Classroom Management as an Effective Means of Promoting Literacy Development

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Classroom Management as an Effective Means of Promoting Literacy Development

by

Deborah Lofthouse-Crowe

August 2009

A thesis submitted to the Department of Education and Human Development of The College at Brockport, State University of New York in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Science in Education
Classroom Management as an Effective Means of Promoting Literacy Development

by

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Chapter One: Introduction

Three years ago, my first day of substitute teaching was prefaced by a feeling of fear as I approached a classroom in which everything was unknown to me. As I entered the room as a new substitute, I was not afraid of my ability to lead lessons. Instead, I was afraid of my inability to manage a classroom of students. This was one area that had been only briefly touched on during my professional training. I had heard horror stories about how substitute teachers are treated. I also recalled how one of my own high school teachers was reduced to tears because of the way that our class treated her.

Many teachers have told me that students in general behave worse for substitutes than for their regular teacher. Since my first day as a substitute, I have regularly and repeatedly worked in unfamiliar classrooms, and fear the experiences much less. Over the years, I have continued to collect ideas from many of these classrooms in order to perfect my classroom management style. I am convinced that there are many factors that work together simultaneously to create an effective learning environment.

As I completed my graduate studies in Childhood Literacy and anticipated the
day when I will have my own classroom, I was especially interested in how I can create an optimal environment to promote literacy learning. I wanted to investigate how various teachers approach each day and what management elements they use to enable their students to be successful. I believed that the similarities and differences in the various teachers' practices would offer clues as to what management elements I should integrate into my practice as well as what I should avoid.

**Problem Statement**

As a substitute teacher, I had experienced a wide variety of classrooms. I understood that in many cases students act less appropriately in my presence than they do in the presence of their regular teacher. However, it was quite evident in some classes that the regular teachers maintained effective classroom management styles. Students in some classes appeared to be able to function more independently and life in the classroom was not jeopardized by the presence of an outsider. In fact, the students were more respectful to each other and to me as they helped guided me through their daily routines. Likewise, there were some classrooms that demonstrated behaviors that may have been the result of an absence of effective classroom
management. Wong and Wong (2005) cited a study which reviewed 11,000 pieces of research over a span of fifty years, and listed classroom management as the most important factor effecting student learning. However, the presence or absence of effective classroom management is not the only factor that determines the climate and culture of a classroom. The uniqueness of the students also plays a large and significant role in the overall performance of the class.

Finding the best combination of classroom management techniques is an ongoing challenge for me as well as for many teachers. Stone (2005) included a teacher in her book who feels that classroom management comes in a multitude of configurations. Teachers choose to utilize some and abandon others depending on their goals. Evertson & Harris (1992, p. 75) discovered through their synthesis of research the “need for a classroom management system that is visible, established, monitored, modified, refined; and reestablished.” Teachers with many years of experience may have developed a reliable and tested classroom management philosophy. However, adjustments may need to be made yearly as these experienced teachers come to understand the strengths and needs of the particular students in their classroom. These teachers begin the year with strong ideas and a plan to maintain a
consistent management policy. This likely will change as the school year continues and they get to know their students better. New and less experienced teachers do not have the benefit of years of experience and modifications to their classroom management philosophy from which to draw. These teachers will benefit from continued practice and experience and through professional development opportunities focused on classroom management strategies.

Another element that determines the overall classroom management philosophy of teachers is their individual teaching style (Gambrell, Morrow & Pressley, 2007). Owocki & Goodman (2002) emphasized it nicely when they said, "effective teachers consciously consider what they believe about language, learning, children, and their worlds. They also consider where their beliefs come from, and how their beliefs influence the interpretations and decisions they make in the classroom" (p. 3). For example, each teacher incorporates different levels of emphasis on dispositions that are essential to teaching. These dispositions include but are not limited to positive outlook, respect, intellectual integrity, dedication and self-awareness.

Another aspect that plays a part in the individual teaching style of an educator
is the integration of a variety of roles. Routman (2000) says, “To do our job well means being professional in the highest sense of the word” (p. 1). She listed eight potential roles of a teacher as a professional: learner, scholar, mentor, communicator, leader, political activist, researcher, and role model for kindness. Each teacher fulfills these roles in varying degrees depending on their knowledge and comfort with the responsibilities of that role. Not all classroom management practices work well for all teaching styles. Therefore, teachers need to discover practices that are conducive to their teaching style and that they feel are manageable in the daily classroom setting (Routman, 2000).

**Significance of Problem**

Considering all of the aspects involved in education, classroom management and discipline are considered the biggest concern among educators, especially new teachers (Evertson & Harris, 1992). The negative effects of ineffective classroom management on student learning has the potential of becoming a perpetually reinforcing problem. In their synthesis of research Evertson and Harris (1992, p. 76) cited Emmer and Ausikker saying, “Systems fail to address the day-to-day classroom
management needed to engage students in productive activities and to prevent minor problems from becoming major ones.” For example, teachers in the primary grades with poor classroom management skills may foster poor academic skills in their students. Lack of skills may lead to poor performance and low self-esteem. Once this happens, a cycle of learned helplessness may begin. In my opinion, with each passing year, students’ negative behaviors will increase unless they encounter teachers with a strong classroom management policy to counteract the negative cycle. Another factor that plays a significant part in the negative cycle is that students’ identities continue to evolve. Those who have had negative behavior reinforced over the years may continue to repeat the behaviors to gain reinforcement. Lyons (2003, p. 188) concludes her book by saying “Brain-based research provides solid evidence that virtually every child is capable of learning how to read and write (under the right circumstances). Allowing large numbers of children to leave the primary grades with minimal skills ensures them a life of school failure.” Teachers who use instructional time ineffectively or unproductively or do not involve students in meaningful and engaging activities risk losing students’ attention and negatively impact students’ motivation to learn.
Behavior problems have continued to be one of the largest challenges for teachers. Evertson and Harris (1992) discovered in their synthesis of research that behavior management and discipline remain the number one concern particularly for new teachers. Behavior problems that lead to this concern include goofing off, disruptions to learning, defiance, cheating, lying, stealing, and violence. Jarolimek et al. (2001) defined more specific behaviors within each of these general categories. For example, the general category labeled as goofing off may include inappropriate behaviors such as running in the classroom, jokes during instruction time, or doodling instead of paying attention to the lesson at hand. The general category of disruptions to learning may include talking out, talking with peers, of task behaviors, etc. There are a significant number of actions that qualify as behavior problems depending on the timing, location or intensity of the action and its interpretation by the teacher. Because behavior problems play such a key role, how is it possible for students to really learn from the instruction that teachers work so hard to prepare? Finally, teachers are expected to enter the field with little or no background in classroom management. Thus the cycle continues as poorly prepared teachers lead back to improper student behaviors and so on.
Purpose

The purpose of this study, then, was to gather information regarding teachers’ classroom management skills that effectively support students’ literacy development. I not only wanted to use it to guide my own professional development but also to help other potential teachers discover exemplary classroom management techniques. I explored how classroom teachers across a range of grade levels use various classroom management techniques to enhance their literacy instruction and promote student learning. During the study, I concentrated on the components of classroom management related to the school and classroom environment, scheduling, routines, student groups and instructional formats.

I explored the following research questions through the study: What classroom management techniques do elementary teachers use to support their students’ literacy development? What are the similarities and differences among the various classroom teachers, grade levels or school districts? How does the classroom environment support elementary students’ literacy development?

I included teachers who represented five grade levels, five school districts, and who were diverse with regard to their teaching experience, gender, classroom
categorization and school setting. This was an attempt to represent a range of diverse teaching populations while using a limited number of teacher resources. I used a combination of observations and interviews to discover some of the similarities and differences of classroom management techniques used by the teachers. I shared my discoveries with the teacher participants as well as interested administration and educational peers.

Rationale

Evertson and Harris (1992) compiled a synthesis of research regarding managing classrooms. They said, “Effective, classroom management must move beyond the control of behaviors. Future research needs to describe how to create supportive learning environments in schools that face complex and changing needs” (p. 74). Each classroom is a unique environment filled with energetic and enthusiastic individuals who embody a variety of social, emotional, cognitive and physical skills and abilities. Finding the right combination of classroom management techniques that enhances literacy instruction and supports student learning can be challenging especially for new teachers. As a new teacher on a quest to prepare
myself for the challenge of meeting and supporting the needs of my future students, I was using this study as a way to add the most effective classroom management strategies and techniques to my educational tool kit. I offer my findings as a condensed collection of exemplary teaching practices, which other educators may use strategically in their own contexts and environments.

