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Preferred Behavioral Management Strategies in 3rd - 5th Grade Teachers

An Honors Thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for Honors in the
Department of Teaching and Learning.

By

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Under the mentorship of Dr. Mecca Williams-Johnson

ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study is to show teachers' most common concern: classroom management and how it affects student learning. Research has found that not every classroom can be conducted the same way because of the variety of differences including grade level, maturity, school placement, and the size of the classroom. Many strategies have proved to be successful; however, each teacher has to modify the plans to fit the needs of their own classroom. Affective behavioral management plans are essential in an effective classroom. The strong correlation between negative behavior and low achieving students must be recognized; furthermore, it is also important to recognize the positive actions because research has proved that behavioral management strategies are directly affecting their students' attitudes toward responsibility. The study conducted will explore behavioral management strategies preferred among 3rd - 5th grade public school teachers. It will look at how teachers' preferences relate to behavioral management plans that have been researched. Teachers will be interviewed with questions regarding what type of behavioral management plans that they prefer to use and why they choose those strategies. Then, their classrooms will be observed to see these behavioral management plans in use.

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Preferred Behavioral Management Strategies in 3rd - 5th Grade Teachers

Preservice teachers share many concerns about their upcoming careers and life in the classroom (Thompson & Webber, 2010). Many are excited and others are terrified about leading and teaching others. Getting to know the students, watching students grow, planning fun activities, and many other things are very exciting to future teachers. But, a common concern is classroom management. Classroom management is immensely influential in student learning. If there is not adequate control and respect in the classroom, then students will not feel comfortable enough to learn. Special education professors and authors, Martella Marchand-Martella (2005) discuss how behavior management seriously affects student learning. They state that “research has demonstrated a strong positive correlation between behavior problems and low academic achievement. Student success and/or failures are in large part determined by how well teachers provide effective instruction to their students” (Martella, 2005, p. 241). How can teachers provide effective instruction if they cannot control their classroom?

Effective behavioral management strategies are so important and essential in all classrooms. There are many things that affect the success of these strategies. Not every classroom should be conducted the same way because of the many differences in every classroom. The age and grade level of the students will make a big difference in the type of behavioral management strategy used. The overall maturity of the class will affect the strategy choice, the experience of the teacher, the culture of the school, school location (rural, suburban, urban setting), the dominant class of the school (low, middle, high class), the size of the school and the classrooms, and the classroom set up. The

consistency of the strategy, the staff support of this strategy, the school wide behavioral management strategies, the weather, the home life of the students, the wellness of the students, the teachers attitude, the teachers wellness, etc... will also affect your strategy choice. There are many strategies that researchers have proved to be successful, but every teacher will have to modify these strategies to fit the needs of their own classroom. No group of students will be exactly alike nor will they need the exact same strategy.

We can research for and plan for successful behavioral management strategies, but the fact that many aspects of our plans may and probably should be changed and tweaked to fit the specific needs of our students is overwhelming. Martella and Marchand-Martella (2005) discuss how student behavior is one of the biggest factors when teachers quit, get burnt out, stressed out, and are unhappy (p. 241-242). If behavior management problems are reasons that certified teachers get out of the education career, then there has to be a way to learn from these mistakes or problems.

Researchers discuss how different classroom management practices can affect students' success and overall achievement. They also depict the importance of behavior management. Salkovsky, Romi, & Lewis (2015) state:

The importance of classroom management is widely documented, indicating that teachers' effective managing of students' behavior and learning is critical to achieving positive educational outcomes. Teachers' classroom management practices can have a significant effect on students' concentration and self-regulated learning, autonomy and responsibility, moral and social development, students' achievements, attitudes toward schoolwork and their teachers, and the development of prosocial values (p. 56).

From Salkovsky, Romi, and Lewi's discussions, we see how behavior management is essential in almost all aspects of a successful classroom and student development.

PURPOSE STATEMENT

The purpose of this study was to investigate the preferred behavioral management strategies among 3rd - 5th grade teachers. The study explored the main discipline problems that these teachers experience in their classrooms and how they handle them. It also explored the teachers' opinions of the effectiveness of their preferred behavioral management strategies. The following questions guided the study:

1. What are the main discipline problems that 3rd-5th grade teachers see in their classrooms?
2. What are the preferred behavior management techniques used to manage classrooms?
3. To what extent do preferred behavior management techniques solve discipline problems?

