on a colorful learning carpet. Mr. Roberts displayed the expectations and learning targets within the learning environment. However, the consequences were not displayed. Mr. Roberts displayed one sample of student work in the classroom. The student work was not displayed outside of the classroom. Mr. Roberts did not attend activities, but asked the students to report about the outcomes. The parents were encouraged to contact Mr. Roberts outside of the classroom.

Educator Twelve: Ms. Griffin

Ms. Griffin, middle 20s, was a Caucasian, novice teacher. Ms. Griffin had taught for four years within the same suburban school district being researched. Ms. Griffin taught 24 students. There were 15 male students, and the remaining students were female. The classroom seating arrangement provided the students the opportunity to sit in an inner and outer circle cooperative grouping style. Ms. Griffin utilized technology in the learning environment. The expectations, consequences, and learning targets were displayed within the learning environment. Ms. Griffin displayed three student work samples inside the classroom and work samples outside the classroom. Ms. Griffin did not routinely attend outside events featuring her students. The parents were encouraged to e-mail or telephone Ms. Griffin outside of the classroom before or after school.

Research Questions

RQ 1: With regard to teacher characteristics of age, gender, ethnicity, and experience, what similarities and differences are found in the steps and procedures implemented by participating teachers to deliberately develop student-teacher connectedness and maintain a successfully managed learning environment?

RQ2: How does classroom management positively and/or negatively affect the educator, students, and classroom environment, with respect to connectedness, as evidenced by behaviors such as off-task, aggressive, and non-academically productive behaviors?

RQ3: How does a teacher's intonation and delivery method seem to affect behavioral management as measured by on-task, academically productive, and nonaggressive behaviors?

RQ4: How does the age, gender, ethnicity, or experience of an educator seem to affect the ability to develop and maintain connectedness and behavioral management within the classroom environment?

RQ5: What is the self-perception of participants of effectiveness in the classroom, as related to the recorded characteristics?

Research Design

There were multiple definitions and views of the term *qualitative research*. Qualitative research was referred to by a variety of terms, reflecting several research approaches. Field research was often used interchangeably with the term, qualitative research, to describe systematic observations of social behavior with no preconceived hypotheses to be tested (Rubin & Babbie, 1993). According to another educational researcher, qualitative research was also referred to as naturalistic research or inquiry (Taylor, 1977). As defined by Fraenkel et al. (2012), qualitative research focused upon the world as having multiple realities. Qualitative researchers were concerned with understanding situations and events from the viewpoints of participants.

Qualitative case study research was defined by various contributors to the educational society. According to Monette, Sullivan, and DeJong (2005), "Qualitative case study research methods are interpretative and aim to provide a depth of understanding" (p. 428). Qualitative case study methods were based on words, perceptions, and feelings rather than numbers, and they included experiments, interviews, focus groups, and questionnaires with open-ended questions. While researchers Polonsky and Waller (2005) categorized vision, images, forms, and structures in various media, as well as spoken and printed word and recorded sound into qualitative data collection, as

qualitative research. According to Walliman (2005) qualitative data collection methods

emerged after it became known that traditional quantitative data collection methods were

unable to express human feelings and emotions. According to Creswell (2007):

> Case study research is a qualitative approach in which the investigator explores a
>
> bounded system (case) or multiple bounded systems (cases) over time, through
>
> detailed, in-depth data collection involving multiple sources of information (for
>
> example, observations, interviews, audiovisual material, and documents and
>
> reports), and reports a case description and case-based themes. (p. 73)

The research provided by Merriam (1988) best supported the researcher's

decision to formulate the research into a qualitative case study. According to Merriam

(1988), a case study's unique strength is its ability to deal with full variety of evidence,

including documents, artifacts, interviews, and observations (p. 8). In support of the case

study approach, Yin (2003) stated a case study design should be considered when: (a) the

focus of the study is to answer 'how' and 'why' questions. The researcher selected the

case study foundation to gain a more in depth understanding of the thought process of

educators in relation to their reality and perception of connecting and implementing

management strategies with students.

This qualitative case study research project examined how teachers built and

maintained connectedness with students, which practices provided the most effective

classroom behavioral management, and how the teacher's characteristics of age, gender,

ethnicity, and experience correlated with classroom behavioral management practices.

Teachers of various grade levels were surveyed, completed questionnaires, participated in

interviews, and were observed to determine which practices utilized by teachers best built

student-teacher connectedness and maintained classroom management.

Procedure

The researcher sought the assistance of building and district administrators in

suggesting potential educators who had a positive academic impact on students and an

ability to connect with students. The researcher and building administrator discussed the

desired research outcomes and purpose of the study. Once these educators were

identified, the researcher extended an opportunity to the potential participants to discuss

the research and the possible contribution to society.

The staff received a volunteer request form. The researcher scheduled various

days and times to meet and discuss the research with the participating educators. Each

teacher was provided a consent form that outlined the expectations of the study. The

educators were provided confidential envelopes to place the information and were

assigned a numeric code to ensure confidentiality amongst the participating and non-

participating staff members. The teachers received a letter that outlined the procedures

and the instructions associated with the completion and return of the consent form

(Appendix B). Once the survey (Appendix C) and questionnaire (Appendix D) were

completed, each teacher sealed the confidential envelope and placed the information in a

secure location. The envelope was collected and an interview location and time was

scheduled, for those who volunteered to participate. The questionnaire and survey were

then later coded to observe responses and take note of any reoccurrences or

commonalities in responses or thought patterns. Once the questionnaire was completed,

the researcher contacted the teacher and set up a day and time to fully explain the

research procedures and conduct the interview. The researcher defined the intended

research and discussed the objectives in further detail, including the method to be used

during the observations. The participating teachers were interviewed and their verbal

answers were audio recorded. The interviews consisted of questions that sought the

viewpoints of teachers with regard to connectedness, management, and perceptions of the

importance of participating in extra -curricular activities of the students which they

taught.

After the interviews were conducted, the participants were then observed in their

classroom environments. The researcher observed the interactions between the teacher

and enrolled students to look for connectedness and classroom management. The results

of these observations were qualitatively coded using an open coding system.

For purposes of furthering the research, the educators were asked to maintain a

log that was kept confidential. The log was designed to allow the educators to interact

briefly with a variety of prompts surrounding the themes of connectedness. The

participation in the study was voluntary and all 12 participants declined to participate in

this part of the research.

Participants' Surveys

The purpose of this qualitative study was to investigate the methods and best

practices teachers utilized to develop and maintain connectedness with their students, as

it related to the educator's age, gender, ethnicity, and experience. This qualitative

research involved an initial survey developed and administered by the principle

researcher (Appendix C). Surveys were defined as part of the broad area of measurement

procedures that involved asking questions of respondents (Trochim, 2000).

The participating educators for this study completed a survey delivered on paper. The survey was confidential and submitted to the researcher. The survey was conducted using a Likert Scale provided for responses, and posed questions about the teacher's self-perception of connectedness and classroom management. This information was qualitatively coded and granted the researcher the opportunity to determine common or shared best practices. Additionally, the approaches educators used were evaluated by age, gender, ethnicity, and experience of the participant, to search for potentially related differences in formulating and maintaining student connectedness.

Participants' Questionnaires

The questionnaire, as explained by DJS Research (2015), could be used to gather facts about people's beliefs, feelings, experiences in certain jobs, services offered, and activities. Questionnaires also could be an effective means of measuring the behavior, attitudes, preferences, opinions, and intentions of relatively large numbers of subjects (McLeod, 2014). A questionnaire (Fraenkel et al., 2012), a form for written or marked answers to questions, was provided for each educator. The questionnaire allowed the participants an opportunity to rate their own expertise in developing connectedness with students and classroom behavioral management. Each participating teacher was provided a 12-question questionnaire, which included six demographic questions and six open ended questions. Responses were later qualitatively coded. The questionnaire responses were analyzed and sorted for similarities and differences expressed between the educators. The information was categorized by commonalities or outliers that may have comprised a portion of the qualitative information contributed by each educator who

responded. The questionnaire was confidential and used as a mechanism to triangulate the data compiled with the interview and survey data.

Participants' Interviews

There were multiple reasons for interviews. The first purpose of the interviews was for getting the story behind a participant's experiences (McNamara, 2009). The interviews granted the researcher the opportunity to learn intricate details of the thought process involving each teacher that may not have been viewed while observing the class and students.

The 12 elementary teachers were individually interviewed, with the consensual usage of an audio recording, which probed into how the teachers introduced the process of building connectedness, the importance of building connectedness, and the best practices utilized to maintain connectedness. The participants had the opportunity to answer the questions to the degree of their comfort level. Each interview occurred at the preferred date and time of the participant. This interview occurred without the presence of students and was confidential. The purpose of the interview was to determine additional information the participating teacher did not provide through the survey or questionnaire components of the data collection. After the interview occurred, the researcher reviewed the information and categories and determined patterns or similarities in a coding scheme. The researcher created the coding scheme (Fraenkel et al., 2012) or set of categories used to record the frequency of a person's or group's behavior. The researcher and participants discussed the objective of the observations and determined tentative dates and times convenient for the participants to receive class visits

Classroom Observations

Gathering data by watching was one of the central building blocks of much qualitative research (Angrosino, 2005). The observations occurred during an academic school year. The first observation was for 15 minutes to assist in the acclimation of the class to the researcher observing the classroom. As the school year progressed, the observation times increased to 30 minutes. The observations were conducted by the researcher as the teacher conducted his or her normal classroom duties. This resulted in no additional time spent by the participants. The classrooms were comparable in population and ethnicity. There were a minimum of four observations per classroom during the school year. The dates and times varied, as to develop an extensive view of methods teachers practiced to develop connectedness and classroom management. The students were observed and noted for their responses to their classroom teacher. The researcher sat in one location of the classroom to observe the teachers and the students. The observer did not obstruct the learning processes of the students, nor question any of the student population. The researcher was observing the interactions between the educators and students for visible behaviors which indicated connectedness, such as on-task behavior, positive verbal interactions, and non-aggressive student behaviors. The researcher observed student and teacher behaviors and how student behaviors were addressed. The measurement of connectedness and classroom management was noted on a researcher generated form that displayed the codes that coincided with potential observable behaviors (Appendix G). As stated in previous research, observations were traditionally recorded as field notes, written accounts created by the researcher either during or after a period of observation in a notebook (Biklen & Bogdan, 2007). Because

the checklist was not absolute, there were areas in which the observer did not have a pre-existing code, and the field notes provided additional data from the observation. Space was provided for recording behaviors not on the coded list on the form. However, the observation record was not limited to only those items on the checklist. The outcomes, holistically, were observed, documented, and coded for similarities and differences that emphasized the age, gender, ethnicity, and experience of each participating teacher. The researcher compared qualitatively whether a difference existed between teachers by gender, age, or ethnicity in acknowledging or demonstrating the importance of formulating connectedness with students.

Summary

This qualitative case study research project examined how teachers built and maintained connectedness with students, which practices provided the most effective classroom behavioral management, and how the teacher's characteristics of age, gender, ethnicity, and experience correlated with classroom behavioral management practices. The researcher sought the assistance of building and district administrators in suggesting potential educators who academically influenced students and had an ability to connect with students. The researcher and building administrator discussed the desired research and purpose for the study prior to formulating a list of potential participants.

The staff received a volunteer request form. The researcher scheduled various days and times to meet and discuss the research with the participating educators. The teachers completed the survey and questionnaire. The questionnaire and survey were coded to observe and take note of any reoccurrences or commonalities in responses or

thought patterns. The educators completed a 12-question written questionnaire and were

interviewed with 12 open-ended questions prior to the first observation.

The researcher observed the interactions between the educators and students for

visible behaviors that indicated connectedness, such as on-task behavior, positive verbal

and non-verbal interactions, and non-aggressive student behaviors. The observations

occurred throughout a portion of one academic school year. The observation of

connectedness and classroom management was recorded and evaluated qualitatively.

Chapter Four: Results

Introduction

This chapter provides an in-depth layout of the research design and results from the data collection process. Chapter Three focused upon the survey, interview, questionnaire, and observations of the learning environment. This qualitative research study sought to determine the best practices educators utilized to formulate student connections and implement and maintain classroom management. The study focused upon 12 teachers within one suburban school district. The teachers participated in surveys, questionnaires, interviews, and observations.

Research Questions

RQ 1: With regard to teacher characteristics of age, gender, ethnicity, and experience, what similarities and differences are found in the steps and procedures implemented by participating teachers to deliberately develop student-teacher connectedness and maintain a successfully managed learning environment?

RQ2: How does classroom management positively and/or negatively affect the educator, students, and classroom environment, with respect to connectedness, as evidenced by behaviors such as off-task, aggressive, and non-academically productive behaviors?

RQ3: How does a teacher's intonation and delivery method seem to affect behavioral management as measured by on-task, academically productive, and nonaggressive behaviors?

RQ4: How does the age, gender, ethnicity, or experience of an educator seem to affect the ability to develop and maintain connectedness and behavioral management within the classroom environment?

RQ5: What is the self-perception of participants of effectiveness in the classroom, as related to the recorded characteristics?

Overview of Participating Teachers

The 12 participating educators ranged in age, gender, ethnicity, and experience. The participating teachers also brought to the research the experience of working with multiple districts. Each teacher provided work experience information. Five of the 12 educators were less than 40 years of age. Four of the 12 educators were male. Five of the 12 educators were African American. Six of the 12 educators were experienced, or veteran. A demographic comparison was shown in Table 1 in Chapter Three.

Table 2

Understanding of Connectedness: Educator Responses

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
I have had knowledge of the concept of student-teacher connectedness.	3	8			1
I am aware of how student-teacher connectedness is developed.	4	7			1
I know what student-connectedness looks like in my classroom learning environment.	4	7			1

Eleven of the 12 participants agreed to some level that they had knowledge of the idea of student-teacher connectedness. Eleven were also aware of how it was developed

and what connectedness might look like in their own classrooms. One educator

represented an outlier and strongly disagreed with all three statements.

Table 3

Importance of Connectedness: Educator Responses

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
I value making student connections with each student.	12				
I have a strategy in plan to develop and implement connectedness with students.	2	8	2		
I believe having connectedness with each student is important throughout the school year.	8	3	1		

When asked about the importance of connectedness, all of the participants said

they valued making connections with students. When the question shifted to their strategy

for building those connections, the participants were less prepared. Eight said they

agreed, while two said they strongly agreed or were neutral towards this statement. The

final question asked about the importance of the connection throughout the year. The

answers shifted back to a stronger response with eight of 12 marking this response. Table

4 reflects the answers to questions about beginning of the year activities and periodic

class meetings with students.