Definition of Terms

The following terms are used throughout this study. The following definitions are intended to clarify the meaning of each for the purpose of this research:

- Classroom management refers to all of the things that a teacher does to organize students, space, time, and materials so that student learning can take place. It overarches everything in the curriculum. (Wong & Wong, 2005, p.84)

- Literacy instruction involves reading, writing, speaking, listening and viewing primarily in the English Language Arts curriculum. However, literacy instruction may also take place in other content areas such as science, math, and social studies. (Cooper, & Kiger, 2006)
• Environment refers to the physical and emotional atmosphere of the classroom. (Jarolimek, Foster Sr. & Kellough, 2001)

• Behavior management plans are often what people think of when classroom management is mentioned. However, behavior management plans are specific agreements or programs in which students are rewarded for good behavior or receive consequences for inappropriate behaviors. Behavior management plans may involve the entire class or may be used to influence behaviors in specific students. (Evertson, Emmer & Worsham, 2003)

Summary

Effective classroom management should be an important part of every teaching and learning environment. Exemplary literacy instruction alone will not be sufficient to promote student success; equally important are the elements of good classroom management to back it up. Although exceptional classroom management is essential, it is often minimally referenced or lacking in teacher preparation programs. In order for me to meet the standard of being a “highly qualified teacher”, I
need to make sure that I am knowledgeable about the best practices used in classroom management. One way to do this is by reading current research. A second way is to observe and collaborate with teachers who have already proven that specific techniques work best. This study has enabled me to take advantage of both ways of investigating classroom management practices in order to improve upon the strategies that I use to support my students literacy experiences.
Chapter Two: Literature Review

The organization and management of a classroom plays a crucial role in students' daily educational experiences. Ideally, a teacher combines the components of environment, scheduling, student groupings, rules/routines, behavior management plans and instructional formats to mold a unique classroom management system for her students and her classroom. Evertson and Harris (1992) suggest that the "broadening definition of classroom management has led research away from the focus on controlling student behavior and looks instead at teacher actions to create, implement, and maintain a classroom environment that supports learning" (p. 74). This overarching management system can be the most influential part of how well students' succeed or how much they struggle. As the emphasis on improving students' ability in literacy increases each school year, I think that it is important to review the various components of classroom management in order to improve their effectiveness. Also, the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 has increased the responsibility placed on teachers and school districts to improve all students' academic progress. The legislation mandates that schools provide highly qualified teachers who use scientific-research based exemplary teaching practices.
(Jaeger, 2007). This, too, increases the need to critique and reflect on the factors that will ensure progress for all students.

As I mentioned in the previous chapter, I began thinking about the most efficient forms of classroom management during my student teaching and subsequent substitute teaching experiences, and have been on a long-term mission to observe the practices and techniques of exceptional teachers in order to target those specific strategies that I plan to use in my own work with students. In each classroom I visit I take informal notes and collect ideas regarding all of the classroom management techniques. This study, then, is a way for me to synthesize all of that former information with the new data I will collect through focused observations and individual interviews.

In this chapter, I examine the components of classroom management - environment, scheduling, student groupings, rules/routines, behavior management, and instructional formats. Next, I discuss the influences classroom management can have on literacy instruction. I conclude the chapter with a discussion of ways to improve teachers’ classroom management practices.
Components of Classroom Management

Environment

Organizing the classroom environment is necessary in order to keep it manageable. There are two main subcategories of environment: the physical environment and the emotional environment. The physical environment includes the space as well as the materials. Space refers to the organization and utilization of available space in the classroom. Where would furniture and other items like that go? Materials include all of the books, posters, and supplies that are available for student use. The emotional environment includes how all classroom inhabitants relate to each other and how each student perceives his or her place in the classroom community. Both environments together create the overall atmosphere within the classroom.

Each classroom has different needs based on the grade level, the number of students, quantity of materials, types of activities and instructional routines of the teacher. Therefore, it is necessary for each teacher to reflect on the specific needs of his or her students and plan accordingly. Preliminary planning at the beginning of the school year can help teachers establish their goals and consider how the goals may be
fostered and realized through the arrangement of the physical elements of the environment.

There is not one "best way" to set up a classroom. Routman (2000, p. 544) recognized that, "the way our classrooms are set up and organized speaks volumes about what we value and believe. I can tell almost immediately upon walking into a classroom what the philosophy of the teacher is." Teachers should consider how they want their students to associate with each other. According to Jarolimek, Foster and Kellough (2001) if teachers want to encourage collaboration and discussions, students should be seated together. If teachers want them to work independently, they should separate the students. It sends mixed messages to them if they are seated together and then get in trouble for whispering and talking with each other (Jarolimek et al., 2001).

In addition to providing a well-organized physical environment, it is equally important that teachers offer students a supportive emotional environment. Jarolimek et al. (2001) recommended that teachers encourage the development of positive self-esteem in students, provide a psychologically safe learning environment and encourage creative thought and behavior through the use of nonevaluative and nonjudgmental responses. The authors suggested that teachers use the following
guidelines to accomplish this: avoid negative criticism, use of minimal reinforcement without overusing terms such as “good”, use elaborate or strong praise sparingly, show respect for experiences and ideas of others, provide positive individual feedback as often as possible, and use nonverbal cues to show awareness and acceptance of individual students. Routman (2000) also suggested that the aesthetics of the room influence the way students interpret the emotional environment and the sense of community.

*Scheduling*

The use of a posted daily schedule is highly recommended for students with some types of disabilities so that they are better prepared for how the daily activities will flow, but its presence benefits all students in the class. The posted schedule gives students a consistent reference for the organization of the day so that they may anticipate the content and transitions that will be occurring over the course the day. The schedule is like the glue that holds the day together. The daily schedule may be formally posted on a board as well as reviewed during the start-of-day activities or morning meeting and then periodically throughout the day.
In addition to the specific daily activities that students participate in, there are the transitions that take place between the activities. Transitions are the planned procedures that shift students’ thinking from one idea to the next or that move their actions from one activity to the next. Jarolimek et al. (2001) observed that “as much as 15 percent of classroom time may be spent in shifting from one activity to another” (p. 149). Transitions should be planned by the teacher in advance so they occur smoothly, efficiently and with the least amount of disruption. Jarolimek et al. (2001), offered suggestions such as avoiding delays in which students sit or stand with nothing to do, having materials ready or easily accessible for the next task, giving students roles and responsibilities such as student helpers who pass out materials, giving out clear directions regarding the next task only after gaining the attention of all students, establishing reasonable time limits for the transition, attempting to set up a familiar routine for transitions, avoiding raising students’ excitement level, allow small groups to transition one at a time, and providing assistance to those who need help getting back on task.

Transitions are one part of the day that is typically challenging to both children and teachers is transitions. Children often get into trouble because they don’t know
what to do or are not good waiters. Peer pressure also induces poor choices regarding decision making about behavior. Transitions seem to trigger a sense of uncertainty, which may be avoided through the use of a posted schedule listed previously and advance verbal warnings by the teacher. Instead of viewing transitions as a challenge, teachers should view them as an opportunity to clarify expectations including lining up, cleaning up, moving between lessons and activities, and waiting for dismissal. Teachers may also want to use them as opportunities for teachable moments in order to maximize class time and as ways to set the tone for upcoming activities. Through consistent observation and reflection of transitions, teachers can refine their use and effectiveness (Flicker & Hoffman, 2006).

**Student Groupings**

In the past, small group instruction tended to be based on the principle of ability grouping for the purpose of tracking progress (Cooper & Kiger, 2006). Since that time, there has been a greater emphasis on an alternative form of grouping called cooperative learning groups. Evertson, Emmer and Worsham (2003) found that significant research on cooperative learning groups has continued to focus on the use
of this type of grouping to increase achievement, create positive interpersonal relations, and improve student attitudes toward learning including motivation. Some of the factors that lead to these successes were increased student engagement, participation, feedback, and mutual construction of meaning among students. This type of grouping allowed students to be an additional support to each other when the teacher is not available. Evertson et al. (2003) concluded that the instructional goals of the teacher should determine if cooperative groups are used as a primary structure or as a support to whole-class and individual instruction.

Jarolimek, Foster and Kellogg (2001) describe cooperative learning groups as heterogeneous groups, which are composed of a mixture of one or more criteria and generally have three to six students grouped together by personality type, social pattern, common interest, leaning style, or abilities. The students work together in a teacher- or student-directed setting, to support one another. Some times group members assume a particular role, and membership in the group is changed several times throughout the year.

Cooperative groups are also referred to as flexible groups (Cooper & Kiger, 2006; Gambrell et al., 2007). Cooper and Kiger (2006) believed that it is important
to remember that flexible means that the groups are constantly changing based on various purposes of learning. This type of group can be used as an important tool to support instruction. Some examples include interest groups, strengths and needs groups, mini lesson groups, discussion groups, project groups, and modeling groups.

