NOVICE MIDDLE SCHOOL TEACHERS' PERCEPTIONS OF CLASSROOM
MANAGEMENT

By

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ABSTRACT

CHRISTOPHER LACY. Novice Middle School Teachers' Perceptions of Classroom Management. (Under the direction of DR. REBECCA SHORE)

The purpose of this study was to investigate novice middle school teachers' perceptions concerning classroom management. Classroom management is a crucial component of teaching. However, it has consistently been a difficult area for novice teachers or teachers having less than three years of teaching experience (Albright, 2017; Kelly et al., 2015; Rose & Sughrue, 2021; Weinstein & Evertson, 2013). While it is evident that novice teachers struggle with classroom management, the way in which they conceptualize it needs further clarification. Determining precisely what specific aspects of classroom management with which novice teachers struggle also needs to be explored further. Using a phenomenological, qualitative design, data was collected using individual interviews. Interviews with eight novice, middle school teachers led to various notable findings. The findings included (a) novice middle school teachers' conceptualizations of classroom management center on the importance of establishing and maintaining a healthy community for learning, as well as the use of repetitive structures and procedures to lead and facilitate classroom activities; (b) Intervening in student misbehavior was found to be the most difficult aspect; (c) building relationships is essential for all teachers, and relationship building can bring about classroom management success; and (d) novice teachers need classroom management support with peer-led or real time learning opportunities. This study illustrates how novice, middle school teachers define classroom management and explores what aspects of classroom management cause novice teachers the most struggle. Prior research has offered a broad, bird's eye view of the problem of classroom management. These findings provide specific problems from the voices of teachers and suggests that providing novice

teachers with peer-led or real-time classroom management support could greatly enhance their classroom management skills.

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Lastly, I would like to acknowledge the participants in the study. Thank you for all you do and the time you gave for this project. The impact you are making will live on in the lives of your families, your students, your schools, and this paper.

DEDICATION

This project is dedicated to my family, both biological and chosen. You all believed I could, so I did.

- To my mother, Fabian, who has championed every venture and success in my journey.

- To my siblings, Nikia, Bryan, and Gabrielle, who have always been my anchors, keeping me grounded through life.

- To my best friends, Kaleigh and Wendolyn, who are the best teachers I know.

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- To my husband, LaDarius, who is a constant in a world of variables.

I am no more than a reflection of the best parts of each of you!

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

A Personal Vignette: The Why

As a fourth-year, middle school assistant principal, I had been successful in the role as a school leader. I was an organized and efficient testing coordinator. I led our English-language arts and exceptional children's departments through a new curriculum implementation and various course restructuring. I observed classrooms, evaluated and coached teachers. As student and family crises came and went, I felt confident in navigating the needs of the professionals, students, and parents I served. Though excelling in various aspects of the assistant principal role, particularly instructional leadership and a wide range of problem solving, addressing student discipline remained an ongoing challenge. Our students' behaviors were not generally considered extreme, yet I processed an inordinate amount of disciplinary referrals daily. Of those referrals, most appeared to be related to our school's unclear and inconsistent classroom management systems and policies.

When I observed classrooms, I began to see great variations in classroom procedures, routines, expectations, and behavior management systems. Our middle school students struggled to navigate the variety of teachers' management styles, meet their varied classroom rules and expectations, and thrive socially and behaviorally through such inconsistency. As our school began to implement new, more focused and uniform processes for behavior management, we created consistent schoolwide expectations and procedures for addressing student behavior. Nevertheless, disciplinary referrals and incidents were steadily increasing and our students still struggled with how our teachers communicated expectations, held them accountable, and managed their behavior. Many of the actions teachers took to enable learning and maximize class time appeared to be failing many of our students.

I compared my thoughts and assessment of our school's classroom management needs with my previous experience as an elementary school teacher and high school administrator; these reflections were filled with key points. As an elementary school teacher, I recalled that my peers and I shared similar beliefs about elementary school classroom management, and we all used similar strategies. Centered on structure, these were carefully crafted sequences of learning activities and group management tools. Most of us managed classrooms similarly. In my experiences while at the high school level I recalled that most teachers also had similar beliefs on how classrooms should be managed. While these beliefs seemed to center on authority, control, and logical consequence, the best practices appeared to be agreed upon. At both schools, there had been an unspoken agreement about the best practices surrounding classroom management. After years of working closely with middle school teachers concerning student needs and behaviors, I realized this consensus about classroom management did not exist in our school. In particular, novice teachers exhibited consistent classroom management struggles. This led me to the question that was the basis for this research study: what do novice middle school teachers believe about effective classroom management?

Overview

Effective teaching requires mastering numerous skills and competencies, and classroom management is arguably one of the most important of those (Bozkus, 2021). Given its importance in the scope of teaching and instructing, researchers and educators have studied classroom management empirically for many years. Dating back over a century to the writings of William Bagley (1907), classroom management has consistently been a topic of interest and concern for educators and researchers (Weinstein & Evertson, 2013). Each year, researchers and

scholars produce considerable literature related to classroom management practices, principles, models, and programs.

During the past 40 years, research on classroom management has steadily increased (Bozkus, 2021). There is now a wealth of knowledge about classroom management (Weinstein & Evertson, 2013). Despite this wealth of knowledge, teachers consistently feel the need for training and support around classroom management. In the 2022 North Carolina Teaching Working Conditions Survey, 70 percent of the 112,509 respondents, teaching in North Carolina reported the need for professional learning around classroom management (North Carolina Teacher Working Conditions Survey, 2022). Further, national research showed that 40 percent of first-year teachers feel unprepared to handle classroom management issues in their classrooms (National Center for Education Statistics, 2012). There has also been an increasing number of younger and older, less experienced teachers entering the teacher profession (Sabornie & Espelage, 2023). Although close to three-quarters of undergraduate and graduate education majors participated in coursework on classroom management before their first year of teaching (Taie, 2022), researchers and educators continue to find it necessary to study classroom management.

There are numerous reasons for continuing this research. Most importantly, classroom management is directly and indirectly related to positive student outcomes. Effective practices directly correlate with students' motivation and engagement. Also, effective classroom management practices indirectly correlate with increased student achievement (Evertson et al., 1980; Nisar et al., 2019). Effective practices support organized learning environments which can create a path to increased academic achievement for all students (Freiberg et al., 2009).

Statement of the Problem

Classroom management is a crucial tool for all teachers. However, it has been a difficult area for novice teachers, or teachers having less than three years of teaching experience (Albright, 2017; Kelly et al., 2015; Rose & Sughrue, 2021; Weinstein & Evertson, 2013). Novice teachers especially have crucial needs around classroom management, discipline, and behavior management (Weinstein & Evertson, 2013). The literature suggests, many new teachers feel they need more preparation to manage their classrooms during their first years of teaching.

Many novice teachers also lack confidence in their own classroom management abilities (Melnick & Meister, 2008). Unlike veteran teachers, new teachers often lack a comprehensive understanding of classroom management and how its practices work alongside classroom instruction (Kwok, 2019). This lack of confidence and skills, combined with an often limited knowledge of ideas concerning classroom management as an influence on academic achievement, creates a unique challenge for novice teachers. Lack of these skills could therefore create a barrier to novice teachers' effectiveness and their students' academic achievement.

While it is clear that novice teachers struggle with classroom management (Albright, 2017; Kelly et al., 2015; Miles & Knipe, 2018), the specific aspects that cause the most difficulties for novice teachers needs to be better clarified. Little research exists regarding why novice teachers often struggle with its practices. Also, the way in which novice teachers understand classroom management needs to be further investigated.

Further research on what variables and aspects of teaching define or foster effective classroom management skills is needed. There is also limited research on how novice teachers operationalize practices to create well-managed classrooms. While the body of research about

classroom management continues to grow (Bozkus, 2021), research on its specific components is lacking.

In addition to minimal research that details novice teachers' understanding of classroom management and its aspects, there is little study on this topic in middle schools in particular. This setting needs to be further investigated in more detail, as it is studied less often than either elementary or high school environments (Gomez et al., 2012). The pairing of specificity regarding novice teachers' perceptions of classroom management in the middle school setting creates a gap in the research and highlights the need for further exploration of novice teachers' perceptions of classroom management, especially in middle schools.

Further, the topic has empirical importance because it will begin to address gaps in the body of classroom management research. This study has practical importance because it could provide teacher-mentors, teacher-coaches, and school administrators insights into beginning teachers' understanding of classroom management. Further information could give these groups practical and empirical knowledge that could be used to create and/or further develop professional development opportunities for novice teachers and inform teacher preparation programs.

Purpose Statement

The purpose of this qualitative, phenomenological study was to investigate novice middle school teachers' perceptions concerning classroom management. The investigator explored how novice middle school teachers view and define classroom management, as well as considered their perception of its tenets. Additionally, the purpose of this study was to understand which factors or aspects of classroom management cause novice teachers the most difficulties.

Research Questions

1. How do novice middle school teachers conceptualize classroom management?

2. What do novice middle school teachers perceive to be effective classroom management strategies?

3. Which aspects of classroom management are easiest for novice middle school teachers to manage, and which create the greatest challenges?

Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework for this study was based on two key concepts related to classroom management research. First, classroom ecology provides a lens for understanding classrooms in their natural complexity (Doyle, 1977a; Doyle, 1977b; Evertson & Poole, 2008; Sinelnikov, 2015). Second, Weinstein and Evertson (2013) provided a structure for understanding the fundamental aspects and tenets of classroom management.

Classroom ecology, as a paradigm for research and understanding classrooms, was a term first used by Walter Doyle to describe prior research and observations related to the nature of the classroom. Doyle (1977a) observed that the dimensions of the classroom are interconnected and the multidimensional nature of the classroom causes unpredictability and complexity. These dimensions include the nature of classroom tasks, the environmental demands of the classroom, and student competence. Doyle (1977a) explained that classroom activities consist of many overlapping tasks. Each has its own goal in supporting learning. While classroom tasks are individually simple, the various tasks done during a class session can be complex when considering the environmental demands of the classroom.

The second dimension of Doyle's classroom ecology paradigm is environmental demands. Environmental demands in the classroom refer to tangible and observable aspects of

the classroom that impact learning and instruction. Aspects of the environment include the number of students and teachers, materials used for the day, equipment used during instruction, and furniture in the classroom. A classroom's environment could also include teacher and student behavior within the classroom (Doyle, 1977a; Doyle, 1977b; Sinelnikov, 2015). However, Sinelnikov (2015) later referred to teacher and student interactions as a social dimension of the classroom.

Doyle (1977) described the dimension of student competence. Student competence is not limited to students' academic ability or language proficiency. Doyle (1977) also described it in other crucial aspects of the classroom: the ability to discern positive and negative feedback, know when performance evaluation is occurring, and acknowledge and appropriately use information shared during instruction.

Sinelnikov (2015) described the three dimensions of the ecological paradigm differently. First, the instructional dimension of the classroom is similar to Doyle's dimension surrounding classroom tasks. Next, the managerial dimension of the classroom was described, which was similar to Doyle's dimension of environmental demands. Lastly, Sinelnikov added the student's social demands in the classroom, which involves how the student and teacher interact.

Evertson and Poole referred to these dimensions as various classroom spaces. In the writings they describe the physical and instructional space of the classroom, similar to Doyle's (1977) description of the environmental demands of the classroom. They also describe the instructional space in the classroom, similar to Doyle's (1977) description of the nature of classroom tasks. Evertson & Poole (2008) also describe the social space in the classroom similar to Sinelnikov's (2015) description of the social dimension of the classroom.

Other research related to the social space of the classroom detailed how social constructs caused further complexity within the classroom. Specifically, there is, especially related to how race, gender, and culture have impacted classroom management and the social context of the classroom. For example, social implications about race, culture, socioeconomic status, gender, and various social structures are embedded intricately with the dynamics of power and privilege.

These dynamics often play out in the classroom. There, teachers are typically given the responsibility to lead, while students are expected to follow (Pace & Hemmings, 2006). Pace and Hemmings (2006) further explained that these interactions and social negotiations were shaped by diverse and sometimes conflicting cultural and societal influences. The ideas add further context and understanding about the natural complexity of the classroom, especially related to the social dimension of the classroom. More about how race, gender, and culture affect classroom management and the social context of the classroom is discussed in the literature review.

 The effects of these interactions between the various classroom dimensions are cumulative and overlapping (Doyle, 1977b). These ideas work together to illustrate the natural complexity of classrooms. Understanding this natural complexity allows a deeper understanding of the classroom environment.

Weinstein and Evertson (2013) provided a way to approach classroom management and its various aspects. Citing the research of Bagley (1907), Kounin (1979), Emmer et al. (1980), Emmer and Everton (1982), and Marzano et al. (2003), Weinstein and Everton used historical classroom management research to develop a concise definition. Weinstein and Evertson (2013) defined classroom management as "the actions teachers take to create an environment that

supports and facilitates both academic and social-emotional learning" (p. 4). They explained that teacher classroom management has five essential tasks:

- Developing supportive relationships

- Organizing and implementing instruction

- Using group management for encouragement and engagement

- Promoting students' social, emotional, and academic development

- Using interventions to assist students with behavior problems

This presents a more concise and structured definition of the classroom management concept. Also, Weinstein and Evertson's (2013) definition has become one of the most frequently cited definitions of classroom management (Sabornie & Espelage, 2023).

Ideas of classroom ecology lay a foundation and present a lens for understanding classrooms in their natural complexity (Doyle, 1977; Sinelnikov, 2015). Doyle's original work provided a foundation for Weinstein and Evertson (2013) to more clearly articulate and define classroom management. Their definition also included five aspects and dimensions of effective classroom management. These concepts provide the basis for this study. Specifically, they influenced the selection of a qualitative methodology and development of the interview protocol.

Overview of Research Methodology

Ravitch and Carl (2016) explained qualitative research methodology attempts to understand individuals, groups, and phenomena in their natural settings. The authors wrote, "qualitative research is a mode of inquiry that centralizes complexity" (p. 39). For this study's purpose and conceptual framework, a phenomenological, qualitative research design was selected. This methodology allowed authentic investigation and understanding of novice, middle-

school teachers' experiences while maintaining an awareness of the complexity of classroom management and classroom ecosystems.

Data for this study was collected using individual interviews of novice middle school teachers. Semi-structured interviews were conducted using virtual conferencing software and followed a semi-structured interview protocol. This approach was beneficial for several reasons. First, interviews are a cornerstone of qualitative research and can provide deep, rich data for analysis (Ravitch & Carl, 2016). Second, virtual interviews allowed for audio recording to assist trustworthiness through member checking and assisted in the analysis process. Lastly, a semi-structured interview protocol allowed for deep, authentic conversations during each interview. Semi-structured interviews were selected because they can give a deep understanding of participants' perceptions (Ravitch and Carl, 2016).

Research Site, Participants, and Data Collection

Data for this study was collected from novice middle school teachers. Those selected for this study were located in several school districts in southwestern North Carolina. The sites and participants were selected intentionally. Novice teachers were selected because of this study's topic and the research gap around novice teachers' classroom management experiences. The middle school setting was selected because it has been studied less than the elementary and high school settings (Gomez et al., 2012).

Middle schools were also selected because of the researcher's strong interest in and hope to produce research leading to improvement in middle school practices. The study location was selected for convenience in finding participants for the study. Eight participants were interviewed using *Zoom*. Two purposeful sampling methods, snowball and quota sampling, were used to recruit participants. Eight participants were selected so that this study could include

perspectives from each grade level in the middle school setting, while keeping the number of participants manageable. Semi-structured interview questions that align with the research questions were used to allow a deep, authentic investigation of participant perceptions.

Significance of the Study

This study explored the perceptions of novice teachers in the middle school setting regarding classroom management. Previous studies have revealed relevant findings and ideas related to novice teachers' views of effective classroom management. Earlier studies present ideas that lay a foundation for the definition of classroom management used in this study. Using historical research, Weinstein and Evertson (2013) explained that classroom management is "the actions teachers take to create an environment that supports and facilitates both academic and social-emotional learning" (p. 4), and these actions center around a set of specific tasks (Weinstein & Evertson, 2013).

Several themes emerged after reviewing more recent classroom management research, which will be presented in Chapter 2 of this study. The first centers on classroom management strategies and interventions. For this study, the findings of some researchers were used concerning strategies and classroom management interventions that teachers report that they use. Other themes and findings focus on teacher classroom management abilities and many novice teachers' lack of classroom management skills when entering the profession. Based on prior research, it is evident that novice teachers struggle with this area (Blank & Shavit, 2016; Brubaker, 2016; Headden, 2014; Renard, 2003).

In addition to their difficulties with classroom management, novice teachers face a variety of challenges in their first years of teaching. Novice teachers often feel unprepared to manage their classroom in their first year of teaching (White, 2021). Along with this lack of

preparation, novice teachers must oftentimes navigate an excessive workload (Kardos & Johnson, 2007; Renard, 2003). Researchers have found that some novice teachers experience shock when the realities of their workload, school expectations, and day-to-day work set in (Brubaker, 2016; Headden, 2014; New Teacher Center, 2019). Research has also shown that among the difficulties faced by novice teachers, classroom management is often one of their greatest problems (Achinstein & Barrett, 2004; Albright, 2017; Brubaker, 2016; Miles & Knipe, 2018). Though novice teachers often receive support through mentoring and induction programs (Ingersoll, 2012; Ingersoll & Strong, 2011; Kelley, 2004; Ladner, 2022), issues related to classroom management have been shown to present the most significant struggle for novice teachers (Brubaker, 2016). Studies have illustrated the complexity of classroom management and the need for continued classroom management research.

The current study contributes to classroom management literature by providing detailed insights into novice teachers' perceptions about classroom management. This study could also inform mentors, beginning teacher support programs, teacher preparation programs, and school and district leaders. By providing insights, this study can aid these groups in developing appropriate classroom management supports tailored to the needs and experiences of novice teachers.

Delimitations

There are several delimitations associated with the study. First, this study took place in the Spring of 2024, in the southwestern region of North Carolina. The participants in the study were only first-, second-, or third-year teachers. All participants were employed full-time in a middle school. In order to ensure the availability of participants, the certification method or type of certification was not a limitation. The only delimitation related to licensure was that all

teachers possess a North Carolina teaching license. Traditionally certified participants all have an initial level A license. This license is given to beginning teachers who have earned a bachelor's degree and completed an undergraduate educator preparation program. Alternatively certified participants have a residency license, emergency license, or a permit to teach, as these are the only licenses given to alternatively certified, beginning teachers in North Carolina.

Assumptions

There were also several assumptions associated with this study. It was assumed that those interviewed would openly and accurately share their work experiences and perceptions. To emphasize being forthright, participants were assured that identities would be kept confidential. Upon the completion of this study, all transcripts and audio recordings of interviews were destroyed. Another assumption associated with participant experience is that the data gained from the participants were used to represent a totality of experience and not individual moments of instruction or classroom interaction.

Other assumptions associated with this study related to parts of the study design and details of the topic. It was assumed that eight participants provided sufficient data to analyze and understand selected novice teachers' experiences and perceptions. Next, this study relied on the assumption that novice teachers had a corresponding novice understanding of the concept of classroom management. That is, participants understood that classroom management relates to teaching, learning, and daily work with students in public school classrooms.

Definition of Terms

Classroom management. Weinstein and Evertson (2013) defined classroom management as the actions teachers take to create an environment that supports and facilitates both academic and social-emotional learning.

Novice teacher. Rose & Sughrue (2021) defined a novice teacher as one having less than four years of experience.

Summary and Organization of the Study

Classroom management is a regular concern for teachers and administrators (Weinstein & Evertson, 2013). Novice teachers often perceive classroom management as a great struggle (Brubaker, 2016; Weinstein & Evertson, 2013). A lack of specificity in the research about novice teachers' perceptions of classroom management has created a gap in the body of classroom management research. It is clear, however, that novice teachers struggle with classroom management (Albright, 2017; Brubaker, 2016; Headden, 2014; Miles & Knipe, 2018). What is unclear, though, are which aspects cause new teachers concern and struggle. This study addressed the gap in research on classroom management, novice teachers, and studies done in a middle school setting.

The remainder of this study is divided into four chapters. Chapter 2 presents a review of the literature relevant to this study. This literature includes studies that explore classroom management defined themes in the relevant classroom management literature, research related to novice teachers, and research related to classroom management in the middle school setting. Chapter 3 describes the research design. Chapter 4 presents findings from the thematic analysis of interview data. Chapter 5 concludes the study by summarizing the research, discussing the findings, and offering recommendations for future research and policy.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

Beginning teachers, specifically, often struggle with classroom management more than their more experienced peers (Blank & Shavit, 2016). Specific aspects of classroom management can be particularly stressful for beginning teachers (Harmen et al., 2018) and add to the difficulty, anxiety, and stress some beginning teachers face in their first years of teaching (Faltado & Faltado, 2014). This difficulty could be further complicated by the complex nature of classroom management, and all its various aspects. This chapter explores the complexity of classroom management particularly for novice teachers, in a review of the literature relevant to the purpose of this study. This study investigated the classroom management perceptions of beginning, middle-school teachers. The literature review explores the research related to various factors in this study. Those factors include beginning teacher experiences, current understandings of classroom management, and factors related to classroom management in the middle school setting. The review is divided into four sections. The first part of this chapter presents a historical review of literature pertinent to the definition of classroom management in K-12 schools. The second section examines a variety of subtopics related to classroom management. The third section of the literature review discusses literature related to middle schools and classroom management. The review concludes by exploring beginning teacher experiences. Table 1 lists the sources used for this review, organized by theme.