Table 4

Implementing Connectedness: Educator Responses

Implementing Connectedness	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
I plan to begin the steps to implement connectedness at the beginning of the school year.	9	1	1		1

I plan to hold class meetings on a routine basis (three or more times in one school week).	4	4	4

The majority of the participants said they would begin the connectedness efforts from the very beginning of the school year. There was again one outlier who strongly disagreed with this practice. The response to holding of periodic classroom meetings was evenly split between choices of strongly agree, agree, and neutral. Table 5 reflects questions about teachers interacting with students outside of the normal classroom day as well as building a more personal relationship with students.

Table 5

Connectedness with Students: Educator Responses

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
I believe it is important to attend events of my students outside of the school day.	2	7	2	1	
I believe I should discover personal views of the students in which I teach.	3	7	2		
I believe the students have a right to speak with me outside of the classroom (approved by guardian).	3	6	2	1	

The responses to all three of these questions was mostly in the agree range with a small number in strongly agree or neutral. One participant disagreed with the idea of interacting with students outside of the classroom setting. Table 6 reflects answers to questions about the specifics of the classroom management plan and its construction.

Table 6

Classroom Behavioral Management: Educator Responses

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
I have a plan to implement for behavioral management.	7	5			
I plan to implement my plan on the first day of school.	9	3			
My plan will be created with the students' input.	4	3	4	1	
I am secure in how to maintain classroom behavioral management.	5	5	1	1	
The students will be penalized by losing privileges under my classroom management plan. One participant stated- I have incentives as well as punitive.	3	7	1	1	
I have arranged a place in the classroom for students to refocus.	4	8			
I have established a teacher to work with as a buddy room for students that may need to redirect their behavior.	5	7			

Most of the responses were in the agree and strongly agree ranges. The exceptions

to this were when asked about student participation in the construction of the

management plan, to which five educators answered either neutral or were in

disagreement with this statement. Two teachers reflected on being less secure in their

ability to manage their classrooms. Two also were less in favor of students' losing

privileges under their plan. This chapter continues with individualized information

focused upon each participating teacher.

Description of Questionnaire and Interview Questions

Each question from the questionnaire is outlined below followed with a summary

of the questionnaire responses from participating teachers. The questionnaire responses

are quoted within the presentation of data, just as the interview was constructed. Chapter

Four will conclude with the introduction and data presentation from the observations

within the learning environments of the participants.

Questionnaire Items and Responses

Q1: How would you describe your current classroom management style?

The respondents varied in their descriptions of their classroom management

styles. The answers ranged from a hybrid approach with authoritativeness and tangible

rewards to active and student friendly. The respondents also described their management

styles as being structured, yet flexible. Their management styles consisted of establishing

clear routines and positivity. Ms. Petty stated, "I also believe in honesty and tough love."

Ms. Guinn provided [it would be ideal if she could], "Laugh and enjoy my students

during appropriate free times, but when it is time to work the students would be able to

get right to it."

Q2: How do you build academic and personal learning connectedness with the

students you teach?

The respondents overwhelmingly discussed the utilization of classroom meetings.

Answers were given, such as remaining in contact with families, utilizing professional

development acquired skills, current and popular television characters, getting to know

the students, remaining current with student trends (e.g. dances, clothing, movies),

providing a safe environment, and listening to the students and families. Mr. Thomas

stated, "I like to buy new books for my classroom library based on current interests."

Ms. Petty divulged, "I believe in building relationships before or on the first day of

school." Ms. Tyler concluded, "By listening and allowing each student to feel comfortable."

Q3: If you utilize one, how do you introduce and maintain your classroom management plan with your students?

Of the respondents, 86% provided answers involving the introduction of the plan on the first day of school and daily review. Two male respondents did not discuss the introduction of the expectations or routines on the first day of school. The respondents also discussed posting the expectations on the wall, role playing, class meetings, and what occurred before the start of each lesson. Answers from the respondents were also stated about the input of the students and the adaptation throughout the year. Ms. Tyler stated, "It is outlined and sent home to parents to discuss."

Q4: What is your plan if, and when, off-task behavior occurs within your learning environment?

According to the respondents, the plans utilized to address and defuse off-task behaviors varied. All respondents mentioned using the first step of ignoring the behavior to attempt to bring about attention to the off-task behavior. Many respondents referred to moving students to different seats within the learning environment. This allowed the continuation of instruction. A respondent focused upon utilizing verbal and non-verbal cues. The action of proximity and non-verbal cues to diffuse off-task behavior was invoked. Ms. Griffin exclaimed, "I often praise students directly next to the student to encourage the off-task student to do the same without using a negative command." Mr. Thomas spoke of using tally charts that were visible to the class. If an expectation was violated, they were marked down. At the end of the day, the students discussed their

actions and the decisions about changing a behavioral card. Ms. Petty discussed using eye

contact and potential conversations with the parent or care giver. Ms. Franklin and Mr.

Fox utilized a 'buddy' classroom if the off-task behavior was preventing learning from

occurring within the classroom.

      Q5: Do you believe the lesson plans are important to assist in developing

relationships and maintaining management, if so, how do you involve these concepts in

your daily plans?

      The answers provided focusing upon lesson plans varied. Fifty-seven percent of

the educators made reference to the necessity of lesson plans to develop relationships and

maintain classroom management. The remaining 43% of the educators provided

reasoning for the lack of a need for lesson plans to infuse relationships and management.

Ms. Petty stated, "If there is a teachable moment, we need to use it." Mr. Thomas stated,

"I don't reference relationships and management in my plans. However, my lesson plans

do provide a structure for me to follow. This enhances positive behaviors, participation,

and minimizes off-task behavior."

      Q6: What is the effect of classroom behavioral management with teacher-student

connectedness?

      The respondents' answers focused upon the effect of classroom behavioral

management focusing on the connections between teachers and students. A respondent,

Ms. Petty, proclaimed a student could be reached by a teacher even when the emotions of

a student were high. Respondents indicated students thrived with structure and routines.

According to Mr. Thomas, "When negative behaviors are dealt with briskly, and positive

behaviors are recognized, the students feel comfortable in the classroom." Some

respondents proposed that students had a more positive relationship with teachers when expectations were high and clear. Ms. Griffin contributed, "Connectedness encourages a 'bond' with students that may make it harder for students to make negative choices because they do not want to break the bond." Ms. Franklin reflected upon a student who presented a behavioral challenge at the beginning the year. However, when Ms. Franklin visited the student at a sporting event in which the student was participating, the behaviors changed to become more positive.

Interview Questions and Responses

I1: What is your definition of classroom management?

The definitions of classroom management varied for many respondents. A female educator provided a definition of classroom management as building relationships with students and teachers establishing boundaries. Another female respondent provided classroom management as implementing structure and utilizing clear and displayed expectations. The respondent continued with the necessity to begin the implementation at the beginning of the year and to revisit the expectations throughout the school year. Mr. Thomas stated, "I create expectations because I want the students to learn and thrive in a safe environment." Ms. Austin contributed, "I want to prevent problems before they occur."

When this question (I1) was asked, 93% of the educators mentioned the necessity to create a safe environment with expectations that were introduced at the beginning of year and routinely reviewed. Ms. Swank stated, "Student and teachers connecting and forming relationships." Ms. Tyler provided a strong response,

Building positive relationships with kids. If one ends the day on a color that was not positive, the student has a fresh day the next school day. I should find out as much as I can about the students background, likes, strengths, and weakness.

One respondent referred to classroom management as having order within the learning environment. In conclusion, one participant referred to classroom management as an organized situation that allowed learning to take place.

I2: What is your definition of student connectedness?

Two respondents used similar language by stating, "Students and teachers should be comfortable in a safe learning environment." One respondent suggested, "Connectedness is when a student and teacher work with one another." One male respondent stated it was important to introduce and implement lessons that were relevant and interesting to the students. One novice teacher suggested student connectedness allowed for the student to identify with the school, classroom, and feel as though the student contributes to the school. Three experienced respondents provided similar responses about student connectedness. The responses consisted of keywords such as relating, establishing boundaries, and connecting. Another male respondent considered student connectedness as a partnership between students and teachers.

I3: How do you believe the age, gender, ethnicity, and experience of a teacher contribute to the formulation of connectedness and maintenance of classroom management?

One male, experienced respondent answered that younger teachers appeared to have an easier time managing students than older teachers. The respondent continued with the comment that maturation of a teacher was more important than the age. Mr. Fox

stated, "I love these children as if they are my own." He continued, "Some children may view me as the rent person, parents' supervisor, or police officer." Ms. Swank mentioned the ethnicity of a teacher was not a factor. Ms. Swank continued, "Color awareness is crucial." One novice female teacher remarked "that a teacher 25 years old or younger may benefit from teaching grades three and lower." A novice teacher contributed that younger teachers may not be taken with the same consideration as older teachers. The novice teacher shared an insight focusing upon the gender, ethnicity, and experience of a teacher,

> The gender of a teacher doesn't matter. The importance of ethnicity may depend upon where the teacher is located geographically. The importance of the teacher's ability to relate with his or her students may be a factor, as well as making sure teachers are culturally competent.

The novice respondent mentioned the lack of coursework focusing upon cultural competency.

Two veteran respondents similarly stated that age, gender, and experience shared factors in the implementation of connecting with students. Of the respondents, two African-American respondents stated the more experience a teacher, had the more that was known. Both of these African-American respondents viewed their ethnicity as being a benefit in educating children. Finally, one novice female teacher did not view ethnicity as a concern with formulating connectedness and managing students.

I4: How does a teacher's intonation and delivery method affect behavioral management?

The question of a teacher's intonation and delivery method evoked various responses from the respondents. One African American veteran respondent used confident language. They stated, "A teacher should use a variety of instructional methods. The instructional methods can be lecture, cooperative, and kinesthetic." This respondent did not focus upon the intonation of a teacher. A Caucasian, veteran female teacher suggested talking calmly, firmly, and with a straight tone. As the conversation continued, Ms. Reeves stated she utilized variations in tones to get the attention of the students. "Whispering, lower the voice, and talking softly causes the students to listen carefully to determine what is being asked or said." Another male, experienced, and veteran teacher slightly agreed by contributing, "A loud voice might lead into a battle, soft spoken and consistency is the key." Many respondents replied with common answers featuring key elements, such as the utilization of low and soft tones, consistent voice intonation, and using instructional models that support the interests of the students.

I5: Have you referred to a student to your building principal for disciplinary concerns this school year, is so, how many?

The responses for this question evoked a range of responses. The male and female novice teachers reported sending two or more students to seek administrative consultation. However, the experienced male and female teachers reported sending less than two students throughout the span of the instructional period. The novice respondents, regardless of age or ethnicity, sought the assistance of administrative assistance to address off-task behaviors. The experienced teachers, regardless of age or ethnicity did not respond with requests of administrative assistance.

I6: What has been the reason(s) for the referral(s)?

The respondents provided a variety of reasons that referrals were drafted. One Caucasian female, experienced respondent verbalized the dominant reasons for office referral were defiance and disruptive behavior. Another African American female, experienced teacher mentioned behavioral referrals for disruptive behavior. Two respondents, one male Caucasian and one female African American, experienced teacher acknowledged reasons for referrals as insubordinate behavior. One male novice Caucasian teacher acknowledged the reason for referrals as being physical aggression in the learning environment.

I7: What has been the result of the disciplinary referral?

The respondents enthusiastically referred to the building leadership that assumed responsibility for the building. Some respondents, experienced, and novice teachers suggested disappointment in previous administrative actions. These respondents implied the lack of support and continuity with behavioral concerns. The respondents spoke about the extensive support for the assistance of removing defiant, disruptive, and insubordinate behaviors. One experienced Caucasian male respondent stated the consequences were in school or out of school suspension.

I8: Have you seen an improvement within the student(s), if so, how? If not, what occurs?

Several respondents indicated the behavior concerns changed immediately. However, one veteran, female Caucasian respondent stated, "I am trying new strategies for the students that do not display behavioral reforms." However, 83% of the respondents concluded the long term behavioral reform occurred often when the support

of the building administration became involved. One respondent proposed, "Once the student returns as educators, we must work with the student to ensure success."

I9: Do the students contact you outside of the classroom to receive assistance with school work? Describe how you handle those situations**.**

One African American female, veteran respondent emotionally declared students who have graduated often come to visit. However, current students would seek help with assignments before or after school. Another African American female, experienced educator mentioned students sought assistance with modifying her behavior. The teacher and student developed a plan to assist in this social journey. One Caucasian female, experienced teacher added how students often sought assistance with assignments during a planning time. One Caucasian male, experienced teacher exclaimed, "I do not have many students that seek individualized assistance." Three Caucasian female, novice teachers injected the utilization of e-mails from parents to receive assistance with assignments.

I10: Has a student, or students asked that you attend functions in which they will be the focus outside of the school day? If so, please describe how you handle those situations.

Three African American teachers, both male and female, mentioned students often asked the teacher to visit a sporting event or birthday party in which the student would be the focus. Each teacher mentioned attending with the knowledge and consent of the parent(s). One Caucasian female, experienced teacher was adamant that the students do not request the teacher's presence at any afterschool activities. Another Caucasian female, novice teacher stated, "I would not go to a home. However, if it were

an event at school, I might attend." Three respondents, all Caucasian, experienced,

novice, and of both genders asked questions about the events if the teacher was unable to

attend. As the student arrived at school, the teachers asked questions to display

recognition and support.

Introduction of Observation Procedures

Each participating teacher allowed the researcher to observe the learning

environment throughout the academic school year. The researcher confirmed tentative

dates and times in which the initial observation would occur. The initial observation was

conducted for 20 minutes. The purpose of the initial interview was to provide the

researcher the opportunity to become familiar with the researched learning environment.

Also, the researcher wanted the students to adjust to another participant in the area that

was being studied. The researcher did not interact with the students; however, the

students were aware an additional contributor was inhabiting the classroom. The

researcher conducted a minimum of four observations for each participant.

Classroom Observations in Relation to Research Questions

RQ1: With regard to teacher characteristics of age, gender, ethnicity, and

experience, what similarities and differences are found in the steps and procedures

implemented by participating teachers to deliberately develop student-teacher

connectedness and maintain a successfully managed learning environment?

Ms. Allen was an experienced African American teacher, who arranged her

learning environment in a circular format. During visits, the researcher observed Ms.