**Rules / Routines**

Our world is full of rules and routines that we are expected to live with on a daily basis. Classroom teachers have the responsibility and privilege of helping guide our students in the acquisition of appropriate behaviors and responsibilities. At the beginning of the school year, classroom teachers can set a tone by establishing clear rules and routines with high expectations for students' ability. Moran, Stobbe, Baron, Miller and Moir (2000) identified four cardinal rules of classroom management: model, practice, focus on the positive, and be consistent. Modeling might include role playing the expected student behaviors. An example of practice for appropriate hallway behavior would be to take walks in the hallway in order to reinforce the positive behaviors and to improve on the inappropriate behaviors. Positive reinforcement is a great way to focus on the positive. For example, "catching students
doing the right thing” and then pointing them out as role models is one way to reinforce the behaviors. In order to be consistent, teachers should maintain expectations for following the rules and have consistent and appropriate consequences for those who do not follow the rules. The four cardinal rules will help to ensure that rules and routines can be maintained on a long-term basis.

At the beginning of the school year, teachers should work collaboratively with students to create the classroom rules so students will have a feeling of ownership and responsibility for following them (Evertson et al., 2003). It is beneficial for teachers to consider the rules that they would like to have in their class but be open to student suggestions. In many cases, students understand what rules are needed especially if they have seen them repeatedly over the years in other classrooms. Although inviting student input is important, teachers should be careful to agree only to those that they can live with daily (Evertson et al., 2003).

An additional important aspect of rules, which is especially helpful during transitions, is the techniques or signals that teachers use in order to gain students’ attention. Attention includes stopping what they are doing, looking at the teacher, and listening to what the teacher is saying. Teachers can use a variety of signals such as a
lowered voice, hand clapping, or hand gestures. It is especially helpful in the early grades to have the students repeat the signal as a way of ensuring their attention (Flicker & Hoffman, 2006).

One teacher, referenced by Stone (2005), used the technique of managing with silence. The teacher, Ms. Daniels, said, “I stand in the classroom, glare at students with my serious, teacher glare, and wait” (p. 7). She said that after a few minutes eventually all the students quiet down. Daniels uses this technique as a teachable moment in telling time as she tallies passing minutes of waiting on the board so the class can see how long it takes. She also uses it as an opportunity to observe what students are doing during transitions. Other techniques that this teacher uses are “Eyes on me at three” for making announcements or giving directions and having students put their hands on their head so that she can visually see who is listening. Her overall goal with each of her techniques is for students to hear what she is saying, which assists with instruction and the intermingled transitions.

Other important concepts teachers will want to establish are individual responsibilities and classroom responsibilities (Evertson, Emmer & Worsham, 2003). For example, all students should be individually responsible for cleaning up after
themselves. Teachers may list classroom responsibilities on a job chart. These are tasks that need to be done on a daily basis but do not require whole class participation. As with the individual cleanup, all tasks should be modeled by the teacher to ensure that students understand how to complete them successfully. Students should also be held accountable for completing their task without reminders. Evertson et al. (2003) recommend that teachers rotate jobs in order to make sure that all students participate equally.

Classroom meetings are an activity that enables the students and teacher to work collaboratively to improve the way the classroom functions. According to Moran et al. (2000) some of the topics that may be covered are problem solving, topic discussions, determining class rules, deciding class functions, team-building activities and positive interactions. The authors suggest that all students sit in a circle so that they have eye contact. There should be a posted agenda, to which students can add items. During the meeting someone should take minutes that can be referenced later, and all students should use “I” statements.
Behavior Management

Recent federal and state mandates as well as shifting philosophies in education have led to an increase in the number of inclusive classrooms; as a result there is less separation of students based on abilities and needs. Classrooms have become a more diverse reality. With increased diversity comes the potential for conflicts and/or peer pressure among students resulting in behavioral issues and the need for appropriate consequences.

Baker (2005) conducted surveys of both primary and high school teachers regarding their beliefs about their classroom management skills. This study was in response to an ongoing problem regarding the discipline related stress in teachers that results from attempting to manage student misbehaviors. In the study, 345 participant teachers from primary and high schools in central Ohio were surveyed. The schools were a combination of both small and large facilities and the teachers were diverse in regards to teaching experience. The survey was based on two previous studies and consisted of the Teacher Readiness Scale for Managing Challenging Behaviors used by Baker in 2002. Baker (2002) discovered a relationship between efficacy and readiness: as teachers' perceptions of self-efficacy for managing a classroom
environment increases so does their overall readiness for utilizing specific behavior intervention techniques. Baker concluded that increasing teachers' feelings of self-efficacy is important to improving classroom management and that teacher's should be offered differing levels of support and professional development based on their needs. Baker (2005) recommended that creating meaningful training opportunities in classroom management will likely become critical in order to meet the district, state and federal goals.

Tomal (2001) examined the differences in elementary and high school teachers discipline styles and determined that teachers should consider their personal discipline style as an aspect of behavior management. He justified his research by saying that the increasing violence in society and disorder in schools will continue to increase unless school districts and more specifically classroom teachers are able to find successful ways to manage student behavior. One hundred five public elementary and high school teachers from northeast Illinois participated in the study. Diversity was alluded to in the categories of gender, age, teaching experience, grade levels, and school setting. A 30-item questionnaire was the method of data collection; each item was rated on a four category scale.
Tomal found that each teacher developed a dominant discipline style in the classroom and that all teachers followed one of the following five discipline styles: enforcer, abdicator, compromiser, supporter, or negotiator. Each of these discipline styles has specific characteristics that were identified for the purpose of this study. For example, the enforcer is intimidating, controlling, dictatorial, and threatening. The abdicator style avoids problems, is apathetic, ignores students and is reclusive. Characteristics of the compromiser are manipulative, inconsistent, open-ended, and wishy-washy. The supporter is helpful, indecisive, unassertive, personal, and seeks harmony. Finally, the negotiator is collaborative, responsible, objective and seeks resolution. There were some additional characteristics listed under each of the discipline styles. Enforcer was the top category for high school teachers with elementary teachers preferring the negotiator. The overall conclusion from this research was that classroom life required negotiation between teachers and students with varying degrees of enforcement and support depending on the situation. In many cases the discipline style selected by the teacher was one that the teacher felt comfortable with delivering on a consistent basis.
Instructional Formats

Much of "old school" teaching was focused on the use of teacher-directed instruction, which utilized lectures, textbooks and worksheets. However, instructional formats have changed and improved over the years to include an emphasis on engaging activities that promote various student-centered activities. It is less likely that behavior problems will occur if students are interested and engaged in their learning. Engaging instruction enables students to stay on task, which in turn impacts classroom management and the overall climate in the classroom.

Authentic Task

One activity that has received recognition is the use of an authentic task that is performance based. Taylor et al. (2002) state that teachers define authentic tasks as instruction that emphasizes real-life problems in a manner that integrates multiple skills. The authors shared an example of a class that is studying forests in which the teacher created a unit on the topic of conserving paper. The teacher integrated content and topics and immersed the students in math, writing, science, conservation and recycling. The authors recognized that this type of instruction better
prepared students for state assessment because assessments are structured with an integrated approach (Taylor et al., 2002).

Zone of Proximal Development and Scaffolding

In their research, Gambrell et al. (2007) referenced Vygotsky’s (1978) zone of proximal development. Vygotsky suggested “that optimal learning occurs when teachers determine children’s current level of understanding and teach new ideas, skills, and strategies that are at an appropriate level of challenge” (p. 22). Vygotsky believed in a learning continuum that involved the distance between a child’s ability to problem solve on his or her own and his or her ability to problem solve with the help of a more knowledgeable other (Soderman, Gregory & McCarty, 2005).

Vygotsky’s concept of a zone of proximal development coincides with the idea of scaffolding, which was developed by Wood and Middleton (1975). Soderman et al (2005) describes scaffolding as “joint problem solving with another peer or adult in which the two work together toward a common goal” (p. 11). In this type of endeavor, teachers begin by modeling the activity. This is followed by guided practice in which the teacher assists the student in completing the task. Finally, the
student participates in independent practice. The guided practice portion of the scaffolding process is that Vygotsky refers to as zone of proximal development. Scaffolding has a better chance of success if there is a good relationship between the student and teacher, the task is at an appropriate level of challenge, and the adult allows the child to take the next step when he or she is ready. Soderman et al. (2005) suggested several instructional scaffolding techniques that teachers might use: “think alouds”, modeling, providing learning strategy objectives, accessing students’ prior knowledge, using visuals and manipulative, and adjusting the teacher’s speech.

Learning Styles and Multiple Intelligences

One way to support student learning is by recognizing and accommodating individual learning styles. Jarolimek, Foster and Kellogg (2001, p. 340) define learning styles as “the way a person learns best in a situation.” A couple of examples of these learning styles are auditory and visual. Students may be prone to learning best through one of these methods of instruction or the learning style may be dependent on the learning environment.