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

INTRODUCTION

Affective behavioral management plans are essential in any classroom and are one of the main concerns of preservice teachers (Thompson & Webber, 2010). Kaufman and Moss (2010) state that “in a meta-analysis of studies examining perceived problems of beginning teachers, Veenman identified classroom discipline as the most frequently cited concern for young professionals, appearing in 85% of the nearly 100 articles reviewed” (Kaufman and Moss, 2010). Because of the many differences in teachers, students, and schools, there are many different ways that classrooms can be managed. There is not one specific plan that can be used for all classrooms. Because of the wide variety of needs in each classroom and the many different researched management methods that are successful, it can be very challenging to implement a successful plan. This is why it would be very helpful to learn from other teachers which strategies they find are the most effective.

HISTORY

In the centuries past, the rules and school policies were much different than they are today, but behavior issues still occurred. In the 19th century many schools consisted of one room buildings, with one teacher, and children of all ages and grade levels. Schools in the 19th century could not be more different than they are today. Then, they still functioned under the Victorian Age rules where children were not to talk unless they were asked to do so. Thus, the teachers were very strict and often punished the students by spanking them. The classroom management rules were much different than they are today, but they still held to the rules of courtesy, respect, fairness, and good manners.

These tenets are still a part of most classroom management policies today (Roskos, 2012).

Roskos (2012) discusses that classroom management research really began during the 20th century. She states that “effective classroom management depends on effective lesson management wherein the teacher demonstrates ‘withitness’ (awareness of what is going on in all parts of the classroom at all times), overlapping (attending to two or more issues at the same time), effective transitioning between activities, and well-paced, varied, and challenging lessons” (Roskos, 2012). Many scientists began conducting research and studying classroom management strategies and their effects on students. It was established that classroom management is the single most influencing aspect of student achievement in the classroom (Roskos, 2012).

Then during the 21st century, many new researchers developed other management strategies. A successful example of one of these strategies is the use of positive reinforcement to discourage negative behavior. Teachers are encouraged to reward their students for their correct behavior so that the misbehaving students will stop their negative actions because they want to be rewarded. Another strategy focused on differentiation in the classroom. It discusses different classroom grouping strategies that they think should be used to ensure achievement for different types of learners (Roskos, 2012).

CLASSROOM MANAGEMENT

Classroom management is much more than just controlling student behavior. Sivri and Balci describe classroom management as an encompassing of “classroom set up, turning in homework procedure, classroom rules, teaching strategies, behavior management plan, seating charts, assessment policies, and many other things” (2015). How a classroom is run or is managed includes hundreds of factors that could be different in every room. Some of these include the age of the students, the size of the classroom, the parent support of the students, the majority socioeconomic status of the students, and the funds of the school. All of these factors can play a big part in the management of the classroom as a whole. Dreikurs, Grunwald, and Pepper (1998) discuss that classroom management includes student development, student goals, home life of students, the understanding of student behavior, and the discipline and order of the classroom. They discuss how the management of the classroom involves so much more than just the rules that the students are asked to follow. Managing the classroom involves knowing the students well enough to be able to understand their thought processes to effectively instruct them (Dreikurs, Grunwalk, Pepper, 1998). Understanding what motivates students in and outside of the classroom will have a monumental effect on management strategies. But, an immense part of classroom management is behavior management and this is one of the most feared aspects of teaching and teachers discuss how the most difficult part of their job is managing the students’ behavior (Broome, 2013).

BEHAVIOR MANAGEMENT

Behavior management is a plan or an approach to disciplining students. There are many different ways to do so, but the main goal is to manage students' behavior whether it is positive or negative. Most schools have school wide behavioral management plans to create positive learning environments and to help back up their teachers in their own plans. All behavioral management plans differ by teacher and by class. Because of the vast differences between individual students and classrooms as a whole, there is not one correct or standard way that all classrooms should be managed (Department of Education, 2009). There is also not a classroom that can function without a plan in place.