Allen sitting in chairs with the students and within cooperative groups. While instructing

the students, this educator utilized experiences from her life to relate topics of discussion

and often displayed crouched eyebrows and minimal emotion. Ms. Allen encouraged students to discuss the focus topic and relate this topic to individual experiences. The educator injected humor and current trends within the learning environment. For example, when the class needed to gather and discuss a topic or participate in specific learning targets, the call and response phrase 'hold up,'" 'wait a minute' was used. The students responded to the teacher's call and response by speaking back, 'wait a minute.' This educator also moved about the classroom and granted the students individual time to complete learning tasks. A timer was used while the students independently moved about the room.

As the students moved about, a reminder of the timer was stated. The students successfully moved to the interior location, and the learning continued. Ms. Allen continued to praise the students. For example, 'Watch out now, look at you, oh go ahead.' These trendy phrases caused the students to smile and laugh. The classroom was quiet and at times had moderate to low educational voice volume. The students were engaged and eager to participate in class meetings and discussions. Ms. Allen frequently attended outside events featuring students within the classroom.

Mr. Thomas, Caucasian and experienced, used current comic and television figures as references throughout the lessons. As the students answered questions, Mr. Thomas walked around the room smiling and seeking answers from students. The teacher used praises and accolades. For example, "If Superman was in the room, what would you do?" The students interacted with Mr. Thomas and the remaining students. As the students earned verbal praises or acknowledgements, Mr. Thomas used the Promethean Board classroom management tool to document and tabulate the data. Mr. Thomas

attended outside activities of students within the classroom. However, for the activities

that Mr. Thomas was unable to attend, the students were questioned about the events and

outcomes. During visits, the students were utilizing Activision tools to answer questions

posed and used with the class Promethean board.

Ms. Petty, an African American experienced teacher, utilized cliché call and

response phrases to gain the attention of the class. For example, 'okey' and the students

responded with 'dokey.' During visits, Ms. Petty often sat at her desk, walked around the

room, or sat in a back area and gathered the students to the area in which the teacher was

located. Ms. Petty selected students to assist in passing papers and learning activities to

the class. Ms. Petty equitably selected representatives from both genders while assisting.

For example, "Sarah, please pass the papers to the groups." "Samuel, please make sure

each learning group has a book."

Mr. Roberts, an African American experienced teacher, utilized statements of

accolades when addressing students. For example, "Where are my quick readers?"

"Where are my smart readers?" The students raised their hands. Mr. Roberts placed the

students in a circular formation on the carpet during instruction. Mr. Roberts sat in one

area and instructed the students. As the students interacted with the lessons, Mr. Roberts

used humor to address some behavioral concerns. For example, "Mr. Bob, are you doing

the right one on the circle?" Another example, when he was correcting a student, "Ms.

Ma'am, is this that the best thing to do at this time?"

Ms. Reeves, an experienced Caucasian teacher, redirected students quickly and

individually. Ms. Reeves placed the students in a rectangular seating formation. Ms.

Reeves often stood at the front of the room while instructing the students. For example,

students were displaying behaviors such as conducting individual conversations and incomplete work. Ms. Reeves walked to the students and whispered the desired behavior. The students looked at Ms. Reeves and continued completing the assigned tasks. Another example of Ms. Reeves quickly addressing potential off-task behavior was when two students were exchanging harsh words. Ms. Reeves walked over to the students, and moved one student from the other and continued the lesson. After the class began to independently work, Ms. Reeves revisited the students and discussed the situation.

Mr. Fox, a novice Caucasian teacher, placed the students in cooperative tables of four. As Mr. Fox introduced various learning targets and lessons the utilization of class meetings was the focus. During the class meetings, Mr. Fox sat in a chair and discussed the learning targets and the expectations. The students that appeared to not engage in the lesson were questioned and redirected to engage in the lesson. Mr. Fox utilized random selection of students in seeking answers to discussion questions. Mr. Fox reminded the students that anyone may be selected to answer questions. For example, he stated to the class anyone may be selected to answer questions; therefore, make sure you are listening. Mr. Fox selected male and female students as well as students that did not have their hands raised for acknowledgement.

Ms. Swank, a novice Caucasian teacher, placed the students in cooperative tables of six students. Ms. Swank sat in a chair near the dry erase board as to have access to an area for the purpose of writing or continuing lessons. As the students were completing learning activities, Ms. Swank walked around the classroom. The students raised their hands for assistance. Ms. Swank walked over to the tables and bent down to eye level with the students. Students that needed additional assistance were pulled from the group

and received assistance quietly at a reading table. The reading table was situated to grant

students individual or group assistance while the remaining students were engaged and

actively learning.

Ms. Tyler, an experienced Caucasian teacher, placed her students in sets of two.

The students sat side by side. This allowed the students opportunities to discuss their

thoughts or questions with a learning partner. Ms. Tyler walked around the classroom.

Ms. Tyler granted the students liberty to move about the classroom. The teacher spoke to

the students individually when the need arose to redirect the classroom actions or

behaviors. The students were allowed to speak without being acknowledged. The

students were permitted to walk toward her without raising their hand or being

acknowledged in some form.

Ms. Guinn, a novice African American teacher, placed her students in vertical

rows. Each row consisted of four students within a grouping. Ms. Guinn stood before the

students and provided instructional assistance. Ms. Guinn allowed the students to work

cooperatively and independently on the carpet while she attended the needs of other

students. For example, during a classroom visit the researcher observed students in groups

of two or three, working and communicating about math problems. The students were

sitting on the carpet completing mathematical tasks. The students on the carpet who

needed help, where allowed to walk toward Ms. Guinn after recognition. Ms. Guinn

provided immediate assistance when students sought clarification to various learning

tasks. During a visit, Ms. Guinn was helping a student solve a behavioral program. The

strategy that was observed was to bring the student away from the student community and

discuss the situation. Once Ms. Guinn had solved the situation to her approval, the student

relocated to the seat which was being used. During a visit, the researcher observed a

student crying and looking toward Ms. Guinn. Ms. Guinn did not respond to the student.

The student continued to cry for less than one minute, and slowly began to complete the

assigned task.

Ms. Austin, an experienced Caucasian teacher, instructed the students to meet on

the circular carpet at the center of the classroom. The students were instructed to review

the learning and behavioral expectations. The teacher utilized hand signals and non-verbal

cues to convey the behavioral expectations. For example, "Rule number 1, read quietly."

The teacher and students placed a finger in front of their lips signifying being quiet. The

students that exhibited undesirable behavior were quietly asked to move to another

location within the classroom. The students that did not display the desired expectations

were met by Ms. Austin. The teacher bent to their eye level and softly whispered the

desired behavior.

Ms. Griffin, a novice Caucasian teacher, stood in the front of the classroom. The

Promethean board was directly behind her. During a visit, the researcher observed as

students exhibited behavior that did not correlate with the classroom expectations. The

teacher's voice elevated. The students continued to communicate without adjusting the

volume due to the adjustment to volume change with Ms. Griffin. Ms. Griffin moved

clips from a circular green, yellow, and red behavioral chart. The researcher observed on

another visit, students did not raise a hand to ask or receive an answer to a question. The

students were able to walk about the classroom. Ms. Griffin utilized non-verbal cues

when seeking the attention of the classroom. For example, Ms. Griffin stood in the middle

of the classroom in silence with her hands at her sides. The students complied within three minutes of the class period.

Ms. Franklin, a novice African American teacher, moved around the classroom while instructing. The students were permitted to walk about the class without prior permission or approval. The students were allowed to speak and talk within the class without permission or approval. The teacher questioned students before the class that displayed behaviors that did not coincide with the established classroom behavioral expectations. For example, a student was using crayons and drawing during the time of instruction in which the materials were not required. Ms. Franklin said, "How long are you going to play with the crayons?" The teacher complimented the students that exhibited the desired and expected classroom expectations. The teacher said things such as, "Thank you" and "I appreciate that Shelly is following the directions."

RQ2: How does classroom management positively and/or negatively affect the educator, students, and classroom environment, with respect to connectedness, as evidenced by behaviors such as off-task, aggressive, and non-academically productive behaviors?

Ms. Allen did not have a defined behavioral chart, nor during the visits did Ms. Allen have to direct the class to redirect off-task behavior. During one visit, a student began the session completing tasks that were not requested; however, the teacher quickly addressed the behavior with eyebrows bent and a stare. The student saw the non-verbal cue, and immediately adjusted the behavior. The students' seats were placed in cooperative groups. Ms. Allen was able to walk around and address learning concerns. The classroom expectations were visible and the students were able to see and

interact with the desired behavioral outcomes. During a visit, Ms. Allen engaged the

students in group and class discussions. The students were writing and discussing the

learning target. After the learning target had been written, the students discussed the

learning target as a class and individual cooperative groups. The students were

discussing a book and answering questions. The students were required to be

acknowledged by the raising of a hand to answer group led discussions. During another

visit, the students were engaged in independent group discussions. The students were

assigned roles and tasks within the group. The group was aware of the expectation and

the group completed the tasks. The students were able to complete additional learning

activities upon completion of the assigned group work. The students did not display

behavioral concerns.

Mr. Thomas utilized the Promethean board. During a visit, the students were

completing a whole group activity. As the students used the Activision software to give a

response, Mr. Thomas walked around the room and monitored the completion of the

assigned task. Mr. Thomas also used the Promethean board to assign points to the teams.

The students were aware of the expectations associated with the points. Mr. Thomas

informed the students as to the purpose of the points and the required number of points to

receive an incentive. For example, the incentive may have been additional computer

minutes, eating lunch with the teacher, sitting in a different area of the classroom, or an

opportunity to read with a partner. Mr. Thomas used slight humor and sarcasm when

managing the classroom environment. During another visit, Mr. Thomas was addressing

a student that was making a slight sound that may have been singing. Mr. Thomas

quickly smiled and said, "The only person that will be singing in this class, today at least,

will be me." The students were able to laugh and the sound ceased. There were minimal classroom management concerns.

Ms. Petty utilized a Promethean board when instructing the students. In the classroom, Ms. Petty did not have a defined behavioral chart system. However, off-task behavior was not observed throughout the visits or observations. During a visit, the students were conducting an experiment. Ms. Petty presented a question to the students seeking an understanding of what happened in a bathtub that may cause residue to remain. The students discussed the answer with the group. Ms. Petty stated, 'okey' and the students responded 'dokey' and the class discussion ceased. Ms. Petty discussed a story about her family and how the science question was similar to the inquiry that was posed before the students. The teacher granted the students five minutes to discuss and agree upon an answer. The students shared the answers with the class. During another visit, the students were preparing to conduct a science experiment with the use of premeasured goods. The teacher reviewed the expectations and asked the students to meet at the back table. Ms. Petty reviewed the expectations of handling science tools. There were not any classroom management concerns.

Mr. Roberts was an educational specialist that taught within the suburban school district. During a visit, the researcher observed a lesson being taught and the class sitting cooperatively on a colored carpet. The researcher observed there was not a defined behavioral system visible. While the students were participating in the lesson, Mr. Roberts walked around the circle to monitor the students' progress. The students were actively engaged in a lesson and following the instructions of the teacher. Amid the observation, two male students were not completing the assigned learning target. Mr.

Roberts walked to the students and nodded his head. The two students immediately walked to the outer part of the circle and sat in separate chairs. There was not a conversation, reaction, or act of defiance from the male students. The lesson continued, and the remaining students focused upon the learning objectives. The students sat in the required seat for six minutes, and with a smile and nod the students were welcomed back into the group.

Ms. Reeves was an educational specialist who taught within the district. Upon entering the classroom to complete an observation, the behavioral system and consequences were visible throughout the room. As the researcher entered the classroom, a student was laying his head on the table. The teacher walked and stood by the student. The student saw the teacher and continued to lay his head on the table. After Ms. Reeves introduced the learning activity for the day, the teacher walked over to the student lying his head on the table. Ms. Reeves hurriedly approached the child, and with a whispering voice asked the child a question. The researcher was unable to hear the question, due to the volume that was being used. The student lifted his head and softly responded to the questions. The teacher sought another student to get a hall pass to allow the student an opportunity to visit the nurse. Ms. Reeves sent a student to walk with the child visiting the nurse.

Mr. Fox was a specialist within the suburban school district. The researcher observed a visible behavioral system. The teacher divided the students in groups or tables. Each table received a tally mark or point. The system required the groups or tables to collect a specific number of tallies or points. Once the desired outcome was achieved, the students participated in various celebratory activities within the learning

environment. During another classroom visit, Mr. Fox was conducting a class meeting.

The students were learning and discussing the learning target for the day. Mr. Fox

continued to speak while three students were talking and two additional students were

looking around the room. Mr. Fox did not address the behavior. The teacher continued

to instruct the remaining students.

After Mr. Fox had given and discussed the learning objectives, he began to direct

the students to their assigned learning areas. The students who exhibited off-task

behavior were individually called to his table. The three students who were talking

continued to talk, and Mr. Fox continued to address the remaining students. After Mr.

Fox erased tallies or points from the table, the three students were placed in alternative

learning environments. The researcher did not observe the students' re-admittance during

that visit. During subsequent visits Mr. Fox contacted the administrative office for

assistance with students who displayed off-task behavior.

Ms. Swank utilized a behavioral chart listing the students' names and

corresponding colored construction paper. The researcher observed the behavioral

system associated with construction paper. Each color represented a stage in which each

student was placed. As the students needed to adjust off-task behavior, the teacher

decided to instruct the students to move their colored cards. This instruction was often

completed using non-verbal cues (i.e. stern facial expressions, pointing to the behavioral

chart, or snapping fingers) and verbal cues. There was a consequence associated with

the decision to demonstrate off-task behavior. This behavioral system was referred to

throughout the researcher's visits. When prompted to interact with the behavioral

system, the students immediately walked to the designated area and 'changed the card.'

The teacher waited approximately five minutes and walked to the student to discuss the infraction and how to redirect the behavior of the student.

Ms. Franklin utilized a behavioral chart that simulated a stop light. The students had clips with their first name and last initial. The researcher observed a male student walking around the classroom without permission. Another male student blurted out words to seek the attention of the teacher. The teacher quickly responded with disapproval of the behavior. The researcher observed the teacher walking into the back of the classroom and speak with two girls who were in the student closet talking and remaining off-task. The teacher walked to the behavioral chart and placed their clips on the yellow circle. This action did not deter the students. The student who was walking around arrived at the assigned seat. Once the student arrived, he began to talk with another student. The teacher moved his clip, and this action caused the student to sit and slowly end the conversation and prepare for the learning activity. The two female students were interrupted by the teacher and corrected in the presence of the remaining students. One female student responded quickly and walked to the assigned seat. The remaining student received two verbal commands and reminders about the classroom expectations. The teacher moved her clip to a color that denoted contact to the student's home.