Jarolimek et al. (2001) also speak of Gardner’s multiple intelligences as
students capacities for learning. The following are the eight intelligences that Gardner identifies: bodily/kinesthetic (skillful use of the body), interpersonal (understands people and relationships), intrapersonal (assesses self as means to understand self and others), logical/mathematical (reasoning, patterns, orders), musical (sensitive to pitch, melody, rhythm, tone), naturalistic (use of natural environment to solve problems or make products), verbal/linguistic (meaning and order of words), and visual/spatial (manipulate nature of space and perceive the world accurately). Jarolimek et al. say that intrapersonal, logical/mathematical, and verbal/linguistic intelligences tend to fit the traditional teaching methods. However, the other intelligences are rarely addresses or even overlooked in some classrooms.

Inquiry-Based Learning

Another way to support student learning is through the use of inquiry-based learning. The thirteen ed online website defines inquiry as “a seeking for truth, information, or knowledge -- seeking information by questioning” (http://www.thirteen.org/edonline/concept2class/inquiry/index.html). Inquiry is a natural process that begins in infancy and continues throughout our lifetime.
Teachers should take advantage of this natural behavior in their instruction because it promotes a more naturalistic form of learning. The authors of the website state that educators need to go beyond data and information accumulation toward more useful skills such as questioning and critical thinking. The importance of inquiry is that it teaches students to seek reasonable answers to their questions even if the pathway results in more questions to be answered later (Edmonds, Alvarado & Herr, 2003).

In the book *Inquiry-Based Learning: Using Everyday Objects Hands-On Instructional Strategies That Promote Active Learning in Grades 3-8* Edmonds Alvarado & Herr (2003) speak about the conflicting ideas related to inquiry. Some teachers feel that it is turning students loose to investigate areas of interest to them. Other teachers feel that it is experimentation, even if the teacher provides all the steps and the final outcome via a verification lab setting. Edmonds Alvarado and Herr posit that educators may turn almost any standard or learning objective into an investigation. They suggest that teachers honor the curiosity of students by allowing initial questions to be a starting point and letting students select the direction to take in order to answer those questions. Most of this book is concerned with how to use everyday objects in a form of inquiry called “object-based inquiry“. This approach
helps students become more observant, inquisitive and reflective. This type of thinking must be explicitly taught to students and is not suitable for every lesson. It primarily encourages observation and critical thinking.

Classroom Management Practices Specifically Used in Literacy Instruction

Environment

A phrase that is often discussed in reference to literacy instruction is the idea of a "literacy rich environment". Taylor and Pearson (2002) described this setting as one that includes a book nook with cushions and bean bag chair. Surrounding book cases are filled with hundreds of books in all levels and genres. Numerous posters on the walls promote various aspects of literacy. Book reviews and books published by the students are included in the classroom library. A vast reference section accommodates all reading differences in the classroom.

Literacy-rich environments are also promoted by Alvermann, Swafford and Montero (2004). They believe that providing a rich literacy environment is equally important in intermediate grades as it is in the primary grades and that teachers should consider "the outside environmental factors that influence students’ engagement with
or disenfranchisement from literacy” (p. 159). They offered an analogy of a bookstore as a guide to creating an inviting and comfortable space to be consumed in literacy. For example, when entering a bookstore, there are many different types of literature as well as comfortable spaces, sounds and smells. This truly makes it an inviting place that people enjoy visiting. Alverman et al. (2004) recommend keeping these ideas in mind as a teacher constructs and organizes the space in his or her classroom. However, they also promote individual creativity by the teacher as they continue through the process of creating a literacy-rich environment.

Soderman, Gregory and McCarty (2005) also recommend immersing children in literacy by bombarding them with examples of printed words when they enter the classroom. The examples should be both functional and illustrative. This expansive connection to print helps the cognitive development of skills, which are necessary for becoming literate.

**Scheduling**

Schedules and routines were two areas of classroom management that Gambrell, Morrow and Pressley (2007) found that have a positive influence on
literacy instruction. They quoted Holdaway (1984) who said, “Children develop a sense of security when events of the school day revolve around a sequence of anticipated activities. Although variety is the spice of life for children too, they find comfort in familiar instructional routines and schedules in a well-organized classroom” (p. 333). One way that this can be accomplished is by following a program such as the Five-Block Schedule. The Five-Block Schedule consists of the following 180 minutes of daily literacy instruction: word work (30 min.), fluency (30 min.), writing (30 min.), comprehension strategy (30 min.) and small-group differentiated reading instruction (60 min. = 3 groups X 20 min. each).

The purpose of the word work block is give students the opportunity to work on phonological and phonemic awareness, concepts about print, letter recognition and production, decoding and word recognition, and spelling concepts. Fluency lessons consist of describing, modeling, practicing, and performing fluent reading. There are five areas of focus in the writing block: composition, spelling, mechanics, grammar, and writing genre concepts. The comprehension lessons involve instruction and practice in vocabulary and the following nine comprehension strategies: questioning, text structure, graphic organizers, inferencing, predicting, visual imaging, monitoring,
summarizing, and activation of background knowledge. Small-group differentiated reading instruction involves a combination of guided reading groups and literacy centers in which students work on strategies and skills taught in the other four blocks.

Fountas and Pinnell (1996) offer an alternative suggestion for literacy scheduling. They target 150 minutes preferably at the beginning of the day with the following components: independent reading (10 min.), opening routines and calendar (5 minutes), read aloud (5 minutes), shared reading or interactive writing (15 min.), guided reading and centers (60 minutes = 2 guided reading groups and four centers per day), read aloud (10 min.), shared reading (5 min.) and writers workshop (40 min.). Independent reading allows students to self-select literature to read silently to themselves for the purpose of enjoyment. Opening routines and calendar help to promote students' use of oral language. Read aloud is an activity in which the teacher models various strategies, which are then integrated during the process of fluent reading. Next, students are expected to participate in shared reading or interactive writing. All students read simultaneously with the teacher from a reading selection or assist the teacher in composing a piece of writing. Similar to Gambrell et al.'s Five Block Schedule, guided reading and literacy centers coincide so that the teacher may
work with small groups while other students are working independently. During writers workshop, students have the opportunity to be fully engaged in writing. These components may be interchanged to suit the needs of the classroom. Fountas & Pinnell believe that this literacy schedule is representative of the comprehensive literacy program that has been promoted by various research studies.

In Chapter 10 of *Literacy: Helping Children Construct Meaning*, Cooper and Kiger (2006) gave readers an inside look into a second-grade class as the teacher organizes her schedule to provide her students with balanced literacy experiences. She begins the week with a 15-minute share session in which students are encouraged to share reading and writing activities they engaged in at home over the weekend. This is followed by a review of the “Our Weekly Plans” chart, which is focused on literacy events for the week and includes: theme, everyday activities, special jobs, and things to add. The teacher includes reading club and writing club under the category of everyday activities. These clubs are actually the independent reading and writing portions of the literacy program. The comprehensive literacy program also includes writing workshop, reading workshop, whole class books, conferences, and other activities. After reviewing the chart, the teacher asks the students for input
regarding the "things to add" section.

Taylor & Pearson (2002) offer what they refer to as innovative scheduling. It is based on the block-scheduling model. Ninety minute blocks are divided between two teachers in order to allow for small group instruction for reading and language arts. Students rotate between the two teachers who each focus on specific concepts or tasks in their small groups. This type of scheduling was in response to disruptions in the English Language Arts (ELA) program. It has promoted ownership by the participating teachers and has provided a unified focus for the whole school as they work together toward the same goal.

**Student Groupings**

Gambrell et al. (2007) referred to flexible groups as the "partial answer to differentiating reading and writing instruction" (p. 324). The temporary groups are based on level of independence and personal interests of the group members as related to a specific task. One example of a flexible group is an assessment data group. This group is determined by progress-monitoring data such as running records, anecdotal records, 1-minute fluency sample, or group participation records. In this example,
several children with similar learning needs are grouped together for the purpose of teaching a particular skill or concept. Gambrell et al. (2007) also offered the following alternative flexible grouping plans:

- **Dyads** - Students are assigned roles of recaller, listener, or clarifier. Each group member reads two pages silently or in unison. Following the reading, they have discussions based on the function of their role. The reading and discussion cycle continues two pages at a time.

- **Focus trios** - Randomly assigned social groups that summarize what they already know about a reading selection. They develop questions to be answered during the reading and then discuss and summarize their answers after reading.

- **Group retellings** - Read and retell information from different books on the same topic.

- **Groups of four** - Randomly assigned in order to complete some phase of a larger task. For example, in writing a letter, group members may be responsible for writing the body, addressing the envelope, etc. Roles are exchanged for each task.