Table 1

Themes in the Literature

Theme	Sources
Classroom Management Defined	
Classroom Management Defined	Bagley, 1907; Brown, 1952; Doyle, 1984; Emmer et al., 1980; Evertson & Emmer, 1982; Evertson & Poole, 2008; Fuller, 1969; Kounin, 1970; Kounin & Doyle, 1975; Marzano et al., 2003; Sabornie & Espelage, 2023; Weinstein & Evertson, 2013
Themes in the Relevant Literature	
Teacher Classroom Management Strategies	Akin et al., 2016; Bondy et al., 2007; Brown, 2003; Clunies-Ross et al., 2008; Cook et al., 2018; Cooper et al., 2018; Egeberg et al., 2016; Gage et al., 2018; Gaias et al., 2019; Jackson, 2005; Jaus-Zissis, 2023; Kwok, 2019; Ozen, 2020
Intervention Programs and Strategies	Baule, 2020; Bondy et al., 2007; Bozkus, 2021; Calderella et al., 2019; Cook et al., 2018; Dean, 2022; Estrapala & Lewis, 2023; Evertson, 1985; Fallon et al., 2019; Farmer et al., 2014; Ficarra, 2014; Grasley-Boy et al., 2022; Keith et al., 2022; Kennedy et al., 2017;

Table 1

Themes in the Literature(continued)

	Kittleman, 2019; Lawrence et al. 2022; Loyd et al., 2023; Marzano et al., 2003; Medina, 2017; Nunn, 2017; Orr et al., 2019; Pace et al., 2014; Powell, 2016; Reinke et al., 2013; Sinclair et al., 2021; Evertson, 1989; Weinstein et al, 2003; Willis et al., 2019
Teachers' Classroom Management Abilities and Self-Efficacy	Blank & Shavit, 2016; Egeberg et al., 2016; Gage et al., 2018; Larson, 2016; Leithwood et al., 2024; Lopez et al., 2017; Ozen, 2020; Pace et al., 2014
Teacher Preparation and Preparedness	Blank & Shavit, 2016; Christofferson & Sullivan, 2015; Cooper et al., 2018; Dicke et al., 2015; Hirsch et al., 2021; Keith et al., 2022; Larson, 2016; Livers et al., 2021; Ozen, 2020; White, 2021
Classroom Management and Diverse Social Axes	Banks et al., 2015; Bassi et al., 2016; Battalio 2005, Braun et al., 2022; Brown, 2004; Butler et al., 2012; Butler et al., 2023; Calais & Green, 2022; Downey & Pribesh, 2004; Fenning & Rose, 2007; Grossman & Grossman, 2004; Huang, 2018; Inan-Kaya &

Table 1

Themes in the Literature(continued)

	Rubie-Davies, 2022; Lane et al., 2022; Markowitz et al., 2023; Marshall & Clark, 2023; Milner & Tenore, 2010
Culturally Responsive Classroom Management	Bondy et al., 2007; Brown, 2003; Gaias et al., 2019; Kennedy et al., 2017; Kudlats, 2019; Kudlats & Brown 2021a; Kudlats & Brown 2021b; Pas et al., 2016; Patish, 2017; Perry-Campbell, 2020; Weinstein et al, 2004; Weinstein et al, 2003
Classroom Management in the Middle School Setting	
Characteristics of Middle Schools	Kim et al., 2014; Ellerbrock & Kiefer, 2013; Gomez et al., 2012; Malone & Shukla, 2017
Developmental Aspects of Adolescents and Classroom Management	Bucher & Lee, 200; Chung et al., 1998; Wills et al., 2019
Middle School Classroom Management Practices	Barksdale et al., 2021; Canter & Canter, 1995; Canter, 2011; Dougherty, 2002; Dreikurs, 1968; Edwards et al., 2014; Englehart, 2013; Evertson & Harris, 1992; Gordon et al., 1974; Malmgren et al., 2005; Manning & Bucher, 2005; Sanford &

Table 1

Themes in the Literature(continued)

	Evertson, 1982; Weinstein, 1998; Wight, 2020

Novice Teachers	
Preparedness to Teach	Albright, 2017; Boothby, 2023; Brubaker, 2016; Darling-Hammond et al., 2002; Davis et al., 2019; Haj-Broussard et al., 2016; Headden, 2014; Melnick & Meister, 2008; Miles & Knipe, 2018; Whitford et al., 2018; Zhang & Zeller, 2016
Struggles of Novice Teachers	Achinstein & Barrett, 2004; Albright, 2017; Barnard et al., 2022; Brubaker, 2016; Brunetti & Martson, 2018; Canfait, 2015; Casey, 2011; Consuegra et al., 2014; Erawan, 2019; Headden, 2014; Kardos & Johnson, 2007; Miles & Knipe, 2018; Piot et al., 2010; Renard, 2003; The New Teacher Center, 2019; Weinstien, 1998; Whalen et al., 2019; Youngs et al., 2015
Novice Teacher Supports	Albright, 2017; Brubaker, 2016; Brunetti &; Martson, 2018; Fuller, 2003; Gilbert 2005; Headden, 2014; Hong & Matsko, 2019;

Table 1

Themes in the Literature(continued)

	Kardos & Johnson, 2007; Renard, 2003; Rose & Sughrue, 2021; Whalen et al., 2019; Youngs et al., 2015
Novice Teacher Induction Programs	Desimone et al., 2014; Evertson & Smithey, 2000; Fletcher & Strong 2009; Fletcher et al., 2008; Glazerman, 2010; Hanke, 2000; Headden, 2014; Ingersoll & Strong, 2011; Ingersoll, 2012; Johnson & Birkeland, 2003; Kelley, 2004; Ladner, 2022; Nevins & Floden, 2009
Retention and Attrition	Albright, 2017; DeAngelis et al., 2013; Ingersoll, 2012; Johnson & Birkeland, 2003; Kelley, 2004; Maready, 2018; Whalen et al., 2019
Novice Teachers and Classroom Management	Albright, 2017; Brubaker, 2016; Brunetti &; Martson, 2018; Casey, 2011; Harmen et al., 2018; Headden, 2014; Hirsch et al, 2021; Kelly et al., 2015; Melnick & Meister, 2008; Miles & Knipe, 2018; Youngs et al., 2015

Classroom Management Defined

This section will explore historical literature related to the establishment of a definition of classroom management, as defined by Weinstein and Evertson (2013).

Early writings on classroom management were based on William Bagley's observations and classroom experiences (Weinstein & Evertson, 2013). Bagley (1907) offered no definition of classroom management, but instead focused on concepts teachers must master to manage students in the classroom. Initially, Bagley outlined three major management components relating to: routine factors, hygienic conditions, and discipline. Bagley described numerous routines that teachers should implement to manage students. These routines included distributing and collecting materials, using the blackboard, and creating an orderly arrangement of materials. Bagley also discussed the importance of hygiene in the classroom, which includes personal hygiene, cleanliness, and teaching students posture. Lastly, detailed ideas about student discipline were given. These were: the importance of tact, precision, and eliminating shame. Bagley's writings introduced recurring classroom management themes that centered on routine and discipline. Bagley explained that strong routines eliminated wasted instructional time and maximized the learning environment (Bagley, 1907).

In the 1950s, Brown's (1952) classroom management research expanded Bagley's ideas of routine and discipline, as well as the classroom management research of that time (Weinstein & Evertson, 2013). Brown's research included ideas regarding routine and discipline, and he added some child-centered considerations for classroom management. Brown's research added the importance of including student input in creating classroom rules and procedures, and discipline focusing on teaching students self-control. Over a half century later, Weinstein and Evertson (2013) noted that the tone of Brown's writing offered a perspective that acknowledged

students and their needs, which advanced the ideas of best practices around classroom management. While re-affirming the importance of routine, Brown also noted the importance of respect for and inclusion of student needs (Brown, 1952; Weinstein & Evertson, 2013).

Following Brown's work, two major approaches to classroom management research emerged. These major approaches were based on the work of behavioral and ecological researchers. Behaviorists focused on principles and beliefs about children and working with them. Ecologists, such as Walter Doyle, studied teachers' and students' complex interactions in the classroom (Weinstein & Evertson, 2013). The majority of classroom management research after Brown centered on the ecology of a classroom, including students' behaviors and resulting teacher actions.

Kounin (1970), using an ecological approach to classroom management, detailed themes and ideas that considered prevention and proactivity. Kounin observed and explained that effective classroom managers prevent disruptions through proactive planning and teachers' discretionary moves during instruction. Kounin's work noted significant findings and a shift in classroom management research (Evertson & Poole, 2008). Kounin listed five management skills often used by effective classroom managers: withitness, overlapping, smoothness and momentum, group alerting and accountability, and challenge and variety. Kounin defines withitness as the teacher's ability to know what is happening in all areas of the classroom. Overlapping refers to the teachers' ability to attend to multiple situations in the classroom at one time. Smoothness and momentum describe a teacher's ability to transition between activities and sustain engagement throughout classroom activities. Group alerting and accountability describe the ways a teacher engages students when communicating directions and directives. Challenge and variety are used to describe the ways a teacher can keep students interested during classroom

activities. By observation and then new technology of video analysis of elementary school classrooms, Kounin (1970) and Kounin and Doyle (1975) highlighted these variables as characteristics of effective classroom managers. Kounin's variables centered on routine skills and procedures that positively impact student attention and engagement.

Emmer et al. (1980) expanded Kounin's research. Using Kounin's research model, Emmer et al. conducted similar research in various elementary grades and developed three qualities of effective managers in elementary schools. Effective classroom managers convey purpose by maximizing learning time and communicating urgency around learning. In doing so, effective classroom managers maximize learning time with routines and procedures, as well as communicate urgency and importance for learning and assignments. Effective managers also maintain students' attention during class time and communicate in a business-like fashion (Emmer et al., 1980). Of these seminal articles related to the development of a concise classroom management definition, Emmer et al. (1980) was one of the first of these research publications to note the racial and socio-economic demographics of the students in the classrooms of the teachers in the study.

Emmer and Evertson (1982) expanded their research into junior high schools, working with the teachers of early adolescent students. Whereas most middle schools include sixth, seventh, and eighth grades, they are an outgrowth of the once popular junior high school structure that included seventh, eighth, and ninth grade students. Continuing with the characteristics and qualities of effective managers, the researchers found four characteristics and qualities of effective managers in that setting. First, most effective classroom managers in the junior high setting thoroughly explain their rules and classroom procedures. Effective managers then implement them strategically. Second, effective managers regularly and closely monitor

student compliance with rules and procedures and quickly respond to students' actions that do not align with classroom rules and procedures. Third, effective managers communicate clearly during instruction and transitions. Lastly, they maximize learning time. Their work, nonetheless, continued to emphasize the importance of routines and the qualities of effective managers in junior high schools.

Building upon the existing body of research, Marzano et al. (2003) conducted a meta-analysis of over 30 years of classroom management research. Citing more than 150 reports and studies, Marzano et al. (2003) outlined four components of effective classroom management. They noted that effective classroom management consists of: rules and procedures, disciplinary interventions, teacher-student relationships, and mental set. They explained that most effective classroom managers have clearly communicated rules and procedures, and students should be included in creating rules. The researchers found that effective classroom managers often use a discipline system that includes record-keeping and a healthy balance of positive and negative consequences. Effective classroom managers also seek to build strong student-teacher relationships.

Similar to Brown's work, Marzano et al. (2003) highlighted the importance of respect for students in classroom management. Lastly, the researchers described an effective mental set. In so doing, the researchers referenced Kounin's idea of 'withitness' (Marzano et al., 2003). Marzano et al. (2003) and Kounin (1970) defined withitness as a teacher's ability to know what is happening in all aspects of the classroom at all times. The idea of withitness, along with the ability to remain objective, can create an effective mental set for classroom management (Marzano et al., 2003).

The definition of classroom management given by Weinstein and Evertson (2013) is supported by and built upon a large body of classroom management research, including that done by key researchers. Key contributors and their ideas include: routine and procedure (Bagley, 1907), including student voice (Brown, 1952, as cited by Weinstein & Evertson, 2013), Kounin's (1970) and Kounin and Doyle's (1975) characteristics of effective managers, purpose, maximized learning time, and effective communication (Emmer et al., 1980; Emmer & Evertson, 1982), and student relationships and objectivity (Marzano et al., 2003). The contributions of these researchers wove an intricate fabric that is the comprehensive definition of classroom management and its components as defined by Weinstein and Evertson (2013). Classroom management is "the actions teachers take to create an environment that supports and facilitates both academic and social-emotional learning (p. 4)." Weinstein and Evertson (2013) explained that teachers carry out specific tasks to effectively manage classrooms. These tasks center on: building positive student relationships, organizing and implementing instruction, effective group management and encouragement, promoting student development, and intervening to stop inappropriate behavior. This definition is one of the most cited definitions of classroom management to date (Sabornie & Espelage, 2023).

The progression of classroom management research previously outlined, along with the current definition of classroom management set forth by Weinstein and Evertson, is detailed in Figure one.

Figure 1

Timeline of Classroom Management Research
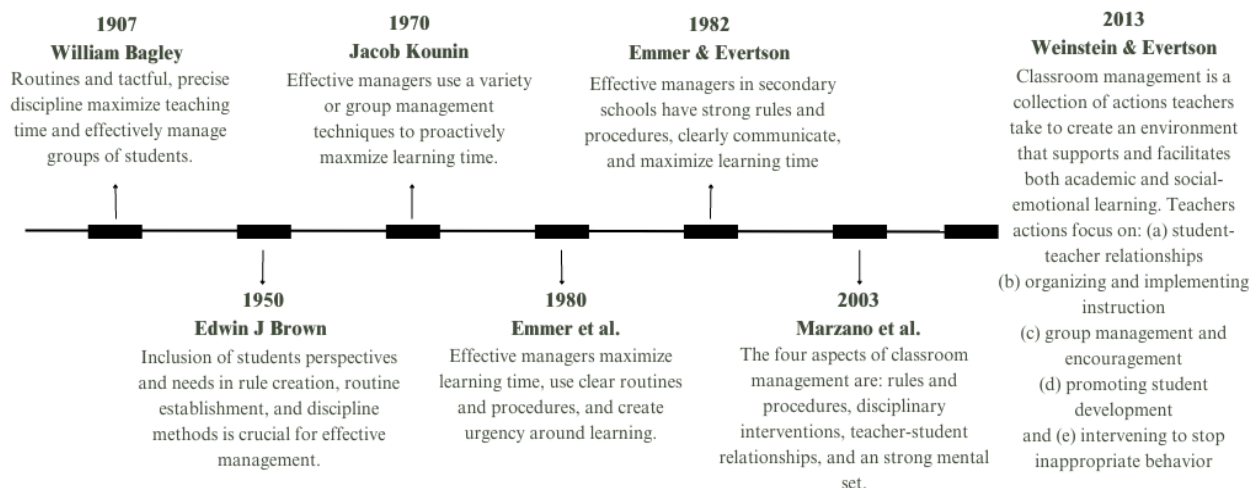
Themes in the Classroom Management Literature

Given the current understanding of classroom management, defined through historical research, there are a host of relevant studies related to various classroom management subtopics. This section of Chapter 2 details major themes in the literature concerning the various subtopics related to classroom management. Five important themes emerged from researching the literature on classroom management. The first theme speaks to strategies teachers use to manage their classrooms. The second theme describes classroom management interventions. The literature around interventions is centered on intervening for students' classroom misbehaviors and interventions used to build teachers' classroom management capacity. The third explores teachers' perceived classroom management abilities. The fourth focuses on teacher training. The fifth section discusses classroom management research related to classroom diversity and various social axes that naturally exist in classrooms. The section concludes with a discussion of culturally responsive classroom management literature.

Teacher Classroom Management Strategies

The first theme suggested by the literature on classroom management considered teachers' use of classroom management strategies. Jaus-Zissis (2023) explained that learning is fully enabled when teachers control and take charge of the classroom. Teachers typically take charge and manage their classrooms using various strategies and tools. Given this idea of teachers in control and in charge, a substantial amount of literature described teachers' actions and strategies often used to manage their classrooms. In his systematic review of 120 classroom management studies from 1980 to 2019, Bozkus (2021) found that over half of the literature related to classroom management practices and strategies.

Teachers frequently use a variety of strategies to manage their classrooms, especially in elementary school (Akin et al., 2016). These strategies are described and categorized in a variety of ways. In a study of classroom management strategies used by beginning teachers in urban elementary and secondary schools composed of mostly African American students, Kwok (2019) found that these methods could be classified as behavioral, relational, and academic. Kwok (2019) collected data from 87 first year teachers, through surveys, interviews and classroom observations. In his research, Kwok (2019) found that frequently used behavioral strategies included addressing students inappropriately talking during class and administering consequences. Kwok (2019) also explained that behavioral strategies often focus on reinforcing positive behaviors. He also explained that relational strategies, such as knowing and understanding students' cultures, are less often used by teachers. The researcher noted that academic classroom management strategies, such as refocusing students on lesson content and asking content specific questions, are also less frequently used.

Other literature detailed and focused on classroom management strategies that are most effective. Research on effective strategies mirrors previously described ideas concerning the wide range of strategies used by teachers. In a study surveying 336 pre-service teachers, Reupert and Woodcock (2010) found that the most effective classroom management strategies address classroom routines and transitions. Also, effective classroom managers often prefer using proactive classroom management strategies instead of reactive ones (Clunies-Ross et al., 2008).

Proactive strategies tend to center on teacher planning, while reactive strategies are reactions to social behaviors (Clunies-Ross et al., 2008). Proactive classroom management strategies could include praising appropriate student behavior, establishing clear rules, and taking a positive approach to student discipline (Clunies-Ross et al., 2008). The preferred use of proactive strategies could be because classroom management behaviors which consist solely of reactions to negative student behaviors have not been found to improve student behavior or decrease student disruptions (Gage et al., 2018). In their study of classroom management practices from a variety racially and socioeconomically diverse schools, Gage et al. (2018) found that reactive strategies, such as the use of lectures and threats, are positively related to teacher stress and negatively related to students' on-task behaviors.

Ozen (2020) researched classroom management strategies related to poor classroom management of 15 teachers, of varying genders and with varied years of experience and teaching grades spanning elementary, middle and high school. Ozen (2020) explained that poor classroom management often results from two factors: lack of teaching experience and knowledge about how management strategies could be used in the classroom. For example, pre-service teachers often focus on low-level, behaviorally corrective strategies instead of those that proactively address classroom routines and transitions (Ruepert & Woodcock, 2010). Less

effective strategies frequently lead to poor classroom management. Poor classroom management often results in less teaching time and less student engagement with learning (Clunies-Ross et al., 2008). Other research (Egeberg et al., 2016) suggested that the most profound understanding of classroom management and the most effective classroom management strategies are developed from an understanding of classroom management theory and a practical understanding of students' needs. Citing Kounin (1970), Edeberg et al. (2016) explained that a deep understanding of classroom management, practically and theoretically, allows teachers to create effective classroom management practices that are responsive to their students' needs.

Intervention Programs and Intervention Strategies for Students and Teachers

Similar to classroom management strategies, there is research on classroom management intervention programs and strategies. Intervention programs and intervention strategies tend to be focused on improvement. This idea of improvement includes strategies for improving student behavior and research on improving teacher classroom management abilities and behaviors. For example, research has shown that classroom management interventions, for teachers to use with students, can effectively address disruptive behaviors (Sinclair et al., 2021) and also noted that the use of researched-based intervention strategies has been shown to improve student behavior in general education classrooms and specialized settings (Calderella et al., 2019; Pace et al., 2014). Alongside this research around strategies to intervene for and manage student behavior, studies like Horner (2014) and Keith et al. (2022) describe aids and interventions used to strengthen teacher classroom management abilities.

A variety of classroom management programs, such as the *Conversation, Help, Activity, Movement, Participation, and Success* program, have been used to increase some teachers' use of proactive classroom management strategies, improve student behavior, and improve student

academic outcomes (Keith et al., 2022). Other intervention strategies, such as the class-wide

functional-related intervention teams strategies, positive behavior interventions and supports, and

greetings at the door strategy, have also improved student outcomes. These improved outcomes

included decreased classroom disruptions, greater time on task, and increased student

achievement (Calderella et al., 2019; Cook et al., 2018; Fallon et al., 2019; Orr et al., 2019;

Willis et al., 2019). These intervention programs and strategies provide teachers with strategies

and actions they can use to manage and mitigate inappropriate student behaviors.

Another set of strategies centered on how teachers manage student behaviors is the

Positive Behavior, Intervention and Supports program. Notably, the implementation of positive

behavior intervention and support (PBIS) programs has grown exponentially in the United States

(Horner, 2014, as cited in Kennedy et al., 2017) PBIS implementation has grown the most in

urban school settings and in schools with high free and reduced lunch rates (Kittleman, 2019). In

turn, there is a growing body of classroom management research around PBIS implementation.

PBIS often provides school-wide consistency for rules, classroom procedures, and school-wide

frameworks for effective behavior practices and interventions (Loyd et al., 2023; Powell, 2016).

Key components of the PBIS implementation typically include the development of school-wide

behavior expectations, teaching students school expectations, creating common discipline

procedures, and using data-based decision-making to drive behavior outcomes (Loyd et al.,

2023). The use of PBIS in schools can directly impact teachers' classroom management, as rules,

procedures, and behavior intervention are foundational for classroom management. There are

several classroom management strategies that align with PBIS implementation (Reinke et al.,

2013). These strategies include the use of positively stated rules and expectations, gaining

students' attention before instructions, systems for documenting and acknowledging

inappropriate behaviors, the use of praise in behavior acknowledgment systems, and using a common continuum of consequences for students' misbehavior (Reinke et al., 2013).

PBIS is also based on implementing both positive and negative reinforcement. This system is built upon how teachers react to negative and positive behaviors (Powell, 2016). As a result, PBIS has had various effects on students, teachers, and schools. First, PBIS effectively improved some students' behaviors in some school settings (Baule, 2020; Nunn, 2017). This improvement could be marked by decreased suspensions in schools implementing PBIS (Baule, 2020; Dean, 2022; Grasley-Boy et al., 2022). In a study of student perceptions of PBIS, with a majority of white student participants, Lloyd et al. (2023) found that students notice an improvement in behaviors and their school climate when PBIS is implemented. Lloyd et al. (2023) also found that while most students view PBIS programs positively, they often focus solely on the behavior acknowledgment systems in use.

There is research that describe the potential dangers that PBIS systems can have for students of color and diverse backgrounds. For example, Calais and Green (2022) describe PBIS as an asymptomatic carrier of racism. The authors describe how PBIS systems often set behavioral norms and expectations that are thought to be culturally neutral for all students. When in actuality, those expectations and norms are created by teachers and are deaf to students racial and cultural values and accepted ways of behavior. The authors explained how PBIS systems are often whitewashed and rooted in covert methods of control. They explain how color evasive ideas in PBIS systems create avenues for biased methods of classroom control. Conversely, in a study of Equity Centered BPIS systems implemented in a high school, McIntosh et al. (2021) found that PBIS implementation, when partnered with teacher education around racialized discipline disparity, can improve suspension and referral disproportionality for students of color.

PBIS programs can have a variety of effects on school staff. In a study of the effects of PBIS implementation in secondary schools in North Carolina, Lawrence et al. (2022) found that school staff, describe an improvement in their school cultures after implementing a PBIS program. In this study, teachers also noted an increase in the use of positive behavior acknowledgment and improved school-wide discipline practices. Lawrence et al. (2022) explained that an increase in consistent discipline practices across the school marked the improvement in school-wide discipline practices. Several studies note various other positive effects for teachers, at schools implementing PBIS programs. First, teachers at schools who implement PBIS programs self-report a higher knowledge of classroom management skills and higher self-efficacy in classroom management (Ficarra & Quinn, 2014; Medina, 2017). Also, in a study of classroom PBIS implementation with a majority of white female participants, Reinke et al. (2013) found that most teachers implementing a PBIS program frequently use generic praise to acknowledge appropriate student behaviors and effectively teach students rules and expectations. Reinke et al. continued that teachers who frequently use praise in their behavior management systems have higher levels of self-efficacy in classroom management skills. While PBIS offers a foundation for school-wide behavior management, there is a need for more research on strategies teachers use when their schools implement PBIS programs (Farmer et al., 2014; Estrapala & Lewis, 2023).

In addition to research on intervention strategies and programs teachers use with students, there is also limited literature on intervention strategies that improve teachers' classroom management knowledge and capabilities. These strategies include teacher coaching and teacher training solely on applying effective classroom management practices (Evertson, 1985; Evertson, 1989; Fallon et al., 2019; Pace et al., 2014; Kennedy et al., 2017). In her research around teacher

classroom management training, Evertson (1985) found that direct instruction in classroom management can improve teacher classroom management abilities, but was unsure about if the improvement sustained through the school year. Teacher coaching that exclusively focused on classroom management has improved some teachers' use of effective classroom management practices and also student behavior (Fallon et al., 2019). Teacher training that emphasized proactive classroom management strategies improved students' behaviors and increased the frequency with which teachers used such strategies (Pace et al., 2014). Also, teacher training using evidence-based classroom management practices increased high school teachers' self-efficacy in student engagement and instructional strategies (Kennedy et al., 2017).

Teacher Classroom Management Abilities and Self Efficacy

Another classroom management research theme focuses on the perception of teachers' classroom management abilities. This research includes researchers' perceptions of teachers' abilities and teachers' perceptions of their own abilities as classroom managers. The growing research on teachers and teachers' actions was a result of the growing body of research about students' actions in schools and classrooms (Larson, 2016; Zhang, 2023). Teachers perceived to have more effective classroom management abilities often have more robust classroom practices in various aspects of teaching (Leithwood et al., 2024; Ozen, 2020). Some of these robust practices include hands-on learning, collaborative learning, and teachers who can minimize actions that minimize learning and maximize the behaviors that enable learning (Ozen, 2020).

Similarly, Blank & Shavit (2016) found that teachers who are perceived as better classroom managers or have stronger classroom management abilities utilize a strong overall instructional design. Their study found that teachers with strong classroom management abilities tend to have stronger abilities in various aspects of teaching. Conversely, as mentioned earlier,

the lack of ability to effectively manage classrooms often results from teachers' lack of teaching experience and knowledge (Ozen, 2020). Concerning a lack of perceived abilities, Gage et al. (2018) found that teachers who were perceived to have low classroom management abilities spend less time teaching and have lower classroom engagement.

In addition to studies on the perceived abilities of teachers, there is research on teachers' perceptions of their efficacy in managing their classrooms. A common theme from the literature is that often teachers feel they need more preparation to manage their classrooms at the start of their careers (White, 2021). However, teachers' classroom management self-efficacy can improve when given training and coaching about specific classroom management interventions (Pace et al., 2014; Fallon et al., 2019). Along with these findings about growing teacher self-efficacy regarding classroom management, Lopez et al. (2017) surveyed 600 teachers (grades 5-9) and found that teacher self-efficacy and teaching experience are more significant predictors of classroom management abilities than management style. These findings, when taken together, demonstrate the significance of growing teachers' classroom management abilities over time. The literature shows that teacher self-efficacy and abilities to manage a classroom are directly related to teacher learning around classroom management.