Ms. Tyler did not utilize a behavioral chart system. The students were permitted to walk about the room and speak without being recognized. Upon the visit of the researcher, two students' desks were removed from the group. The researcher observed some students raising their hands for acknowledgement who were not recognized. The female student took her hand away after not being recognized. The teacher walked

around and discussed the learning focus. As the teacher walked around, a male student

walked to her to ask a question. The student did not raise his hand, and the teacher

firmly instructed him to sit in the seat. The student walked back to the seat loudly,

causing the other students to hear his movements. Throughout the visits, the researcher

observed the students who demonstrated off-task behaviors were acknowledged

intermittently, moved to another location in the classroom, or moved to a different room

to adjust their off-task behavior.

   Ms. Guinn implemented a behavioral management system. The students had clips

with their names on each clip. There was a large poster that outlined the levels of

consequences for off-task behaviors. For example, the levels consisted of verbal

warnings, teacher conferences, removal from their cooperative group, redirection in

another classroom, and office referral. The students were engaged in various learning

activities, as the researcher conducted a class visit. While the students completed a

learning assignment, the teacher injected various redirection cues to prevent and diminish

off-task behavior. Examples of the verbal cues included, 'I will wait until you finish your

conversation. Stop shouting out the answers, I am calling on Sally. If you lose the

counter again, I am taking it away. Steve, did you hear me?' The researcher observed on

another visit, the teacher utilized the lights within the classroom. As the teacher sought a

classroom subject transition, the lights were turned off. The students were familiar with

cleaning work areas and moving to their classroom seat.

   Ms. Austin utilized a classroom behavioral system. The students were able to

move about the room without raising their hand. The researcher observed students using

passes placed on their clothes to indicate leaving the classroom for personal needs. The

students were able to cooperatively discuss learning activities with the usage of a low whisper. During a visit, the teacher was refocusing a student's behavior. The teacher addressed the behavior quickly and returned to instructing a small group. As the teacher was preparing to conduct a subject transfer, the teacher lightly tapped a wind chime. This auditory cue indicated the students were to finish their learning activity, clean their areas, and meet in the designated area in the classroom. The teacher utilized various non-verbal cues to address desired and undesirable behavior. For example, smiling, winking, thumbs up, walking to a student and placing stickers on her paper, frowning, and standing in the room with her hands folding in front of her body.

Ms. Griffin utilized the behavioral chart that was in form of a stop sign. As the researcher conducted a visit, the students' names were clipped on the green section of the behavioral chart. As the students interacted in the classroom, the teacher stood in the front of the room and spoke. While the teacher spoke, one male student was walking to the student closet to place his belongings. Another male student was looking through his desk, and gathering items. Two female students were talking at their tables. The teacher provided the verbal cue, "As I am looking around, I see [a student] is ready." Also, she stated, "I asked you to stop." These verbal cues caused the behaviors to diminish for less than two minutes. The students returned to displaying off-task behavior. The teacher continued to talk and spoke louder. As the visit continued, the researcher exclaimed, "I am going to count to three, and if all students are not prepared to move onto science, I am taking minutes off of the Friday Fun activities."

RQ3: How does a teacher's intonation and delivery method seem to affect behavioral management as measured by on-task, academically productive, and nonaggressive behaviors?

Ms. Allen spoke to the students in a moderate to low tone. During the visits, the researcher observed the teacher utilized multiple hand signals. For example, the students used their fingers to seek permission for choices such as going to the restroom, getting materials within the classroom, throwing away trash, getting a pencil, or asking a question. Each choice was assigned a finger; therefore, the finger or thumb that was raised informed the teacher as to the request of the individual student. The researcher observed two students raising three fingers, three students raising a thumb, and one student raising one finger. As the students utilized this non-verbal cue, the teacher signified by nodding her head or acknowledging with 'Okay, "That is fine,' 'Thank you,' or 'Of course.' Ms. Allen referred to the students as 'ladies and gentlemen." During the visits, Ms. Allen did not request or require the assistance of the administrative team.

During several visits, the teacher implemented various instructional methods. During three of the visits the researcher observed the teacher implementing a hybrid of teaching methods. Examples of teaching methods the educator utilized were command, demonstration, reciprocal, self-check, and self-selection. During the visits, the students were engaged in receiving the learning target, learning and implementing their role and responsibility within the cooperative group, and assessing their independent and collaborative work. The requirement of monitoring and addressing behavioral concerns or off-task behavior was minimal throughout the class visits.

Mr. Thomas utilized moderate to low tones with humor and satire. An example of the teacher's humor was, "Now, you know if you were hungry, you would eat more than a salad." The students laughed; however, the learning expectations and on-task behavior remained the focus. As the researcher visited the classroom, several students were engaged with Mr. Thomas and part of his conversation. As the students were completing learning tasks, Mr. Thomas smiled and spoke at a low tone while providing feedback or instruction. The students reciprocated the tone of voice when answering or asking questions of the teacher. Mr. Thomas did not individually refer to the students during the visits.

Mr. Thomas implemented a hybrid approach of instructional methods. During multiple visits, Mr. Thomas utilized reciprocal, self-check, and delegation instructional methods with the students. For example, the students were reviewing a learning expectation and were granted time to complete the required information. The students implemented reciprocal learning as they cooperatively worked with a learning partner in answering and checking the assigned questions and answers. The students interacted with the assigned learning partner to complete the task. Another visit, the researcher observed the students self-checking and delegating assignments with the Activision device. The students were answering questions about text that had previously been read with the teacher. The students were scrutinizing answers of questions that had been introduced and discussed. During the visits, behavioral concerns were minimal to non-existent and did not require the assistance of the administrative team.

Ms. Petty utilized a high pitch, loud tone, humor, and satire. Ms. Petty spoke rapidly during some class visits, and there was ample voice projection. For example, a

male student was off-task and looking throughout the desk. An example of the satire, the teacher stated, "That is whack." As the students' behaviors deviated, the tone of the teacher adjusted. The teacher asked questions such as, "Who is capable of working in groups?" "What are your suggestions?" "Who will change to have others come in the room?" Upon another visit, the students were engaging in a science activity using blindfolds. The teacher used humor such as, "When you put on the blind folds, do not act silly and fall around the room." The students laughed and the learning expectations continued and were not interrupted. Ms. Petty referred to the whole class as "ladies and gentlemen."

The instructional methods Ms. Petty implemented were hybrid. Ms. Petty implemented command, demonstration, reciprocal, and self-check. The students were provided a learning target and recited the learning target holistically. Before, the students began the science exploration the teacher reviewed the expectations with the blindfold. The students watched and completed the task with the learning partner. As the students finished the required learning assignment, they cooperatively answered questions about the discoveries that occurred throughout the process. During the visits, behavioral concerns were minimal to non-existent.

Mr. Roberts received the students as they quietly sat. Mr. Roberts had an energetic voice when teaching the students. For example, "Today, boys and girls, we are going to read about. . . ." The teacher then followed with, "This class is wonderful!" Mr. Roberts continued to praise the students during the learning activities. As Mr. Roberts walked around the room to monitor on-task behavior, he used proximity for those students who did not have the correct page to complete the lesson. The teacher walked

over to the table, and used proximity for the student. The student saw Mr. Roberts and asked for assistance when needed.

Mr. Roberts utilized a variety of teaching methods. He implemented command and demonstration. During research visits, the researcher observed the students interacting cooperatively to comprehend learning targets. Mr. Roberts began each class session, during the observation, reviewing the daily learning targets. Throughout the visits, Mr. Roberts utilized proximity to assist students who were having an academic challenge or appeared off-task. Mr. Roberts approached each disciplinary concern individually and quickly. There was an example of the teacher correcting a student. Mr. Roberts quickly defused the situation and the learning process was not compromised. Mr. Roberts did not have students with behavioral concerns who required administrative assistance or removal from the classroom during the visits.

The delivery methods Ms. Reeves used concentrated on command and self- check instruction. Ms. Reeves introduced a learning target and monitored as the students completed the task. The students were granted an allotted time to complete and ask questions about the project. While the students worked, the teacher walked around and assessed the progress made. As well, during the visits, the teacher was able to address individual questions she did not want to be addressed with the whole group.

Ms. Reeves conducted the learning environment with varying intonations. As Ms. Reeves was instructing the class, the teacher utilized varying vocal tones. During a class visit, Ms. Reeves was introducing a new concept. A student was off-task, and the vocal tone of the teacher increased. As the student began to redirect his behavior, the teacher minimized the teacher intonation. Ms. Reeves referred to the whole class as "boys" and

"girls" or "students." The teacher did not require or request administrative assistance during the visits.

Mr. Fox utilized instructional methods that focused upon command and self-check. During a visit, Mr. Fox instructed the students in the development of an electronic book trailer. The students observed a book trailer the teacher had developed. The students received an I-Pad and were granted time to begin the project. The teacher informed the students of the allotted time to complete the task. Throughout the visit, the students worked on the beginning of the book trailer.

Mr. Fox used an intonation that varied during the classroom visits. During a visit, Mr. Fox was projecting his voice and correcting several students. As his voice projected the students' voices coincided. Mr. Fox attempted to redirect the students; however, his strategies did not affect the behavioral concerns of many students. For example, three students were moving around the learning environment, four students were laughing and interacting with the students who were moving in the learning environment, and two students were talking and not following the instructions of the teacher. Mr. Fox projected his voice three times, and the conclusion was in the form of the administrator coming to diffuse the situation. The students moving around the room without approval were removed. The administrator asked to speak with Mr. Fox during his planning time.

Ms. Swank implemented a variety of instructional methods. The researcher observed, during a classroom visit, the systems, such as command, demonstration, reciprocal, self-check, and delegation. The students were instructed to meet on the carpet in the front of the room. The teacher reviewed the mathematical learning targets that would assist in math learning activities during the math portion of the afternoon. As the

teacher provided directions about the various instructional materials, upon completion the teacher sought questions. After this time period, the students were provided opportunities to work collaboratively with a learning partner. Throughout the visit, the teacher requested specific students to the area in which she was located. During that time, the teacher provided instruction and sought clarification as to the student's understanding of the concept on which the student was working. Ms. Swank referred to the whole class as "friends."

Ms. Swank used an intonation that varied during the classroom visits. Ms. Swank spoke in a medium to low tone. Ms. Swank complemented the students frequently throughout the visits. During another visit, Ms. Swank verbally corrected a student firmly. The student displayed off-task behavior. The teacher complemented the students who remained focused and on task.

Ms. Tyler incorporated a hybrid approach to instructional methods. She utilized command, self-check, and demonstration. As the researcher entered the classroom, the teacher had completed the introduction of a learning target. The students had been on the carpet. After questions were asked, the teacher instructed the students to complete the learning activity on their tables. The teacher walked around and answered questions. The students worked at their instructional levels, and frequently the teacher checked the progress of the students. During another visit, the researcher observed the students worked on a learning target that had to be shared with the class.

Ms. Tyler spoke to the students in a medium to loud tone. There were times during the visits Ms. Tyler fluctuated her voice. The teacher used negative words more than twice times during a classroom visit. For example, "You are not invited to the

carpet." and "Some of your friends are talking." The teacher utilized a call and response

with clapping. "If you hear my voice, clap once, if you hear my voice clap twice." Ms.

Tyler referred to the students as a whole group as "friends."

Ms. Guinn used a hybrid approach to instructional methods. Ms. Guinn used the

command, demonstration, reciprocal, and self-check. The students participated in

receiving the math learning target. Ms. Guinn introduced the learning target holistically.

The students asked questions about the lesson. Ms. Guinn walked around and monitored

the learning environment. The observer ascertained the students collaborated and

exchanged information. While the students prepared to self-check, Ms. Guinn indicated

the need for the students to return to their seats. The strategy Ms. Guinn used was to turn

off the lights and count to 10. Once the teacher arrived at the number 10, 15 of the 17

students were in their desks. Ms. Guinn stated, "When the lights go off, what else goes

off." The students chorally responded, "Our voices go off." The two students who

remained were moving to the desk.

Ms. Guinn spoke to the students in a loud and firm tone. There were times during

the visits Ms. Guinn fluctuated her voice. During a visit, the students were participating

in an English Language Arts learning target. The majority of the students were on task.

Two students were moving about the classroom. The teacher stood in one place, and

once the students looked at Ms. Guinn, the students sat in the allotted area of the

classroom. Ms. Guinn referred to the whole class as "boys" and "girls" or "students."

The teacher did not require or request administrative assistance during the visits.

Ms. Austin used a hybrid approach to instructional methods. Ms. Austin used

command, reciprocal, self-check, and self-selection. While on the carpet, the teacher

reviewed the learning targets and expectations for the Daily Five reading block. The

students had opportunities to select stations in which they wanted to work. As the teacher

called the stations and instructed the students to raise their hands, the remaining students

moved about the classroom. After the students moved to the expected areas, Ms. Austin

called some students to the table in the back to receive additional assistance. While the

students independently and collaboratively worked, the teacher had to redirect five

students. The five students displayed off-task behavior. Two of the five students talked

to their table mates. One student sat at the table and did not respond to instructions. The

remaining two students were moving around the room and were not academically

productive. The teacher called the name of the student who was at the table. Using a

whispering voice, the teacher redirected the student. The students who were talking to

the table mates were separated and the teacher instructed each student that their names

would be called again to learn and observe the completed work. The remaining students

who moved about, where redirected to sit at the table.

Ms. Austin spoke to the students in a low to medium tone. There were times

during the visits Ms. Austin fluctuated her voice. For example, "Friends, how should our

bodies look when we are meeting on the carpet?" The students modeled the behavioral

expectation. Next, the teacher stated, "Friends, we are going to review the expectations

of Daily Five." The teacher led the students in a song that reviewed the learning

expectations. The teacher did not require or request administrative assistance during the

visits.