- **Jigsaw** - Group members read different parts of the same text and retell to the other members. Discussion and clarifying questions follow the retelling.
• Metacomprehension pairs - They alternate reading and orally summarizing paragraphs or pages of text. The other partner follows along and checks accuracy of the summary.

• Think-pair-share - Individually think of an answer to a problem and discuss with their partner. They share their consensus of the answer with a larger group.

• Problem solving/project groups- The problem solving group solves self-selected reading or writing problems. The project group explore a variety of projects such as plays, puppetry, Readers’ Theater, research, student-authored books, poetry, lyrics, notes, invitations or cards. The result is a publishable quality product for an authentic audience.

Literature Circles

Another literacy based grouping option is Literature Circles. Taylor and Pearson (2002) explain that these groups select their own book and then meet to discuss it. Each group member is well-trained in the different roles of the Literature Circles: discussion leader, illustrator, summarizer, etc. The teacher usually spends about two weeks modeling these roles and how the circles should function. The use
of Post-it notes from each member with questions or comments about the reading helps facilitate discussion in the absence of the teacher. Gambrell et al. (2007) offer steps to organizing literature circles such as offering book talks about 3 or 4 books of interest that the students can choose from, filling groups ideally with their first or second choice, and determining meeting schedules and number of pages to be read. Because these are interest-based groups with active roles for all members, the level of motivation and participation tend to be higher than traditional seatwork activities.

**Instructional Formats**

**Literacy Centers**

Fountas and Pinnell (2005) and Diller (2007) encourage the use of literacy centers as part of the instructional schedule. The authors have each developed a professional development DVD that provides suggestions for setting up literacy centers as well as ideas for activities to incorporate relative to the grade level that is using them. These literacy professionals feel that literacy centers are an effective addition to the comprehensive literacy program in classrooms. Diller's DVD (2007) referred to literacy centers as an innovative management and learning system that can
be used to support achievement on standardized tests and provide reading and writing practice in the content areas. In addition, literacy centers support the growing ability of older students to take on more responsibility for creating and maintaining the stations as well as managing themselves. Some examples of centers include buddy reading, observation, word study, recording, newspaper, poetry, writing, ABC book, listening, etc. The list of possibilities for literacy stations is immense. Diller and Fountas & Pinnell encourage modeling of each station activity and setting guidelines for expectations within the center. As students gain practice in each center, the tendency for independence increases.

*Guided Reading*

Routman (2000) describes guided reading as “any reading instruction in which the teacher guides one or more students through any aspect of the reading process: choosing books, making sense of text, decoding and defining words, reading fluently, and so on” (p. 140). Ideally, guided reading involves the teacher scaffolding instruction by building on what the students already know. This is the starting point from which the teacher provides reinforcement as well as some challenge. The
teacher then supports and demonstrates strategies which will help the student progress. Routman (2000) suggests that guided reading may provide individualized instruction by attempting to meet the needs of all learners. The focus is always on meaning even if individual skills and strategies are being taught. In order to provide appropriate levels of challenge, the text should be carefully selected to be within the student’s zone of proximal development. Most guided reading groups should be composed of students who have similar instructional needs in order to provide the maximum benefits from the instruction.

Writing Workshop

Writing workshop is a well-known instructional format that focus on providing effective writing instruction. Fletcher and Portalupi (2001) said, “teaching kids to write is hard....writing is a bundle of skills....We believe that writing workshop creates an environment where students can acquire these skills along with the fluency, confidence, and desire to see themselves as writers” (p. 1). These authors suggest that a regular writing schedule is essential to writing instruction and recommend three basic components: whole-group instruction, time for writing, and
time for a structured response. For example, an hour-long writing workshop begins with 5-10 minutes whole-group mini lesson followed by 35-45 minutes of writing and 10-20 minutes of share time.

Fletcher and Portalupi (2001) suggest that “choice leads to voice” (p. 23) and that by giving the students choice to write about what they want, the students feel a sense of ownership in their writing. This helps to foster a love of writing, which is the long term goal of writing workshop.

Improving Teacher Classroom Management Practices

Teachers have been held to high expectations when it comes to classroom management especially in recent times. In fact, classroom management has been noted as an influential variable in teacher effectiveness. Studies of student achievement and surveys of teacher perceptions have supported the idea that effective classroom management is a fundamental aspect of effective teaching (Stronge, 2007). In many cases, a teacher is judged by how well behaved his or her students are and how few discipline problems the students display. Because classroom management holds such importance, we would expect that teachers would receive a wealth of
training in this topic. However, this does not appear to be the case.

Merrett and Wheldall (1993) conducted research regarding how teachers learn to manage a classroom and the opinions of teachers regarding their initial training in classroom management. There were two portions to the study. An initial pilot study consisted of 50 secondary teachers chosen through random sampling from seven schools in the West Midlands. The main study involved 126 secondary teachers also from the same schools. Merrett and Wheldall (1993) used structured interviews as their data source. Interview questions included information about the participants' teaching experience, their perceptions about their preparation in various areas of teaching, and their feelings about the importance of managing a class. One significant statistic in this study was that three-quarters of teachers were dissatisfied with the preparation that they received in this area especially considering the fact that the teachers recognized the major impact their classroom management skills had on their daily work. Overall, the participants felt that too much time is wasted on discipline issues in the classroom, which takes away from instructional time. The participants also agreed that they had received inadequate training prior to entering the education field and that further training would be helpful. In many cases, they felt that most of
their skills had been gained through the process of trial and error while on the job.

**Program on Effective Teaching**

One classroom management training program that is now available to teachers is Program on Effective Teaching (PET). Evertson (1989) conducted research on this program as it was used in grades one through six. Twenty-nine elementary teachers from two Arkansas school districts participated in a series of classroom management workshops prior to the beginning of the school year and again in mid October. They were then compared to similar teachers who had not received the training. The workshops consisted of information from a teacher manual with a compilation of research-based findings on classroom management. Data was collected through the use of observations made by trained observers. These observers rated each teacher on such categories as planning, implementing rules, and maintaining the system. In many of the observation categories, the trained teachers outperformed the control group of teachers in five of the twelve subcategories of organizing and conducting lessons and seven of the ten subcategories dealing with development and implementation of appropriate rules. The success of the program was credited mainly
to reflection. The teachers who received training were encouraged to reflect on their practices continually as the workshops progressed. This may have been just as important as the content of the workshops. None of the concepts or techniques were new to the teachers; however, the teachers were able to examine their own practices closely and modify accordingly.

**Choice Theory**

A second program that is intended to help teachers improve their classroom management skills through the focus on intrinsic motivation is William Glasser’s Choice Theory. Erwin (2003) is a staff development specialist at the William Glasser Institute and has written an article in which he discussed the use of intrinsic motivation as a means of managing the classroom. According to Erwin, "If a student has the mindset not to comply, nothing you can do can make him. Internal motivation, however, guides all human behavior" (p. 19). Erwin goes on to describe how external motivation is predominant in school and also in the world, yet it actually hinders learning. He believed that rewards are no more effective than threats and punishments and that rewards harm the relationships in which they are used. Choice
Theory consists of building relationships with students and attending to their following five basic needs: survival, love and belonging, power, freedom, and fun. Under each of these needs, Erwin offered suggestions to help create a positive and productive learning environment.

Based on this research regarding teachers and their performance, it is important to look at ways to improve the effectiveness of their performance. Many of the professional developments offered to teachers revolve around the curriculum and not around the components of classroom management. Teachers should consider the professional texts, journals, videos, and other resources that are available to them. These resources offer a multitude of research based and proven practices that can help teachers to maximize their effectiveness.

**Summary**

As Stronge (2007) stated, “effective management is a key component of effective teaching.” (p.41). There are a multitude of elements that compose the area of classroom management including environment, scheduling, student grouping, rules/routines, behavior management, and instructional formats. In fact, there are
probably even more that I will not include in this study. With so much to think about and be responsible for, it is no wonder that teachers find classroom management one of the most challenging aspects of their work.
Chapter Three: Methods and Procedures

The purpose of this study was to explore how classroom teachers use various classroom management techniques to enhance literacy instruction. Specific elements of classroom management include the classroom environment, schedule, and management plans. Throughout the study, I paid special attention to how teachers provided an atmosphere in which students engaged in literacy learning.

Research Questions

I explored the following research questions:

• What classroom management techniques do elementary teachers use to support their students’ literacy development?

• What are the similarities and differences among the techniques across grade levels and/or school districts?