Teacher Preparation and Preparedness to Manage Classrooms

Pre-service teacher training programs often teach various aspects of classroom management (Keith et al., 2022). However, some beginning teachers often feel they need more preparation to respond to inappropriate student behaviors in the classroom (Keith et al, 2022; Livers et al., 2021). Specifically, novice teachers reported a need for a greater understanding of how to effectively implement classroom rules, student praise, and routines. Though they are typically taught some aspects of classroom management, pre-service teachers often leave their

training programs ill-equipped to respond to behaviors outside the general management strategies they learned (Keith, 2022).

A qualitative study of middle school teachers of varying genders, school locations, school demographics, and school sizes found that teachers consistently feel unprepared to manage their classrooms (White, 2021). White (2021) also found that teachers in various school settings regularly need support from their school administrators to address classroom disruptions and feel confident managing their classrooms. Though research has shown that targeted classroom management training has improved the classroom management skills of beginning teachers (Dicke et al., 2015), school-based classroom management training can be inconsistently effective (Cooper et al., 2018).

In their study of 248 teachers, Cooper et al. (2018) found that the highest sense of classroom management preparedness results from coursework combined with training in classrooms. Beginning teachers typically enter the profession with limited experience and preparation and often receive inconsistent training in classroom management during their careers. In a qualitative study of beginning teacher classroom management training, Hirsch et al. (2021) found that beginning teachers often receive professional development on classroom management strategies. However, Hirsch et al. also found that there is little research on professional development regarding culturally responsive classroom management, another important aspect of relevant classroom management research related to race, gender, ethnicity and other cultural axes.

Classroom Management and Diverse Social Axes

The classroom is a microcosm of the world (Battalio, 2005). In her writings about classroom diversity, Battalio (2005) explained that teachers and students enter and leave the

classroom with ever-changing dynamics and experiences. These experiences come together to create shared classroom experiences for all students. Teachers' and students' lived experiences often collide as they create new experiences together. At the intersection of these day-to-day experiences, teachers' and students' identities impact their behaviors. These identities often center around various social axes such as race, gender, socioeconomic status, ethnicity, and ability.

Teachers and students, accompanied by their lived experiences and varied identities, then create a set of new shared experiences within the social dynamics of the classroom. Farmer et al. (2018) explained that teachers' behaviors directly and indirectly drive social dynamics in class. Teachers indirectly affect the social dynamic through their behaviors and can directly affect them in the classroom through various classroom management strategies. Farmer (2018) explained that some of these classroom management strategies could include grouping strategies, seating assignments, and teacher disciplinary practices.

Similarly, in a study of how teachers affect students' peer relationships, Hendricks et al. (2016) found that teachers' modeled behaviors and the way teachers responded to specific student behaviors greatly influence students' social climate. They explained that when students misbehave, teachers can respond in a supportive or conflict-oriented manner. Both of these responses implicitly modeled and taught students the nuances of the social climate in the classroom.

This implicit modeling and teaching around behaviors could be roadblocks for academic and social success for white teachers and students of color (Milner et al., 2018). In their writing about needed shifts in classroom management, Milner et al. (2018) explain that teachers' and students' different backgrounds can be culturally and racially understood differently. This

difference can cause incongruence and serve as a roadblock for teachers' and students' success. The researchers continued that teacher and student disconnections have been noted to be a cause of classroom conflict. Similarly, race, gender, and linguistic incongruence can be create classroom conflict and negatively impact student academic achievement and behavior (Butler et al., 2023). These conflicts can be nested in misinterpretations that may be shaped by the cultural, racial, ethnic, and socioeconomic differences that can exist between teachers and students.

The social implications around race, culture, socioeconomic status, gender, and various social structures are rooted in complex dynamics of power and privilege. In the classroom, generally, teachers are entrusted with the responsibility to take charge. While teachers have this responsibility, students are often charged with obeying (Pace & Hemmings, 2006). Pace and Hemmings (2006) explained that these interactions and social negotiations are influenced by various and possibly conflicting cultural and societal factors. Authority is a complex social relationship that plays out in classrooms through the interactions of students and teachers. Classroom and behavior management are often rooted in power and control (Marshall & Clark, 2023).

Together, these findings illustrated how the social dynamics of the classroom are naturally complex, especially considering race, gender, culture, and socioeconomic status. Therefore, a central theme in classroom management literature centers on classroom management related to the impacts of diverse social axes in classrooms. The literature related to these complexities in the classroom focuses on culture, race, discipline and referral patterns, and gender.

Classroom management is often presented as culturally neutral in research and practice (Butler et al., 2023). In their writings on culturally responsive classroom management instruction

in teacher education, Butler et al. (2023) explained that research, preservice teacher education programs, and writings about classroom management often present the topic as racially and culturally neutral. Similarly, in a study of classroom management practices in urban schools with teachers of varying races, Brown (2004) noted that monocultural ideas about classroom management have become ritualistic in schools. Brown (2004) also found that these monocultural classroom management practices tended to reinforce dominant and Eurocentric standards for communication and behavior, which is a source of bias toward students.

While Brown (2004) noted the bias in the standardized use of Eurocentric classroom management strategies, Inan-Kaya & Rubie-Davies (2022) found that teachers' different behaviors were also a source of biased behavior toward students. In their study of New Zealand Indigenous and New Zealand European teachers, the researchers found that some teachers do not respond to student behaviors consistently. They concluded that this was a manifestation of teacher bias and biased classroom conditions.

The researchers noted teachers often legitimize their different behaviors by saying they are responding to individual student needs, but question the legitimacy of this idea considering how quickly and automatically decisions can be. These seemingly conflicting findings added to the complexity of the social dynamics in the classroom. This complexity could be explained by the findings of Butler et al. (2012). When studying disproportionate discipline practices, Butler et al. (2012) explained that finding ways to capture sociological dynamics, especially dynamics associated with race, can be difficult due to their multi-dimensional nature.

Given the complexity of race in the classroom, there is classroom management research directly related to how race plays a role in creating disparate classroom conditions for students of color. In a meta-analysis of case studies, Downey and Prebesh (2004) found that Black students'

behaviors are often perceived worse when they have white teachers than when they have Black teachers. Some white teachers also find Black students to be less productive and cooperative (Downey and Prebesh 2004). Other research (Grossman & Grossman, 2004), has noted that Black students are praised less and criticized more. Black students are often perceived to not fit into the social norms and structures of school (Fenning & Rose, 2007).

These perceptions are often rooted in stereotypes, and Black students can be perceived as dangerous or out of control (Fenning & Rose, 2007; Marshall & Clark, 2023). When teachers seek to gain control and center their classroom management strategies and techniques solely around control, this can lead to increased disciplinary referrals for students of color (Cunningham, 2022).

These perceptions, which could be rooted in social stereotypes, often lead to biased and inequitable discipline effects for students of color. Literature related to classroom management and diversity often focuses on referral patterns because most office referrals, leading to disciplinary action, originate in the classroom (Milner & Tenore, 2010). Milner and Tenore (2010) explained that these referral patterns are often disproportionate for students of color and those with a lower socioeconomic status.

In a study of student survey data, Huang (2018) found that Black students receive more discipline referrals and out-of-school suspensions for subjective behaviors, such as disrespect. Huang (2018) also noted that this finding illustrated bias towards Black students, as Black students were suspended twice as much as their white counterparts. A study of almost 2,000,000 office referrals from 44 states over two school years (Markowitz et al. (2023), showed teachers often write longer referrals for students of color, and use more negative descriptors than discipline referrals for white students.

Patterns of bias within topics related to classroom management also extend to other social descriptors such as gender, primary language, and ability. In their writings about multicultural education, Banks and Banks, (2015) explained that classroom management has traditionally been steeped in gendered expectations. Teachers often watch boy's behavior closely because they are often stereotyped as aggressive. The researchers explained the combination of these gendered stereotypes and racially driven stereotypes can lead to bias and disparate classroom conditions for students. They also explain these stereotypes have led to classroom invisibility for females. Similarly, Bassi et al. (2016) found that girls often receive less attention than boys in their study of fourth-grade classrooms. Similar to race, gender stereotypes often drive classroom management practices and potential bias in classroom and discipline practices.

Similar to the findings presented about race, classroom management for students with disabilities has frequently centered on the historical ideas of combating difficult behaviors (Lane et al., 2022). These ideas have contributed to disproportionality concerning management strategies and suspension rates for students with disabilities. Lane et al. (2022) also described that a shift in classroom management practices has moved toward more proactive strategies which benefit students with disabilities in separate and inclusive settings.

When taken and understood together, these findings illustrated the diversity and complexity of classrooms. These conclusions also indicated the need for culturally responsive ideas related to instruction and classroom management.

Culturally Responsive Classroom Management

In their writing about culturally responsive classroom management (CRCM), Weinstein et al. (2004) explain that a lack of cultural competence can intensify and heighten classroom management issues for many novice teachers, and some veteran teachers. They also note that

classroom management literature, in Europe and the United States, has often been void of discussions of culture and frequently present classroom management as a culturally neutral concept. The researchers urge educators and researchers interested in classroom management, to begin to make cultural diversity and cultural competence a part of classroom management discussions, as to mitigate the conflicts that could occur from teachers and students of different cultures (Weinstein et al., 2004).

There is recent notable research on CRCM (Patish, 2017). CRCM is not simply a toolbox of strategies used to control a class, and CRCM centers around more than the ability to acquire a set of strategies and skills (Patish, 2017; Weinstein et al., 2003, 2004). CRCM is an extension of effective classroom management strategies grounded in culturally responsive teaching (Gaias et al., 2019; Patish, 2017). CRCM requires teachers to understand themselves, their students, and the contexts in which school happens (Weinstein et al., 2003). Weinstein et al. (2003) noted that teachers must acknowledge that race, gender, ethnicity, class, and culture all combine to create the varied identities of the teachers and the students they teach. Teachers must also acknowledge that schools often reflect and perpetuate the discriminatory practices of the society in which they function. When teachers reflect on how their classroom management practices oppose or continue discrimination against any students, they can then start to develop CRCM strategies and practices. Weinstein et al. (2004) explained that the goal of CRCM is to ensure all students have equitable access to learning.

This understanding of CRCM can be paired with a set of skills, strategies, and tasks used by culturally-responsive classroom managers to improve the learning environment. CRCM involves a set of dynamic strategies and skills teachers regularly use (Brown, 2003). Several studies outline these strategies that aim to provide all students equitable access to learning. The

primary approach involves building student relationships and is aligned with the findings of

Marzano et al. (2003). Developing strong student-teacher relationships has been connected to

improved student outcomes (Kudlats & Brown, 2021a; Kudlats & Brown 2021b; Kudlats, 2019)

and is fundamental to CRCM (Bondy et al., 2007; Brown, 2003; Patish, 2017; Perry-Campbell,

2020). Another core strategy of CRCM centers around communication. Culturally responsive

classroom managers use culturally relevant communication styles when interacting with

students. These communication styles often include code-switching and using popular culture

references when communicating with students (Bondy et al., 2007; Brown, 2003; Patish, 2017;

Perry-Campbell, 2020; Weinstein et al., 2003). Other strategies include being authoritarian and

assertive when necessary, setting clear expectations, and ensuring consistent communication

with students' families (Brown, 2003; Bondy et al., 2007; Weinstein et al., 2003).

There is research on the ways teachers develop CRCM practices and strategies. Pas et al.

(2016) conducted a study that analyzed teacher coaching data, from 146 teachers who were

mostly white and female, about CRCM practices. Similar to Fallon et al. 's (2019) findings, Pas

et al. (2016) found that coaching about a specific strategy is an effective way to improve

teachers' classroom management and CRCM skills. Perry-Campbell (2020) added that teachers

need regular professional development in CRCM for consistent classroom climate improvement.

Classroom Management in the Middle School

This section of Chapter 2 details the themes in the relevant literature related to classroom

management in the middle school setting. Three major themes emerged from the literature

review. The first of these centered on the unique characteristics of middle schools that relate to

student behavior and classroom management. The second theme explores how middle school

student development relates to some problem behaviors in the classroom. The last theme addresses classroom management practices for middle schools.

Characteristics of Middle School

Research and writing about the middle school setting noted that this particular configurations of grade levels of students often presents unique challenges (Englehart, 2013). A number of researchers described the uniqueness of this setting, much of which has been described using various negative descriptors (Kim et al., 2014). In their study of the middle school context, Kim et al. (2014) found that administrators have described middle schools as chaotic with a host of student conduct problems. A significant difference involves the transition from elementary school to middle school. Typically, this transition involves students changing from spending time in a single teacher's classroom each day, to multiple teachers for different curricular content. This typically involves students moving from place to place independently, navigating a variety of classes, class structures, materials and procedures. The research team determined that the "chaos" and conduct problems in middle schools often negatively impact the school's social context and influence how middle school students feel about their school experiences. Similar to the work of Kim et al. (2014), a study of 1,483 adolescent experiences in middle and K-8 schools found that middle schoolers often report that they have less favorable school experiences (Weiss & Kipnes, 2006). Malone et al. (2017) also found that middle school students often have more negative experiences than any other groups of grades levels. As noted by the previously cited studies, middle school students tend to enjoy their school experiences less than other grade configurations, particularly elementary school settings in which students had fewer teachers across the school day and school year.

Willis et al. (2019) explained that middle school can be a vulnerable time for students, especially students with pre-existing behavior problems. This vulnerability could be related to the findings of Alverson et al. and Ellerbrock and Kiefer. A 2019 study of the implementation of the middle school model found that student behavior is one of the most significant barriers to student academic achievement (Alverson et al., 2019). Also, middle school students typically have multiple teachers with varying expectations and rules (Malone et al., 2017).

Middle schools often introduce regular unstructured times during the day such as independent transition from class to class, which research has shown, create new opportunities negative school interactions (Ellerbrock & Kiefer, 2013). Middle school students are also more likely to experience a decline in motivation and academic performance in this more hectic environment (Kim et al., 2014). Given the difficulties of this setting, Demirdag (2015) noted a great need for unique classroom management skills.

Developmental Aspects of Adolescents and Classroom Management

Several developmental characteristics of middle-school-aged students directly impact their behavior and influence teacher classroom management. Chung et al. (1998) suggested that the transition to middle school is particularly difficult for early adolescents. In their study of students' adjustment to middle school, Chung et al. (1998) surveyed 120 students, with participants who were mostly white and evenly split between boys and girls, and found that this transition often causes increased psychological distress.

Other studies explain how the developmental, physical characteristics of middle school students may increase behavior problems (Bucher & Lee, 2001; Demirdag, 2015). Bucher and Lee (2001) detailed how students' developmental aspects may play a role in misbehavior in the classroom. For example, these developmental differences frequently impact how students engage

with each other and may cause them to behave either more boisterously or more withdrawn in the classroom. Bucher and Lee (2001) also noted that students' changing physical sizes and maturity are often mismatched, making engaging with middle schoolers complex. Some middle schoolers may give the physical impression that they are more mature than they actually are cognitively. These wide variations in adolescent development can impact teachers' classroom management and instruction.

Middle School Classroom Management Practices

Few research studies have specifically focused on the classroom management practices in middle schools. However, in the literature investigating middle school classroom management practices, there is noteworthy research around student perception of classroom management practices (Barksdale et al., 2021), classroom management frameworks used in middle schools (Malmgren et al., 2005), and how some middle school classroom management practices align with the middle school concept (Dougherty, 2002). The middle school concept grew out of the recognition that early adolescents require unique education experiences and practices, different from elementary or high school, to meet their unique developmental needs (Edwards et al., 2014). Centering on family engagement, collaboration and comprehensive advising, the middle school concept was designed to cater to the dramatic changes early adolescents experience (Dougherty, 2002; Edwards et al., 2014).

First, it is known that classroom management practices often influence student learning regardless of factors such as race (Barksdale et al., 2021). Barksdale et al.'s 2021 study included participants who were mostly African American, students across all middle school grade levels, and students of varying socioeconomic statuses. In their study of middle school students' perceptions of classroom management and achievement, Barksdale et al. (2021) found that some

middle school students' perceive student achievement is influenced by student-teacher relationships, classroom organization, clear rules, and other classroom factors.

While management practices impact student learning, Sanford and Evertson (1982) found that adolescent teachers management effectiveness did not vary by management style. In their case study of three junior high school teachers, they found that consistently effective classroom management practices were not specific to the teachers' classroom management styles. Some of these effective practices included explicitly teaching classroom expectations and providing regular maintenance around those expectations.

There is additional research regarding classroom management frameworks most often used in middle school. Malmgren et al. (2005) described three classroom management frameworks often used in middle school. These management frameworks are assertive discipline, logical consequences, and teacher effectiveness training. Assertive discipline is the first notable framework often used in middle schools today, which grew in popularity in the 1970s (Weinstein, 1998b). Assertive discipline relies on a system of rewards and consequences (Canter, 2011; Malmgren et al., 2005). In this system, teachers establish firm rules. Teachers also establish consistent consequences for following or breaking rules. The second of these classroom management frameworks is using logical consequences. Stemming from the research of Dreikurs et al. (1968), the logical consequences framework is based on the assumption that student misbehaviors are manifestations of unmet needs. This view of students' behaviors and unmet needs drives teachers' actions when responding to misbehavior. In this framework, teachers' responses to misbehavior vary but are always reasonable, respectful, and related to the misbehavior.

Malmgren et al. (2005) offered an example of a student refusing to remove their headphones in class. A teacher subscribing to the framework based on students' unmet needs may ignore a student's refusal to comply with the headphones and discuss this behavior with a student after class, explaining to the student the implications of listening to music in class. The teacher may choose to do this because they perceive that the headphones in class are meeting some social or emotional need of that student at that time. Malmgren et al. (2005) also described the use of teacher effectiveness training (TET). Popularized by the research of Gordon et al. (1984), a driving theme in TET is that teachers use structures in which students manage their own behaviors and other variables in the classroom without conflict. In this framework, effective management is measured by students' abilities to manage classroom materials and instruction, and structures are created so that very little teacher rule enforcement is used. In a literature review of classroom management research, Evertson and Harris (1992) explained that TET often centered around managing threats to classroom order but failed to equip most teachers with the preventative support needed to intervene for and manage student misbehaviors.

Of the varying middle school classroom management frameworks and practices, Dougherty (2002) described how middle school classroom management practices do not always align with the middle school concept. Dougherty (2002) explained that an important goal of middle school is to create small learning communities built on mutual respect. In contrast to this, many middle school classroom management practices involve student isolation and a lack of respect from teacher to student. Dougherty (2002) also wrote that mental health, physical health, and family engagement are crucial to the goals of the middle school concept. However, many classroom management practices do not include families, center around actions that could be damaging to students' mental health, and require students to sit quietly in one place for extended

times. Dougherty (2002) suggested teachers shift toward positive cultures around classroom management and concluded that middle school classroom management involves subtle correction of misbehavior, explicit expectations, and parental involvement.

There is also recent research that has found several effective methods for managing middle school classrooms consistent with the body of classroom management research, including what not to do. Englehart (2013) gave multiple classroom management approaches to avoid: engaging in public conflict (address misbehavior one-on-one instead); and using sarcasm and yelling (approach behavior issues with emotional objectivity). This idea of emotional objectivity is the same rationale given by Marzano et al. (2003). Englehart (2013) cautioned against expecting students to sit quietly for extended periods and urged teachers to use engaging instructional strategies that allow for intentional physical movement. Similar to other researchers, Englehart (2013) recommended teachers have clear routines and expectations and added that students must be taught how expectations and behaviors connect.

Further, in a study of positive behavior intervention and supports (PBIS) in both middle and high school classrooms, Manning and Bucher (2005) found that PBIS could mitigate classroom management struggles in middle and high school classrooms. Despite this positive finding about PBIS in middle schools, another study of PBIS use in middle schools by Wight (2020) found that PBIS did not significantly change school culture based on the perceptions of students and teachers. This was based on survey data collected from 68 middle school teachers.

Novice Teachers

This section details the major themes present in the literature surrounding novice teachers. Novice teachers, also referred to as beginning teachers, are in their first, second, or third full year of teaching (Rose & Sughrue, 2021). In the literature, four major topics were

identified. The first theme is beginning teachers' preparedness to teach. The second explores the struggles of beginning teachers. Next, studies relating to beginning teachers explored support provided for them, specifically induction programs. Following that, the review considers beginning teacher retention and attrition. This section ends with a review of studies related to beginning teachers and classroom management.

Preparedness to Teach

There are two primary ways novice teachers are prepared to teach in US public schools; they are typically either traditionally certified or alternatively certified (Boothby, 2023; Melnick & Meister, 2008). Traditionally certified teachers typically receive certification after the completion of an education focused undergraduate degree program (Zhang & Zeller, 2016). Guili Zhang and Nancy Zeller explain that these undergraduate programs typically include the study of the teaching discipline and a student-teaching experience. Alternatively certified teachers, or lateral entry and residency certified teachers, are often hired as classroom teachers, or teachers of record, while having completed a college degree, and little to no education courses in the teaching discipline (Boothby, 2023; Haj-Broussard, 2016, Whitford et al., 2018). Haj-Broussard et al. (2016) and Whitford et al. (2018) explain, most alternatively certified teachers usually complete accelerated coursework in the discipline of teaching, and complete their teacher education, during their first year of teaching. This study will include traditionally and alternatively certified teachers.

Research has also found that preservice programs for new teachers do not always fully prepare them to be teachers (Headden, 2014). Researchers have found that upon entering the classroom, beginning teachers often fail to see the connection between their coursework and practical experiences in the classroom (Miles & Knipe, 2018). In a longitudinal study of nearly

3000 novice teachers' survey data, Darling-Hammond et al. (2002) found that regardless of their preparation program, they often felt ill-prepared when entering the profession (Darling-Hammond et al., 2002; Davis et al., 2019).

Other studies also explain that regardless of the preparation method, novice teachers often feel unprepared to successfully manage their classroom when entering the profession (Albright, 2017; Brubaker, 2016). Albright's (2017) study of middle school teachers in the Midwest found that teachers are often unprepared to manage their classrooms and remain unprepared for years into their careers. Novice teachers could be unprepared for a number of reasons, including the level of their skills after completing preservice programs.

Struggles of Novice Teachers

This noted lack of preparation could contribute to the various struggles of many novice teachers. These struggles are documented in a number of studies investigating their experiences.

A study of over 100 new teachers in rural school districts showed that their professional needs do not tend to vary by race, age, or teaching placement (Erawan, 2019). This illustrates that novice teachers have similar struggles and the struggles are various (Erawan, 2019).

Struggles Related to Classroom Management. Of the various novice teacher struggles, most often noted are classroom management, differentiation, and student motivation (Renard, 2003). In a qualitative study of four beginning teacher experiences, Brubaker (2016) found that new teachers often struggle with differentiation and classroom management. A study focused on beginning teachers' abilities to differentiate instruction, or provide instruction tailored to each student's individual needs, found that differentiation is often inhibited by teachers' lack of classroom management skills (Casey, 2011). Casey (2011) explained that differentiation requires the use of a variety of teaching strategies concurrently. These strategies can include structured

independent work, small group instruction, and high student independence. Without effective classroom management skills, teachers may not be able to concurrently manage the moving parts of a differentiated classroom (Casey, 2011)

Other hurdles for novice teachers involve not understanding the complexities of the teaching profession (Miles & Knipe, 2018). Some of these complexities often include cultural diversity of some classrooms (Piot et al., 2010), as well as various work expectations (Youngs et al., 2015). In a study of six novice teachers with multiethnic classrooms in Belgium, Piot et al. (2010) found that some new teachers struggle to manage the cultural differences between themselves and their students. This study examined several beginning teacher experiences in a school composed mostly of immigrant students whose ethnicity did not match their teacher's ethnicity. This study explained that some novice teachers may only recognize cultural differences when they cause classroom management problems. The researchers also explained that planning for a culturally diverse classroom can also add to the excessive workload for novice teachers. Similarly, in a study of five beginning, middle-school teachers' experiences, researchers found that some beginning, middle-school teachers lacked a clear understanding of student development, balancing curricular expectations, and high-stakes testing (Youngs et al., 2015). This lack of understanding represents another complexity that many novice teachers must navigate.