Ms. Griffin spoke to the students in a medium to loud tone. There were times

throughout the visits Ms. Griffin fluctuated her voice. Ms. Griffin attempted to

introduce and discuss the expectations for the class period, but many students were off-task. Ms. Griffin stood in the front of the class and continued to talk while one student was moving items in the desk, another student was beating on the table, and three students were talking with classmates in close proximity. The teacher repeatedly asked the students to redirect and focus on the learning. The teacher spoke and rapidly moved hair behind her ear while talking. The remaining students were distracted by the classroom environment and focused on the students and not the teacher. The teacher loudly stated, "I am not going to tell you again!" "Sit down in 5, 4, 3, 2, 1 . . . you will write in your journal you are refusing to follow directions, to your mom!" The teacher attempted for the second time to revisit the learning expectations, and four of the 17 students removed the attention from the class and directed the focus upon the teacher. The teacher displayed an activity on the Promethean board, and five more of the 17 students directed the focus on the teacher. As Ms. Griffin continued to talk, the off-task students took their seats and the students who talked minimized the conversation. The teacher informed the students, "You will write about . . . and before you do, think about your idea." Ms. Griffin had a classroom management chart with the names of each student, but the chart was not utilized.

Ms. Griffin spoke to the students in a medium to loud tone. There were times during the visits Ms. Griffin fluctuated her voice. During another visit, the teacher was observed informing the students of learning targets. Next, the teacher stated, "Friends, we are going to review the expectations of our writing assignment." The teacher did not move the students' behavioral clip when the noise level increased, nor did the teacher request administrative assistance during the visits.

Ms. Franklin used a hybrid approach to instructional methods. She used the command, reciprocal, self-check, and self-selection. Ms. Franklin commanded the students to return to their seats. Of the six, three students quickly walked back to their seats. The remaining three students had to be directed three times to return to the seat. The students who sat at the desks awaited the teacher to continue the lesson. The teacher provided the learning target and set a timer; as the teacher walked around the students were informed of the necessity to complete a task before a predetermined time. Ms. Franklin had a classroom behavioral chart. During this class visit, the teacher did not utilize the classroom behavioral management chart.

Ms. Franklin spoke to the students in a medium to loud tone. There were times throughout the visits Ms. Franklin consistently fluctuated her voice. Ms. Franklin attempted to discuss the expectations for the class period, but many students were off-task. During the visit, the researcher observed six students standing in the student closet in the back of the classroom. While the students stood in the closet, the students laughed, moved about their belongings, and looked into the personal belongings of students in the classroom. Ms. Franklin walked to the back of the classroom and addressed the six students. The students at their desks talked or wrote on paper. The teacher did not request the assistance of the administrative team during the visits.

RQ4: How does the age, gender, ethnicity, or experience of an educator seem to affect the ability to develop and maintain connectedness and behavioral management within the classroom environment?

The age and ethnicity of Ms. Allen was displayed during the class meetings. Ms. Allen used current vernacular when explaining a variety of concepts. For example, "If

we were going to host a party and were inviting . . . people to watch us do the dance . . . how much food . . . would we need?" The students displayed high engagement to these questions. The students wrote down ideas and raised their hands to provide an answer. Ms. Allen spoke words of encouragement of students to remain focused upon lessons that supported Irvine's (2002) research. The ethnicity and experience of Ms. Allen was observed as the students discussed ideas for the 'party' question. The students discussed foods, dances, and activities to host during the party. Ms. Allen was able to provide comments and used humor during the comments. One comment Ms. Allen gave, "Who thinks they can do the 'Whip' or 'Nae' dance better than your teacher?" The students continued to raise their hands and engaged in the class meeting. Ms. Allen made personal references about past teaching experiences that featured students participating in parties and personal gatherings.

The age of Mr. Thomas was discussed utilizing cartoons and movies that the teacher watched as a young student. The students became engaged as an assignment was to search the character names of at least one character or movie name Mr. Thomas referred to during a lesson. There was no evidence of ethnicity being a factor within this learning environment. There was no evidence of experience being a factor within this learning environment.

The age, ethnicity, and experience of Ms. Petty referred to clichés and music with which the students were familiar. For example, Ms. Petty responded with warm demanders, such as "Stay in your lane, my intelligent one." "You are only getting 'Good Job' cards if you are being the best you can be!" Ms. Petty used music the students were familiar with during visits in which the students were collaboratively and

independently working. The students occasionally moved about in their seats when a familiar song was heard. There was no evidence that the gender of Ms. Petty affected the teacher's ability to maintain connectedness and classroom management.

The age, experience, and ethnicity of Mr. Roberts was displayed while the teacher was instructing the students and using experiences in life to convey the lesson during the visit. One example of how Mr. Robert's age and gender affected his ability to maintain connectedness and classroom management was referring to entertainers and various sporting players during his years in school. Mr. Roberts referred to Louis Armstrong, Miles Davis, and Aretha Franklin as he told stories about how these pioneers became famous. During one of the classroom visits, the teacher held a class meeting that questioned what they believed school was like for Mr. Roberts when he was the age of the students in the class. There was no evidence that the gender of Mr. Roberts affected the development of connectedness and maintenance of classroom management.

There was no evidence that the ethnicity of Ms. Reeves affected the development of connectedness and maintenance of classroom management. In addition, there was no evidence that the gender of Ms. Reeves affected the development of connectedness and maintenance of classroom management. During the classroom visits, Ms. Reeves referred to personal experiences within her family, but not school experiences. For example, Ms. Reeves discussed her daughter and granddaughter and her appreciation for attractions around the researched area. The teacher provided various stories associated with her family in which the students became engaged and participated with stories of the students' families.

There was evidence that the gender of Mr. Fox affected the ability to connect and maintain of classroom management. During the visits, Mr. Fox displayed challenges with instructing the older students. For example, during two visits, Mr. Fox sought the assistance of the administrative team while instructing older elementary students. During an additional three visits, Mr. Fox provided the title of 'Mr.' to the male students. Mr. Fox referred to the female students by their first names. There was no evidence that the age of Mr. Fox affected the ability to connect and maintain classroom management. During each visit, the researcher observed the experience Mr. Fox had with older students in regard to maintaining classroom management. There was a visit in which the researcher observed students expressing personal experiences with which Mr. Fox was not familiar. Also, the students made reference to cultural experiences of which Mr. Fox was not aware.

Ms. Swank displayed several examples of relating to the students through age. For example, she wore themed outfits to support the school pride. For example, the researched school had a Book Fair character night, and Ms. Swank dressed as her favorite character. Another example occurred when Ms. Swank wore outfits that supported the building colors, along with the students in her class. Ms. Swank often participated in school spirit activities. Also, Ms. Swank participated in athletic events that featured the students within the classroom. There was no evidence that the ethnicity of Ms. Swank affected the development and maintenance of connectedness and classroom management. Ms. Swank displayed the experience to participate in class meetings focused upon questions and views that the students shared. There was no

evidence that the gender of Ms. Swank affected the ability to maintain and develop

connectedness and classroom management.

There was no evidence that the age of Ms. Tyler affected the development and

maintenance of connectedness and classroom management. There was no evidence that

the gender of Ms. Tyler affected the development and maintenance of connectedness and

classroom management. Ms. Tyler utilized her experience in additional schools and

learning environments. The experiences she referred to were grade levels she taught,

and the students compared and contrasted events between learning environments. Ms.

Tyler utilized technology that engaged the students, and her experience of knowing

children of that age and grade level was evidenced in the engagement the students

showed when various programs were viewed. There was no evidence that the gender of

Ms. Tyler affected the ability to maintain and develop connectedness and classroom

management.

There was evidence that the age and experience of Ms. Guinn affected her ability

to develop connectedness and classroom management. For example, Ms. Guinn wore

shoes that were identical to many students' in the classroom. This occurrence caused

the students to become engaged in various activities Ms. Guinn introduced. Ms. Guinn

also used 'warm demanders' in the classroom. Ms. Guinn was able to relate through

experiences, to the students in reference to various media outlets and personal situations.

During a visit, Ms. Guinn was using a familiar song to teach a concept of math. There

was evidence that the ethnicity affected the ability to maintain and develop

connectedness and classroom management. Ms. Guinn was using a familiar dance, 'The

Whip,' to teach patterns. There was no evidence that the gender of Ms. Guinn affected the ability to maintain and develop connectedness and classroom management.

There was no evidence that age affected the ability of Ms. Austin to maintain and develop connectedness and classroom management. There was evidence the gender of Ms. Austin affected the ability to maintain and develop connectedness and classroom management. Ms. Austin displayed difficulties with developing connectedness with girls within the classroom. For example, during the visits of the researcher, Ms. Austin was directing girls during the majority of the classroom observations concerning their behaviors. Ms. Austin used the experience of teaching to implement behavioral strategies to redirect students within the classroom. For example, speaking softly, ignoring minor behavioral infractions, redirecting within the classroom, and individual compelling conversations. There was evidence that ethnicity was a concern for Ms. Austin. During the classroom visits, the teacher redirected members of one ethnicity within the classroom. The redirection consisted of frequent individual conversations, behavioral observations, verbal and non-verbal cues, and removal from tables to locations within the classroom.

There was evidence the experience of Ms. Griffin affected the ability to maintain and develop connectedness and classroom management. During the classroom visits, Ms. Griffin displayed a limited range of connectedness and management strategies. For example, the students often spoke without recognition or exhibited off-task behavior. Ms. Griffin utilized the strategy of not addressing the behavior until more than three students displayed off-task behavior. Ms. Griffin implemented increasing the intonation and volume in the delivery of instructional information. Ms. Griffin was not consistent

with the method of admonishing behavioral infractions. She often wore outfits that

engaged the students. For example, there were days to dress casually. Ms. Griffin,

during the visits of the observer, wore clothing that the students discussed and to which

they associated a parallel experience. There was no evidence that gender affected the

ability to maintain and develop connectedness and classroom management. There was

evidence that ethnicity affected the ability to maintain and develop connectedness and

classroom management. As the researcher observed, the students provided discussions

of ethnic experiences to which Ms. Griffin stated a lack of experience or knowledge.

There was no evidence that gender affected the ability to maintain and develop

connectedness and classroom management for Ms. Franklin. There was no evidence

that age or ethnicity affected the ability to maintain and develop connectedness and

classroom management. There was evidence that experience affected the ability to

maintain and develop connectedness and classroom management. Ms. Franklin

exhibited a lack of strategies to redirect students who displayed undesirable behaviors.

During the first two visits, Ms. Franklin did not acknowledge behaviors of some

students. Ms. Franklin did not implement behavioral strategies consistently. During

additional visits, Ms. Franklin utilized some strategies, such as compelling conversations

and redirection. Ms. Franklin stated to the students that exhibited off-task and

aggressive behavior, a consequence. However, during the visits, the researcher did not

observe consistency in the manner in which the infractions and consequences occurred.

Summary

Chapter Four provided the results of the research. This research was conducted

with three male and nine female educators. The average teaching experience was nine

years in education. Two participants taught at schools prior to the researched school

district and school building. All of the participants placed the students in a seating

arrangement that lent to cooperative learning, whether pairs, tables, or cooperative

grouping. The participants infused seating arrangements, volume and voice levels, and

technology into the learning environment to assist with developing and maintaining

connectedness and classroom management. The educators utilized class meetings

throughout the school year.

       The researcher examined research questions and compiled observations based

upon the classroom visits. During the classroom visits, the researcher sought best

practices associated with each participating educator. The researcher conducted a

minimum of four classroom visits, or observations. During the classroom visits, the

researcher did not interact with the participants or the students. The researcher sat in an

area of the learning environment that allowed the participating educator to remain the

focus of the instruction. The researcher positioned herself in the learning environment

in a location which was the least obtrusive. The salient information was recorded with

the research questions being the focus for the topics studied. The research questions

were provided, and the information associated with each teacher and the qualifying data

was recorded.

       The classroom visits spanned throughout the academic school year and did not

exceed more than 30 minutes for an observation. The researcher selected different days

and times of the school day to assist in gathering how educators and students worked

cohesively throughout the school day. The observer utilized a recording checklist that

included potential occurrences or reactions between students and teachers. The

researcher administered an anecdotal notebook to document traits or best practices that

were not represented on the checklist. Each participating teacher's confidentially was

observed, and the critique of each classroom visit was placed in a confidential notebook.

The confidential notebook was created with the pseudonym of each participant that is

discussed in Chapter Five. Chapter Five includes a review of the research study,

questions, purpose, and methodology. Chapter Five provides triangulated results and a

personal reflection, and suggested recommendations for future research. The researcher

presented five questions throughout the research. Four questions were summarized in

this chapter; the final research question, RQ5: 'What is the self-perception of participants

of effectiveness in the classroom, as related to the recorded characteristics?' is discussed

in Chapter Five.

Chapter Five: Discussion and Reflection

Introduction

This chapter provides an in-depth look at the results from the data collection process. Chapter Five focuses upon the review of the purpose, methodology, research questions, and results. The researcher presents the data in the form of comparison of observable best practices, as well as the verbal practice explanation provided by the participating educators. This chapter outlines the focus upon the triangulation of data with regard to the survey, questionnaire, interview, and observations. Chapter Five also provides personal reflections and recommendations for future research.

Research Questions

RQ 1: With regard to teacher characteristics of age, gender, ethnicity, and experience, what similarities and differences are found in the steps and procedures implemented by participating teachers to deliberately develop student-teacher connectedness and maintain a successfully managed learning environment?

RQ2: How does classroom management positively and/or negatively affect the educator, students, and classroom environment, with respect to connectedness, as evidenced by behaviors such as off-task, aggressive, and non-academically productive behaviors?

RQ3: How does a teacher's intonation and delivery method seem to affect behavioral management as measured by on-task, academically productive, and nonaggressive behaviors?

RQ4: How does the age, gender, ethnicity, or experience of an educator seem to affect the ability to develop and maintain connectedness and behavioral management within the classroom environment?

RQ5: What is the self-perception of participants of effectiveness in the classroom, as related to the recorded characteristics?

Research Questions with Analysis

The purpose of this research was to conduct an investigation and gain an understanding of educational topics outlined by the five research questions. Data were gathered using a variety of methods. The first of the measures was a teacher survey. The initial survey results contributed to the respondents' understanding of connectedness. The survey was coded and categorized for common themes or responses.

The second method of measurement was through use of a teacher questionnaire. The researcher provided a questionnaire for each respondent. This questionnaire spanned the knowledge of then-current management styles, introduction and maintenance of a management plan, effects of behavioral management plans on teacher-student connectedness, procedures to build academic and personal connectedness, and plans for off-task behaviors exhibited by students. The respondents had an opportunity to provide insight in reference to these questions. The questionnaire was coded, and common themes were developed. The respondents who participated in this research provided common practices, such as being authoritative, remaining clear and consistent, leading daily reviews, being flexible, and remaining positive.