• How do elementary teachers use the classroom environment to support their students’ literacy development?
Participants

I worked with five elementary teachers who represent five different grade levels and five different school districts in western New York. Three districts were rural, one was suburban and one was urban. Four teachers were female and one was male. The years of teaching experience ranged from two to twenty-three years. Also, three of the classrooms were general education, one was inclusive and one was a self-contained special education teacher. I chose these districts and teachers because of convenience, accessibility and our prior personal and professional connections. I ensured the confidentiality of the participants through the use of pseudonyms.

Positionality of the Researcher

I am currently in the final semester of graduate studies for a master’s degree in childhood literacy. I hold a New York State initial teaching certificate in childhood education grades 1-6 and have recently completed the requirements for a certificate extension for special education. I have spent the previous seven years studying and practicing various elements of effective teaching in elementary school settings. My most recent studies have focused on effective instruction and practices specifically
related to the area of literacy.

I have had previous personal and/or professional connections with all of the teacher participants in this study to a varying degree. I have approximately a 20 year personal history with two of the teachers. One of which was a peer in another career and the other a friend of the family. The remaining three teachers have been classmates during some of my childhood literacy courses over the past two years. My exposure to these teachers has been inconsistent over that period.

Criteria for Trustworthiness

My goal for this research was to present my observations and the interviews in an honest and professional manner. I took every precaution to list the facts in a nonjudgmental way and to not let my personal and professional connections influence the data collection and analysis.

Data Collection

I used two primary data collection instruments to understand how teachers employ various classroom management techniques to promote literacy instruction.
The first instrument was an observation record (see Appendix A) in which I documented aspects of environment, schedules, and general management plans. Under each of these categories I recorded more specific observations regarding various components of each. Over the course of the study, I conducted two observation sessions for each teacher with a focus primarily on the literacy instructional periods. Although more observations may have given additional data, I felt that my data collection from the two observations was informative and sufficient.

The second instrument I used was a teacher interview (see Appendix B). I anticipated that the interview would create an opportunity for me to explore how and why each teacher uses the techniques that had been observed in his/her classroom. For those teachers who have taught multiple grade levels and/or have large amounts of teaching experience, it was also used to track any changes in classroom management techniques that the teacher has made due to these factors. On average, the interview lasted approximately 60 minutes, but the duration was dependent on the depth of the teacher’s responses and my follow-up questions.

I collected my data based on classroom observations of the teacher’s environmental plan, classroom management plan and their interactions with students.
My observations of the teachers’ interactions with students involved some secondary observations of the students themselves. All participants remained anonymous through the use of pseudonyms to organize the specific data collected for each participant.

Data Analysis

I used the observation and interview data to compile an individual case study of each teacher. In order to do this, I transcribed each teacher interview verbatim. I read and reread the transcript, a process that offered insight into each teacher’s reasoning. I read and reread my observations of each teacher, coding for patterns. After I completed the five case studies, I completed a cross case analysis by looking across the cases for common categories and themes related to aspects of effective classroom management across grade level and school district.

Time Schedule

I began the data collection process in mid May and continued until the end of the 2008-2009 school year. The frequency of observations and interviews was
dependent on my ability to coordinate with each teacher. Data analysis and construct of the case studies continued throughout the summer of 2009.

**Procedures**

1. I conducted one initial one to two hour observation of each classroom teacher during a literacy lesson to begin the study.

2. I then conducted approximately a 60-minute interview with each teacher based on my research questions and questions generated from my observation. I transcribed each interview.

3. Next, I completed one more observation in order to notice patterns and to confirm/reject statements made during the interview.

4. Once the observations were complete I began the process of analyzing the multiple data sources to create a case study of each teacher and his/her classroom management strategies related to literacy instruction.

5. I asked each teacher to review his/her case study.

6. I then looked across the five cases for similar themes, strategies and other devices as well as differences in the classroom management.
Previous comments by teachers regarding their use of the Teacher Expectations and Student Achievement (TESA) program led me to this study and the approach of using both observations and interview with each teacher. Some teachers said that they believed that they were acting one way in the classroom until they saw the results of observations of their true behaviors made by an outsider. For example, teachers' may believe that they are calling on all students equally to answer questions. In reality, they may actually be calling on the same students most of the time and ignoring other students.

Limitations

There were several limitations that bound this study. Perhaps most significant was the fact that the participants were five elementary teachers from five school districts in western NY. This demographic reflected an extremely narrow sampling of overall teachers. However, I have attempted to give a variety of perspectives by including schools with different demographics, classrooms with different instructional makeup, and teachers with different levels of experience. Although the participants represented only western New York State, I feel that the generalities in
the data collection and analysis may be transferred to other settings.

I was also limited in the time I could spend observing each teacher. There may also be other methods of data collection which would have lead to different conclusions. The data in this study by no means reflected the vast number of classroom management techniques that may be used based on the specific needs of individual classrooms. Teaching experience, knowledge of classroom management techniques, and district policies were all factors that influenced the data that I was able to collect. Also, knowledge by the teacher and students that they are being observed for the purpose of tracking classroom management issues may have influenced their behaviors. This may not reflect what happens without an observer in the room. Finally, personalities and factors outside the classroom fluctuate daily. Therefore, the outcomes of teacher/student interactions will never be the same from day to day. These observations and interviews reflect a very narrow glimpse at the topic of classroom management yet they may offer some insight into the effective practices that are possible. The classroom management techniques used by each individual teacher must suit the needs of the teacher and the students in the classroom in order to be effective.
Chapter 4: Results

The purpose of this study was to gather information regarding elementary teachers’ classroom management skills that effectively support students’ literacy development as a means to guide my own professional development and to help other new teachers become familiar with exemplary classroom management techniques. Through the study, I explored how the classroom teachers from across a range of elementary grade levels used various classroom-management techniques to enhance their literacy instruction and promote student learning. I concentrated on the components of classroom management related to the school and classroom environment, scheduling, routines, student groups and instructional formats.

Throughout the study, I sought to answer three research questions: What classroom management techniques do elementary teachers use to support their students’ literacy development? How does the classroom environment support elementary students’ literacy development? What are the similarities and differences among the various classroom teachers, grade levels and/or school districts?

Each of the five teacher participants offered a unique view into how he or she
manages the classroom to enhance effective literacy instruction. I worked with five elementary teachers who represented five different grade levels and five different school districts in western New York. Three of the school districts are rural, one is suburban and one is urban. Four of the teachers are female and one is male. Their years of teaching experience ranges from two to twenty-three years. Three of the classrooms are general education, one is inclusive and one is self-contained special education. Table 4.1 lists the teachers' demographics and teacher experience. I have substituted pseudonyms for the teacher's real names in order to ensure their confidentiality.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Teacher</th>
<th>Mr. Reynolds</th>
<th>Mrs. Henion</th>
<th>Mrs. Conley</th>
<th>Miss Moore</th>
<th>Miss Burke</th>
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<td>Years of Experience at Current Grade Level</td>
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<td>8</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4.1: Teacher Information
I had the opportunity to visit and observe in each classroom two times, spending between one and two hours each time. I also conducted a forty-five minute interview with each teacher regarding the specifics of his or her classroom management plans that he or she created and implemented during the school year.

In this chapter, I present the five teachers' individual case studies. These case studies helped me address my first research question. After presenting each case study, I provide a cross-case analysis in which I make comparisons between and among the case studies. The cross-case analysis supported my ability to answer the second and third research questions.

Case Studies

Research Question: What classroom management techniques do elementary teachers use to support their students' literacy development?

Mr. Reynolds: Sixth Grade

"How can you expect to have good classroom management if you don't gain the trust of each student in the classroom?"

Mr. Reynolds regarding substitute teachers difficulty with classroom management, May 13, 2009
This classroom was my first observation for this study which took place on May 13, 2009. I sat quietly at a corner table as the students returned from their daily special class. There was quite a bit of student conversation as they entered the room with the special education teacher; most of them proceeded to their seats and appeared to be ready to begin their social studies lesson. Then everything changed. Students started randomly leaving their seats, chatting with each other about topics unrelated to instruction, and a few began throwing things back and forth to each other. The noise level in the room was now very loud and the special education teacher, who was trying to start the social studies lesson, had to shout over the students in order to be heard. The special education teacher made numerous threats such as "losing lunch time," "changing behavior cards on the board," and "calling administration to escort students from the room." The scene lasted for approximately the next ten minutes and the social studies lesson had still not begun. It's hard to say for sure what factors led to the chaos and lack of student attention and teacher instruction. It may have been the special education teacher's gender, her age, her experience (five months), the lack of a relationship between the teacher and students, the mood of the students, or maybe a combination of all of the above. And then, Mr. Reynolds, the general
education teacher returned from making copies. A sudden hush swept across the room as if the students were hoping that he would not know what had been happening during his absence. Their actions reminded me of how, at times, children try to hide their misbehaviors from their parents. However, Mr. Reynolds proceeded to let the students know that he was aware of their actions while he was away from the classroom. He said in a composed manner, "I could hear you from way down the hall." The students continued to be very quiet and well behaved throughout the rest of my observation.