Praxis Shock. The lack of adequate preparation for the rigors of teaching can ultimately lead to praxis shock, a form of disillusionment about the teaching profession (Headden, 2014; New Teacher Center, 2019). Many beginning teachers go through numerous unexpected feelings during their first year of teaching. These phases can include states of anticipation, survival, and disillusionment (Headden, 2014; New Teacher Center, 2019). When the realities of the difficulty

of the teaching profession set in, novice teachers are often frustrated when they realize that despite their perceived preparation of the job they actually are unprepared for the realities of teaching (Whalen et al., 2019). Brubaker (2016) explained that some disillusionment is expected, and some beginning teachers suffer from unrealistic expectations related to the difficulty of teaching.

During the first year of teaching, many beginning teachers often enter praxis shock around the third or fourth month of the school year (New Teacher Center, 2019). Achinstein and Barrett (2004) and Piot et al. (2010) explained that this occurs when beginning teachers transition from how they imagined teaching would be to the reality of the hard work of being a teacher. In a study of 118 student teachers, Weinstein (1988a) explained that this unrealistic optimism begins prior to student teachers' initial classroom experiences. Related to the transition from an imagined form of teaching to the reality of teaching, research has shown that some beginning teachers abandon their personal beliefs to conform to the practices of their school and peers (Canfait, 2015).

Workload. There are several aspects of teaching that could contribute to beginning teachers' negative experiences. These aspects can include praxis shock/disillusionment (Achinstein & Barrett, 2004; New Teacher Center, 2019), the nuances of the profession (Miles & Knipe, 2018), classroom management (Albright, 2017) and the noted crushing workload of some beginning teachers (Barnard et al., 2022; Consuegra et al., 2014; Kardos & Johnson, 2007; Renard, 2003). Interviews with eleven beginning teachers showed that some beginning teachers consistently consider their workload to be excessive (Barnard et al., 2022).

Beginning teachers have often reported that they feel overwhelmed with the amount of work required for their jobs (Renard, 2003). This perceived extreme workload could be caused

by the premature expectations of supervisors that new teachers be experts in their curricular areas and are fully prepared to work independently (Kardos & Johnson, 2007). In their study of 456 beginning teacher experiences, Kardos and Johnson (2007) found that some beginning teachers are often expected to be completely independent when starting their careers, but some are not fully prepared for this work. This expectation of independence was marked by the finding that many beginning teachers are typically given the same amount of job responsibilities as experienced teachers, and are sometimes offered no additional support. The researchers explain that only about half of the teachers in their study work in schools where beginning teachers are expected to work in partnership with experienced teachers. Kardos and Johnson (2007) also found that many beginning teachers often plan for instruction alone. This expected independence, coupled with some teachers' lack of partnership with veteran teachers, or other mentors, contributes to some novice teachers' negative experiences regarding their first years of teaching (Kardos & Johnson, 2007).

In a mixed methods study of beginning teachers' experiences, including 11 teachers in urban and suburban schools of mixed socioeconomic status, Consuegra et al. (2014) found that beginning teachers frequently work in isolation, and perceive that their more experienced peers do not value collaborative work. Consuegra et al. (2014) found that staff interactions are not often designed with cooperative learning in mind, and the value of collaborative learning is often downplayed in the workplace. With many teachers left to plan instruction independently and teach on their own, some novice teachers are often left to solve problems without assistance and forced to seek the help they need (Consuegra et al., 2014). This issue of workload, noted across multiple studies, could also contribute to problems that beginning teachers have with work-life balance. In a study of development of 53 teachers across their careers, Brunetti and Martson

(2018) found that beginning teachers have little work-life balance, while experienced teachers have learned to better manage work and their personal lives over time.

Novice Teacher Supports

As previously stated, some novice teachers struggle with aspects of their work (Brubaker, 2016; Fuller, 2003; Headden, 2014; Renard, 2003; Youngs et al., 2015). Alongside this struggle, many beginning teachers go with and without the crucial support they need to succeed (Kardos & Johnson, 2007). Some novice teachers often seek the help they need. The degree of support for them varies from school to school, and district to district (Kardos & Johnson, 2007). Lack of support for beginning teachers has been related to beginning teacher attrition.

A study of difficulties novice teachers faced related to retention found that they often express that support for them is absent (Whalen et al., 2019). Beginning teacher support could include regularly observing other teachers, working closely with mentors, and receiving teacher-centered feedback (Gilbert 2005). In a survey of 362 beginning teachers from six Georgia school districts, Gilbert (2005) found that this group believed that teacher observations, mentoring, and teacher-centered feedback are the most valuable and practical support they received in their first years of teaching.

Further, many beginning teachers need support from their colleagues and peers (Brunetti & Martson, 2018). A qualitative study of 53 beginning teachers' experiences, who all graduated from the same five-year teacher preparation program, found many beginning teachers need substantial peer validation and support (Brunetti & Martson, 2018). Brunetti and Martson (2018) also explained that this may be due to some beginning teachers' lack of confidence. Other school-based support often includes professional development (PD). In their study of beginning teacher development, Rose and Sughrue (2021) found that beginning teachers sporadically felt

PD met their needs. However, Rose and Sughrue (2021) suggested increasing the amount and availability of PD that is specifically targeting the needs of beginning teachers.

Of the struggles of some novice teachers, researchers have found that some school administrators have sometimes presented barriers to novice teacher supports (Albright, 2017). Through focus groups and interviews of 9 novice teachers and 5 principals of varying genders, Albright (2017) found that administrators did not provide adequate support, as perceived by teachers in the study. In a study including survey data from 1,013 novice teachers, who were mostly white females, Hong and Matsko (2019) found that weak leadership can create barriers to novice teachers' access to quality mentoring. On the other hand, a multiple-year study of a small group of beginning teachers found that school principals can create school-wide policies supporting beginning teachers (Youngs et al., 2015). Youngs et al. (2015) also found that solid instructional leadership positively impacts beginning teachers' experiences.

Kardos and Johnson (2007) surveyed 400 beginning teachers and learned the support they receive from their schools and school districts vary greatly. Knowing that many beginning teachers need support, combined with knowledge of some of the effective supports for beginning teachers, and that such supports are often inconsistent in their frequency, add to understanding the potential difficulty and complexity of the plight of beginning teachers.

Novice Teacher Induction Programs

Novice teacher support programs are also known as induction programs. Many beginning teacher induction programs are based on the belief that teaching is complex and pre-service teacher education programs do not always provide sufficient experiences needed to be successful in the first years of teaching (Ingersoll & Strong, 2011). Multiple studies have found that induction programs can have a variety of benefits for new teachers (Ingersoll, 2012; Ingersoll &

Strong, 2011; Kelley, 2004; Ladner, 2022). Effective induction programs can improve teachers' classroom practices, improve retention, and improve student outcomes (Ingersoll & Strong, 2011).

Reviewing previous research on new teacher induction programs, Ingersoll and Strong (2011) outlined a number of findings from a review of literature related to teacher induction. Some conclusions from their analysis, with findings from the studies they cited, are detailed next.

Induction programs can have varying effects on beginning teacher retention and attrition (Desimone et al., 2014; Ingersoll, 2012; Johnson & Birkeland, 2003). Various surveys have shown that beginning teachers who participate in induction programs are more likely to persist in the profession and more likely to remain in their school (Hanke, 2000; Headden, 2014). In a study of 7000 beginning teachers' experiences, gauged through public survey data, Hanke (2000) found that beginning teachers who participate in these programs often remain in the profession at a higher rate than those who do not. The retention rates in Hanke's (2000) study differ by 11 percent. Another study concluded that some beginning teachers need scaffolds and support, like induction programs, to be successful and remain in the teaching profession (Johnson & Birkeland, 2003).

There is also research on the effects induction programs have on beginning teacher practices. In their study of 46 beginning teachers' classroom practices, Evertson and Smithey (2000) found that beginning teachers who participated in induction programs organized and managed their classrooms more effectively than those who did not. Evertson and Smithey (2000) explained that students of beginning teachers who participated in induction programs are often better behaved and more engaged in class. A study of 24 beginning teachers' effectiveness found

that beginning teachers who participated in induction programs that emphasized mentoring were more effective than those who did not (Nevins & Floden, 2009). Nevins & Floden (2009) used an 130 item observation tool, and found that beginning teachers who participated in the program classroom management improved more than those who did not. These findings illustrate the varied effects induction programs have on teachers' classroom practices.

Induction programs can also positively impact students' academic outcomes (Fletcher et al., 2008, Fletcher & Strong, 2009; Glazerman, 2010). In a study of a California-based mentoring program across three school districts, Fletcher et al. (2008) found that many beginning teachers who work with their mentors often (weekly) show greater growth in student reading scores than most of their peers who work with mentors less often. Fletcher and Strong (2009) found that full-time novice teacher mentoring can have a greater impact on student success than less frequent mentoring. In their study of over 1000 beginning teacher experiences, Glazerman (2010) found that teachers who participate in induction programs, which typically include mentoring, experience increased student test scores over time, at a greater rate than those who do not participate in induction programs.

Retention and Attrition

Several factors can contribute to novice teacher retention and attrition (Albright, 2017). Several studies on beginning teachers' experiences found trends related to novice teacher retention and attrition (DeAngelis et al., 2013; Ingersoll, 2012; Johnson & Birkeland, 2003; Kelley, 2004; Maready, 2018). In a study of beginning teacher retention predictors, Maready (2018) noted three significant factors often related to beginning teacher retention: mentoring practices, a collaborative school culture, and principal support. Preparation can also be a predictor of longevity and teachers' plans to remain in the teaching profession (DeAngelis et al.,

2013). In their study surveying 1,159 novice teachers, DeAngelis et al. (2013) found that beginning teachers who consider themselves less prepared after their pre-service training programs tend to leave the profession more often than those who feel prepared. DeAngelis et al. (2013) also noted that mentoring and induction programs could mitigate beginning teachers' lack of adequate preparation for teaching, thereby increasing retention.

Mentoring and beginning teacher induction can also affect retention. A study of six beginning teacher experiences, focused on beginning teacher challenges, found that mentorship can improve retention (Whalen et al., 2019). Kelley (2004) found that induction programs can positively influence teacher retention and teacher confidence, while a lack of mentoring, a non collaborative culture, and lack of principal support can negatively impact it. The effect of these factors on retention could be explained by Johnson and Birkeland's (2003) study of beginning teacher experiences. In their interview study of 50 novice teachers, Johnson and Birkeland (2003) found that novice teachers often leave environments where they do not feel successful and supported.

Novice Teachers and Classroom Management

Several studies describe novice teachers struggling with classroom management (Albright, 2017; Brubaker, 2016; Headden, 2014; Miles & Knipe, 2018). Brubaker (2016) studied four teachers throughout their careers and found that classroom management is one of the greatest struggles for these beginning teachers. Brubaker (2016) found that novice teachers are often overwhelmed and not always prepared for the challenges of classroom management. Brubaker's (2016) findings related to classroom management discuss beginning teachers not feeling prepared to manage all student behaviors that arise in the classroom. Brubaker's (2016)

findings are supported by studies that describe some novice teachers' struggles with classroom management and other aspects of teaching.

Some studies explain that classroom management struggles often accompany other struggles for beginning teachers (Brunetti & Martson, 2018; Casey, 2011; Headden, 2014). Headden (2014) found that novice teachers often struggle with classroom management and teaching a prescribed curriculum. Casey (2011) found classroom management can pose a unique challenge for beginning teachers, which could then inhibit their ability to differentiate instruction. This inhibition could be explained by the findings of Brunetti and Martson (2018), who determined that beginning teachers often adopt a laser focus on a single aspect of their work, such as effective lesson design or discipline and management, sometimes blinding them to the bigger picture involving the complexity of teaching in classrooms.

Various classroom management factors are often stressors for beginning teachers (Harmen et al., 2018). Harmen et al. (2018) studied the causes of and responses to stress for 143 new teachers, mostly females. The investigators found that several negative aspects of working with students, high psychological demands, and undesirable social aspects were stressors for this group. These stressors are supported by previously mentioned research concerning the experiences of beginning teachers. Harmen et al. (2018) described these negative aspects as weak student-teacher relationships and student misbehavior. Student-teacher relationships and student misbehavior directly relate to Weinstein and Evertson's (2013) conclusions about classroom management. Weinstein and Evertson (2013) identified student teacher relationships and intervening for student misbehavior as crucial components of classroom management. Harmen et al. (2018) outline these components as potential stressors for many beginning teachers.

Along with these classroom management challenges, it is known that beginning teachers may need to improve their classroom management skills (Kelly et al., 2015). They also typically need support to do so (Melnick & Meister, 2008). In a comparison of beginning (n=273) and veteran teachers'(n=218) concerns across the nation, Melnick and Meister (2008) found that beginning teachers are often less confident and frequently need assistance with classroom management. For beginning teachers to improve their classroom management skills, Hirsch et al. (2021) wrote that there is a need for specific support and PD concerning classroom management. In their systematic literature review of the effects of PD on beginning teachers' classroom management, Hirsch et al. (2021) found that targeted PD about classroom management often enhances novice teachers' classroom management skills.

Summary

This chapter explored scholarly literature investigating classroom management, classroom management ideas targeting the middle school setting, and challenges of novice teachers. The first section of this chapter illustrated how some of the significant works in the body of classroom management research, built upon each other over time, support the definition of classroom management to be used in this study, as presented by Weinstien and Evertson (2013). The second section explored the relevant literature related to relevant classroom management ideas and illustrates the complexity of classroom management and various subtopics related to classroom management. The relevant literature centered on teachers' classroom management strategies, the preferred use of proactive classroom management strategies, some teachers' lack of preparedness to manage their classrooms upon entering the profession, and emerging literature around culturally responsive classroom management and classroom management research related to diverse teachers and student population. The third

section of this chapter discussed the literature related to classroom management in the middle school setting. The section detailed the finding of various studies related to the unique characteristics of middle schools, the developmental characteristics of middle school students, and middle school classroom management practices. The final section of this chapter detailed many of the struggles and experiences of novice teachers. In these experiences, many novice teachers often experience isolation, praxis shock, and inconsistent support in their schools. These research findings throughout the literature illustrate the difficulty and challenges associated with teachers' beginning years of teaching. These findings also detail the progression and current definition of classroom management, while also exploring the complexities of classroom management and managing middle school students.

Chapter 3 will detail the methodology for this study. Chapter 3 will include details regarding the research design, researcher positionality, participant selection, the instrumentation, data collection techniques, and the data analysis procedures.

CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY

Classroom management has been a field of increasing interest for researchers and practitioners over time (Weinstein & Evertson, 2013). In the growing body of classroom management research (Bozkus, 2021), various studies have found that novice teachers, in particular, generally have difficulties with classroom management (Albright, 2017; Blank & Shavit, 2016; Kelly et al., 2015; Melnick & Meister, 2008). In Taie's (2022) report on a nation-wide survey of teachers in 2020 and 2021, almost 75% of teachers reported that they had undergraduate or graduate coursework in classroom management before their first year of teaching. However, many new teachers feel particularly unprepared to manage their classrooms when starting their first year of work (National Center for Education Statistics, 2012). Despite the increasing amount of research on classroom management and on novice teachers, a gap remains in understanding novice teachers' perceptions of classroom management.

Along with this gap in the research, Gomez (2012) noted that the middle school setting is understudied compared to the high school and elementary school settings. This is another gap in the literature related to the topic of this study. This phenomenological study, however, sought to address the paucity of research and investigate novice middle school teachers' perceptions of classroom management. In particular, this study explored how novice middle school teachers define classroom management and how they conceptualize its various aspects. The study also explored which elements of classroom management novice middle school teachers perceive to be the most problematic and which have brought them the most success.

Research Questions

Bozkuş (2021) stated that classroom management is the most important tool in a teacher's toolkit. Other investigators have noted that novice teachers struggle with classroom

management (Albright, 2017; Kelly et al., 2015; Miles & Knipe, 2018). These findings, combined with a lack of research surrounding novice middle school teachers' in-depth understanding of classroom management, led to the research questions that guided this study. The research questions were:

1. How do novice middle-school teachers conceptualize classroom management?

2. What do novice middle-school teachers perceive to be effective classroom management strategies?

3. Which aspects of classroom management are easiest for novice middle school teachers to manage, and which create the greatest challenges?

Research Design

This qualitative study utilized a phenomenological study design. Ravitch and Carl (2016) described phenomenology as a research design and philosophy in their writings on qualitative research. In their description, they explained that phenomenological research is best used for studies that seek to understand the lived experiences of others. They added that phenomenological research requires the researcher to set aside their biases and beliefs in an effort to understand the phenomenon as it naturally exists. Phenomenological research lets researchers comprehensively understand a phenomenon and use an individual's experiences as a point of access to explore it (Gearing, 2004; Goulding, 2005; Moustakas, 1994; Ravitch and Carl, 2016).

A phenomenological study design aligned with the study's purpose: to understand how novice teachers conceptualize and experience classroom management. This purpose of understanding aligned with the goals and purposes of phenomenological research. While other qualitative designs could potentially have accomplished the purpose of this study, investigating

novice middle school teachers' perceptions about classroom management was best accomplished through a phenomenological design.

Phenomenology requires the researcher to set aside, or bracket, their biases, previous experiences, and assumptions (Gearing, 2004; Ravitch & Carl, 2016). Bracketing poses a unique but necessary challenge for me. One reason for this study is to give voice to beginning teachers' knowledge of classroom management and its principles. To accomplish this, the researcher's perceptions and beliefs must be set aside to let participants' voices be fully and authentically heard.

Positionality Statement

My career has included serving as a middle school administrator, teacher coach, and elementary school teacher. Each of these experiences uniquely impacted my perspectives on classroom management. As a middle school administrator, I spent much time processing student discipline. Many of the disciplinary incidents managed in my office were directly related to various teacher's classroom management practices. Such experiences refined and changed my earlier views about best practices for classroom management.

My initial thoughts around classroom management best practices began as an undergraduate. As a traditionally certified elementary school teacher, I received some instruction in the best classroom management practices and was taught Kounin's (1970) ideas about group management. I also learned to create lessons and had to consider the behavior management aspects of lesson delivery and instruction. Doing so created strong beliefs about effective group management, organized lesson delivery, and how these ideas worked together to bring about effectively managed classrooms.

As an elementary classroom teacher, I was taught the importance of positive behavior intervention and support systems (PBIS). By implementing PBIS in my classroom and the schools I led, I was taught the power of positive narration and reinforcement to manage student misbehavior. These experiences and perspectives followed me into my work as a teacher coach and strongly affected how I coached novice teachers.

Throughout these experiences, I have consistently experienced frequent and rampant otherness, the quality or state of being other or different (Merriam-Webster, n.d.). As a Black, male educator I have become accustomed to being a singular representation of my various identities in many profession spaces. I have taught and been an administrator in majority White schools. I have served on leadership teams, where there were no other males or people of color. I have worked on teaching teams where there were no other males or people of color. I have supervised teacher teams where there were no other males or any teachers of color. This consistent state of otherness developed my passion for inclusive and equitable educational practices. These ideas of inclusion and equity related to race, ethnicity, and gender, also impact my perception of effective classroom management and best practice classroom management strategies.

Further, these experiences strongly affected how I understood, analyzed, and assessed teachers' classroom management abilities as an assistant principal. My earlier roles and experiences formed my thoughts about middle school teachers' abilities to manage their classrooms and could similarly impact how I explore the experiences of new teachers in this study. My beliefs and perspectives about classroom management could have potentially impacted the objectivity of my analysis in this study. To mitigate this possibility, I remained grounded in the fundamentals of phenomenological research.

As explained by Gearing (2004) and Ravitch and Carl (2016), phenomenological research requires bracketing of personal perspectives and beliefs to deeply understand the experiences of participants. Throughout the study I completed structured reflexive activities on the topic and my experiences. To aid this process, I kept a reflective audio-journal throughout the research process and reflected on my position about and perceptions of classroom management. This aided me in reducing bias and helped me remain grounded in the objective, exploratory nature of the method being used.

Participants

Participants in this study met various selection criteria. First, all participants in the study were in the first, second, or third year of teaching. Participants were middle school teachers. Participants held a valid North Carolina teaching license. Lastly, participants in the study were located in one of the 10 districts in the southwest region of North Carolina. Districts in the southwest region of North Carolina vary. In the region there is one large, urban school district, several moderately large school districts and several smaller school districts.

The study included participants who were traditionally or non traditionally certified. Race, gender, and age were not considered for the selection criteria.

Three sampling techniques were used to recruit participants who meet the selection criteria. The sampling techniques used for this study were convenience, snowball, and quota sampling. First, the researcher used his contacts and professional colleagues to identify participants for the study. Next, snowball sampling was used. In this sampling method those who agreed to participate in the study helped me identify additional participants. Ravitch and Carl (2016) explained that snowball sampling begins with one or two participants who meet the

selection criteria and using their contacts to recruit others for the study. This sampling technique was used to contact and recruit novice teachers.

Quota sampling was also used. Ravitch and Carl (2016) also explained that quota sampling involves using a predetermined number of participants or cases in a larger population. Ravitch and Carl also explained that quota sampling is used to ensure various categories within the larger population are included in the study. So that the study included voices from all middle school grades, quota sampling was used to ensure participants would include a minimum of two teachers from the sixth, seventh, and eighth grades. Quota sampling also helped ensure that teachers who followed traditional and non-traditional routes to certification were included.

Using snowball and quota sampling allowed the recruitment of eight participants spanning all three middle school grade levels. To aid the sampling process, individuals identified who met the selection criteria were sent a recruitment email (see Appendix A). This recruitment email was the initial communication with prospective participants. Those who responded to the recruitment email and met the selection criteria received a follow-up email containing the consent form (see Appendix B). Teachers who consented to participate and signed the study consent form were scheduled for an interview.

The goal sample size for this study was six to eight teachers. Ravitch and Carl (2016) explained that sample size is less important in qualitative research. They explained that the purpose of the study should inform sample size, along with what resources are available, what sample size will be credible, and what data will be useful. Six to eight was an appropriate sample size for this study because this sample size provided sufficient data and sufficient perspectives across the middle school setting.

Instrumentation

One instrument was used for data collection. A semi-structured interview protocol was developed and was the only tool used (see Appendix C). The protocol was divided into four sections: the first section collected participant demographic data, and the remaining three each aligned with the research questions for this study.

All participants began by answering a question that provided the demographic data pertinent to this study. Data collected included their years of experience, licensure and method of initial licensure, grade level the participant taught, participant's age, and gender. Participants were also asked to describe their classroom and students.

The second portion of the interview protocol addressed the first research question ("How do novice middle-school teachers conceptualize classroom management?"). Participants were asked two questions in this second section: How do they define classroom management, and what are the key components, aspects, and tenets of classroom management?

The third section of the protocol related to the second research question ("What do novice middle-school teachers perceive to be effective classroom management strategies?"). In this portion, participants were asked to discuss the most effective classroom management strategies that align with the five tasks and aspects of classroom management outlined by Weinstein and Evertson (2013). Participants were presented with five questions that asked them to detail the most effective strategies for developing supportive relationships, organizing and implementing instruction, group management for encouragement and engagement, promoting students' social, emotional, and academic development, and intervening to assist students with behavior problems. Those interviewed were also shown a graphic organizer (see Appendix D) for reference, which showed the five aspects of classroom management.

The final portion of the protocol aligned with the last research question ("Which aspects of classroom management are easiest for novice middle school teachers to manage, and which create the greatest challenges?") This section of the interview included two questions and asked participants to describe which of the previously mentioned tasks and aspects of classroom management which with they have found the most success and which have been the most difficult. Participants were also asked to explain why certain aspects have brought success or caused struggle. Participants continued to have access to the graphic to reference the five aspects of classroom management.

The interview protocol was tested in a pilot study and interview rehearsal. An interview participant, who met the selection criteria set for participants in the main study, was selected. After a participant was selected, the participant was interviewed. This interview was recorded. Pilot study and rehearsal data was not used in the data sets analyzed and reported in this study. As piloting is a central aspect of designing and refining research study instruments (Ravitch & Carl, 2016), the pilot study allowed the instrument to be tested. Based on a review of the pilot study, the interview protocol was not changed.

Data Collection Techniques

The data for the study was collected in the spring of 2024. After approval from UNC Charlotte's IRB, the participants were recruited, and data collection begun. As part of recruitment, participants signed a consent form. Once their consent was obtained, interviews began.

Ravitch and Carl (2016) explained that qualitative data collection could include a variety of instruments and methods (e.g., interviews, observations, and focus groups). Individual interviews were selected for this study because in-depth interviews "play an integral role in

phenomenological research" (p. 377) and provide access to the participant's lived experiences. These ideas align with the purpose of this study. The individual interviews took approximately 30-45 minutes to complete.