For the third method of measurement the researcher conducted an interview with each respondent. This interview questioned participants' definitions of student-teacher

connectedness and classroom management. The interviews gathered from each

participant perceptions of the relevance of age, gender, ethnicity, and experience in a

teacher, and the steps and procedures to necessary to maintain a management plan. The

effect of positive or negative behavior of a student on a teacher and the teacher's voice

intonation and delivery method were questioned. The interview also investigated how

redirection appeared in the classroom, the number of office referrals, reasons for those

referrals, participants' conclusions, and whether there was a necessity for student contact

outside of school. The interviews were confidential and each participant had the

opportunity to expound to the level of his or her comfort. The interview responses

provided themes that centralized upon building relationships with students, involving

students with the development of classroom expectations, routine reviews of expectations

within the learning environment, varying characteristics of a teacher, intonation utilized

during interactions, redirections, and levels of involvement with students outside of

school.

The fourth method was classroom observation. The data gathered through the

class observations supported the fourth research question, how the age, gender, ethnicity,

or experience of an educator seemed to affect the ability to develop and maintain

connectedness and behavioral management within the classroom environment. The data

also addressed the aforementioned research questions. The classroom observations

occurred throughout the allotted and approved research time frame. The initial

observation occurred shortly after the researcher and participant interview.

The first observation was implemented to create familiarity and lessen the

distraction the presence of the researcher may have caused. This observation provided an

opportunity for the researcher to acclimate to the learning environment and understand

the individual layout of each participating teacher's classroom. Times and dates varied

throughout the observation period. The researcher investigated practices utilized by the

participants throughout the day and week that exhibited connectedness and classroom

management. The observations did not exceed 30 minutes, and the researcher did not

interact with the participating teacher or students during times of observations. A

checklist was used which contained possible observable practices. The researcher used

this checklist and anecdotal notes and collected visible data. The researcher triangulated

data featuring the observation in the form of a synopsis. The synopsis provided the

observational practices implemented in the various researched classrooms. The

researcher drew comparisons when applicable. The observations chronicled the 12

educators throughout the school year. The researcher provided information about the

participants' ages, genders, ethnicities, and experiences from the vantage point of

observable interactions with the students, voice intonation, and delivery method. As

well, the researcher examined the observable practices of classroom management.

The fifth method of measurement was the self-reflective journal. However, the

participants, who were free to refuse to participate at any time, declined to keep this

journal. This planned method of data collection was thus not available for analysis.

RQ 1: With regard to teacher characteristics of age, gender, ethnicity, and

experience, what similarities and differences are found in the steps and procedures

implemented by participating teachers to deliberately develop student-teacher

connectedness and maintain a successfully managed learning environment?

Survey results. The majority of the respondents overwhelmingly expressed knowledge of student-teacher connectedness. A small number of respondents did not express a secure sense of knowledge associated with student-teacher connectedness. However, more than half of the respondents reported awareness of student connectedness and expressed the same information in terms of what student connectedness looked like within respondents' learning environments. The respondents were confident in the understanding and awareness of student connectedness. The survey continued with the results of the importance of student connectedness.

The survey results displayed the perception of the participants of the importance of student connectedness with a teacher and within the learning environment. The entire researched population emphatically agreed with a value placed upon connecting with students individually. However, the results included a mixed viewpoint of the strategy each respondent had and utilized in order to develop and implement connections with students. Ten respondents believed connectedness with students was paramount, whereas, four respondents were divided in the importance of the connections with students. The results continued with the implementation of connectedness with students and teachers.

One aspect of the survey questioned the importance of how and where student connectedness may occur. The survey suggested an amalgamated result as to how connectedness was achieved. According to the results, less than 20% of the respondents were insistent in attending events that featured the students enrolled within their classrooms, while 42% of the respondents agreed with the importance of attending events outside of the school day that required the presence of the students taught. Thirty-three

percent of the respondents shared in the agreement that some importance was placed

upon the benefit of attending outside school events. However, one respondent adamantly

disagreed with being involved with the students outside of the school day. The survey

concluded with the vantage point of the respondents in the area of classroom

management.

Face to face interview results. Many respondents provided similar responses to

the ideology of student connectedness. Ms. Petty stated, "When I think of connectedness,

I think of how in tune and involved I am with the students' learning processes." Ms.

Tyler provided a different outlook, "When students do not have a good day, the next day

is an opportunity for students to have a fresh start or outlook." Ms. Tyler concluded, "I

must set the desired behavior tone and find out about the background, strengths, and

weaknesses of a student. It does not take much for a student to know if they like you!"

Mr. Fox stated, "If you do not try to connect, you are not going to reach the students."

Ms. Guinn provided an interesting thought, "How can a student connect with me if they

do not feel comfortable?" Mr. Roberts suggested, "As a teacher, I should find lessons

that connect with students and their experiences."

While most of the respondents preferred a lack of involvement with students

outside of the classroom, the respondents provided parents with their e-mail addresses

and school telephone numbers to utilize for clarification or assistance. One who did

encourage the contact was Ms. Allen. Ms. Allen smiled when she provided, "Many

former student stop by to see me after school." Ms. Allen continued,

The parents have my telephone numbers and e-mail address. Why should I be

able to contact the students and have their information, but I act shy about giving

mine. I believe this helps me with a low number of office referrals.

Conversely, Ms. Austin hastily stated, 'No, the parents can only contact me through the

school or e-mail". Mr. Thomas immediately provided how he handled being asked to

attend functions for students:

I have been invited to many functions provided by students. I make sure that I get

an e-mail or letter from the parent. When I get invited I make every effort to go

to the function. If I am not able to attend I will ask about the event the next time I

see the student. If you do not try to attend some of your students' events outside

of school, it may make the believability of your connectedness questionable.

Ms. Tyler and Ms. Guinn stated the students had not invited them to events

outside of school. The respondents suggested the fact each teacher was new to the

building may have something to do with parents not reaching out to invite them to events

featuring their child. Ms. Franklin stated, "If some students are having a dance or game, I

will try to go. If I do not go, I will talk with them about the event the next time I see

them at school." Ms. Griffin stated, "I love going to my students' events, I contact the

parents first, to ask if that is possible." Mr. Fox sorrowfully proclaimed, "My geographic

location does not allow me to attend events outside of school. But, I often stay after

school when I can, if the school is hosting a program." Ms. Petty regrettably stated, "The

students do not invite me to events." The information received from the interviews

provided insight as to what was observed from each teacher throughout the classroom

observation component of this qualitative research case study.

Classroom observations. Many educators displayed connectedness to the students within the classroom. Ms. Allen and Ms. Morgan displayed similar connectedness skills. Both educators utilized personal stories to share with the students. Mr. Thomas was similar to Ms. Allen and Ms. Morgan. Mr. Thomas connected with the students by discussing familiar characters seen in television, cartoons, or movies. Ms. Swank wore clothing that was coordinated with students on special occasions. The clothing may have represented a book character or coincided with a theme color which the class decided to display. Mr. Roberts discussed age-appropriate music and connected the students' experience with then-current songs. Mr. Fox involved genres of books that may be read within individual book bags and hosted meetings about the books, as well as centralized lessons around the books. Ms. Franklin discussed areas around the world that may be of interest and initiated discussions as to events in which the students would be involved and what feelings surrounded these events.

RQ 2: How does classroom management positively and/or negatively affect the educator, students, and classroom environment, with respect to connectedness, as evidenced by behaviors such as off-task, aggressive, and non-academically productive behaviors?

Survey results. The survey provided insight as to how the respondents implemented connections with the students. This aspect of the survey showed results from respondents that reflected how each participant decided to implement connections with students. The respondents suggested class meetings were held three times or more in a school week. The results showed that while 75% of the respondents planned to implement connectedness at the beginning of the school year, the survey also suggested

that less than 40% of the respondents planned on holding class meetings three or more

times within a school week. Another 40% of the respondents presented an indifference to

class meeting, while 25% were impassioned about implementing class meetings. As the

survey continued, the question of connecting with students became the focus.

The survey developed information about classroom behavioral management and

how it was conducted in the respondents' learning environments. The respondents

reported a definite desire to implement a behavioral management plan.

Twenty-five percent of the respondents agreed and planned to implement a behavioral

management plan. Yet, 75% of the respondents strongly agreed with the implementation

of a behavioral management plan. The survey showed 92% of the respondents

implemented the management plan on the first day of school. Eight percent agreed only

with the plan being implemented at some point during the school year. The respondents

provided a mixed response to students having an input in the classroom expectations

created. Thirty-three percent of the respondents agreed strongly or agreed with students

having an input. Yet, 25% of the respondents agreed with students being a part of the

input of classroom expectations. One respondent strictly stated students were not able to

contribute to the development of classroom expectations. Forty-two percent of the

respondents shared in strongly agreeing or agreeing in how to maintain classroom

management. One respondent stated a confident security in maintaining classroom

management. In conclusion, one respondent did not agree with being secure in the

knowledge of how to maintain classroom management.

As the survey focused upon the consequences of management, the researcher

sought information on the viewpoint of each respondent. Fifty-eight percent of the

respondents penalized students with the loss of privileges when off-task behaviors

occurred. One respondent stated he used the infusion of incentives, as well as punitive

measures associated with classroom management. Twenty-five percent of the

respondents strongly agreed with the loss of privileges for students when off-task

behavior occurred. One respondent was neutral in regard to this form of classroom

management, whereas one respondent strongly disagreed with students losing privileges.

The respondents referred to strategies implemented to address off-task behavior before

the contacting of administrative assistance. Sixty-seven percent of the respondents

agreed with having an area in the room to refocus the desired behavior, while, 33% of the

respondents strongly agreed with the function and implementation of a refocus area

within the learning environment. The respondents provided information about teacher

collaboration for behavioral management. Fifty-eight percent of the respondents

collaborated with a teacher and established a buddy room for students to redirect their

behavior. Yet, 42% of the respondents strongly agreed and utilized various teachers to

assist with redirecting student behaviors.

     Questionnaire results. Ms. Allen, an experienced teacher, remarked that being

authoritative and rewarding students with tangible incentives was the management style

of choice. Ms. Swank, a novice teacher provided, "I am not military style, but students

know the expectations and that there will be consequences both positive and negative for

following or not following them." Ms. Guinn, a first year teacher stated:

     I would describe my classroom management style as being authoritative. I feel I

     can laugh and enjoy my students during appropriate free times but when it is time

     to work, the students would be able to get right to it.

Mr. Roberts, an experienced teacher described his management style as structured, student friendly and active. Mr. Fox, a novice teacher remarked, "My management style is about respecting classroom norms and having the freedom gained from being responsible." Some respondents maintained the need to be clear and consistent. Ms. Austin, an experienced teacher stated, "I set clear expectations, explain and model the expectations, early and frequently; and hold students accountable for meeting these expectations. My management style is structured yet flexible and very positive." Mr. Thomas, an experienced teacher stated, "My management style is based on clear expectations, positive feedback, rewards, and repetitive routines." One respondent emphasized in the answer the importance of the review of expectations. Ms. Tyler a novice teacher stated, "I am in charge, students are aware of their expectations and they are referred to regularly throughout the school day." Many respondents mentioned the importance of flexibility. Ms. Austin a Caucasian teacher stated, "My management style is structured yet flexible" Mr. Roberts, an African American teacher exclaimed, "I provide structure, flexibility, and active engagement." Ms. Reeves, a Caucasian teacher concurred with the respondents, "Structured but flexible." Three respondents provided feedback about being positive. Ms. Griffin, a Caucasian teacher stated, "My management is positive and safe." Mr. Thomas agreed, "My management is based on clear expectations and positive feedback", and Ms. Austin concluded, "My style is structured yet flexible and very positive."

Face to face interview results. The respondents did not unanimously agree upon the involvement of students in the development of classroom expectations. The respondents agreed entirely that classroom expectations should be visible and reviewed

daily. The responses for student involvement in the development of classroom expectations varied. One teacher, Ms. Griffin stated, "Expectations are intended for how the classroom is to flow." Ms. Allen provided an in-depth procedure implemented in the introduction and implementation of classroom expectations or routines:

All parties must feel comfortable with each other during the process. The classroom must have methods to solve and deal with issues that happen in the classroom. Therefore, we meet and discuss daily current events and situations that may be occurring and how to deal with them. I used verbal praises and incentives as a mixture of classroom management. I also involve parents in the process. The students receive a contract that they must sign along with their parent or parents. The students take a part in developing the management plan and everyone has ownership in the process.

Ms. Reeves provided a different thought, "Posting expectations and discussing them throughout the year is crucial." Mr. Thomas lamented, "It is imperative to set the expectations on the first day and revisit the expectations daily." Ms. Swank suggested,

I allow the students to help with the development of the expectations, but I have two or three that I have in mind. I work my conversation to make seem as though the students crafted the expectations on their own.

Ms. Franklin provided, "I believe classroom expectations are necessary for the students to be successful and learning systems can stay in place." Ms. Tyler stated, "I use a clip chart for the students and a behavioral binder goes home to inform the students of the expectations the class has decided and agreed upon." Mr. Fox adamantly stated:

 Having a set of rules is a structure to allow learning. The guidelines are for

students to be safe and able to learn. Many think discipline and punishment are

the same, but they are not. When we have self-discipline, we can be safe.

Ms. Guinn interestingly stated, "Many do not like to use the word 'order', but that

is the best way to describe the environment. You need order to keep moving and safe.

As a teacher I need to use signals as I develop expectations."

The respondents provided similar responses to the daily review of routines. One

respondent, Ms. Austin, commented about daily reviews of expectations, "It takes a while

because this may be the first time for some students, but if you start this process in the

beginning, you will have a better school year." Mr. Thomas did not provide a specific

number, but he stated, "Revisit constantly". Ms. Swank suggested methods to make the

review of expectations refreshing, "Make a poster, write a letter to a student explaining

why expectations are important, write a poem about building and classroom expectations,

and give homework free days if a student shows the following of expectations." Mr.

Thomas interestingly implemented this method, "I work with the students throughout the

year on the review of the expectations and allow the students to explain to new students

what is expected during the building and classroom." The respondents provided

impressions of intonation volumes and delivery methods with students.

Classroom observations. The participating teachers implemented different

classroom management techniques. Some educators, such as Ms. Swank, Ms. Allen, and

Ms. Petty utilized a call and response. Ms. Austin utilized a wind chime to indicate

transition. Ms. Griffin, Ms. Tyler, and Ms. Guinn elected to ignore behaviors and chose

to address the off-task behavior once the escalation involved multiple students. Mr.

Roberts and Mr. Thomas utilized humor and satire throughout the management component, as well as Ms. Petty. Mr. Fox referred to the male students with a title, whereas the female students did not receive a title. Ms. Reeves, similar to Ms. Griffin, Ms. Tyler, and Ms. Guinn selected to ignore off-task behaviors until the escalation began and continued.