Mr. Reynolds is a sixth grade teacher in an urban school in western New York. He has been teaching for three years at this school during which time he has spent two years in fifth grade and one year in sixth grade. This year, his sixth grade inclusion classroom consists of twenty-two students (twelve boys and ten girls). Eleven (seven boys and three girls) of the twenty-two students are special education students with either an Individualized Education Program (IEP) or a 504 Plan.

Environment

The most striking aspect of Mr. Reynolds’ classroom physical environment

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was the abundance of posters, which were predominantly teacher created. There was hardly a bare space visible on the walls. Many of the posters focused on either literacy concepts or classroom rules and routines. Figure 4.1 represents the topics of the many posters and charts that were present in Mr. Reynolds room. Mr. Reynolds said that the posters and charts are displayed in the classroom in order “to help support student independence on various activities throughout the day“ and that they are also used as reminders in order “to help refocus students when necessary.” He feels that “independence is an important element for sixth graders to achieve as they move into the high school environment.” (Interview, 5/21/09)

In addition to the vast array of supportive posters, Mr. Reynolds had also organized the physical environment in his classroom so that it supports the daily activities of his students. Student desks were arranged in small groups in the center of the room with four students seated independently. Mr. Reynolds’ and the special education teacher’s desks were located together in the corner opposite from the entry into the room. During my observation on 5/13/09 & 6/4/09, neither teacher spent much time at their desk other than to glance at lesson plans or gather materials. Located in the front of the room were a blackboard, two bulletin boards, a white board
### Literacy

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Independent Reading Rubric</th>
<th>Classroom Expectations</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>What Writers Write About</td>
<td>Morning Procedures</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What to Include in a Writers Notebook</td>
<td>Working Levels</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reading Response Log</td>
<td>Small Group Routines</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sentence Starters</td>
<td>Rules for Computers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Editing Checklist</td>
<td>Bathroom Procedures</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Persuasive Writing</td>
<td>Hallway Expectations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Read 180 Performance Chart</td>
<td>Noise Meter</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assignment Heading Information</td>
<td>Rotation Chart</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Writing Process</td>
<td>Good Listening Rules</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Punctuation</td>
<td>Read 180 Instructional Model</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parts of Speech</td>
<td>Star of the Week</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Be More Descriptive</td>
<td>High Five at School</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Proofreading Marks</td>
<td>Dismissal Procedures</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| **Figure 4.1:** Posters Supporting Literacy and Classroom Routines |

easel, and a chart-paper easel. During my observations, most of the whole group instruction was delivered from this central location. Small group instruction took place either at one of the student desk clusters or at the round table located near the door. Independent activities took place in other designated locations in the room.
Seven computers were located along the back wall of the classroom for use with Read 180 interactive software, and five bean bag chairs were located on the floor underneath the exterior windows for independent reading time. There were three areas in the room that were dedicated to students' writing.

I found the emotional environment that Mr. Reynolds created in his classroom to be supportive of the diverse student population. During each of my two observations (5/13/09 & 6/4/09), I saw Mr. Reynolds use a predominance of humor. He used humor as a way to refocus students and ease tension between students. He also used it numerous times during each instructional period and the students appeared to respond well to it. An additional support that Mr. Reynolds used was the use of student vernacular, even slang. He incorporated terms and figurative expressions that are commonly used in the students' environments outside of school. Mr. Reynolds used terms such as “girl”, “deke and sky and dunk and fly”, and “cops or po po” during his interactions and instruction. One example came when Mr. Reynolds was discussing a newspaper article regarding police taking a pet tiger away from its owner. He said, “They’re not cops or po po. They are called police officers. They are our friends” (Observation, 5/13/09).
Mr. Reynolds also used proximity as a support when interacting with his students. He circulated throughout the room in an effort to answer the students' questions and to offer assistance where needed. Mr. Reynolds believes that being close to the students acted as a management technique to prevent some student misbehaviors. During his interview, he stated “Being close to the students and sometimes putting my hand on a shoulder is often all it takes to prevent or redirect negative behaviors” (Interview, 5/21/09).

Scheduling

The classroom’s daily schedule is often primarily set by the school administrators. They establish a time line template for when all grades/classes have specials such as music or physical education and when students eat lunch. Once the master schedule is established it is up to the individual teachers to determine the flow of the required grade level content and instruction. The district in which Mr. Reynolds teaches has a 90-minute block requirement for the Read 180 program. Mr. Reynolds has placed this block in the morning. He said, “I would prefer to have Read 180 and writers workshop instruction back-to-back but I couldn’t make it work this
year” (Interview, 5/21/09). The time constraints of the schedule this year made it necessary for him to divide these into two separate instructional periods. He said that this division seems to work alright for the students. Figure 4.2 represents the weekly schedule in Mr. Reynolds’ classroom.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Monday</th>
<th>Tuesday</th>
<th>Wednesday</th>
<th>Thursday</th>
<th>Friday</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>8:30-8:50</td>
<td>Arrival</td>
<td>Arrival</td>
<td>Arrival</td>
<td>Arrival</td>
<td>Arrival</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8:55-9:30</td>
<td>Math</td>
<td>Math</td>
<td>Math</td>
<td>Special</td>
<td>Math</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9:35-10:10</td>
<td>Math</td>
<td>Math</td>
<td>Math</td>
<td>Break</td>
<td>Math</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10:15-10:50</td>
<td>Special</td>
<td>Special</td>
<td>Special</td>
<td>Math</td>
<td>Special</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10:55-11:30</td>
<td>Social Studies</td>
<td>Social Studies</td>
<td>Science</td>
<td>Math</td>
<td>Social Studies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11:35-12:55</td>
<td>Read 180</td>
<td>Read 180</td>
<td>Read 180</td>
<td>Read 180</td>
<td>Read 180</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1:00-1:30</td>
<td>Lunch</td>
<td>Lunch</td>
<td>Lunch</td>
<td>Lunch</td>
<td>Lunch</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1:35-2:45</td>
<td>Writer’s Workshop</td>
<td>Writer’s Workshop</td>
<td>Writer’s Workshop</td>
<td>Writer’s Workshop</td>
<td>Writer’s Workshop</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2:50</td>
<td>Dismissal</td>
<td>Dismissal</td>
<td>Dismissal</td>
<td>Dismissal</td>
<td>Dismissal</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 4.2: Typical Weekly Schedule in Mr. Reynolds’ Sixth Grade Classroom

Within the 90-minute literacy block devoted to Read 180, Mr. Reynolds incorporated each of the components of the Read 180 instructional model. This model includes twenty minutes whole group instruction, sixty minutes small group
rotation, ten minutes whole group wrap up, and twenty minutes modeled and independent reading. During our interview, Mr. Reynolds explained that he included his modeled reading within the whole group and small group activities. He also included the independent reading time as part of the small group rotation. He said, "I decided to divide my class into three twenty minute groups for the small group rotation. During rotations, they receive guided reading instruction, independent reading time, and Read 180 instructional software on the computers" (Interview, 5/21/09). Mr. Reynolds decided to merge the last twenty minutes of the Read 180 instructional model into the other components in order to make it fit into the ninety minute block of time which he had for reading instruction. Otherwise, the instructional model would have required one hundred and ten minutes of instruction time.

**Transitions**

In terms of his use of transitions, Mr. Reynolds said, "I am conscious of the importance of managing transitions and include them as part of my daily planning" (Interview, 5/21/09). In order to gain students' attention, he slowly counts down from
five to one. He also said during our interview that, “In many cases, students are ready by the count of three or two so I do not need to continue the countdown.” Mr. Reynolds gives clear directions prior to each transition. For example, he would say to the students, “Please, have a seat, take out your Read 180 books and open to page 150” (Observation, 6/4/09). During the Read 180 centers, he would use a timer to offer a five minute warning before transitions. Students appeared to be aware of the procedures and order for center rotation during my observations (5/13/09 & 6/4/09).

Another technique that Mr. Reynolds used for transitions was to count up from one to three. In this technique, each number had a specific action. On “one” the students prepared and listened, at “two,” the students stood up, and on “three,” they moved to the next activity: Mr. Reynolds said, “What you see now is not how transitions looked at the beginning of the year. Continuous practice has led to much smoother transitions” (Interview, 5/21/09).