Because of the many differences in students, there are many different ways that their behaviors can seriously affect their education. Disruptive behavior affects their own learning and the learning of their classmates. Researchers Garner, Moses, and Waajid (2013) discuss how one of the most important aspects of behavior management is the student-teacher relationship. They discuss how behavior management strategies affect the student's social endeavors and how the social aspect of their education has a huge impact on their academic success. In order for the teachers to be able to have an effective relationship and be able to create a sufficient behavior management plan, the teacher must be able to understand the beliefs and wants of the students (Garner, Moses, & Waajid, 2013).

Classroom disruptions also have an immense impact on the effectiveness of the teacher (Thompson & Webber, 2010). Many studies have shown that first year teachers feel that they are "wasting their time" teaching because of the constant student misbehavior. They also want more assistance with their classroom management and consider it to be extremely important (Obenchain, 2005). Many universities require

education majors to take classes that discuss and teach behavior management strategies. But, this aspect of teaching is still thought of as one of the hardest and the most feared for preservice teachers.

Many new teachers struggle managing their classrooms while they are teaching, but they recognize and they see first-hand the importance of an effective behavioral management plan (*Teacher In-Service Behaviour Management: Facilitator's Manual* 2009). Studies have been conducted in Australia that examine teacher and student views of different behavioral management policies and their impact on student responsibility. Roache and Lewis (2011) give very interesting but differing perspectives of the effectiveness of these management plans in their article discussing how management policies that use harsh punishment are not effective because they distract the student from their school work. They state that “a combination of rewards and punishments, set in a context of discussion, validation of appropriate behavior, involvement and trust, will encourage student responsibility and reduce misbehavior” (Roache and Lewis, 2011).

Roache and Lewis (year) find in their investigations of teacher perspectives that their behavioral management strategies are directly affecting their students feelings of responsibility. They discuss how teachers become concerned when their students act out and how their reactions tend to be much harder and more frequent. These students who receive these negative punishments are seen to become less responsible. They also discuss how they found that these teachers could help to increase the responsibility of their students if they would recognize appropriate behavior more often than they recognize inappropriate behavior (Roache and Lewis, 2011).

SUMMARY

Thompson and Webber's article focuses on the realignment of student and teacher perceptions of school rules. They also discuss how there is a large amount of research on school wide positive behavior support systems, but there is hardly any research on the perceptions of teachers and their effect on the behavioral management plans (Thompson & Webber, 2010). Teacher's perceptions of their own behavioral management plans would give educational research an interesting perspective. To compare teachers' perceptions of their plan to the behavior management research that we can already find would give a micro perspective of the effectiveness or ineffectiveness of these teachers (of specific behavior management approaches?). It will show if there is a lack of education in their behavioral management plans. It could also help administrators to see the need of teacher instruction in behavioral management and the lack of in the schools. This could help to enhance the behavioral management strategies of schools by revealing the lack of adequate education and the serious need for it.

METHODOLOGY

QUALITATIVE RESEARCH

This qualitative study explored what behavioral management strategies were preferred among 3rd - 5th grade teachers. It also looked at the main discipline problems that teachers experienced in their classrooms and how they handled these problems. Then it explored the teachers' opinions of the effectiveness of their preferred management strategies. In order to examine these topics, the researcher used a qualitative design (Creswell, 2009). The journal Medical Teacher describes this design by stating, "the task of ethnographers is to document the culture, the perspectives and practices of the people in these settings. The aim is to 'get inside' the way each group of people sees the world" (Reeves, Peller, Goldman, Kitto, 2013). By using this design the researcher studied the patterns of behaviors of 3rd-5th grade teachers and their students in their natural setting of school.

RESEARCH SITE AND POPULATION

This study was conducted in the southeastern region of the US. In order to examine the preferred behavioral management strategies among teachers, the researcher interviewed a diverse population of six 3rd-5th grade teachers. The interview subjects included two teachers from each grade. To ensure reliability of the data, one of the subjects from each grade has less than ten years of experience and the other more than ten years of experience. The two schools selected include one of low socioeconomic status and one of a middle/high socioeconomic status. This adds more depth to the data as it provided multiple perspectives on behavioral management issues.