Using the semi-structured interview protocol, participant interviews were conducted using *Zoom* video conferencing software. *Zoom* allowed interviews to be done at a time and place that was convenient for the participants. The platform also enabled interviews to be audio recorded, captioned, and stored. These features were used during the interview and later assisted in transcribing the interviews. Following member checking, the transcripts were the basis for data analysis in the study.

Data Analysis Procedures

The data for this study was analyzed using an inductive thematic analysis strategy described by Braun and Clarke (2006). They described thematic analysis as a "method for identifying, analyzing, and reporting patterns within data" (p. 59) and gave six steps. This process includes:

1. Become familiar with the data.

2. Generate initial codes.

3. Search for and generate themes.

4. Review the themes.

5. Define and name the themes.

6. Produce the final report.

This process was used to analyze, reduce, and aggregate interview data. This inductive process involved having the themes emerge from the data rather than from previously identified

categories. The methods for which Braun and Clarke's (2006) process for thematic analysis was applied to this study are described in the following section. .

Following Braun and Clarke's (2006) thematic analysis strategy, the researcher first familiarized himself with the data. This was done by creating interview transcripts and reading them multiple times before beginning to code. These readings included noting initial thoughts about the raw data. Next, the interview transcripts were coded. Interesting, relevant, and/or repeated ideas were marked and assigned a code. Codes were identified for all data.

These codes were then used to create themes. This step involved organizing, grouping, and collating codes relevant to a potential theme (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Braun and Clarke (2006) explained that a theme captures something of importance in the data set, represents a pattern in the data, and has meaning. Once initial themes were identified, they were reviewed. In this review, the researcher ensured that the themes, codes, and raw data related to and communicated the same ideas. After reviewing the themes, they were named and defined. Following that, examples of each theme were extracted from the raw interview data and used with a discussion of each theme in Chapter 4. A digital codebook was developed that parallels the coding process. An example of the codebook is given below (Fig. 2).

Figure 2

Sample of the digital codebook.

Code	Theme	Revised Theme	Theme -Definition	Theme - Example/Quote

Protection of Human Subjects

Several measures were taken to ensure that those participating in this study were protected. First, participation was voluntary, and participants completed a consent form (see Appendix B). The consent form shared key details about this study and acknowledged that the participant was volunteering to be interviewed and recorded via *Zoom*. Secondly, no participant was under the researchers direct or indirect supervision. They also were not employed at the school where the researcher was employed

Further, the study does not contain information that identifies participants. Pseudonyms were used in reporting to maintain anonymity. The interview recording and transcripts were stored in the researcher's UNC Charlotte Google Drive. The interview transcripts and recordings were destroyed when the study was completed. This study was conducted after obtaining approval from UNC Charlotte's IRB. All IRB requirements were followed.

Trustworthiness

There are four aspects to consider concerning trustworthiness in a qualitative study. These are credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability (Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Ravitch & Carl, 2016). Credibility describes the researcher's ability to draw truthfully and meaningfully constructed inferences from the data collected (Ravitch & Carl, 2016). In this study, credibility was enhanced by member checking. Member checking involves checking back with a participant to ensure the analysis and interpretation of the interview data are accurate (Ravitch & Carl, 2016). Each participant was involved in the member-checking process. Each participant was given an opportunity to read the transcript of the interview and review the thematic data. Participants were also provided the opportunity to give feedback on the accuracy of the data.

Transferability refers to the generalizability of a study. However, generalizability is not per se a goal of qualitative research (Ravitch & Carl, 2016). However, the transferability of this study was enhanced by providing detailed descriptions of the study's setting and its participants. Participant experiences, school settings, and demographics were included in the data collection. These descriptions provide readers with the context needed for transferability.

Dependability refers to the stability of the data (Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Ravitch & Carl, 2016). To ensure this characteristic, researchers collect data and use procedures consistent with their research questions and the goal of the study (Ravitch & Carl, 2016). Dependability in this study was enhanced by thematic analysis. Using Braun and Clarke's (2006) process of thematic analysis, transcriptions of the interviews were read three times. After these readings and code development, themes were created and reviewed multiple times and revised as needed. Several readings of the initial interview data and multiple reviews of the themes found ensured consistency in the data and dependability of the study.

Confirmability involves subjectivity and objectivity (Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Ravitch & Carl, 2016). Confirmability in qualitative research means acknowledging that subjectivity is a natural limitation of qualitative research and taking steps to minimize the effects of the researcher's subjectivity (Ravitch & Carl, 2016). The confirmability of this study was strengthened by engaging in structured reflexive practices that acknowledge subjectivity and objectivity. During these structured reflexive practices, the researcher completed positionality-centered reflections during data collection and analysis.

Limitations

Several limitations existed in this study related to the study location, sample size, and design. First, the study took place in various districts, in the southwestern region of North

Carolina. This location was selected based on convenience. While the location of the study limited the breadth of experiences that were included, the region provided access to many beginning teachers. Keeping the research local ensured that a sufficient amount of novice middle school teachers were recruited for the study.

The second limitation of this study was the small sample size (eight teachers). The small sample size limited the representation of novice middle school teachers. In an effort to provide a wider range of experiences in this study and include the experiences of novice teachers from different middle schools, quota sampling was used to ensure that teachers of each grade level in middle schools were included in the study.

Similarly, the selection of a phenomenological, qualitative study design also limited the generalizability of this study. However, Ravitch and Carl (2016) did not consider generalizability a goal of qualitative research. This phenomenological qualitative study does not seek to make generalizations but explore the experiences of individual beginning middle school teachers.

<div align="center">**Summary**</div>

Chapter 3 described the methodological procedures for this study. The chapter included the three research questions related to how this study explored the classroom management perceptions of novice middle school teachers. Following data collection, the thematic coding given by Braun and Clarke (2006) was used to analyze, reduce, and interpret the data collected. This chapter also addresses trustworthiness, protections that were provided to participants, and the study's limitations. Chapter 4 will report the findings of this study based on the analyzed data.

CHAPTER 4: FINDINGS

The purpose of this qualitative study was to investigate novice middle-school teachers' perceptions concerning classroom management. This study sought to gather, investigate, and understand their insights on middle school classroom management. In alignment with this purpose, this study utilized a phenomenological, qualitative research design. Data were collected using individual interviews with eight middle school teachers in their first, second, or third year of teaching. This chapter will include a detailed description of the participant recruitment methods, a summary description of the participants, the findings organized by research question, and a chapter summary.

Recruitment

Two sampling techniques were used to guide the participant recruitment and selection process. First, I contacted several colleagues to identify potential study participants. These contacts included 12 school administrators and teacher-leaders, two district administrators, and one superintendent. Of those professionals, six school-level professionals and one superintendent offered further contact information and support in recruiting potential participants. From those communications, 31 novice middle-school teachers were identified as possible participants in the study.

The 31 teachers identified as potential participants received the recruitment email (Appendix A). Nine potential participants responded to it. Eight teachers responded and agreed to participate in the study, and one teacher declined. The eight teachers who agreed to participate completed the study consent form via UNC Charlotte's DocuSign. After the consent forms had been completed, individual interviews were scheduled via email.

Participant Summary

This section provides a summary and description of each participant in the study. The summary includes the teacher's race, gender identity, method of teacher preparation, class size, and key information about the participant's school. Table 2 presents this information followed by narrative descriptions of each participant. As noted in Table 2, seven participants identified as women, of which three were African American, one was Indigenous/Latina, and three were White. There was one male participant. There was a wide range of ages among participants; five were in their twenties, and three were in their fifties. Three participants had three years of teaching experience, three had two years of experience, and two were in their first year of teaching. Subjects they taught included math, science, language arts, and multi-lingual language. Table 2, listed below, details demographic and other relevant data about the study participants.

Table 2

Demographic and Other Participant Information

Name	Age	Race	Preferred Pronouns	Yrs. teaching	Grade Taught	Subject Taught	Class Size
Nikia	23	White	She/Her	2	7	Math	25-30
Fabian	25	Indigenous /Latina	She/Her	3	6,7,8	Multi-lingual language; Lang Arts	Class sizes differ significantly
Gabrielle	23	White	She/Her	2	7	Math	22-31

Table 2

Demographic and Other Participant Information(continued)

Name	Age	Race	Preferred Pronouns	Yrs. teaching	Grade Taught	Subject Taught	Class Size
Dominique	26	African American	She/Her	2	8	Science	26-30
Bryan	50	White	He/Him	1	8	Lang. Arts	15-29
Kaleigh	28	White	She/Her	3	8	Science	32-38
Wendolyn	52	African American	She/Her	1	6	Science	28-32
Penny	57	African American	She/Her	3	7	Math	23-27

Participant One: Nikia

Nikia is a second-year teacher who teaches seventh-grade math. Nikia is a White female whose pronouns are she and her. She is traditionally trained (completed a teacher education licensure program) and has a bachelors degree in mathematics education. She is 23 years old. Nikia's class sizes are between 25 and 30 students. She teaches a total of 110 students across four classes throughout the day. This is Nikia's second year teaching seventh grade at a midsized, suburban school in the Southwest Region of North Carolina. Approximately 61 percent of the students in Nikia's school are minorities, and 39 percent are White.

In 2023, approximately 59 percent of the students in Nikia's school were identified as economically disadvantaged. When asked to detail anything important about her classroom and students, Nikia explained that her curriculum was based on an investigative and collaborative teaching model. This model drives the table-groups design of her classroom and the various teaching styles and actions she makes when instructing. In 10 years, Nikia hopes to still teach math, but is unsure if she can remain in the classroom that long.

Participant Two: Fabian

Fabian is a third-year teacher who teaches Multilingual Language to sixth, seventh, and eighth-grade students. Fabian is an Indigenous Latina female whose pronouns are she and her. She is traditionally trained and has a bachelor's degree in elementary education. Fabian is 25 years old. She teaches 120 students across five classes during the day. This is her third year teaching at a midsized, suburban school in the Southwestern Region of North Carolina. Approximately 61 percent of the students in Fabian's school are minorities, and 39 percent are White. In 2023, approximately 59 percent of the students in Fabian's school had been identified as economically disadvantaged. When asked to detail anything important about her classroom and students, Fabian explained that she teaches a self-contained multilingual language class and co-teaches with various language arts teachers in her school. She feels her biggest role is to serve as a liaison between her students, whose first language is not English, and their core content teachers. In 10 years, Fabian hopes to work in curriculum development or educational legislation and policy.

Participant Three: Gabrielle

Gabrielle is a second-year teacher who teaches seventh-grade math. Gabrielle is a White woman, whose pronouns are she and her. She is traditionally trained with a bachelor's degree in

mathematics education. Gabrielle is 23 years old. She teaches 106 students across four classes each day. Her classes are between 22 and 31 students. This is her second year teaching at a midsized, suburban school district in Southwestern North Carolina. Approximately 61 percent of the students in Gabrielle's school are minorities, and 39 percent are White. In 2023, approximately 59 percent of the students in her school had been identified as economically disadvantaged. In 10 years, Gabrielle hopes to work in curriculum writing and curriculum support for middle school math teachers.

Participant Four: Dominique

Dominique is a second-year teacher who teaches eighth-grade science. Dominique is an African American woman, whose pronouns are she and her. She is an alternatively certified teacher and was licensed through her school district's residency program. Dominique is 25 years old. She teaches 170 students across six classes. She sees her students every other day, as her school operates on an A-day/B-day schedule for her subject. Dominique's school has approximately 98 percent minority enrollment, primarily Latino and Black students. This is Dominique's second year teaching at a mid-sized school in a large city district. In 2023, approximately 56 percent of the students in Dominique's school were identified as economically disadvantaged. She is currently completing a master's degree in education, and in 10 years, she hopes work as an academic and curriculum facilitator, supporting middle school science teachers.

Participant Five: Bryan

Bryan is a first-year teacher and teaches eighth-grade Language-Arts. Bryan is a White male, whose pronouns are he and him. Bryan is alternatively certified and will participate in the North Carolina teacher residency program in the 2024-25 school year. For the current school

year, Bryan was issued a Permit to Teach by the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction. The permit to teach is a one-year license designed for teacher candidates with the qualifications for a residency license but cannot yet begin a residency program (NC DPI, n.d.). Bryan is 50 years old. He teaches 71 students across three classes. Bryan's school is a small middle school in a large city district. Bryan's school is comprised of approximately 68 percent students of color. In 2023, approximately 40 percent of the students in Bryan's School were identified as economically disadvantaged. Bryan is currently unsure of where he would like to be in the next 10 years.

Participant Six: Kaleigh

Kaleigh is a third-year teacher and teaches eighth-grade science. Kaleigh is a White woman whose pronouns are she and her. She is alternatively certified and was licensed while completing a master's of arts in teaching. Kaleigh is 28 years old. She teaches 140 students across four classes. This is her third year teaching at a midsized- suburban school district in Southwestern North Carolina. Approximately 61 percent of the students in Kaleigh's school are minorities, and 39 percent of the students are White. In 2023, approximately 59 percent of the students in her school were identified as economically disadvantaged. In 10 years, Kaleigh would like to be a middle school science teacher. However, she does not think she will be able to continue teaching for all of that time. If she is not teaching, Kaleigh hopes to be working as an instructional coach, supporting science teachers in her district.

Participant Seven: Wendolyn

Wendolyn is a first-year teacher and teaches sixth-grade science. Wendolyn is an African American woman whose pronouns are her and she. She is an alternatively certified teacher, participating in her school district's teacher residency program. Wendolyn is 52 years old. She

teaches 119 students across four classes. This is Wendolyn's first year teaching in a midsized middle school in a large city district. Approximately 96 percent of the students at Wendolyn's school are minorities, with 56 percent of those students African American. Approximately 76% of the students in Wendolyn's school were identified as economically disadvantaged. In 10 years, Wendolyn hopes to be coaching, inspiring, and educating adults.

Participant Eight: Penny

Penny is a third-year teacher and teaches seventh-grade math. Penny is an African American woman whose pronouns are she and her. She is an alternatively certified teacher and obtained her teaching license through her district teaching residency program. Penny is 57 years old. She teaches 75 students across three classes each day. This is Penny's third year teaching in a large middle school in a large city school district. Approximately 89 percent of the students at Penny's school are minorities, primarily composed of Black and Latino students. Approximately 65 percent of the students at Penny's school have been identified as economically disadvantaged. In 10 years, Penny hopes to be working in beginning teacher support.

<div align="center">

Findings By Research Question

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The purpose of this qualitative study was to investigate novice middle school teachers' perceptions concerning classroom management. The data analysis yielded various key findings related to novice middle school teachers' understandings of classroom management, themes and ideas that undergird effective classroom management strategies, and which aspects of classroom management challenged these teachers the most and brought about the most success. These findings will be discussed alongside Weinstein and Evertson's (2013) definition and framework for classroom management in Chapter 5. The findings of this study, organized by research question and theme, are illustrated in Table 3 and followed by a narrative description of each.

Table 3

Summary of Findings

Research Question	Themes	Subthemes
Research Question 1: How do novice middle school teachers conceptualize classroom management?	Establishing and maintaining a healthy community and environment for learning is integral to classroom management.	
	Classroom management involves how teachers lead and facilitate classroom activity.	
Research Question 2: What do novice middle school teachers perceive to be effective classroom management strategies?	Establishing and maintaining a healthy community and environment for learning is integral to classroom management.	Creating and finding time to build relationships with students.
		Separate students, de-escalate and communicate to process and respond to student misbehavior.

Table 3

Summary of Findings(continued)

		Teachers use strategies that allow them to maintain a comprehensive awareness of classroom happenings.
		Teachers behavior expectations for students are taught, monitored, addressed and retaught as needed.
	Classroom management involves how teachers lead and facilitate classroom activity.	Teachers utilize various instructional strategies to facilitate content and social engagement.
	Classroom management practices are influenced by various experiences with education and school.	

Table 3

Summary of Findings(continued)

	Classroom management practices influenced by teachers views of their work in a greater context.
Research Question 3: Which aspects of classroom management are easiest for novice middle school teachers to manage, and which create the greatest challenges?	Intervening for students with behavior problems is the most challenging aspect of classroom management.
	Relationship building is essential and can contribute to success in classroom management.
	Novice teachers need classroom management support with real-time or peer-led learning opportunities.

Research Question 1: How do Novice Middle School Teachers Conceptualize Classroom Management?

The first research question sought to explore how participants defined classroom management and explore how they conceptualize various tasks, tenets, and aspects of classroom management. Data analysis revealed two key themes related to this research question: (1) establishing and maintaining a healthy community for learning and (2) leading and facilitating classroom activity

Theme 1: Establishing and Maintaining a Healthy Community and Environment For Learning is Integral to Classroom Management.

When defining classroom management, many of the participants' initial insights, and the first theme of this study, centered around establishing and maintaining an environment where all students could learn, be safe, and be successful. The participants' interviews illustrated how establishing and maintaining a healthy community and environment for learning is integral to classroom management. The novice teachers described a teacher-owned responsibility for ensuring a community and environment where learning is enabled. Participants spoke of safety, inclusion, relationships, and community in their initial definitions of classroom management.

For example, Nikia defined classroom management as centered on safe relationships and ensuring students are learning. She said:

> Classroom management, to me, is making sure that everyone is safe… we are not doing anything harmful, as well as building those relationships. I think that is a big part of classroom management, building that community…So classroom management means building that community, making sure everyone is safe, [and] making sure everyone's learning.

Similarly, Kaleigh said, "I would define it as keeping a safe and inclusive learning environment so that all students in the classroom can learn." These insights start to build these common ideas

around safety, the classroom community, and learning. Related to the community and the learning environment.

Fabian defined classroom management by describing a classroom culture centered on building relationships to ensure student safety and build community. She noted:

> For me, classroom management is like my classroom culture. It's like, what type of culture have I cultivated as an educator? And how do I…utilize my relationships to create a safe environment for learning and an environment where learning takes place…So I would say, classroom management for me is directly correlated to the relationships that I have built in my community and with my kids.

Fabian continued to contribute to the ideas communicated about classroom management defined by the creation of a community to enable learning. Fabian's words also illustrated the ownership and leadership participants communicated throughout their interviews. Participants described a sense of responsibility for the classroom culture and community.

Similarly, Gabrielle's definition of classroom management centered on the classroom environment and learning, and she also made an explicit connection to strategies, procedures, and techniques that support her classroom management. Gabrielle added, "Classroom management is…your strategies, your techniques, your procedures for how you set up your classroom for success. Success for your students to be able to learn in the best environment they possibly can." Gabrielle connected establishing the learning community and environment to the use of specific strategies, procedures, and techniques. Themes surrounding some of these strategies, procedures, and techniques are explored further in other themes from the study data.

Overall, participants' perceptions about how classroom management is defined were grounded in the idea of establishing an environment where students are safe, a sense of

community exists, and all students can learn. Subthemes related to establishing and maintaining a healthy learning environment emerged in the data analysis for research questions two and three.

Theme 2: Classroom Management Involves how Teachers Lead and Facilitate Classroom Activity.

Five of the eight participants defined classroom management in terms or how they lead and facilitate activities in the classroom. Several participants described the ways they create, lead, and facilitate students' engagement with their classroom content as part of classroom management. The participants also described various repetitive structures they used to guide students' engagement and activity during class time.

Kaleigh illustrated this relationship between classroom activities and management, stating that classroom management is "how I run my instruction." Kaleigh described various structures she uses during instruction. She mentioned partner work, group projects, and independent work as she detailed various instructional activities in her classroom. She then added ideas of routine and repetitive structure, stating that classroom management is "keeping your routines and expectations every day so that everybody is learning at their maximum potential."

This idea around repetitive structures and routines continued in Gabrielle's definition. Gabrielle's definition included, "setting up your classroom and how you want your everyday flow to go." Gabrielle provided an example of an everyday procedure she created. She said:

> For my typical classroom, it's you come in, you get your notebook out, you get your pencil out, and you have your warm up on the board that you're starting in your notebook by yourself having that constant procedure that they are used to.

Similarly, Penny's definition of classroom management described how she created and facilitated engagement and activity. Penny said, "Classroom management is the way my students and I get things done in the classroom. It's everything from how we enter and leave and those little details." In speaking about the components of classroom management, Penny, like Kaleigh and Gabrielle, described a daily flow or progression. Penny said:

> The flow of the day. When there is independent work time, what are the expectations during that time? Then it's whole-class discussion, when we are working with partners, how do we do those? Classroom management is what governs how each thing looks.

> Like Gabrielle, Kaleigh, and Penny, Dominique described the structures for engagement.

Dominique also described strategies she used to facilitate students' activity and engagement. When describing the components of classroom management, Dominique noted:

> Classrooms should always have an agenda - so the kids know where you are step-by-step. I always have an agenda [and] a warm-up. I give my kids five minutes to do their warm-up and we know that two minutes is going to be review, one minute is going to be good things, and then we begin a lesson.

Dominque repeatedly referred to how she uses her classroom agenda to lead students' engagement and activity during instruction. Dominique continued:

> My kids always have a routine, so they know what they are supposed to be doing when they walk in. Pick the two papers up by the door, grab your binder, sit down, open it up, and get to the warm-up. So I feel like if you have a routine, your classroom management won't be so bad.

> Participants had various ideas that centered around the ways they guided students'

engagement and activity during instruction. They used repetitive structures, routines, and

procedures that directed students' physical and cognitive activity. In her definition of classroom management, Wendolyn succinctly encapsulated these ideas and said, "I would define classroom management as the way you organize, structure, and manage your classroom. And that would include everything from procedures, rules, and content learning."

Research Question 2: What do Novice Middle School Teachers Perceive to be Effective Classroom Management Strategies?

The second research question sought to understand the classroom management strategies that participants found to be most effective. Participants described a variety of strategies used to manage their classrooms. While participants did not often speak of using the same classroom management strategy explicitly, several strategies centered on the same purposes and ideas. Those ideas were captured, and some explicitly mentioned strategies were captured in the themes for this research question.

Several themes and subthemes emerged. First, the first study theme, from Research Question 1 reemerged with four subthemes within the data from Research Question 2. The first theme was establishing and maintaining a healthy community for learning is integral to classroom management. Subthemes for this study theme included (a) creating and finding time to build relationships with students, (b) separate students, de-escalate and communicate to process and respond to student misbehavior, (c) teachers use strategies that allow them to maintain a comprehensive awareness of classroom happenings, and (d) teachers behavior expectations for students are taught, monitored, addressed and retaught as needed.

The second theme to emerge from Research Question 2 was a reemergence of the second theme from Research Question 1 with one subtheme. The second theme was classroom

management involves how teachers lead and facilitate classroom activity, and the subtheme was teachers utilize various instructional strategies to facilitate content and social engagement.

The third theme to arise from this research question was classroom management practices are influenced by various experiences with education and school. Lastly, the fourth theme centered around how some participants' classroom management strategies are impacted by the ways they perceive their role in a greater schooling and societal context.

Theme 1: Establishing and Maintaining a Healthy Community for Learning is Integral to Classroom Management.

Subtheme 1: Creating and Finding Time to Build Relationships with Students. All participants spoke about the ways they built relationships with their students. This subtheme describes how the participants do not consistently have a designated time to build relationships with their students. However, the participants explained how relationships are built through interactions outside the classroom, and through the use of small moments during instructional time. Six spoke about finding time outside the classroom and finding small moments during class time to get to know students. Bryan captured this idea, explaining that he has to find time during the day and during the lesson to build such relationships. Bryan stated:

My experiences with managing people was such that [relationship building] was one-on-one, having time as a resource. Having the time to meet with people and to just get to know them. In the classroom, you don't have as much one-on-one time. What you have to do is talk to people in the hallways when you can. During the lesson, there are questions you ask and answer, and side comments to get to know them through those smaller interactions. I would characterize the classroom as being more a series of smaller interactions that can add up. In a haphazard way, it's not always organized.

Similarly, Gabrielle noted that she builds relationships outside her math class. Gabrielle said, "One major thing is standing outside of my classroom every day to greet students as they come into my room." Gabrielle further explained:

> In Canvas, I'll put forms that ask, 'Tell me about yourself' or 'What kind of music do you like.' Also, just walking around at lunch and talking to kids when they're not typically in your classroom…just seeing what they're like and having conversations with them daily has built relationships throughout the year,

Several participants spoke of ways they build relationships during class: Kaleigh explained:

> It all starts behind the scenes. Students are going to do more and respect you more if you have that personal relationship. At the beginning of the year, just learning their name...learning their interests when you're not actively teaching, asking them if they are an athlete. Talking about their family life or something. I think that it [building relationships] is the biggest strategy for classroom management. If they think you care a little about their personal lives, they are going to be more inclined to listen.