RQ 3: How does a teacher's intonation and delivery method seem to affect behavioral management as measured by on-task, academically productive and nonaggressive behaviors?

Face to face interview results. The respondents provided a mixture of approaches to intonation and delivery method. Ms. Allen offered, "A student does not want to be yelled at or embarrassed. Think about how you would feel if someone yelled at you and tried to embarrass you in the presence of your peers." Ms. Allen also stated, "Teaching needs more than one method. As a teacher, over time, you will feel comfortable with giving information in different ways. For example, you may have to lecture, group students cooperatively, or allow them to complete independent work." Ms. Reeves indicated, "Talking calmly and softly works the best." Mr. Thomas stated, "If you are a yeller, the students become immune to a loud voice." Ms. Swank said, "Speaking softly is the best way to work with students." Ms. Guinn concluded, "I speak in an assertive tone, not mean." The respondents did not provide profoundly different approaches to redirection. The respondents indicated the procedures of verbal and non-verbal warnings, individual conversations, complementing the surrounding students that exhibited on-task behavior, and finally removal of classroom seating or administrative assistance.

Classroom observations. The instructional delivery method of all participants was a hybrid approach. The participants utilized direct instruction and cooperative learning primarily. Three participants utilized class meetings, which supported the survey. The male participants utilized proximity more than the female participants. The older and more experienced teachers utilized a hybrid approach of direct instruction and cooperative learning. The novice teachers implemented cooperative learning techniques, but had a difficult time refocusing the discussion once the activity concluded. The novice teachers led the discussions and talked 80% or more of the time. Once a need occurred to discipline a student, the novice teachers lengthened the conversation. This caused the student to continue with the off-task behavior or not to acknowledge the teacher. The experienced teachers managed the students with minimal conversation. The African American teachers utilized call and response terms that may be in song lyrics or familiar words to the students. The Caucasian female teachers referred to all the students as "friends." One male teacher referred to the boys as "Mr." The male teachers implemented more humor and assumed a more relaxed manner in corrections and management.

The participants utilized varied intonation within the instruction. The younger and novice teachers projected their voices, and at times yelled. The younger experienced teachers spoke softly and at times whispered. One male teacher, older and experienced yelled and became frustrated with the students. The remaining male teachers spoke at a moderate tone and continued to utilize humor while instructing and disciplining. The younger teachers did not vary often from the intonation throughout instruction. The experienced and African American teachers used warm demanders throughout the

classroom visits. One example, "You are not going to quit and give up." These words of encouragement supported the concept of "warm demanders." According to Irvine and Fraser (1998) described an interaction between a student and teacher below by borrowing James Vasquez' notion, "warm demanders," a description of teachers of color "who provide a tough-minded, no-nonsense, structured, and disciplined classroom environment for kids whom society has psychologically and physically abandoned" (p. 56). Bondy and Ross (2008) have summarized warm demanding as "approaching students with unconditional positive regard, knowing students and their cultures well, and insisting the students perform to a high standard" (p. 58).

    RQ 4: How does the age, gender, ethnicity, or experience of an educator seem to affect the ability to develop and maintain connectedness and behavioral management within the classroom environment?

    Face to face interview results. The respondents provided insight as to the characteristics of a teacher. One respondent, Ms. Guinn, a new teacher provided thoughts about how age may be a focal point in connectedness and classroom management. Ms. Guinn stated:

> This is my first year, and I am in my twenties. Some of my students thought I was a tutor when I first started. I am better with younger students and not older students. Sometimes, students think of me as an older sister or cousin, I have to work harder to gain control and order in the classroom.

    The answer Mr. Fox provided about age conflicted with the views of Ms. Guinn, "Younger teachers have it easier." Ms. Allen stated, "Age has nothing to do with connectedness." Mr. Thomas suggested, "My age has helped because I can relate to the

students and their interests." Ms. Austin declared, "More than anything, experience is the most important." Ms. Franklin expressed, "When you first graduate, if you are younger, the students do not take you seriously." Mr. Roberts extended Ms. Franklin's answer, "It should not matter the age of a teacher, but it does. A teacher that is younger, has to work harder to gain control of the classroom and form connections with students." The respondents shared insight about the gender significance in education.

The respondents expressed views about the gender of a teacher. Mr. Fox, Mr. Thomas, and Mr. Roberts provided similar responses. Mr. Fox stated, "As a teacher, you have to get beyond your gender." Mr. Thomas followed, "The world of teachers is filled with women, as males we have to navigate differently. But, if you love teaching, you get over the obvious." Mr. Roberts concluded, "Some children are not used to having a male role model. I love these children as my own." The female respondents provided a mixture of responses to the view of gender. Ms. Allen stated, "You have to be able to teach children no matter your gender." Ms. Reeves contributed, "Sometimes I believe male students will benefit from having a male teacher. They are used to seeing women, and having a male teacher may be helpful at times." Ms. Franklin expressed, "There is no barrier between genders, I am able to manage male and females the same." The respondents continued to discuss the ethnicity of the teacher.

Ms. Swank expressed, "If you know where students are coming from, this helps." Ms. Franklin stated, "As an African American teacher, I feel I have a stronger connection to their experiences." Ms. Guinn expressed, "I do not have to be the same color to identify with my students." Mr. Fox interestingly stated, "I am not colorblind to my students, I am color aware. As educators we must be aware of the colors and cultures

that are sitting before us." Mr. Roberts followed, "It should not matter, but it does, the color for some students. We must make sure we move beyond the color and teach." Ms. Petty and Ms. Austin did not contribute answers about the ethnicity of a teacher as being of a factor to be considered. The respondents concluded the interview questions with the analysis of the experience of a teacher.

Ms. Allen expressed, "If you do not have experience with other cultures your ability to teach and reach will be complicated, at best. This viewpoint supported Yosso (2005). Yosso suggested that educators visit the restaurants, parks, stores, churches, clinics, organizations and agencies in the neighborhood to hear firsthand the needs, fears, desires and values of community members (p. 91). Ms. Reeves did not provide a response to the ethnicity being a characteristic of teachers. However, Ms. Guinn stated, "The longer you are in the educational world, the more you know. You have an opportunity to pull from different experiences." Mr. Fox stated, "It helps if you can bring different experiences, but if you cannot, just be honest. The experiences will come, wait your turn." Mr. Roberts expressed, "You have to adjust the way you teach to respect all cultures and ethnicities, and that comes with experience." Ms. Griffin concluded, "The biggest factor in education is experience. Experience brings a different dynamic to education. I am learning now, that experience helps with connecting and managing all students."

RQ 5: What is the self-perception of participants of effectiveness in the classroom, as related to the recorded characteristics?

The educators were asked to maintain a log that was confidential. The log was designed to allow the educators to interact briefly with a variety of prompts surrounding

the themes of connectedness. The participation in the study was voluntary and all 12

participants declined to participate in this part of the research. This resulted in no

appropriate data to answer this research question.

Personal Reflections

The purpose of the research was to examine, with respect to the teacher,

characteristics of age, gender, ethnicity, and experience, which classroom behavioral

practices were utilized that may build and maintain connectedness with students and

which can provide classroom behavioral management. The research measured

qualitatively, whether a difference exists between teachers by gender, age, or ethnicity in

acknowledging or demonstrating, the importance of formulating connectedness with

students. This connectedness may have assisted in managing classroom routines and

behaviors, as well as assisted students in focusing upon their learning outcomes.

The intended outcome was to observe best practices used by educators that could

be shared with grade level colleagues, vertical team colleagues, and schools within the

district to assist in effectively connecting with and managing student outcomes and

behavior. This research was conducted to assist school districts, as districts potentially

implemented professional development opportunities for all staff members to improve

performance and increase student learning. This research on connectedness between

teachers and their students may suggest specific training choices were needed in a given

district. Also, teaching colleges and universities may implement courses and professional

development opportunities that focus upon the importance of and strategies involved in

developing teachers who focus upon forging a strong connectedness to contribute to

student academic success. The research sought responses to a multitude of research questions:

The journey to the completion of this project was arduous, enjoyable, and humbling. As an educator, the expectations of working with the students who enter the doorways are presumptive. The idea that giving your best, determined to succeed, and remaining positive and steadfast is the key element to the successes of teaching. As educators, we are taught to seek the best practices to educate students. However, an emphasis on building relationships is not taught as a priority. Perhaps, it is an assumption that building relationships or connectedness is imperative; however, many teachers long to determine or receive methods to assist in connecting with students. The researcher observed some students who appeared to look forward to entering the classroom environment, and other students who had an aversion or a sense of anxiety about what lay ahead through the educational day. That is what led the researcher to the decision to study how educators developed and maintained connectedness with students. The researcher sought to examine if the characteristics of a teacher helped or hurt the accomplishment of this goal.

The researcher visited and observed numerous educators who were held in the highest regard. Each teacher brought to the learning environment influences, voluntarily or involuntarily, into the realm of education. The researcher observed some teachers evolved throughout the process of study. Some teachers were observed discussing lessons with smiles, laughs, and a relaxed sense of conversation. However, learning transpired. The researcher observed some participants seeking methods to gain a more coherent understanding as to the thought processes of each student, to assist the teacher in

forging a more in-depth connection with the students. The researcher observed

participants using words of encouragement as learning took place. Also, many teachers

found the positive when behavior was corrected or redirected.

Obstacles in the Research

There were obstacles throughout the pathway of this case study that may have

been altered if the research were continued. The researcher implemented a survey,

questionnaire, interview, and classroom observation. The survey would have benefited

from the pursuit of how the participants viewed the age, gender, ethnicity, and experience

of the teacher as having any positive or negative influence in the role of education. There

were potential positives and negatives in regard to the questionnaire and interview

component. The questionnaire and interview data granted the researcher an opportunity

to garner a more comprehensive understanding of the individual thoughts shared by each

participating teacher. These instruments provided teachers an opportunity to express

ideologies in regard to each question. However, there was not an instrument to measure

the validity of the answers each respondent provided. Some participants may not have

provided authentic responses due to a concern that their responses might be reported.

Although the researcher continuously reiterated the confidentiality and security of the

information gathered, there was a potential that a teacher did not want to be associated

with views of dissent. The observation may have caused the participating teachers some

form of anxiety while another staff member observed the interactions within the

classroom. Often, teachers have a sense of aversion to being observed for the fear of

judgment.

Possible Changes to Research Design

The survey, questionnaire, and interview components were administered on paper and returned. One potential change to the survey could have been questions segmenting the characteristics of the age, gender, ethnicity, and experience of a teacher. A potential change to the research design could have been to interchange some questions from the interview and questionnaire. The researcher may have gathered different responses from the participants if the questions on the interview and questionnaire had been interchanged. The classroom observations may have been better if the frequency occurred in increments of 15 minutes and more intermittently.

Summation of Research Questions

The first question examined the influence of the characteristics of age, gender, ethnicity, and experience of a teacher in regard to connectedness and classroom management. The researcher concluded through the observations and literature review, that the age of a teacher had a potential affect upon the ability to relate to students.

Age. There was limited information about the characteristic of age as a contributing factor in the formulation and maintenance of connectedness and classroom management. The participating teachers provided differing viewpoints of age and contributed age may affect some students' ability to relate to the teacher and the knowledge being delivered. The younger teachers often had to exhibit a sterner or firm form of discipline in an effort to ensure productivity in the classroom. The researcher suggests that teachers entering the educational profession acknowledge that age is a factor that is inevitable. It is the responsibility of the educator to defuse the emphasis of

age and redirect the focus upon using current trends or events that are student age appropriate to bolster to influence of education within the learning environment.

Gender. The observation and literature yielded information about genders. The observations conducted provided information about the researched male teachers. The male teachers maintained proximity within the classroom. The literature suggested a decline in the pursuit by males and African American individuals of a career in teaching. The previous research provided reasons such as low salaries and fear of being accused of sexual abuse, as well as negative stereotypes (Martino, 2008, p. 192). The observation from the research district provided the male representation as 25% of the researched population. The remaining 75% of the researched population consisted of female teachers. The researcher suggests recruitment programs continue, advertisements in teaching colleges and universities, libraries, career centers, and media outlets continue. The researcher suggests then-current male teachers attend high school and career readiness centers to encourage other males to pursue a career in education. The salaries for many school districts were increasing and schools were implementing protocols and procedures to minimize claims of inappropriate male interactions with students.

Ethnicity. The observations and literature provided limited information about the importance of the ethnicity of an educator, although cultural competency and culturally responsive education surfaced while the research was being conducted. According to the literature, culturally responsive teaching was defined as empowering students "Intellectually, socially, emotionally, and politically by using cultural referents to impart knowledge, skills, and attitudes" (Roberts, 2009, p. 382). The literature provided information about warm demanders. The warm demanders were teachers who embraced

values and enacted practices that were central to their students' success (Brody, Ross,

Hambacher, & Acosta, 2005). Warm demanders were observed in several classrooms.

For example, many African American teachers utilized motivational statements or

provided teachable moments that infused warm demanding statements to encourage

academic success from students. The researcher suggests teachers that did not share the

same culture as the students being taught, research, read, and learn about the ethnicities

they will be instructing. The researcher suggests having enriched dialogue between

teachers and students may assist in learning and gaining insight to ethnicities that are

being taught.

    Experience. The observations and literature provided information about the

experience of a teacher. The literature stated experienced teachers had concerns different

from the novice teacher. According to the research, new trends in curriculum and

instruction, professional development opportunities, and teaching strategies for use in the

classroom were concerns that some experienced teachers expressed (Certo & Fox, 2002).

The instrumentation for this case study did not examine in depth the concerns

experienced teachers had in the aforementioned area. The observation investigated

procedures or practices utilized by teachers described as experienced teachers. The

research sought methods or best practices utilized to develop and maintain connectedness

and classroom management.

    The observations and literature provided information as to potential affects

classroom management had on the students, teachers, and learning environment. Also,

the researcher discovered information about the intonation and delivery method of the

teacher. According to Lewis (2000), it was the duty of the teacher to create a good

learning environment and decorate the room. Classroom management could pose a problem to the teacher, if putting routines in place and then executing, modifying, and reinstating them does not occur. The researcher observed that poor classroom management could still take place in environments with furniture arranged and rooms decorated. There were some classrooms that were decorated with student-friendly writings and neatly organized; however, the teacher struggled to maintain order. The researcher suggests that although these components are crucial aspects of classroom management, concepts such as student work samples being visible and daily conversations between the teacher and student may assist with classroom management. The literature focusing on intonation at the time of this writing was not in abundance. The observations provided the researcher with the conclusion that in the classrooms in which the teacher remained calm and spoke at a softer tone, management and connections were consistent. The delivery method the researcher observed throughout the classroom visits was cooperative learning and independent work. The students worked with partners or groups of four if not independently.