PROCEDURES

The subjects were selected through a voluntary basis. I emailed the principals of the two schools to gain permission and request the contact information needed of the applicable teachers. Then the teachers were chosen by years of experience. One with less than 10 years of experience and one with more than 10 years of experience are needed for each grade.

To collect the data I interviewed the teachers in their most comfortable setting, the school. It is important to conduct interviews in the most natural setting of the interviewee. This established a comfortable setting and keep them on task as they are questioned in their own classrooms. The teachers were asked many interview questions (see attachment # 1) in order to obtain a more comprehensive picture of the classroom as a whole. The focus of the questions was to determine what issues these teachers are having in their classrooms, how they handle them, and their opinion of the effectiveness of their strategies. I voice-recorded the interviews to prevent from losing data. Before I began asking the teacher questions about their behavioral management strategies, I discussed the meaning of a behavioral management strategy with him/her to make sure we are on the same page. We discussed how a behavior management plan is an approach to disciplining students. We discussed how there are many different ways to approach a plan. Some use positive reinforcement, some focus on punishment, but the overall goal was to manage the student's behavior (*Teacher In-Service Behaviour Management: Facilitator's Manual*, 2009).

In order to ensure the reliability and validity of my research I limited the teacher interviews to 3rd, 4th, and 5th grade public school teachers. I thought it was best to base my research from only these three grades because of the behavior management

differences due to the developmental and maturity changes between a wider range of grades. I also voice recorded my interviews and my observations to prove the reliability of my research. These videos were carefully decoded for data. I was also sure to choose the teachers for my study from a diverse group of 3rd-5th grade public school teachers.

ANALYZING THE DATA

After the interviews had been orally recorded and transcribed they were systematically decoded. During this process the data was organized by similar themes or ideas. For instance, if any of the interviewees discussed similar behavior problems or similar response strategies, these themes were organized together. Once overarching themes have been categorized, explanations for these findings were sought out. Questions were asked to determine why classrooms are experiencing similar behavior problems or why particular response strategies were effective. To ensure that the data being collected is valid, any outliers, interview data that does not go along with the overarching themes, were analyzed to determine why this content is different from the rest of the data (O'Connor and Gibson, 2013). Once the explanations of the themes and outliers have been thoroughly analyzed the data was represented in an organized graph.

FINDINGS

The purpose of this study was to investigate the preferred behavioral management strategies among 3rd - 5th grade teachers. In order to do so teachers from these grades were interviewed using a qualitative research design and questioned about the main discipline problems experienced in their classrooms and how they handle them. They

were also questioned on their opinions of the effectiveness of their preferred behavioral management strategies. To thoroughly explain themes and commonalities across the interviews, findings are organized according to my research questions. The first of the three research questions asks about the main discipline problems that teachers see in their classrooms. The most common discipline problem that all five interviewees discussed is talking in the classroom.

Overall the data revealed that talking was the most common discipline issue, even though it was an issue in different facets and forms. Some teachers had problems with students talking too loudly and not being able to use self-control when they are given the opportunity to talk. Others discussed how students interrupted and talked out of turn too frequently. Susan stated how students struggle with “talking too much when the teacher is speaking.” She discussed having problems with students not talking respectfully to one another and having problems with student’s passing notes. Susan, who teaches 3rd grade, stated that “passing notes to one another or saying something mean about somebody, temper on the playground, doing something they shouldn’t do like hurting or saying something they shouldn’t say” are common issues in her classroom.

In contrast, only one interviewee, Carla who teaches 4th grade, discussed how talking was not an issue in her classroom, but she knew it was in all the other classes on her team. She stated that “having the discipline to put forth their best effort” is the main discipline problem that occurs in her classroom. She also discussed how she thought her focus on reinforcing positive behavior by giving rewards is the main reason that talking is not an issue in her classroom. Carla stated, “I love rewards, and the students do as well. Actually, I have a student that still (to this day) asks me about the reward he did not

receive after I left for a new job. He had a new teacher that did not continue the rewards.” She also discussed a less common, but still a frequent issue in her classroom, which was students hitting each other.

The other less common issues that were discussed by interviewees varied. Some included (1) students not being prepared for class and (2) students hitting each other or picking at each other. Anna, who teaches 5th grade, discussed how her students are always trying to get her off topic and could be very manipulative. She also discussed how teachers need to understand that sometimes students need to burn off energy to be able to succeed. She states that “you’ve got to know the difference in when you’re being manipulated and when it’s just like everybody’s got this huge amount of energy”.