Dominique also spoke about the ways she finds class time to build relationships with students, stating, "I really get to know them. I do icebreakers, get to know yous, and at my school we do good things. They got to tell us one thing that was good…and I can build connections off that."

Nikia and Fabian spoke about using class time to get to know students. Nikia said, "During that warm-up time. Walking around, talking with students. Even doing a warm-up that is just a kind of check-in. So, using those five minutes, 10 minutes to do a fun warm up and ask some questions." Fabian described getting to know her students by teaching writing. She described an activity she regularly uses to learn about her students' lives outside of school and

teach writing skills. Fabian explained, "I really try to build space where they feel like they can talk to me, and I have fun ways of doing that." Fabian described how her students write about their personal lives, and that writing is used to teach and practice writing skills.

Several participants in this study expressed how they found time outside the classroom to build relationships with students or used class time to learn about the student's personal lives.

Subtheme 2: Separate Students, De-Escalate and Communicate to Process and Respond to Student Misbehavior. To respond to student misbehavior, several participants spoke about separating students who are misbehaving, de-escalating any strong emotions or inappropriate behaviors, and fostering communication when students do not meet their teacher's or school's behavior expectations. This was not a named strategy by each participant. However, when the participants described how they intervened for students' problem behaviors, this theme emerged as a common response. In describing how she responds to students' misbehavior, Nikia said, "I will tell them to wait in the hallway for a couple of minutes, let them cool down if they are upset about anything. Then I'll go out [into the hallway] and talk to them and try to figure it out."

Similarly, Gabrielle described various instances and situations where she used this strategy to respond to student misbehavior. She described speaking to the students one-on-one and outside of the classroom. Gabrielle said:

> If it happens a second time, typically I ask, quietly next to them, 'Hey can we talk outside?' so I can have the one-on-one not in front of the whole class and kind of see what is happening…or even why they think they might be having this conversation with me…If I have a student constantly calling out, I'll be like, 'Hey, let's talk outside, what's going on, why are we constantly calling out, is there something that I can do to help you

not call out as much as you are?... If they are having issues with other students, move them away from that situation and talking to them…to make sure they are not going to continue those issues with each other. We do a lot of walks and talks.

Dominique explained how she consistently follows a similar process when responding to students' misbehavior. She said she responds to misbehavior by "pulling [students] to the side and asking them, why they are doing it, how can she make it better, and what would they like to change?" This guides their conversations in her correction of student misbehavior.

Kaleigh also described this process but extended this communication to parents and families. She noted:

I try to give them the warning as a class, and then I use a lot of hallway talks. I mean, when they get pulled out in the hallway it kind of makes it a little bit more serious to them. And then I am very clear and honest with them about what I'm expecting. Maybe they are not meeting my expectations...and if they are still not meeting [expectations], I take a further step of contacting their parent or having to write it up. I found hallway talks are pretty effective. Again, I'll just make some call their parents right then and there, because a lot of times that's when it kind of becomes real to them.

In describing how she intervenes and responds to student behavioral problems, Wendolyn gives an example of how she recently attempted to separate, de-escalate, and foster communication. She described students arguing at recess. She described the four students as "up in arms and wanting to fight." She talked with the students in the hallway, and she explained, "I always ask them, is it worth a suspension? How can we de-escalate? What is really the reason you are upset?"

As a co-teacher, Fabian explained that she is often called into another teacher's classroom to address student behavior problems. She described how she sits with students and works to understand their misbehavior. Fabian explained:

I sit down with them and [ask] What is going on? What happened, how did you find yourself in this right now? Have you eaten?'...Do you feel like you are all here today?' I try to tap into the knowledge I have of their life and make sense of their behavior. From there I remind the expectations and…Often, I have them spend time with me in my classroom…and I contact their parents.

Like Fabian, the participants in this study described their process for separating students to communicate one-on-one, working to de-escalate any emotions, and fostering communication to make sense of the student's misbehavior.

Subtheme 3: Teachers Use Strategies That Allow Them to Maintain a Comprehensive Awareness of Classroom Happenings. Another subtheme related to the learning community spoke to how participants maintained awareness of what happens in the classroom. This theme describes how teachers use a variety of strategies to maintain awareness and presence throughout their classrooms. They sought to maintain a comprehensive awareness of all classroom happenings and an awareness of student engagement and success in navigating instructional activities.

Nikia described the importance of classroom awareness, noting that a key component of classroom management is, "keeping an eye on everything, listening and making sure no one is doing anything crazy." She described the use of proximity to ensure students know that she is aware of the classroom happenings. Nikia continued, "So I have my iPad in my hand, and I am walking around just so that I am constantly moving so that they don't think that I'm just sitting at

my desk and not seeing what they're doing." The use of proximity to communicate awareness

continued with other participants. When speaking about managing student behavior and

engagement, Dominique said:

> I do a lot of walking around. Students don't know why I'm walking around. But while
>
> walking around, I might see something. And they're like, okay, I'll put my phone up
>
> because she's walking around, so doing a lot of walking around really helps me out.

When Bryan reflected on some of his struggles with managing student behavior, he described

learning the effectiveness of using proximity to maintain and communicate his awareness of

classroom behaviors. He said:

> I'm still trying to figure out my own style, and I've seen how other teachers do it. I'm not
>
> much of a yeller. If I raise my voice, I just, I end up sounding like a crazy person. So
>
> what I've learned to do is use my physical proximity. So I separated the desk and put a
>
> big column in the middle of the room so I could walk to the back, making sure I hang out
>
> more in the back of the room. And then, if there's something going on, I walk towards
>
> them and just be close to them, so that even if it's something like talking, if they're being
>
> loud, just me being physically near where they are has helped a lot.

> When describing instructional strategies used to support classroom management,

Gabrielle described using proximity to manage the classroom and monitor students. Gabrielle

noted, "Using hotspots. If I know throughout the year this is a group of students that might get a

little chatty or off task, hovering over that specific area or making sure they know I'm watching

and can see if they're not doing what they're supposed to be doing." When mentioning this use

of proximity again, Gabrielle continued:

How I monitor my room, or how I walk around is, I kind of see what they're writing in

the notebook, and I will just, even if they don't have a question, pause and talk to them. If

I see they're struggling with a specific concept, I'll just have them one-on-one. Sit with

me at my desk and see what's going on, what they're struggling with.

Gabrielle used proximity to maintain awareness of students socially and behaviorally. She also

used this method to gauge her students' understanding of the content or their success

instructionally. This allowed her to intervene and manage students' behaviors and academic

success daily. The participants' words clearly articulated how they use their physical proximity

to the students to maintain awareness of the classroom and communicate this awareness to

students.

Subtheme 4: Teachers' Behavior Expectations for Students are Taught, Monitored,

*Addressed and Retaught as Needed***.** Throughout the interviews participants described the ways

they create a classroom community. In this creation of the community teachers establish

expectations for their students' behavior. When students do not meet these expectations,

participants addressed the inappropriate behaviors and then re-taught or reiterated their

behavior expectations.

When discussing strategies used to assist students with behavior problems, Nikia

described setting and reteaching or revisiting behavior expectations throughout the school year.

Nikia described how she regularly reiterated expectations with students:

Setting those expectations at the beginning of the year and going over them. I set them in

the beginning of the year. We went over them in January, and I'll probably go over them

tomorrow for the start of the fourth quarter. I'm repeating those expectations over and

over again. That way, I can refer back to them.

Similarly, when describing the components of classroom management, Gabrielle gave an example of reiterating expectations. She said, "If [students] are coming in loud and not getting to their seats right away. I repeat those expectations by asking, 'What should I be seeing,' [and saying] 'let me model that for you.' [Classroom management is] lots of tasks like that."

In her description of the components of classroom management, Penny described setting behavior expectations and making appropriate changes as necessary. When asked about the components, Penny said, "Setting expectations, communicating those expectations. I set the framework, and then as we get through the year, I get to know my students, they get to know me, and we make adjustments."

"Expectations" and phrases about "teacher expectations" were regularly mentioned across interviews but not concretely defined. Wendolyn, Kaleigh, and Fabian spoke about expectations more concretely. Wendolyn also described setting expectations with respect for students. She described setting expectations and said, "I was just honest and transparent about what I expected and what I felt like, at their age, they should be able to give me." When describing classroom management, Kaleigh said:

I think a lot of it is just your expectations. I can't just assume that my students know every single expectation. They have to be taught over and over again having them know what's expected in order for them to be successful.

Similarly, Fabian said,

So I start my class by leading with my expectations, what I expect from them every day. This is how you know you are going to be safe. You're going to be respectful. You're going to stay engaged in the topics and the lessons. From there, I kind of just remind them of our expectations.

Theme Two: Classroom Management Involves how Teachers Lead and Facilitate Classroom Activity.

The theme of leading and facilitating classroom activity re-emerged from the participants' responses to the second research question. Just as in Research Question 1, participants spoke about repetitive structures they use to manage their classrooms. These structures centered on students' engagement with each other and the class content.

Subtheme 1: Teachers Utilize Various Instructional Strategies to Facilitate Content and Social Engagement. When speaking about instructional strategies used to support their classroom management, all participants spoke about the teaching structures used in their classrooms on a day-to-day basis. These teaching structures centered around whole group instruction and various forms of collaboration around the content, mostly small group instruction. This theme centers on the various strategies teachers use to guide their students' engagement. This includes guiding students' engagement with the content and students' engagement with each other.

For instance, Bryan described his instructional strategies as a regular use of the same teaching methods. Bryan said:

> There's direct instruction, and then there's independent work or group work. My most effective strategy so far has been direct instruction. So, I spend most classes talking, and it's more of a Socratic method. So, talking, trying to engage them in discussions, asking if they have questions doing more class participation.

Similarly, Nikia described her classroom teaching model as an investigative style that utilized small-group instruction and whole-group facilitated discussions. She shared how her

classes work to solve a problem in groups, and then she facilitates instruction using student examples. She stated:

> I don't have a ton of whole-group instruction because it's because it's more investigative math…I usually start with a warm-up as well as [the students] in groups…When I'm walking around, I'll be like 'Oh, I liked how you solved this. Can you do that on the board?

During a discussion of instructional strategies, Fabian also spoke about the use of small-group instruction. She said:

> I often pull small groups, and I am working one-on-one. Small groups are a great tool. I think it facilitates instruction, and it's very organized. So I will pull small groups to the back with me and work one-on-one on whatever we are doing.

Dominique spoke about her frequent use of small groups and added that she assigns group roles to support her classroom management. Dominique said, "When I do group stuff, I like roles. So everybody in the group has a role, someone be the timer, someone be the writer, someone needs to be the leader." Gabrielle also described small group instruction and the use of group roles. She said:

> For small groups, a good classroom management technique I've used is making sure each student has their own role. They know what they are supposed to be doing and what I'm looking for. So you might have like a leader, the timekeeper, [and] the person who's actually going to be telling the class what their group came up with.

Kaleigh described how she regularly uses direct instruction and student collaboration during her class. Kaleigh said:

If I am doing direct instruction, I try not to do it for the whole class period, because it's just not going to work out well on my end. Or for them because [of] their attention spans, so I might do like 15, 20 minutes of direct instruction. But then, right after that, have that independent or that partner work that they are collaborating with. There's a lot of turn and talks, so that they're constantly talking to each other about it.

Kaleigh then described how she is adding her turn and talks and collaborative conversations about the content to her direct instruction. She continued, "I try to incorporate it even if it is direct instruction. Like finding a stopping point that gets them talking and thinking about it."

Theme 3: Classroom Management Practices are Influenced by Various Experiences with Schooling and Education

When participants were asked about how they were prepared to manage their classrooms, most participants talked about how their personal educational experiences influenced their classroom management. These descriptions included the ways participants interacted with schooling as teachers, students, and parents. While some participants felt they were not prepared to manage their classrooms, they attributed their current management practices to a variety of school-centered experiences. This theme centers on how all of these experiences have had direct impacts on the participants' classroom management practices.

Some participants described learning about classroom management by trial and error. Fabian described learning to manage her classroom in her first year of teaching. When describing how she learned to manage her classroom Fabian said, "Like a lot of things in education, it's baptism by fire." Fabian began to speak about how her beliefs about education and classroom practices developed holistically. She attributed many of her ideas and practices to her study abroad experiences. Fabian recounted:

But I have to say a lot of my cultural knowledge that I feel like plays the biggest part in who I am as an educator was through my study abroad experience. I cannot promote study abroad enough. You have to go abroad because to learn about another culture, you have to learn about yourself. I had to get to know who I was as a educator, as a Latina, who and what I identified with as a person. And I became a global citizen. My whole outlook in life was truly changed.

When speaking about how he was prepared to manage his classroom, Bryan explained:

Most of it was on my own, I did get advice from other teachers I did sit in with some other classrooms. So, the biggest thing that's also very interesting to me about teaching is, there's so many different strategies that teachers can have that are effective for them that aren't necessarily effective for me. And so it's been more sort of trial-and-error, and trying to figure out what works and what doesn't.

Gabrielle also said:

I feel a lot of it happened when I had my own classroom. To begin with, that very first day, I was kind of like, 'Oh my gosh, wow! Now I'm actually the teacher in the room,' But a lot of the strategies were also from college, and they didn't work. I didn't see which ones would work for me until I was actually in the classroom and figuring out which strategies I would want to use. I think it was a combination of both.

Similar to Gabrielle, Kaleigh said she learned,

"Through experience, and watching other teachers. I'm going to be brutally honest. I don't really think my college classes prepared me for the classroom management aspect. I think I just kind of had to be thrown to the wolves and figure it out. And so it was through trial and error in the classroom. And so I learned, you know, this works, and this

doesn't. And I learned a lot from my colleague. Watching other teachers and seeing how

they handled certain things. Just seeing like what works for other teachers."

Fabian, Bryan, Gabrielle, and Kaleigh described learning mostly through their experiences as

novice teachers.

Wendolyn and Penny described other school and teaching experiences that impacted their

classroom management practices. When asked how she was prepared to manage her classroom,

Penny laughed and said, "Teaching kids in Sunday school. I don't feel that I was prepared, to be

quite honest." Also, Wendolyn attributed her classroom management knowledge to many life

experiences related to school, She explained, "I am a firm believer that God wastes nothing. I

have been a child and a student and have had five children who have all gone through the school

system. So really, just life experience."

The participants in this study described how a variety of experiences related to teaching

and schooling influenced their classroom management practices.

Theme 4: Classroom Management Practices Influenced by Teachers Views of Their Work in a Greater Context.

This theme discusses how some of the study participants mentioned ideas around larger

contexts that impacted their classroom management practices. Several participants mentioned

preparing their students for endeavors beyond their classrooms, and greater social contexts and

systems impacting their classroom management practices. The novice teachers spoke about their

classroom management practices potentially having impacts beyond the reach of their teaching

and time with students.

In Kaleigh's interview, she mentioned some interpersonal value-based discussions, like

being respectful and responsible. She also spoke about ensuring her students are prepared for

high school. She described how some of her management choices are rooted in ensuring she does her part to prepare students for the future. When speaking about the ways she promotes students' development, Kaleigh said:

> They are, you know, about to go to high school. And so again, there can be some of the real talks that I have as well. Like, 'hey, you're about to go to high school. You need to get your crap together. You can't be this disorganized. You can't be not doing every single assignment.' I've had talks with them about [middle school course structure], but when they get to high school, they are course by course, and so if you are late and absent a lot in one course, like you're gonna fail that course, and you have to keep retaking it until you pass. And so just having honest real talks with them, whether it be full class or in the hallway."

Fabian also spoke about preparing her students for the future. When speaking about how she encourages her students, she regularly reminded them of the future community they will serve. Fabian said:

> I'm always trying to encourage my students and let them know. You know, I've told my kids 'you guys are going to be the ones taking care of my kids one day; you are, gonna be the bearers of my community' And I found that that really works for my students

Continuing with this idea of school choices in a greater social context. In speaking about addressing students' behavior, Wendolyn explained,

> So, in addition, we have conversations because I am a mother and a grandmother. I have seen so many people suffer consequences…I talk to them a lot about self-control and self-management and what that means, and how the consequences get worse the older you get.

Wendolyn continues

> There is a very fine balance you have to walk. This concept of the school-to-prison
> pipeline. I don't want, you know, small infractions to be blown out of proportion in a way
> that it negatively affects them. At the same time, I don't want their negative behavior
> negatively affecting the rest of the students.

Wendolyn described how these experiences and contexts outside of schools impact her decision-making, the conversations she has with students, and the ways she addresses behavior problems.

Throughout the interviews, some teachers presented ideas about how schooling works as a part of the student's life experiences. From preparation for high school to preparation for the consequences of adulthood, these greater societal contexts impact these teachers' classroom management practices.

Research Question 3: Which Aspects of Classroom Management are Easiest for Novice Middle School Teachers to Manage? Which Create the Greatest Challenges?

The last research question sought to investigate and understand what aspects of classroom management cause novice teachers the greatest struggle, and in which aspects of classroom management do novice teachers feel the most successful. Three themes were revealed from the data analysis. The first theme discusses how intervening for students' behavior problems is the most challenging aspect of classroom management. The second theme describes how relationship building, which is where novice teachers find the most success, is essential and can contribute to classroom management success. The last theme to explore was that novice teachers need classroom management support with real-time or peer-led learning opportunities.

Theme 5: Intervening for Students' Behavior Problems is the Most Challenging Aspect of Classroom Management.

When asked about the most challenging aspect of classroom management, six participants stated that intervening for student behavior problems was the most challenging aspect of classroom management. Bryan, Gabrielle, Kaleigh, Nikia, Penny, and Wendolyn immediately named intervening for students with behavior problems as the most challenging aspect of classroom management. When asked why this was true, participants listed a variety of reasons. Teachers' reasoning mostly centered on the various ways they lacked the capabilities to manage their student's misbehavior. Participants either lacked the knowledge or time to manage student misbehavior.

To start, Bryan noted a lack of knowledge about how to deal with behavior problems. Simply stated, he said, "For the bigger behavior problems, I don't really know what to do." Similarly, Gabrielle explained how student behavioral problems vary greatly, and managing those varied problem behaviors can be difficult. Gabrielle noted, "Because every student is going to be different, and their behavior problems are going to be different as well."

Gabrielle continued to speak about how all strategies for intervening in students' behaviors are not effective with all students. She said, "So students that I might be able to pull out of the classroom and talk to solve the problem and some that still might have a reoccurring thing where I'm going to have an issue with them, and it's just not gonna be solved."

Kaleigh also spoke about behavior interventions not working and not understanding why. To communicate her frustration, she said:

I am doing the same intervention every single day, with the same kids, and they are just not changing at all. So again, I don't know if that's more me or if that [is] more the admin

support and follow through. I'm just kind of drained from the aspect of dealing with the same [behavior problems] every single day.

When explaining why intervening for students with behavior problems is difficult, Nikia spoke about not having adequate time to appropriately address student behaviors. She explained, "Sometimes it just kind of feels like you don't have a lot of time in the day." She continued with an example and said, "Sometimes what you really need to do is to step out in the hallway, but you just feel there is just not enough time or there's some things where you're, 'we will talk about this later,' and then you forget about it, and it is just because you are so busy."

Most of the participants in this study expressed frustration with using interventions to assist students with behavior problems. They explained that dealing with student behaviors is difficult because they lack the knowledge, time, or skills to intervene in the variety of behavior problems students exhibit.

Theme 6: Relationship Building is Essential and Can Contribute to Success in Classroom Management

When asked about the aspect of classroom management in which the participants felt most successful, six participants explained that building supportive relationships is where they experience the most success and is the easiest part of classroom management. In their explanations, most participants mentioned that relationship building is an interpersonal strength, a professional strength, or a necessity for teachers.

To explain why participants felt the most successful in developing supportive relationships, three participants attributed their success in relationship building to a personal quality they possess. When describing the aspect of classroom management that brought about the most success, Wendolyn said, "Developing supportive relationships is what I do naturally, so

it comes easily to me. That's just who I am. It even assists me with the hardest part, which is the behavior management." Similarly, Penny also attributed her relationship-building success to an innate quality she possesses. When asked why she felt the most successful in building supportive relationships, Penny said, "I love what I get to do, I love my kids, I love watching them grow and seeing them come into their own. I am so deeply invested in that. That is just something that is in me. So I do not have to work so hard for it."

Similarly, Gabrielle attributed her success in relationship building to one of her qualities. Gabrielle attributed her success to her age. She explained that her age makes communication with her students easy. Gabrielle noted:

> I am a younger teacher. So it's very easy for me to, in general, just build a relationship with the students, and then from that, they're able to see I am one that's going to support them through their process of sixth grade in math or just sixth-grade middle school. So it makes it a little bit easier, just because I feel like they're so easy to talk to because I'm not that much older than them.

Kaleigh and Fabian attributed the relationship-building success to their personal qualities and added how relationship-building is a tenet of effective teaching. They described the relationship-building traits they possess, connect to effective teaching practices, and have some success in classroom management. When asked where she felt the most successful in classroom management, Fabian said:

> Definitely relationship building. That is the foundation of my teaching. If a student does not know I love and respect them, nothing else will happen. I want to be a witness to [the student's] life. I want to be able to say, 'Hey, I know this person, and they're amazing.' Relationships is one of the easiest things that come to me.

Similarly, Kaleigh said:

> I know the relationship is the easiest. I don't think you can actually be a teacher and not
> want relationships. I think that's a catch-all thing that people try to say, but it really does
> work. You have to care about the children you are teaching. I enjoy personal
> conversations. I enjoy them coming and telling me about the drama they have that day.
> Even if they think it's silly, it's important.

Student-teacher relationships were mentioned in every interview and more than 50 times in all interviews. Teachers in the study found much success in building and leveraging relationships when managing their classrooms.

Theme 7: Novice Teachers Need Classroom Management Support with Real-time or Peer-led Learning Opportunities.

A theme that was mentioned by all participants was the need for more classroom support. For example, after affirming that she needs more classroom management support, Nikia said, "Classroom management is such a hard concept, I don't think I could ever really master it." Other participants also affirmed they needed more classroom support and described the types of support they needed. The kinds of support and how support could be extended to novice teachers varied and centered on support from experienced teachers and support regarding some of the managerial nuances of their school.

Four study participants wanted more support that involved observing other teachers or some form of real-time observation of effective classroom management strategies. When describing how classroom management support could be extended to him, Bryan spoke about wanting to be able to observe other teachers more than he was able to do. Bryan said:

I had one day of observing with my alternative licensure pathway, I was rushed into the classroom. I would say, though, if we could fit in maybe what classroom management looks like in a real classroom environment, that that would have been more helpful for me.

Similarly, Penny, who is also alternatively licensed, described the support she would like to have had and commented, "being able to shadow teachers in action. What would be beneficial would be the opportunity to shadow my peers. To either go see strategies you can use or know you are not alone." Gabrielle spoke about wanting the opportunity to observe other teachers rather than being told what to do. Gabrielle said:

I definitely need more support. With professional development…just being told different strategies isn't as effective. But actually being able to practice those strategies…actually being able to see how this teacher uses it and when they use it is going to be a lot more helpful.

Dominique spoke about peer-led training differently and wanted support from more experienced teachers about a single, specific aspect of classroom management. Dominique said, "If I get any help, It would be like assistance from a more experienced teacher training me how to get students engaged."

Unlike other participants, Fabian and Kaleigh spoke about classroom management support needed as related to several administrative factors at their school. Fabian and Kaleigh, both traditionally trained teachers in their third year of teaching, described two ways in which their school's administrative decisions and staffing are impacting their classroom management success. Kaleigh described that she needed more support and consistency from her school administration. Kaleigh said:

It's just really hard managing behaviors, and so I guess that's not something that I think

classroom management professional development is going to fix, but it's also that

collaboration with admin. At our school, I have had three different principals in the three

years that I have been there, and we haven't had a consistent admin team, and it has

shown in the student behaviors as well. And so it's been extra hard … on the classroom

management side because we don't have that admin support. I don't know if it pertains to

classroom management, but I would like smaller class sizes and more collaboration from

admin. I think that can help a lot of issues.

Similarly, Fabian said, "Honestly, I feel I need another ESL teacher permanently, full time.