In conclusion, the classroom observations provided information about how the age, gender, ethnicity, and experience of the teacher affected the classroom effectiveness. The researcher observed that the age and experience of the participating teacher contributed to concerns with consistent connectedness and good management. The teachers who indicated an age younger than 40 were observed more frequently ignoring off-task behavior, talking more as a form of discipline, and being inconsistent with the implementation of a classroom behavioral system. These teachers also did not indicate on a survey a belief in the importance of class meetings. As well, the researcher did not

observe consistent class meetings or discussions with students about personal experiences. The African American teachers, regardless to age, gender, or experience sat more frequently during instruction; however had a stronger command for connectedness and classroom management. These teachers instructed the students with anchor stories about personal experiences these teachers experienced. The definition of "experienced teacher" may vary. According to Lewis (2000), experienced teachers had taught two or more years. However, the researcher defined experienced as a teacher that taught for more than five years. This was due to Missouri districts considering five consecutive years of teaching required for tenure for a teacher. (Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, 2015). The researcher observed teachers who were classified as experienced by this definition used a hybrid approach to discipline; non-verbal and verbal cues, moderate-to-low intonations, and high classroom engagement and who sought the assistance of buddy classrooms or administrative assistance.

Recommendations for Future Research

The findings from this qualitative case study research developed these recommendations for future research:

1) The recommendation is to investigate teachers of additional ethnic backgrounds, i.e. Asian, Hispanic, Pacific Islander, and Multiracial.

2) The recommendation is to concurrently study two schools with comparable demographics and teacher populations.

3) The observational log checklist should be modified in future research to reflect additional teacher behaviors that the researcher did not initially address.

4) The recommendation is for a male researcher to conduct research about

connectedness and classroom management from the male gender perspective.

Conclusion

Teachers have interacted with students for centuries. The educational

expectations are continuously evolving and best practices are being created daily to reach

students. As educators craft lessons, the interest levels of students should be included

and considered when creating and designing lessons to instruct students. Teachers that

consider the interest level of students will benefit from the engagement and retention of

information being received. Teachers that are both novice and experienced will benefit

from designing lessons that coincide with the learning targets and expectations of

students, while maintaining engagement. While teachers are instructing students,

developing consistent classroom routines, procedures, and protocols will assist in the

maintenance of good classroom management. Teachers that include students in the

development of classroom routines and procedures will yield improved student

connectedness and improved classroom management.

The classroom environment has evolved. Many students are entering the

classroom with emotional concerns, lack of parental support, and instability. These

impressionable minds are coming to school to seek stability and security. The students

that are sitting in the seats of today look different than 100 years ago. The need and

requirement to engage students and acknowledge the cultural influences are crucial to

properly prepare students to face society upon the completion of formative education

years. Teachers that take the time to encourage and create lessons that seek

connectedness, cultural responsiveness, and good classroom management will feel

confident in being a pertinent component of the academic and mental development of a

multitude of students.

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Appendices

Appendix A

Leslie Threadgill-Kendall
11950 Old Halls Ferry Road
Florissant, Missouri 63034
December 4, 2014

Dear Teachers:
I am attempting to complete a mixed method research report that measures the ability to formulate and implement student-teacher connectedness and maintain classroom management. It is my hope to observe how we as educators develop a positive relationship with the students in which we teach daily, as well as effectively and productively manage their classroom behavior.
Please complete the enclosed questionnaire/survey. Your candid and thoughtful reply will help me complete this mixed method research. Most people are able to complete the questionnaire in less than one hour. Your response and any comments will be treated with utmost confidentiality. After the results are tabulated and compiled, the information will be destroyed.
Once you have completed the questionnaire/survey, please place it in the brown envelope, in my mailbox. Please return the completed questionnaire/survey to me by December 11, 2014.
Thanks again for your help.
Sincerely,
Leslie Threadgill-Kendall
Second Grade Teacher
Jury Elementary
Enclosures

Appendix B

Lindenwood University
School of Education
209 S. Kingshighway
St. Charles, Missouri 63301

Informed Consent for Participation in Research Activities

Title: "The Study of Academic Practices Developed and Implemented by Educators to Gain and Maintain Student-Teacher Connectedness and Classroom Behavioral Management as Related to Educator Characteristics of Age, Gender, Ethnicity, and Experience"

Principal Investigator Leslie Threadgill Kendall
     Telephone: E-mail: lt655@lindenwood.edu

Participant_____ Contact Info _____

_____

1. You are invited to participate in a research study conducted by Leslie Threadgill Kendall under the guidance of Dr. Terry Stewart / Dr. John Long. The purpose of this research is to study the methods and/or strategies educators implement and maintain to gain an academic connectedness with their students.

2. a) Your participation will involve
     Educators will be interviewed, participate in a survey, observed, and maintain an anecdotal journal that records their various experiences throughout the process in developing and maintaining connectedness with their students.

     The teachers will be observed throughout the academic school year. The observations will be a minimal of four times within the school year. The teachers will participate in a voluntary initial interview, questionnaire, and survey prior to the observation. The explanation of this process will be revisited throughout the process of this research.

   b) The amount of time involved in your participation will be quarterly classroom observations, with anecdotal notes throughout the research study process. The amount of time the anecdotal notes are completed will vary with the teacher responsible for the information. The educator will also participate in an interview, questionnaire, and survey. The amount of time, verbally and in written form, that is required to ascertain this information will vary from the input of each teacher.

Approximately 12 teachers will be involved in this research.

3. While all participants will be given a pseudonym, there is still a slight risk of identification associated with this research.

4. There are no direct benefits for you participating in this study. However, your participation will contribute to the knowledge about student and teacher academic connectedness and may help society gain a more concrete understanding as to the best strategies utilized and implemented to develop and maintain student and teacher connectedness. The possible benefits to you from participating in this research are assisting current and aspiring educators, school districts, and teaching institutions to better prepare and adapt a learning environment that supports student and teacher connectedness.

5. Your participation is voluntary and you may choose not to participate in this research study or to withdraw your consent at any time. You may choose not to answer any questions that you do not want to answer. You will NOT be penalized in any way should you choose not to participate or to withdraw.

6. We will do everything we can to protect your privacy. As part of this effort, your identity will not be revealed in any publication or presentation that may result from this study and the information collected will remain in the possession of the investigator in a safe location.

7. If you have any questions or concerns regarding this study, or if any problems arise, you may call the Investigator, Leslie Threadgill Kendall at 314.921.2291 or the Supervising Faculty, Dr. John Long at 626.949. 4937. You may also ask questions of or state concerns regarding your participation to the Lindenwood Institutional Review Board (IRB) through contacting Dr. Jann Weitzel, Vice President for Academic Affairs at 636-949-4846.

I have read this consent form and have been given the opportunity to ask questions. I will also be given a copy of this consent form for my records. I consent to my participation in the research described above.

_____   _____
Participant's Signature   Date   Participant's Printed Name

_____   _____
Signature of Principal Investigator   Date   Investigator Printed Name

Appendix C

Survey- Student-teacher connectedness and classroom management

Teachers:
Thank you for participating in the upcoming research. Please take the time to read and complete this survey. Once you have completed the survey, please place this in the confidential brown envelope in my mailbox. Please submit this by December 11, 2014.
Thank you again for your participation!

Understanding of Connectedness	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
I have had knowledge of the concept of student-teacher connectedness.					
I am aware of how student-teacher connectedness is developed.					
I know what student-connectedness looks like in my classroom learning environment.					
Importance of Connectedness					
I value making student connections with each student.					
I have a strategy in plan to develop and implement connectedness with students.					
I believe having connectedness with each student is important throughout the school year.					
Implementing Connectedness					
I plan to begin the steps to implement connectedness at the beginning of the school year.					
I plan to hold class meetings on a routine basis (three or more times in one school week).					
Connectedness with Students					
I believe it is important to attend events of my students outside of the school day.					
I believe I should discover personal views of the students in which I teach.					
I believe the students have a right to speak with me outside of the classroom (approved by guardian).					
Classroom Behavioral Management					
I have a plan to implement for behavioral management.					
I plan to implement my plan on the first day of school.					
My plan will be created with the students' input.					

Classroom Behavioral Management (continued)					
I am secure in how to maintain classroom behavioral management.					
The students will be penalized by losing privileges under my classroom management plan.					
I have arranged a place in the classroom for students to refocus.					
I have established a teacher to work with as a buddy room for students that may need to redirect their behavior.					
Additional Comments:					

Appendix D

Student-Teacher Connectedness and Classroom Management Questionnaire

Please complete this questionnaire. Your completion of this information is truly appreciated. When you have completed the questionnaire, you may return it into the enveloped, marked "Questionnaires".

1. What is your age range?
    O 21-39
    O 40-58
    O 59 and older

2. What is your ethnicity?
    O Caucasian/White
    O African American/Black
    O Asian
    O Hispanic
    O Latino
    O Other
3. How many years of service have you provided in the area of education?

    O 1-10
    O 11- 20
    O 21- 30
    O 31 years or more

4. What is your highest degree earned, and certifications?
    O Bachelors of Education
    O Masters of Arts
    O Masters Plus 30 years
    O Doctorate/Ph.D
    O Other Certifications (please list below)

    _____
    _____

5.   Currently, how many students are enrolled in your classroom?

    O 1-15
    O 16-25
    O 26 or more

6. How would describe your current classroom management style?

_____

_____

7. How do you build academic and personal learning connectedness with the students in which you teach?

_____

_____

8. If you utilize one, how do you introduce and maintain your classroom management plan with your students?

_____

_____

9. What is your plan if and when off-task behavior occurs within your learning environment?

_____

_____

10. Do you believe the lesson plans are important to assist in developing relationships and maintaining management, if so, how do you involve these concepts in your daily plans?

_____

_____

11. What is the effect of classroom behavioral management with teacher-student connectedness?

_____

_____

12. How does a receptive and productive academic relationship affect student achievement?

_____

_____

Appendix E

January 2015

Good Morning:

It is my hope that your winter holiday was enjoyable and full of rest.

Thank you for agreeing to participate in this educational research about student connectedness and classroom management. Your appreciated and crucial role in this qualitative research may potentially bring awareness to educators and school districts that educators that vary in age, ethnicity, experience, and gender may approach developing and maintaining academic connections with students differently.

The intended outcome is to observe best practices used by educators that can be shared with grade level colleagues, vertical team colleagues, and schools within the same or different school districts.

I would like to set up a date and time that will allow me to interview you. This interview will be confidential and assist me in gathering additional information that is not seen while observing you with your wonderful students. The interview will take the length of time you would like to give that best conveys your thoughts.

Also, on the day we meet and talk, I would like to set tentative dates/times for the initial observation, which will be 20 minutes or less. As I mentioned to you before, this initial observation will be to assist the students in having my presence occasionally throughout the school year.

My times I have available are Tuesday through Thursday, 12:40-1:30, to interview and observe. On Fridays, my time will be from 1:40-2:30. If you would like to meet before or after school, please indicate that in your response, we can discuss that as well.

I would like to meet with you starting next week, January 12th, so please indicate if this is possible and what day/time of the week.

Again, thank you, and I appreciate your completion of the data collection materials and I look forward to meeting with you soon.

Mornings (7:30-8:30) Name: Time:

After School (4:00-)   Name: Time:

Initial Observation- Day of the Week: Time

Thank you,

Leslie

Appendix F

Student-Teacher Connectedness and Classroom Management

Interview Questions

1. What is your definition of connectedness?
2. How would you define classroom management?
3. How do you think age, gender, ethnicity, and experience contribute to formulating connections with students?
4. What steps and procedures were implemented to maintain a successful classroom managerial environment? Please explain.
5. Does classroom management positively and/or negatively affect the educator if the teacher does not formulate empathetic relationships with students? Please explain.
6. How does a teacher's intonation and delivery method affect behavioral management? Please explain.
7. When you redirect a student, what does that look like in your classroom?
8. Have you referred to a student to your building principal for disciplinary concerns this school year, is so, how many?
9. What has been the reason(s) for the referral(s)?
10. What has been the result of the disciplinary referral?
11. Have you seen an improvement within the student(s), if so, how? If not, what occurs?
12. Do the students contact you outside of the classroom to receive assistance with school work? Describe how you handle those situations.
13. Has a student, or students asked that you attend functions in which they will be the focus outside of the school day? If so, please describe how you handle those situations.

Appendix G

Teacher:																			
Student:	1.: Teacher Speaks Softly (TSS)	2: Teacher Speaks Loudly or Yells TSLor	3. Teacher responds quickly (TRQ)	4. Teacher gives less than one minute	5.Teacher gives more than one minute	6. Teacher smiles at students (TSAS)	7.Teacher greets students in the morn	8.Students off-task, how many? (SOTx_	9. Teacher's room is student friendly (T	10. Can students access materials with	11. Cooperative learning (CL)	12. How often is a student or students	13. Student sent to redirection area in	14. Student sent to buddy classroom, t	15. Students interact positively/negati	16. Student returns from buddy room	17. Principal visits class (PVC)	18. Student sent to office (SSO)	Total-- count th
2																			
3																			
4																			
5																			
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Vitae

Leslie Threadgill Kendall

Florissant, Mo. lesthread@aol.com

EDUCATION
Lindenwood University (currently)
Ed.D in Administration   2015
Dissertation: "Academic Practices to Gain and Maintain Student-Teacher Connectedness
and Classroom Behavioral Management, Related to Educator Demographics"

Lindenwood University
M.A. in Administration   2007

Harris-Stowe State University
B.S. in Elementary Education   1996
Areas of Concentration: English
Minor: Social Studies

TEACHING EXPERIENCE
Hazelwood School District
2015
Armstrong Elementary
Elementary Educator

Hazelwood School District   2014
Jury Elementary
Elementary Educator   2004

Saint Louis Public School District   1996
Gateway Elementary Math, Science, and Technology
Elementary Educator

RELATED EXPERIENCE
Curriculum Writing
Curriculum Writing   August 2014 – present
Assisting the Hazelwood School District in developing
curricular subject matter for the 21st Century Learner
Assessment Literacy Presenter
Presenter   August 2013 – May 2015
Presenting research based learning activities to promote
successful learning in a 21st Century Classroom

MEMBERSHIPS
Alpha Chi National College Honor Scholarship Society