The second of the three research questions asked teachers to explain their preferred behavior management technique. Overall the data showed that most of these teachers use check marks to discipline students for their misbehavior. These check marks had consequences of losing recess, calling the student's guardian, or an office referral. Semaj, who teaches 4th grade, discussed how they made the rules together as a class. She stated that “if they (the students) are a part of the decision making process then they know I have respect for them and am more likely to have their respect.” Another teacher discussed using check marks for misbehavior, but also spelling out the word ‘noise’ onto the marker board when the class is getting too loud. When the ‘n’ is placed on the board that is the class’ warning to talk more quietly, but each additional letter added takes a minute off of their recess.

Another commonality found in the data in regards to preferred behavioral management techniques is focusing on positive behavior rather than negative. Teacher’s

found that motivating the students and finding something for them to work for is more effective than just punishing them. One teacher discusses the effectiveness of giving quads (their desk arrangement) of student's tokens when they are doing what they are supposed to. She stated that, "I think that these tokens are effective because they are motivated by them. They were excited this morning about them and I think that it is effective, because they make each other accountable. Some days all students are not where they're supposed to be and others will get their book out and get it open for them and they have that teamwork going on because they want that token and it makes them feel accountable for each other." Susan also discussed how her students love the rewards that they receive as they earn coins for their bucket by quad (the groups of student desks). She states that "they love getting that piece of candy at the end of the week and then also you can get another piece of candy if you didn't get your name on the clipboard at all at the end of the week so you have a chance to get two pieces of candy." Thus, expounding that these positive reinforcements act as great motivators for the students to behave.

While four of the five interviewees discussed a specific strategy that is successful in managing the behavior of their students, Carla's discussion was not strategy centered but student centered. She stated that teachers should "love all of them and make them feel special, but ALWAYS make your most difficult child feel like they are the teacher's pet... all while maintaining clear communication of fair and consistent consequences. With that strategy, the ones that are not a problem continue in that manner. The kids that have issues usually try to please you because they know you love them... and typically, they have not had that feeling because of their behavior."

After discussing these teachers' main discipline problems and their preferred strategy used to handle them, they were then asked the third and final research question. This question asked the teachers to explain to what extent their preferred behavior management techniques solve their discipline problems. Overall the data revealed that these teachers all thought their preferred strategy successfully solved their discipline problems, but there was also the common theme of how the success depends on the group of kids. Carla states how every year brings "a wave of new students which brings different dynamics to the classroom." Her statement directly aligns with three of the other teachers who said that the success of their strategy always "depends on the class." Susan discussed why she thought her strategy was successful. She discussed how figuring out what motivates your students is key to getting them to work. She stated that "they love getting that piece of candy at the end of the week and then also they can get another piece of candy if you didn't get your name on the clipboard at all at the end of the week, so you have a chance to get two pieces of candy." Thus, discussing how her current class loves getting a piece of candy at the end of the week and is really motivated by it. Therefore, making this a successful strategy for current class.

Susan also discussed that in order to have a successful behavioral management strategy it is imperative that you are flexible and consistent. She stated that "you just have to be flexible because things can come up that you can't anticipate. So there has to be grace and mercy and you have to learn as you go. Decide and stick with your guns. When do I need to extend mercy and when do I need to not bend at all. So you can have a plan, but it has to have some flexibility built in because every situation is different." She also discussed how she pulls students aside or out of the class and trying to figure out what is

going on. She tries to do this when possible instead of just giving them their consequence and she relates this to her behavior management success. She stated, “sometimes you just need to spend some time talking with the child about the issue and you find out maybe there’s some underlying reason for why they’re acting out.”

Similar to Susan’s discussions about what lends to her successful behavioral management strategy, Anna discussed what she considers to help in her classroom. She discussed how important it is to recognize that these are children and they are full of energy that needs to be expelled. She stated that “you’ve got to know the difference in when you’re being manipulated and whether just everybody’s got this huge amount of energy.” She discussed how sometimes you just need to give them a few minutes to get this energy out before you can expect work from them and this will immensely aid in your behavior management success. She also discussed the importance of reflecting. She states that teachers should learn “to step back and reevaluate... Like it might be me having a bad day. It might be them having a bad day. It might be, you know, any number of factors and just evaluating each day individually.”