When I have smaller classroom sizes, I am able to do better work." These traditionally trained,

more experienced novice teachers expressed needs surrounding classroom management support

in the managerial and administrative factors of their school building, unlike other participants in

the study.

<div align="center">**Summary**</div>

The purpose of this study was to explore novice teachers' perceptions of classroom

management. To accomplish this purpose, the study used three research questions. This chapter

detailed the study's findings and relevant information related to them. Other relevant details

related to the findings include the study recruitment process and participant summary.

Research Question 1 was answered with clear themes describing how novice middle

school teachers conceptualize classroom management. It also considered how they defined

classroom management and conceptualized any components or aspects of it. In this exploration,

the data revealed that the participants in this study had ideas about classroom management that

centered on establishing and maintaining a healthy community for learning, leading, and facilitating classroom activity.

Research Question 2 sought to explore the strategies participants found to be the most effective when managing their classrooms The study data did not reveal consistency around specific strategies they used. However, the study data revealed several themes, concepts, and trends in the strategies shared by participants. They described strategies that centered on finding and creating time to build student relationships, de-escalating and communicating for assisting with behavior issues, using strategies to maintain a comprehensive awareness of all classroom happenings, guiding and facilitating engagement, using daily routines and procedures, and having their own classroom expectations for student behavior. Other themes revealed from the data collected for this research question included teachers' classroom management practices being influenced by the various ways they have experienced school, teaching, and learning. The participants' classroom management practices were also impacted by the ways they believe school exists in a greater social context.

The study's data from Research Question 3 revealed several themes around areas where novice teachers struggle the most, find the most success, and need further support related to classroom management. The main theme was that student behavior problems cause novice teachers the most difficulty. This is related to the variations in student behavior and the unpredictable nature of effective interventions for addressing student behavior problems.

Another theme related to Research Question 3 was that supportive student relationships were essential for teachers, naturally easy to build, and contributed to classroom management success. The study data from Research Question 3 also revealed a clear theme around novice teachers' support. These teachers need classroom management support and would prefer support

from their more experienced peers or support that involves some amount of real-time learning and observation.

  Chapter 5 will include a discussion of the study findings. The discussion will include an explanation and graphic of how the findings relate to the conceptual framework of this study and other relevant research. Chapter 5 will also include recommendations and the study's conclusion.

CHAPTER 5: DISCUSSION

This chapter contains the discussion portion of the study. The discussion starts with an overview of the study that reminds readers of the purpose and significance of this research. After the overview, this discussion includes a summary of the study findings. The chapter organizes the findings by the aforementioned research questions and offers recommendations based on my analysis. The chapter concludes with a chapter summary.

Study Overview

Classroom management, the actions teachers take to create an environment that supports and facilitates both academic and social-emotional learning, is an essential tool and skill for all teachers (Weinstein & Evertson, 2013). However, research has shown that classroom management can be difficult for novice teachers (Albright, 2017; Kelly et al., 2015; Rose & Sughrue, 2021; Weinstein & Evertson, 2013). While it is clear that novice teachers often struggle with classroom management, a dearth of research exists to explain the reasons novice teachers struggle with classroom management. There is an absence of research about how novice teachers conceptualize classroom management and why novice teachers struggle with classroom management. The purpose of this study was to investigate novice middle school teachers' perceptions of classroom management.

Three research questions guided this investigation. The research questions were as follows:

1. How do novice middle school teachers conceptualize classroom management?

2. What do novice middle school teachers perceive to be effective classroom management strategies?

3.   Which aspects of classroom management are easiest for novice middle school teachers to manage, and which create the greatest challenges?

This study utilized a qualitative research design. Data was collected using individual interviews. After receiving approval from the UNC Charlotte IRB, I recruited participants for the study via email. Eight participants agreed to be interviewed. I recorded the interviews via *Zoom* virtual conferencing software, which aided me in the creation of interview transcripts. Then, I analyzed the data, and when doing so, I created themes. My methods for data analysis followed an inductive thematic analysis strategy outlined by Braun and Clarke (2006). This analytical strategy allowed repeated, and relevant ideas to emerge from the interview data, and themes were created. In this analysis strategy, I read the interview transcripts multiple times, and I coded the interviews where I noticed interesting, relevant, or repeated data. I grouped the codes, and thus, I created themes.

To protect participants, the retained interview data did not contain identifiable information. After the interviews, I gave the participants pseudonyms, which were used in the final report. After creating interview transcripts and themes, novice teachers participated in a member-checking process (Ravitch & Carl, 2016). I emailed each participant their transcript and thematic data. The participants were allowed to edit any interview data and add further insights. Member checking ensured the data analysis and interpretation were accurate. Few participants responded and did not have any additional insights to add to the study data.

The findings from the study are detailed in the subsequent section.

Summary of Findings

Research Question 1 explored how novice teachers conceptualize classroom management. In their definitions and descriptions of classroom management, two major themes

emerged: The first theme was establishing and maintaining a healthy community and environment for learning is integral to classroom management. The participants spoke about safety, inclusion, relationships, and community in this theme. The data from Research Question 1 also revealed another central study theme: The second theme was that classroom management involves how teachers lead and facilitate classroom activity. Five study participants defined classroom management as the repetitive structures that guide students' engagement and interactivity during the lesson. The participants spoke about everyday routines, tools used to manage those routines, and how their classroom management is what governs their time with students daily.

Research Question 2 investigated the strategies novice teachers used. In this portion of the study, I asked participants to describe the most effective strategies they have used to manage their classrooms. Several key themes emerged from the data from Research Question 2.

First, the first study theme re-emerged around the healthy community for learning. The theme reemerged with various subthemes. The first of these subthemes was about the participants creating and finding time to build student relationships. In this theme, the participants explained that teachers must make time to build relationships with all of their students. As articulated by Bryan, the time to build relationships is not always included in the school's instructional schedule. The novice teachers explained that they had to take instructional time to build relationships, build relationships in the hallways or cafeterias, and use intentional teaching strategies that allowed them to build relationships with students during class time.

The second subtheme, related to the healthy learning environment, centered around the ways the novice teachers responded to student misbehavior. Several novice teachers described responding to student behavior by separating students from each other or the class, working to

de-escalate any emotions about the misbehavior, and working to process students' misbehavior with clear communication.

The third subtheme was about how teachers use various strategies to maintain a comprehensive awareness of all classroom happenings. In this subtheme, the participants describe a host of strategies and actions that allow them to maintain knowledge or perceived knowledge of what all students are doing in the classroom and allow them to maintain a presence throughout the entirety of the classroom. As Nikia described it, teachers use various strategies to keep "an eye on everything."

The last subtheme, related to the healthy community for learning, was teachers' behavior expectations for students, are taught, monitored, addressed, and retaught as needed. In other words, the participants described how novice teachers address the students or class about unmet expectations and re-teach students their expectations and how they should behave in the classroom.

There was also a reemergence of the second major theme of the study, relating to leading and facilitating classroom activity, with one subtheme. The subtheme was that teachers employ various instructional strategies to facilitate academic instruction and social engagement. These teaching structures centered on whole-group instruction and various forms of collaboration, specifically small-group instruction.

Another theme from the data in Research Question 2 explained how teachers' classroom management practices are influenced by various experiences the teachers have had with schooling and education. When asked how they were prepared to manage their classrooms, novice teachers spoke about an array of experiences. Teachers talked about their experiences as

students, learning by trial and error as novice teachers, and some spoke about personal experiences, such as parenting and teaching in their faith organizations.

The last theme within the data from Research Question 2 discussed how classroom management practices are influenced by teachers' perceptions of how their work with students, exists in a context that surpasses their classroom and time spent with students. Three participants spoke to this theme. Participants spoke about their students' roles in their communities, their students future schooling, and the school-to-prison pipeline. These teachers not only spoke of these larger societal factors impacting their students but explicitly connected these greater social ideas to their classroom management decisions.

The data from the third research question sought to investigate where novice middle school teachers find the most classroom success and which aspect of classroom management causes the most struggle. The data from this research question yielded three significant themes. The first of these was around the area of classroom management, which the participants found to be the most challenging. Most participants noted that intervening for students with behavior problems is the most challenging aspect of classroom management, which was a study finding for Research Question 3. This difficulty stems from a lack of knowledge about what strategies to use to manage student behavior, and the wide diversity of student misbehavior makes responding to student misbehavior and intervening for students' misbehaviors difficult. When asked which aspect of classroom management the novice teacher felt most successful, the participants named building student relationships. Six of the eight participants in the study said that building relationships with students is where they find the most success because it is either a natural interpersonal quality they possess or a necessary component of teaching. This led to the theme: relationship building is essential and can contribute to success with classroom management.

The last study theme explains how the participants would prefer support with classroom management. All of the participants stated they needed more classroom management support. When asked how they wanted to receive this support, the novice teachers preferred observing or coaching from more experienced peers. Two participants spoke about school management and administration-centered support they would like. One teacher named further administration support for students' misbehavior, and another participant spoke about smaller class sizes.

The various themes and subthemes illustrate how some novice teachers conceptualize classroom management, how managing student behavior is the most challenging aspect of classroom management, relationship building is where they experience the most success, and that they would like more classroom management support in their school buildings. The data analysis did not reveal a lot of consistency around specific classroom management strategies. However, similar ideas that undergird novice teachers' classroom management practices, are listed in the findings for Research Questions 1 and 2. The next section of this chapter will discuss these findings further.

Discussion and Conclusions by Research Question

This section of Chapter 5 will discuss the study findings as they relate to other classroom management research and empirical literature. This section is also organized by research question.

Research Question 1: How do Novice Middle School Teachers Conceptualize Classroom Management?

The first research question sought to investigate and understand how novice teachers conceptualize and define classroom management. In the conceptual framework of the study, Weinstein and Evertson (2013) defined classroom management as "the actions teachers take to

create an environment that supports and facilitates both academic and social-emotional learning (p. 4)." The researchers noted that classroom management involves five key tasks. Those tasks are as follows:

- Developing supportive relationships

- Organizing and implementing instruction

- Using group management for encouragement and engagement

- Promoting students' social, emotional, and academic development

- Using interventions to assist students with behavior problems.

When asking novice teachers how classroom management is defined, the thematic data around how novice teachers conceptualize classroom management was narrower than Weinstein and Evertson's definition. The initial definition set forth by the researchers broadly included all the actions teachers take to facilitate learning and then added the five broader tasks involved in classroom management. The initial data from this study, specifically the data relating to how the novice teachers defined classroom management, was less broad. The teachers' definitions centered around two key ideas: establishing and maintaining a healthy community for learning and facilitating classroom activity. The teachers' initial conceptualization of classroom management did not include all of the teacher's actions in the classroom.

Within the five tasks involved in classroom management, the participants' initial conceptualization only involved some of these aspects. The teachers' conceptualizations did not directly speak to student development, intervening for student behavior problems, or group management and encouragement. However, if the study data is taken in totality, the thematic data and findings speak to most of the components Weinstein and Evertson named. Weinstein and Evertson listed that teachers should develop supportive relationships, and within Research

Question 3, the novice teachers noted how relationship building is crucial and can bring about classroom management success. The thematic data related to Research Question 2 also notes how novice teachers build relationships. Weinstein and Evertson spoke about organizing and implementing instruction, and the novice teachers in this study spoke to the concrete ways they facilitate and lead instructional engagement in Research Question 2, discussing various teaching structures they use in their classroom. These teaching structures included direct or whole-group instruction, small-group instruction, and partner work. The researchers listed using group management for encouragement and engagement. Similarly, the participants spoke about the collaborative ways they engage students in partner work and group work. Lastly, Weinstein and Evertson listed using interventions for intervening for student behavior problems, and the thematic data revealed a common strategy many of the teachers in this study used to intervene for students' misbehavior. This strategy involved separating students from their classmates, de-escalating emotions, and communicating to help students process their misbehavior. The findings from this study were missing any connection to supporting student development. These specific findings organized by their relation to Weinstein and Evertson's definition of classroom management are detailed in the Figure 3.

Figure 3

Findings Related to Weinstein and Evertson (2013)
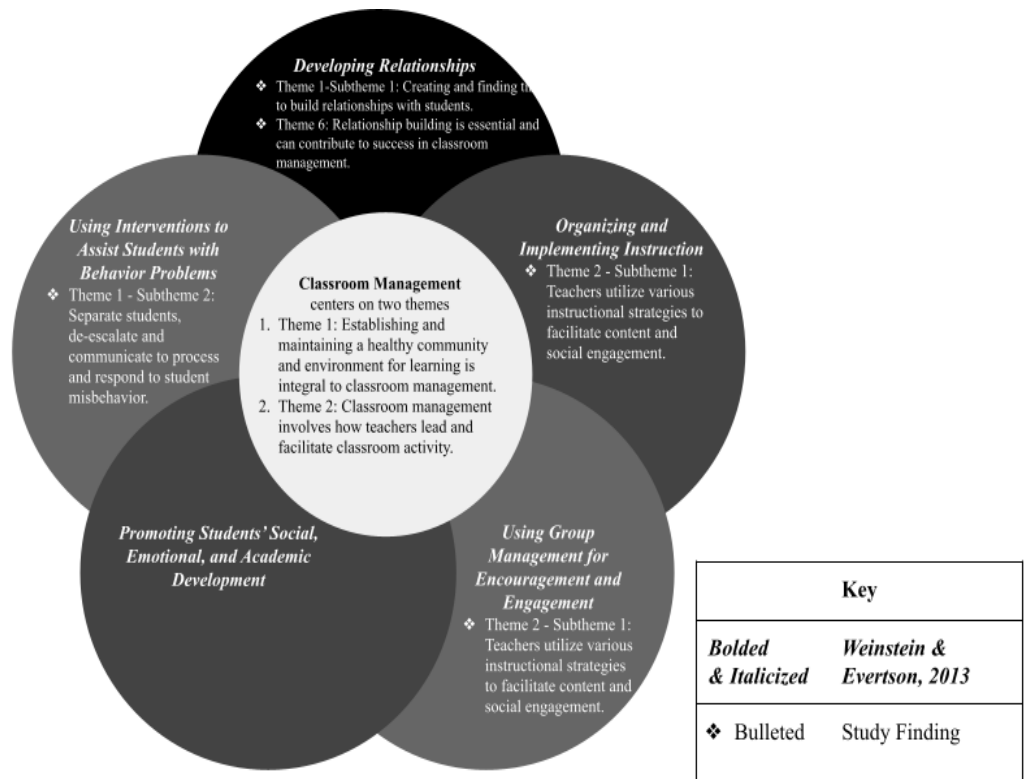
Among the research that supported Weinstein's and Evertson's definition of classroom management, there were several key aspects and contributions from some historical and pertinent literature on classroom management. The data in Research Question 1 directly connects with the findings of several other researchers. Mainly, the study findings echo the findings of Bagley (1907), Brown (1950) Emmer and Evertson (1982), and Marzano et al. (2003) concerning routines and procedures. The researchers previously mentioned all wrote about the importance of routines and procedures. They write that effective classroom management relies on repetitive routines and procedures that guide how students navigate the classroom. The findings in this study echo these ideas in Theme 2, classroom management involves how teachers lead and facilitate classroom activity. The participants described repetitive teaching structures (small

group, whole group) and repetitive progressions of classroom activity(whole group instruction, followed by partner work).

The findings in Research Question 1 also align with Marzano et al.'s (2003) findings regarding the importance of teachers developing supportive student relationships. Marzano et al. explain that quality relationships are a cornerstone for effective classroom management. Similarly, This study found that relationship-building is essential and can bring about classroom management success.

Research Question 2: What do Novice Middle School Teachers Perceive to be Effective Classroom Management Strategies?

Several findings from Research Question 2 directly connect to other literature in the body of classroom management research. To start, a major theme around behavior management described how several novice teachers used a similar type of strategy to respond to student misbehavior. Several novice teachers would separate students who are misbehaving from the class, try to de-escalate any emotions or disruption, and work with students to process misbehaviors. This concurs with Englehart's (2013) recommendations for managing student misbehavior in the middle school setting. Englehart recommends avoiding public conflict and speaking to students one-on-one, just as the participants do when separating students and talking to them privately or in the hallway. Englehart also recommends remaining emotionally objective. In other words, Englehart suggests teachers carry out classroom tasks rationally, without outwardly emotional communication or actions. Similar to this, the novice teachers explained how they work to de-escalate students' emotions after student misbehavior. While this is not about the teacher's emotional objectivity, this does speak to the novice teachers' work to establish

a tone and temperature of emotional objectivity by working to de-escalate student emotions when responding to student misbehavior.

It is important to discuss how the separation of students, or removal of students to the hallway, was a somewhat automated response to misbehavior. Teachers in the study did not discuss misbehaviors that are addressed in the classroom and misbehaviors that require separation. Also, outside of these three steps of separating, de-escalating, and communicating, there was no consistent process for responding directly to the misbehavior or any mentioned scope of students' consequences. There was no mention of categories of behavior and responses or any streamlined response to student behaviors. Yet, almost all of the participants emphasized the importance of routine and knowing what was to be expected most or the time. This absence of streamlined responses to student behavior before and after the separation connects to İnan-Kaya and Rubie-Davies (2022) ideas about teachers differential behavior. Without a streamlined set of consequences for students' behavior, teachers could potentially exhibit significant amounts of differential decision-making in response to student misbehavior. This could create points of inequity in how student misbehavior is managed. In their study, Inan-Kaya & Rubie-Davies (2022) explained that teacher biases are potentially acted upon through this differential behavior. When considering these findings with the findings of this study, they beg the question of whether teachers create potential points of inequity with the somewhat automated inclination to separate or exclude students from the class.

The study data related to Research Question 2 also revealed several themes that connect to other important classroom management research. For example, many participants spoke to using various strategies that allow them to maintain a comprehensive awareness of all the classroom happenings. In the data, the participants mentioned using proximity and moving

around the room to ensure students know they are watching and students assume they know what is happening in the classroom. This is similar to Kounin's idea of *withitness*. Kounin (1970) and Marzano (2003) describe withitness as the teacher's ability to maintain awareness of what is happening in the classroom, allowing them to respond to study behavior problems quickly. The findings of this study concur with the findings and writing of Kounin and Marzano and illustrate how this idea is an essential and valuable classroom management strategy and skill.

The study findings included the subtheme that teachers' behavior expectations for students are taught, monitored, addressed, and retaught as needed. Many participants repeatedly used the word "expectations" when speaking about managing students' behavior. The use of expectations is a key indicator of positive behavior intervention and support (PBIS) use in schools. It makes sense that some of these teachers used PBIS-styled language around behavior, as PBIS was a statewide initiative for North Carolina schools since the early 2000s (Headden, 2014). Upon further research of the participants' school and district websites, I became aware that all of the participants' school districts support the implementation of PBIS in their schools. While PBIS was only mentioned in some interviews, behavioral expectations indicate widespread use of PBIS in the participants' schools. One noted concern about PBIS is how the teachers and school staff create behavior expectations. These expectations often appear to be deaf to and inconsiderate of students' racial, cultural, and personal values (Calais and Green, 2022). The findings of this study could support those findings when considering that seven participants spoke about their teacher-owned and -created behavior expectations, and only one of those participants, Penny, mentioned adjusting those expectations in response to student needs.

PBIS has been found to reduce disciplinary exclusion, specifically out-of-school and in-school suspension, when implemented fully, using three tiers of behavior intervention (Grasley-

Boy et al., 2022). Grasley-Boy et al. also found that when PBIS is implemented partially, without using three tiers of behavior intervention, the reductions in disciplinary exclusion is minimal. The use of behavior expectations is a singular aspect of PBIS, without further use of the system and full implementation, teachers could potentially miss the benefits of the PBIS practices.

In the conceptual framework of this study, I discussed the various dimensions of the classroom, and how these dimensions are interconnected in the classroom ecosystem. Evertson and Poole (2008) describe these dimensions as spaces. They explain in the interdimensional nature of the classroom, teachers must plan for the use of the physical space, the social space, the instructional space, and consider the social interactions of the classroom. Similar and connected ideas were revealed in the findings around leading and facilitating classroom activity, specifically the subtheme teachers utilize various instructional strategies to facilitate content and social engagement. Similar to Evertson and Poole's ideas, the participants speak about how they facilitate students' engagement with each other and engagement with their course content. Focusing on collaboration and small group instruction, the teachers described how they intentionally plan for students to navigate the social interactions, and the instructional space in the classroom.

Two of the findings draw critical attention to how schooling impacts students and teachers. First, the study theme around how teachers were prepared to manage their classrooms highlights how all of the participant's diverse interactions with schooling prepared them to manage their classrooms. This included their experiences as teachers, students, and parents. The participants all discussed how they learned to manage their classroom through trial and error processes as a novice teacher. Some participants spoke about learning some classroom management concepts in their teacher preparation programs. Other participants spoke about

teaching in their religious organizations and their experience as a parent. Participants described how many different interactions with school and learning impacted their classroom management practices.

Another finding highlighted how some teachers' classroom management practices were directly impacted by how they believe their work plays a role in some greater context. Three teachers spoke about preparing students for later schooling, preparing students to serve their communities, and how their actions could contribute to breaking the school-to-prison pipeline. These ideas highlight how these teachers believe their work impacts students' lives outside of school. In other words, experiences beyond a teacher preparation program, or lack thereof, influenced teachers perception and ideas regarding classroom management.

Together these two previously stated findings illustrate an understanding of the role school plays in society, even in the views of novice teachers. Feinberg and Soltis (2004) explain that varied ideas exist about how schools operate in relation to society. In other words, school is constantly teaching students about the world around them, beyond the prescribed curriculum. Both implicitly and explicitly, students' experiences in schools can create lasting impacts. These ideas about school impact teachers' and school leaders' actions, so experiences with schooling have explicitly and implicitly influenced these teachers regarding how to manage their classrooms. Some teachers' classroom management practices are implicitly and explicitly teaching students about the world around them. When taken together, these findings illustrate how teachers' classroom management practices can be seen as directly related to the role schools play in a larger social context.

Research Question 3: Which Aspects of Classroom Management are Easiest for Novice Middle School Teachers to Manage, and Which Create the Greatest Challenges?

There were several findings from Research Question 3 that connect to and concur with various classroom management research and literature. First, the findings in this study clearly show that intervening for student misbehavior is the most challenging aspect of classroom management. This finding affirms the findings of Brubaker (2016), Harmen et al. (2018), and Keith (2022), that managing student behavior is a notable difficulty for novice teachers. Similar to Brubaker and Harmen et al., the study also found that novice teachers are taught some about classroom management in their teacher preparation studies, yet they feel they need to be more prepared to manage their classrooms. Despite the instruction pre-service teachers receive in their teacher preparation programs, beginning teachers continue to need classroom management support and learning opportunities.

Another similarity and connection to previous classroom management research centers on the necessity of student and teacher relationships. For example, Bondy et al. (2007), Brown (2003), Patish (2017), and Perry-Campbell (2020) speak to the importance of student relationships, which is echoed by the findings of this study. The teachers in this study frequently mentioned student/teacher relationships throughout the study data, illustrating the importance and frequency of use for relational and relationship-centered classroom management strategies. This also contradicts a finding of Kwok (2019), who stated that teachers rely on relational strategies less often than behavioral strategies.

Lastly, this study revealed findings on the importance of peer support for novice teachers. The novice teachers in this study explained that they, in fact, needed further classroom management support and would like this support from other teachers. The teachers preferred

classroom management support in the form of teacher observations and peer coaching. This finding parallels the findings of Brunetti & Martson (2018) as well as Gilbert (2005). These studies explain that novice teachers need support from their colleagues, specifically observation and collaboration with their more experienced peers.

This section explored how this study's findings align with and connect with the findings and writing of other classroom management research. The next portion of this chapter will explore how these findings, in connection with other classroom management research, point to important implications and recommendations for practice and research.

Implications

The findings of this study, connected to other research around classroom management, point to some important implications related to novice teachers' perceptions of classroom management. To start, the novice teachers' definitions of classroom management centered on establishing and maintaining a healthy community for learning and facilitating classroom activity. As mentioned in the conceptual framework for this study, and the definition of classroom management for this study, classroom management is inclusive of all teachers' actions that allow learning, centered on five key classroom management tasks. Those tasks are as follows:

- Developing supportive relationships
- Organizing and implementing instruction
- Using group management for encouragement and engagement
- Promoting students' social, emotional, and academic development
- Using interventions to assist students with behavior problems.

The findings imply some crucial congruence in how some novice middle school teachers conceptualize classroom management and some crucial incongruence with research-based ideas of classroom management.

The novice teachers are well-aligned and connected with ideas around building relationships, establishing routines and procedures, and leading various activities in the classroom. The incongruence lies in the importance of students' developmental needs. The findings and study data related to teachers' considerations for student development related to classroom management was scant. This incongruence suggests that some novice teachers' classroom management practices are not explicitly connected to or responsive to students' academic, social, or physical development. Adolescents need school environments that are responsive and supportive of their developmental needs (Kim et al., 2014). For example, only one participant, Fabian, asked students about their needs when addressing misbehavior. She simply asked, "have you eaten, do you feel like you're all here today?" The lack of data or findings related to student development in this study suggest that novice middle school teachers' classroom management ideas need to be more directly connected or responsive to the developmental needs of early adolescents specifically.

The findings of this study also lifted a consistent approach for how participants often respond to student misbehavior. Teachers in the study spoke of a somewhat automated response to student misbehavior. This response was to separate the students from the class, de-escalate emotions and communicate with students to process misbehavior. While this process does match recommendations for responding to adolescent misbehavior, the separation, most often mentioned in the data, is an exclusionary practice. The participants did not include any ideas around the of scaling of behavior response or different responses based on the misbehavior. This

begs the questions: which student behavior warrants this immediate exclusion, and which behavior warrants a different response and is this somewhat automated exclusion the most appropriate response to all forms of student misbehavior? These ideas suggests the participants have a somewhat neutral view of student misbehavior and disruption when student misbehavior and disruption usually lay on a continuum of severity.

Another important implication of this study is the use of expectations. As explained in the discussion, the wide use of behavior expectation is directly connected to the use of PBIS in North Carolina and this region. Some research around PBIS champions the use of expectations to communicate the teacher's desired classroom behaviors. Some PBIS research cautions against the use of expectations when expressed as authoritarian norms for expected behavior. The use of expectations in this study is connected to both uses. Teachers' teaching and reteaching expectations suggest that novice teachers use expectations to communicate. However, the lack of interview data about expectations responsive to students' identities and needs suggests the use of the authoritarian norming of behavior.

When pairing the ideas of authoritarian set expectations and the ideas of somewhat automated exclusions, novice teachers in this study could create or foster oppressive classrooms. Teachers could create classrooms rooted in the idea of meeting potentially oppressive expectations or suffer automated exclusion. When taken together, these two implications illustrate the possibility of an unfair classroom community dependent on the teacher's actions, beliefs, and potential biases. This is not to say that exclusion is never necessary or that PBIS expectations cannot be used to communicate teachers desired behaviors or be leveraged for success for every student. This is to say, without the proper pairing of these two practices, stereotypes, biases, and inappropriate beliefs about students could lead to unjust treatment. Could

these ideas be connected to the ever-present trends in discipline disproportionality of students of color and lower socioeconomic status? Could the linking of these ideas be connected to disproportionate discipline outcomes for males and students with disabilities? Could these ideas about meeting potentially oppressive expectations or suffering exclusion be a crucial link between disparate classroom management practices and disproportionate disciplinary outcomes for diverse learners?

Similarly, there were two findings related to lasting impacts of schooling. These findings spoke to how teachers' cumulative experiences with school impacted their classroom management practices and how some teachers' classroom management practices were directly connected to the greater context. These suggest and reaffirm the idea that the way schooling exists in society plays a relevant and vital role in the decisions educators make. It is often spoken of how students bring their full life experiences to school every day. These findings illustrate that teachers' school experiences are not bracketed when entering the classroom. They impact classroom choices, and some educators, even novice teachers, are extremely cognizant of the lasting impact they would like their choices to have.

Recommendations

The following recommendations are based on the findings and implications of this study. This section details the recommendations for school and district leaders, teacher preparation programs, and state policy.

Recommendations for School and District Leaders

Based on the study findings and implications, several pertinent recommendations exist for school and district leaders. First, school districts and school leaders should employ the use of interview questions that effectively explore teacher candidates' perceptions of classroom

management, ideas around the components of classroom management outlined in this study, and novice teachers' perceptions of how schooling exists in a larger context.

Classroom management connects to equitable classroom experiences, as well as equitable disciplinary and academic outcomes for students. The findings of this study show that novice teachers have some knowledge about the various aspects of classroom management and have schooling experiences that impact their classroom management practices. For these reasons, districts that screen teacher candidates and building-level administrators who hire teachers, should seek to gain an understanding of teacher candidates' classroom management perceptions in depth. This could be accomplished by asking teachers a series of questions corresponding to the various components of the classroom management literature. For example, hiring managers could ask:

1. Could you speak about a time when you built a lasting relationship with a student, subordinate, or someone you led on a team? How did you build that relationship, and how did that relationship help you reach a goal?

2. How would you organize instruction so that all students are engaged in the classroom content?

3. Research says that early adolescents have unique developmental qualities and needs. These include rapid physical growth, significant cognitive and emotional development, increased importance of peer relationships, a decrease in the perceived significance of parent relationships, and a significant growth in peer influence. What role do these developmental characteristics play in how you lead and manage your classroom?

4. In what ways have you or could you encourage the students you teach?

5. How do you intend to intervene for student misbehavior?

6. In your opinion, what role does school play in our society, and how does that directly impact your classroom practices?"

Each of these interview questions could assess a teacher candidates' knowledge and perceptions about a key component of classroom management, even though they may have no experience in the classroom.

Based on the findings of this study, school and district leaders should create induction programming requirements that include ongoing teacher observation and mentor coaching. The participants in this study expressed a need for classroom management support led by their more-experienced peers. Teachers should be afforded this opportunity frequently. Districts and schools could set up a monthly schedule for teacher observation and debriefing with a mentor for the entirety of the novice teacher experience.

The novice middle school teachers regularly relied on a behavior management strategy that involved the exclusion of students. While this does follow some recommendations for managing adolescent misbehavior, novice teachers should be offered guidance around when to exclude students and when to attempt to solve behavior issues within the classroom. Some schools that are fully implementing PBIS create continuums of behavior that outline when teachers should address misbehavior in the classroom and when a student should be removed. It is recommended that all schools adopt such a continuum to guide and develop teachers' understanding of what behaviors should lead to removal. This will also help create equity and combat any inequity and disproportionality around student exclusion. When given a continuum of behavior and suggested behavior responses, outlining what behaviors cause exclusion and what behaviors should be classroom managed, teachers should be trained and equipped with appropriate strategies to respond and intervene for student misbehavior. Creating guidance

around when a student should be removed and teaching novice teachers different ways to respond to student misbehavior could benefit all novice teachers.

Teacher and school behavior expectations are cornerstones and lasting remnants of a state-wide endorsement and implementation of PBIS. PBIS is still used and mentioned across districts in the southwest region of North Carolina. Teacher-created and school-created behavioral expectations can also foster a culturally unresponsive school climate if not thoughtfully developed. Schools using PBIS should build teachers' capacity to be able to use expectations as communication for the desired behavior and be able to create behavioral expectations that are responsive and valuing of students' cultural and diverse identities. It is recommended that schools create behavior expectations that include students' voices and beliefs about the school environment. School and district leaders should ensure teachers create classroom behavioral expectations with their students and revise and revisit those expectations to ensure teachers can create expectations that are not oppressive to any student.

Another recommendation for school leaders centers on how to support teachers' classroom management development. When hiring new teachers or helping teachers with ineffective classroom management, school leaders should utilize a classroom management framework to assess teacher's classroom management abilities and guide coaching around classroom management improvement. For example, school leaders could develop their own classroom management framework by using the interview questions from this study. School leaders and teacher leaders could use the questions to explore their own perceptions around effective classroom management and develop a bank of classroom management best practices for their schools. School leaders could use the interview questions from this study to assess teachers'

classroom management abilities and provided targeted coaching around the various aspects of classroom management.

Recommendations for Teacher Preparation Programs

There are three important recommendations for teacher preparation programs. These programs could include college and university programs for traditionally trained teachers, college and university programs for alternatively certified teachers and residency programs. First, teacher preparation programs work with pre-service and novice teachers at the onset of their formal teacher training and development. Based upon the findings of this study, it is recommended that teacher preparation programs take time to fully explore preservice and novice teachers' experiences that could impact their choices in the classroom. Novice teachers and preservice teachers should take time to reflectively explore how their educational experiences affect their view of education and affect their beliefs about the role of schooling in society. Further, novice teachers and preservice teachers need to investigate what impacts they intend to make as educators. Teacher preparation programs are an ideal place for this reflection to occur. Therefore, it is recommended that all teacher preparation programs embed program-long, instructor-facilitated reflection for preservice and novice teachers, centered on how their life and schooling experiences are impacting their current beliefs about school and what impact they aim to make with their work with students. Teacher preparation programs should then have students explore how these experiences and intentions will directly impact their classroom practices.

Secondly, teacher preparation programs for middle school teachers should give close attention to adolescent student development. The findings from the study suggest that novice teachers either need to gain knowledge of early adolescent development, how to support early adolescent development, or how student development connects to classroom management.

Teacher preparation programs could provide an ideal opportunity for pre-service and novice teachers to learn about early adolescent development in depth and explore how early adolescent development connects to classroom management.

Teacher preparation programs should also be sure to include classroom management learning that is paired with real-time classroom observation and reflection.

Recommendations for State Policy and Beginning Teacher Support Policy

The North Carolina Department of Public Instruction currently provides standards, state policy, and a beginning teacher support handbook for public school units. The policy outlines the goals of beginning teacher support, standards for mentors, and standards for beginning teacher induction programs. The policies should be updated to include a quantified requirement for beginning teachers to observe mentor teachers and a quantified requirement for frequent mentor support and coaching. The current policy says that opportunities for observation should be provided but does not list a requirement for these observations. Quantified specifics around beginning teacher observation and mentor support will create more and frequent opportunities for novice teachers to receive this mentor and peer-led professional development.

Recommendations for Future Research

This study was completed in the southwestern region of North Carolina, with novice middle school teachers. Future research should include a recreation of this study with veteran middle school teachers. This study, recreated with veteran teachers, could provide an alternate investigation into the effective classroom management practices used in middle schools. A study centered around veteran middle school teachers' classroom management practices is essential to growing the body of classroom management research about the middle school configuration

specifically. An exploration of veteran teachers practices could also support novice middle school teachers as they learn to manage their classrooms.

Future research should also utilize a different study methodology so that this study could be recreated with more participants. For example, this study could be completed as an open-ended survey, participants could be recruited across the state, and researchers could seek a very large sample size. Survey responses could be collected and analyzed using an automated text analysis program, similar to Markowitz et al.'s (2023) analysis of student disciplinary referrals. This study design could offer a broadened analysis of teacher classroom management strategies across the state or nation. A larger sample size could improve the transferability of this study or a similar study.

Another recommendation for future research concerns the approach of separating, de-escalating, and communicating to address students' misbehavior. The discussion highlighted that while this strategy is intended to manage classroom behavior, it may unintentionally foster exclusion and create inequitable experiences for students. Future research should investigate the extent to which exclusionary classroom management practices are used in middle school settings. Additionally, it should explore if and how these practices contribute to exclusionary disciplinary outcomes or disparities in disciplinary outcomes for students.

Future research should also include a study of novice teachers in other school configurations. It should include a study of novice teachers' classroom management practices in high schools, early colleges, and middle colleges. In the body of classroom management literature, these settings are studied less or combined with middle schools in studies focused on secondary schools.

Summary

The purpose of this study was to investigate the classroom management perceptions of novice middle school teachers. Three research questions guided the work of this phenomenological, qualitative study. In accordance with the study purpose and methodology, the study data was collected using individual interviews. After the data analysis, several themes were revealed, previously detailed in the study findings, and summarized in this chapter. This chapter discussed the study findings compared to other classroom management research, and then highlighted several study implications.

This chapter then listed several study implications. One implication related to novice teachers' conceptualization of classroom management included novice teachers' lack of knowledge about adolescent development and how it relates to classroom management. Another implication noted a potential point of inequity in a frequently used strategy involving student exclusion. The implications also discussed ideas around potential strengths and issues related to the use of student behavioral expectations and how teachers' experiences with schooling can directly impact teachers' classroom management practices.

Following these implications, several recommendations were proposed for school and district leaders, teachers' preparation programs, state policy, and future research. These recommendations included the increase of novice teachers' opportunities to observe their peers. This recommendation extended explicitly to state policy, teacher education programs, and school and district leaders. The recommendations also include recommendations for hiring practices, teacher education opportunities, the use of behavior expectations, and recommendations for educating novice teachers about early adolescent development. Recommendations for further

research included studying other secondary school configurations regarding effective classroom management and a redesigning of the study to include a larger number of participants.

This study sought to explore and investigate novice middle school teachers' perceptions of classroom management. The novice teachers' experiences and study findings paint a portrait of how novice middle school teachers manage their classrooms and highlight where novice teachers need further support to ensure their success. This study highlights the current classroom management practices of novice teachers in the southwest region of North Carolina. This study also provides researchers and practitioners direction as they seek to support and grow novice teacher effectiveness, especially related to classroom management.

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APPENDIX A: RECRUITMENT EMAIL

Good Morning/Afternoon _____ ,

My name is Christopher Lacy and I am a doctoral student at UNC Charlotte. I am completing a research study about novice middle school teachers' perceptions of effective classroom management. The purpose of the study is to explore the experiences of middle school teachers, in their first three years of teaching, related to classroom management.

I am contacting you to see if you would be interested and willing to participate in the research study. You were identified for potential participation in this study because you are a middle school teacher with less than three years of teaching experience. I received your contact information from _____*(insert college name, school administrator name, or district administrator name)*.

Before making a decision about if you would like to participate in this study, let me provide you with more information about participation in the study. Participation in the study will take approximately 65 to 90 minutes total. For about 45-60 minutes you would participate in a virtual interview via *Zoom*. The interview would be recorded and captioned by the Zoom application. For another 20-30 minutes, you would be asked to participate in a member-checking process. In this process, I would email you a copy of your interview transcription for your review. I would ask that you read this transcription carefully. After reading your interview transcript, I would ask that you reply to my email and let me know if there is anything that needs to be added, changed, or clarified. If an email does not accommodate any feedback you have, we could meet on Zoom again to discuss any changes or edits you would like made to your interview.

Participation in this study is voluntary and confidential. Your privacy will be protected. The final report and data used in this study will include a pseudonym, instead of your name. The data and reports will not include your name, your school name, or your school district name.

 What questions do you have about this study? Is there a time we could speak further about the study and your potential participation?

At this point, you have several options. You could agree to participate or decline to participate in the study if you are ready to make that decision. If you are ready to make that decision please reply to this email to let me know. If you agree to participate, I will send you a consent form that could be completed via DocuSign.

You also could take some time to consider your options and the information I have shared. If you would like some additional time to think, before making your decision, please let me know via reply to this email. If needed, I could email you a consent form containing what we have discussed so far. The consent form will also contain my contact information so that we can remain in contact until you make a final decision.

Thank you for your time and I look forward to hearing from you,
Christopher Lacy

EdD Student
Educational Leadership Department
UNC Charlotte
clacy2@charlotte.edu | 704-219-6233

Rebecca Shore, EdD
Associate Professor and Project Faculty Advisor
Educational Leadership Department
UNC Charlotte
rshore@charlotte.edu | 704-687-8867 ext. 4

APPENDIX B: **CONSENT EMAIL**

[Insert UNC Charlotte letterhead and/or logo]

Consent to be Part of a Research Study

Title of the Project: Novice Middle School Teachers' Perceptions of Effective Classroom Management
Principal Investigator: Christopher Lacy, UNC Charlotte Department of Educational Leadership
Faculty Advisor: Rebecca Shore, Ed.D, UNC Charlotte Department of Educational Leadership

You are invited to participate in a research study. Participation in this research study is voluntary. The information provided is to help you decide whether or not to participate. If you have any questions, please ask.

Important Information You Need to Know
- The purpose of this study is to investigate the classroom management perceptions of novice middle school teachers.
- You will be asked to participate in one virtual interview and a member-checking process to verify the accuracy of data collected from your interview
- If you choose to participate, it will require approximately 65 to 90 minutes of your time.
- If you choose to participate, your interview will be recorded, and the audio from this recording will be retained for data analysis.
- You may risk some emotional discomfort while answering the interview questions. The interview questions will be about your teaching experiences related to classroom management. To minimize this risk, you can skip any questions that cause you discomfort.
- You will not directly benefit from participating in this study

Please read this form and ask any questions you may have before you decide whether to participate in this study.

Why are we doing this study?
The purpose of this qualitative study is to investigate middle school, novice teachers' beliefs and perceptions concerning classroom management. The investigator will explore how novice middle school teachers view and define it, as well as consider their perception of its tenets. Additionally, the purpose of this study will be to understand which factors or aspects of classroom management cause novice teachers the most difficulties.

Why are you being asked to be in this research study?
You are being asked to be in this study because you are a licensed middle school teacher with less than three years of teaching experience. Any middle school teacher with a valid North Carolina teaching license, less than three years of experience, and willing to be interviewed and recorded for 45-60 minutes can participate in this study. Between six and eight teachers who meet the selection criteria will be selected for this study.

What will happen if I take part in this study?
If you choose to participate in this study, you will be asked to participate in a virtual interview and participate in a member checking process. The interview will take approximately 45 to 60 minutes of your time. The interview will be conducted via the web conferencing application *Zoom.* The interview will be recorded and captioned by the Zoom application. Video recordings will be destroyed immediately after the interview. The audio recordings will be kept in my UNC Charlotte Google Drive, which is a secure location. Audio recordings and captions from the interview are confidential and will not be shared with the public. Participants in this study will be recorded via *Zoom.*

During this interview, you will be asked various questions about your perspectives and perceptions of effective classroom management. Some sample questions include: How do you define classroom management, describe the most effective strategies you have used to develop supportive relationships and thinking about those five aspects and components of classroom management, which components do you find most challenging and why?

Secondly, you will be asked to participate in a member-checking process that will take between 20 and 30 minutes. In this process, I would email you a copy of your interview transcription for your review. I would ask that you read this transcription carefully. After reading your interview transcript, I would ask that you reply to my email and let me know if there is anything that needs to be added, changed, or clarified. If an email does not accommodate any feedback you have, we could meet on Zoom again to discuss any changes or edits you would like made to your interview.

Your time commitment will be about between 65 and 90 minutes.

What are the benefits of this study?
You will not benefit directly from being in this study. However, others might benefit from your participation in this study. Your participation in this study will provide insights into novice teacher perceptions about effective classroom management. Others could potentially gain meaningful insights and understandings about classroom management and novice teachers' experiences.

What risks might I experience?
I do not believe there are any risks, including privacy or confidentiality risks, from participating in this research. However, there is the possibility you will risk some emotional discomfort. The questions in the interview will ask you to speak about your teaching experience and your experiences with students. These questions will be somewhat personal. To minimize this risk, you will be able to skip any questions that you would not like to answer.

There is also the potential for an informational risk or breach of confidentiality related to your participation in this study. To minimize this risk, any identifiable information will not be included in this study. The study will not include any of your demographic information. For data collection and reporting in this study, you will be given a pseudonym. Any school names, school district names, student names, or professional names mentioned in your interview will be excluded from the data and reporting for this study. The audio recording from your interview

will be stored in my UNC Charlotte Google Drive. Again, I do anticipate any risks from participating in this study.

How will my information be protected?
Though the interview will be audio recorded, your identity and any identifiable information will be kept confidential. The audio recording and transcripts from your interview will be kept in my UNC Charlotte Google Drive, which is a secure location. My faculty advisor and I will be the only people with access to your interview recording. We will do our best to keep study data safe and confidential, but we cannot make any absolute promises. The following are the ways we will protect the data:

To protect your privacy, your identifying information will be removed or changed. You will not be identified in any publication from this study. We will protect the confidentiality of the research data by destroying any data with identifiable information at the conclusion of this study after the final dissertation defense.

How will my information be used after the study is over?
We may share your research data with other investigators in future studies without asking for your consent again. The only data shared after the study would be select quotes used in the final dissertation/report. Interview recordings, interview transcripts, and coded interviews will not be shared after the study is over. The information we share with these other investigators will not contain information that could directly identify you. After this study is complete, data results may be shared in a professional publication or conference. Again, the data results we share will not include information that could identify you. There still may be a chance that someone could figure out that the information is about you.

Selected portions of the data may be deposited in a public archive, such as ProQuest. The data and work in this archive are typically only available to those affiliated with educational institutions. The retained data will only include direct quotes from the interviews that will be used in the final dissertation/report. These quotes will not contain or be connected to any identifiable information. Using pseudonyms instead of names and excluding participants' names, school names, and district names will ensure the quotes can not be connected to any participant. The interview recordings and transcripts, where the quotes are selected from, will not be available as they will have been destroyed after the final dissertation defense.

Will I receive an incentive for taking part in this study?
There is not a monetary incentive for participation in this study.

What are my rights if I take part in this study?
It is up to you to decide to be in this research study. Participating in this study is voluntary. Even if you decide to be part of the study now, you may change your mind and stop at any time. Should you withdraw from the study, your interview recording, interview transcript, and any notes from your interview will be permanently deleted/destroyed and not used in this study.

Who can answer my questions about this study and my rights as a participant?

For questions about this research, you may contact Christopher Lacy at clacy2@uncc.edu or 704-219-6233. You may also contact Rebecca Shore at rshor6@charlotte.edu or 704-687-8867.

If you have questions about your rights as a research participant or wish to obtain information, ask questions, or discuss any concerns about this study with someone other than the researcher(s), please contact the Office of Research Protections and Integrity at uncc-irb@charlotte.edu.

Consent to Participate

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

I understand what the study is about and my questions so far have been answered. I agree to take part in this study.

_____

Name (PRINT)

_____

Signature   Date

_____

Name and Signature of person obtaining consent   Date

APPENDIX C: INTERVIEW PROTOCOL

Interview Protocol

Introduction, Demographics, and Description of the Classroom	
1. Please introduce yourself. Could you tell me your name, age, preferred pronouns, how long you have been teaching, and how you were licensed (Traditional undergraduate program or Alternatively certified through a residency/lateral entry program)? 2. Could you describe your class and classroom? Be sure to include your grade level, amount of students, the physical setup of the room, and any other information you think is important.	

Research Question 1: How do novice middle school teachers conceptualize classroom management?	
3. How do you define classroom management? 4. With that definition in mind, what actions, or tasks are involved in managing the classroom? a. Possible Probe - you said _____ is an aspect of classroom management, could you describe that a little more for me?	

Research Question 2: What do novice middle school teachers perceive to be effective classroom management strategies?

Say: Weinstein and Evertson (2013) defined classroom management as "the actions teachers take to create an environment that supports and facilitates both academic and social-emotional learning" (p. 4). They explained that classroom management has five essential tasks:
- Developing supportive relationships
- Organizing and implementing instruction
- Using group management for encouragement and engagement
- Promoting students' social, emotional, and academic development
- Using interventions to assist students with behavior problems

For the rest of our time together, we will use this definition to guide our work. I will place a

graphic on the screen for us to reference in the rest of the interview(*Show Graphic)*	
5. Describe the most effective strategies you have used to develop supportive relationships. 6. Describe some instructional strategies you have used to support classroom management. 7. Describe the most effective strategies you have used for group management. 8. Describe the strategies you have used to encourage and engage students. 9. Describe the most effective strategies you have used to encourage the whole class or groups of students. 10. Describe the most effective strategies you have used to promote students' development (academic and/or social-emotional). 11. Describe the most effective strategies you have used to intervene or assist students with behavior problems. 12. How were you prepared and trained to manage your classroom?	
Research Question 3: Which aspects of classroom management give novice middle school teachers the most success and the most struggle?	
13. Which components are the most challenging? Why? 14. To what extent do you feel you need additional support in classroom management? 15. How might that support be extended to you 16. Where do you see yourself in 10 years?	

APPENDIX D: CLASSROOM MANAGEMENT REFERENCE GRAPHIC

- Developing supportive relationships
- Using interventions to assist students with behavior problems
- **Classroom Management** *The actions teachers take to create an environment that supports and facilitates both academic and social-emotional learning(Weinstein & Evertson, 2013).*
- Organizing and implementing instruction
- Promoting students' social, emotional, and academic development
- Using group management for encouragement and engagement