Overall, we found that the success of your behavioral management strategy depends on each class individually. You have to evaluate and figure out what motivates them. But, also remember that they are children who need to be active and not consider these needs behavior problems. These data findings lend themselves back to the research stated in the review of literature section of this paper. Thus, these connections and many other implications that have been made from the data will be discussed thoroughly in the chapter to come.

DISCUSSIONS & IMPLICATIONS

The purpose of this study was to investigate the preferred behavioral management strategies among 3rd - 5th grade teachers. In order to do so teachers from these grades were interviewed using a qualitative research design and questioned about the main discipline problems experienced in their classrooms and how they handle them. They were also questioned on their opinions of the effectiveness of their preferred behavioral management strategies. The themes and commonalities found will be related and compared back to existing research. Also any implications and further findings will be discussed and analyzed.

This theme found in the data of talking being the most common discipline problem in the classroom lends itself to many implications. Thompson and Webber discussed the realignment of student and teacher perceptions of school rules in their article. In this they also discussed how classroom disruptions also have an immense impact on the effectiveness of the teacher (Thompson & Webber, 2010). This lends itself well to what Anna discussed about being able to recognize when students need to get some energy out before they should be expected to work. She stated that “you’ve got to know the difference in when you’re being manipulated and when it’s just like everybody’s got this huge amount of energy.” I think this relates well to what Thompson and Webber discuss. If the students have so much energy and are causing disruptions then this will have a huge impact on the teacher’s effectiveness when teaching. Thus, it would be best to recognize this energy level and give the students 5 minutes do yoga, to dance, or to have some sort of brain break where they can be active. But, because the data

showed an overall theme of talking being the main discipline issue in the classroom, I think giving the students a set time to be social before class starts will help them get some of this energy out and help them to be able to concentrate in class. Thus, also aiding the teacher in having effective instruction as she can focus on teaching them the content and not just focusing on getting them to behave.

As talking was the most common discipline issues discussed, there was only one interviewee who had contrasting findings. Carla stated that she knew that this was the most common problem for other teachers on her team, but it was not an issue in her classroom. But, her preferred behavior management strategy was also very different than the other interviewee's strategy. Carla stated that teachers should:

Love all of them and make them feel special, but ALWAYS make your most difficult child feel like they are the teacher's pet... all while maintaining clear communication of fair and consistent consequences. With that strategy, the ones that are not a problem continue in that manner. The kids that have issues usually try to please you because they know you love them... and typically, they have not had that feeling because of their behavior.

Her strategy is very student centered. She does not focus on a specific strategy or mark system that disciplines the students well. She focuses on her relationship with the students.

This student centered plan is backed up by research from Garner, Moses, and Waajid (2013) when they discussed the importance of the student-teacher relationship. They discussed how behavior management strategies affect the student's social endeavors and how the social aspect of their education has a huge impact on their academic success

(Garner, Moses, & Waajid, 2013). Carla explicitly discussed her student centered plan in the quote above. She also stated that talking, which is the main discipline problem for all the other interviewees, is not an issue in her classroom. Thus, we can come to the conclusion that Carla's strategy was successful and this type of student centered atmosphere had a "huge impact on their academic success." This strategy continues to be backed up, but not only by Garner, Moses, and Waajid (year), but also by researchers Dreikurs, Grunwalk, and Pepper. They discussed how the management of the classroom involves so much more than just the rules that the students are asked to follow. Managing the classroom involves knowing the students well enough to be able to understand their thought processes to effectively instruct them (Dreikurs, Grunwalk, Pepper, 1998).

This research also lends itself to Carla, Susan, and Anna's focus on positive reinforcement in their classrooms. She and Susan discussed how their students love rewards and are really motivated by them. Susan stated that "they love getting that piece of candy at the end of the week and then also you can get another piece of candy if you didn't get your name on the clipboard at all at the end of the week so you have a chance to get two pieces of candy." Thus, expounding that these positive reinforcements act as great motivators for the students to behave as they are supposed to. These findings are reinforced by researcher Roskos' (2012) findings as well. He encourages teachers to use positive reinforcement to encourage others to do what they are supposed while also rewarding those who are. He also discusses different classroom grouping strategies that should be used to ensure achievement for different types of learners (Roskos, 2012). Susan has her students grouped in quads of four or five. For her positive behavior management strategy, she gave the teams of desks coins when they are behaving as a

team. She discussed how this encouraged teamwork and student help as they remind each other to stay on task. This is a very similar grouping strategy and positive behavior management strategy that Anna discussed using in her classroom during her interview.

Roache and Lewis (2011) also support this positive behavior classroom focus. They discussed the effectiveness of these positive management plans in their article discussing how management policies that use harsh punishment are not effective because they distract the student from their school work. They stated that “a combination of rewards and punishments, set in a context of discussion, validation of appropriate behavior, involvement and trust, will encourage student responsibility and reduce misbehavior” (2011).

Susan’s positive behavior management strategies coincide well with Roskos’s findings, but also with Dreikurs, Grunwald, and Pepper (1998). They discuss how the management of the classroom involves so much more than just the rules that the students are asked to follow. Managing the classroom involves knowing the students well enough to be able to understand their thought processes to effectively instruct them and understanding why they behave the way they do (Dreikurs, Grunwalk, Pepper, 1998). Their discussions directly relate to what Susan stated during her interview about pulling students aside or out of the class and trying to figure out what is going on. She tries to do this when possible instead of just giving them their consequence and she relates this to her behavior management success. She stated, “sometimes you just need to spend some time talking with the child about the issue and you find out maybe there’s some underlying reason for why they’re acting out.”

I think it would be very interesting and beneficial for the education community to do more behavioral management research, but to focus it on the consistency of the positive and negative management strategies. After interviewing current teachers and reading the literature about behavior management techniques, I think the success of the technique would demand on the consistency its use. It would be very interesting to see if other teachers agree and it would be interesting to be able to actually observe their classrooms to have an even clearer depiction of their behavioral management strategy.

Classroom management is much more than just controlling student behavior. Sivri and Balci describe classroom management as an encompassing of “classroom set up, turning in homework procedure, classroom rules, teaching strategies, behavior management plan, seating charts, assessment policies, and many other things” (2015). While it is important to have a positive and negative behavioral management plan in place for the schools year, it is also important to remember that this is not the only thing that will create a successful classroom. It is also important to remember that you will have to change or tweak your plans each year as you get a new group of students. Carla states how every year brings “a wave of new students which brings different dynamics to the classroom.” Her statement directly aligns with three of the other teachers who said that the success of their strategy always “depends on the class.”

The U.S. Department of Education (2009) also discussed how behavioral management plans differ by teacher and by class because of the vast differences between individual students and classrooms as a whole, there is not one correct or standard way that all classrooms should be managed. Which is why I think educators should all keep Carla’s classroom advice in mind and keep our classrooms student centered.

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Interview Questions:

1. How many years have you taught?
2. What ages are your students?
3. How many students do you have in your classroom? How many girls and how many boys?
4. How is your classroom arranged?
5. What are the classroom rules?
6. Who creates the classroom rules?
7. When and how are the classroom rules introduced to the students?
8. Describe a typical day in the classroom?
9. Do you have a behavior reward system in place in your classroom? If so, what is it?
10. What behavior consequence system do you have?
11. What would you say is the most common discipline problem that you have in your classroom?
12. Do other teachers raise the same concern or have similar discipline problems that you encounter?
13. What are some other less common problems that you have?

14. How often do you stray away from the consequence or reward system to deal with the less common problems?
15. What are the students' usual responses to these consequences or rewards?
16. Do you think your response to these issues is effective? How so or why not?
17. Tell me about a time you used a behavior management strategy that did not work well in your classroom?
18. How long did you try this strategy?
19. What prompted your to change?
20. What did you change to address this management issue?
21. How often do you feel the need to change your management strategies?
22. Out of all of the strategies that you use, which one(s) do you feel is most effective and why?
23. Is there anything that you would like else you would like to share about your classroom behavior management that was not discussed earlier?