**Student Groupings**

During my first observation (5/13/09), the student desks were grouped in clusters of four to eight students in each. There were four students whose desks were
alone. Upon entering the room for the second observation (6/4/09), I noticed that the desks were organized in rows with two or three students together and then a space between the next two or three students. Mr. Reynolds said,

I generally conduct five or six seat changes per year but always make sure that students have peer support through the seating arrangement and partner work. This helps prepare them for the seating changes they will encounter in high school. I never seat them in long rows. It's a disaster and too hard to manage. (Interview, 5/21/09)

In general, Mr. Reynolds begins each instructional period with whole group instruction. Read 180, math and writing also include small group instruction, with the small groups formed on student needs. The groups change as students' needs change over the course of the year. I witnessed (Observations, 5/13/09 & 6/4/09) three groups of students during Read 180 and five groups during math time. The small groups in writing change frequently.

Small, homogeneous groups allow Mr. Reynolds to target his instruction specifically to his students' needs. He said, "I watch what the students are doing and how they interact. Then, I decide how to divide them up. Sometimes it feels like I
am changing the groups almost daily” (Interview, 5/21/09). Targeting instruction may have a similar overall format but consists of differentiation in certain elements. An example of this was visible in my first observation (5/13/09) when Mr. Reynolds conducted a reading lesson using a poem about basketball. As he moved into the three small reading groups, I noticed that there were subtle differences in his instruction based on what the groups were able to do. In one group, Mr. Reynolds read the poem. In the second group, he selected a student to read the poem. In the third group, he had the students each read part of the poem independently. Also, Mr. Reynolds asked each group what the word “stanza” meant. Based on the students’ responses in the different groups, he approached the definition and elements of a stanza differently. Those groups that needed more support were given more details while the one group that had a good grasp of the concept was invited to move forward more quickly. Based on my observation (5/13/09), I feel that although Mr. Reynolds anticipates and plans some of his instructional differentiation, he is prepared to differentiate his instruction in response to students’ understanding and his interactions with them.
In Mr. Reynolds classroom, there are different rules/routines for various aspects of classroom life. For example, there are posters in the room that apply to morning procedures, hallway expectations, bathroom procedures, classroom expectations, rules for computers, and small group routines. Mr. Reynolds said, I allow the students to help make up the rules but I have a strong influence on what they choose for whole group instruction rules. By allowing them to help create the rules, it promotes a team atmosphere.

We conducted various simulations at the beginning of the year in order to identify problem areas and established rules and routines that would solve these problems. (Interview, 5/21/09)

The rules and routines are then listed on various posters as reminders of the expected behaviors in during these times. The following “rules for computers” are listed on a poster in the computer area: 1) Everyone should be working., 2) Eyes on your own computer., 3) Sit in your assigned seat., 4) Try your hardest., 5) Respect others when they are working. Some examples of posted routines included morning procedures, small group routines, hallway expectations, and dismissal procedures.
Regarding student behavior, Mr. Reynolds stated, “I rely strongly on high expectations of the students, positive feedback and reassurance for managing students’ behavior in my class” (Interview, 5/21/09). He begins the year by modeling the expectations that he has for student behavior. This is followed by positive reinforcement of good behavior and immediate correction of inappropriate behaviors. There is a chart hanging in the classroom entitled “How is your day?” that enables Mr. Reynolds to have students change their color (four color levels) when inappropriate behaviors occur, with consequences attached to each color. There is also school wide in-school suspension that may be used in severe cases of inappropriate behavior. However, Mr. Reynolds finds that use of positive reinforcement such as verbal praise or a “thumbs up” is a more effective motivator than the consequences from the behavior chart or in-school suspension. He said, “It is best to handle matters immediately and within the classroom whenever possible” (Interview, 5/21/09).

During the time I observed in the classroom, there were no individual behavior management plans in effect. Mr. Reynolds recognized that this is an area in need of
improvement. In our interview (5/21/09), he stated that the most important thing to remember regarding behavior management is to “know your students and what they will respond positively to.” He moves around the room in order to be closer to the students who need it. He will offer verbal praise, give a thumbs up signal, tap a desk, glance and smile, or whisper a positive comment as a way to encourage the positive behaviors.

One additional strategy Mr. Reynolds uses to “control” behavior and keep students on task was the use of random questioning. For example, he uses “fairness sticks,” popsicle sticks labeled with each student’s name. He also uses “numbered heads”, where he assigns numbers to each student as a method to form three or four small groups. When fairness stick or numbered heads is used, Mr. Reynolds expects students to have a response to the question he posed. These strategies help to keep everyone responsible for answers because they never knew when they might need to respond (Interview, 5/21/09).

**Instructional Formats**

The reading program at Mr. Reynolds’ school consists primarily of the Read
180 program (Scholastic Inc., 2005). Within this program, there are four separate components and required time allotments. The components are whole group reading instruction (20 minutes), small group rotation (60 minutes), whole group wrap up (10 minutes), and modeled/independent reading (20 minutes). The whole group reading instruction consists of selected materials chosen from the Read 180 program. The teacher chooses a reading passage to be read with the whole group and a reading objective(s) to be taught in a mini lesson format. I observed a lesson (5/13/09), in which Mr. Reynolds had selected the poem Stretch from the Read 180 teacher manual. He played an anchor video in which a young adult gave some background to the poem and then read the poem to the class. Each of the students was then asked to read and respond to an active reading question before Mr. Reynolds reread the poem. The objectives of this lesson focused on voice and rhythm. The whole group instruction was followed by the small group rotation. During this time, Mr. Reynolds worked with small groups of students for twenty minutes at a time. The groups explored the reading selection and objective further with guidance from Mr. Reynolds and a corresponding Read 180 workbook. As Mr. Reynolds worked with one group, the other two groups either read independently or used the Read 180 interactive
software on the computers. At one point in the rotation, the students in the lowest performing group worked with the special education teacher for a second guided reading lesson using a high interest book. This group read the book, discussed high frequency words and completed grammar worksheets. The Read 180 lesson concluded with the whole class back together for a review and wrap up of the material covered in the lesson.

I did not have an opportunity to observe Mr. Reynolds during a writing instruction. During my interview with Mr. Reynolds (5/21/09), he stated that he conducts a writing workshop format in the afternoons. The students are divided into two groups. One group works with Mr. Reynolds while the other group works with the special education teacher.

Through Read 180 and writer's workshop, Mr. Reynolds is able to administer all components of a balanced literacy program. He said, "Due to lack of time, I don't do as much read aloud as I probably should" (Interview, 5/21/09). However, he does attempt to share some of his own literacy experiences with the students such as personal/professional readings and his college literacy activities. During Read 180, there is time for both shared and independent reading. Writer's workshop allows for
both shared and independent writing activities. The use of small groups allows Mr. Reynolds and the special education teacher to differentiate instruction to suit the needs of students in each group as-well as provide the students with the needed scaffolds for effective literacy learning.

Professional Development

During his interview, Mr. Reynolds said that he has received "no professional training in classroom management" (Interview, 5/21/09). In an effort to gather information on the topic, he has done some professional reading such as *Setting Limits in the Classroom* (MacKenzie, 1996) and *Teaching Self Control* (Henley, 2003). He has also observed other classroom models and collaborated with professionals to gain management ideas. He recommends that teachers first reflect on their personalities and dispositions within the classroom in order to better understand how they will approach classroom management. It is then, in many cases, a process of trial and error to discover the techniques that will best suite the teacher’s style and the individuality of the students in the classroom. Mr. Reynolds said, “I keep trying to improve my classroom management but there is still a lot of improvement left to
Biggest Challenge and Success in Literacy

During the interview, Mr. Reynolds said that there have been two substantial challenges for him regarding literacy instruction (Interview, 5/21/09). The first has to do with his ability to effectively apply what he has learned about literacy instruction from his professional training. There are many strategies and techniques that he has learned over the past few years. However, it is still up to him to decide when or if to use them in his work with students. Many of his decisions are determined by his interactions with students, their abilities, and the instructional requirements of his district. The second challenge is in his ability to differentiate instruction to meet his students' needs. This involves first assessing and getting to know the individual students. The use of small group instruction is one way that Mr. Reynolds attempts to meet this challenge, but he admitted, that there “just isn’t enough time in the day to meet all of their needs.” (Interview, 5/21/09)

There were two areas where Mr. Reynolds felt he was successful in terms of his literacy instruction. He said, “This year was challenging and many of the students
were low performers in reading and writing. I’m proud that all of the students in my classroom moved forward and achieved higher scores on their ELA state standardized tests (Interview, 5/21/09). He attributed their improvement to his feeling that “they now all believe in themselves as readers and writers.” His second success has been his “ability to take a risk in the classroom and try new things.” He believes that this contributes to “the trial and error approach that is necessary to achieving successful classroom management and literacy instruction.”

“I’m not into bribing them, I try to encourage intrinsic motivation. Also, patience helps move the students to where they need to be.”

Mr. Reynolds regarding behavior management techniques, May 21, 2009

Mrs. Henion: Fifth and Sixth Grades

“Classroom management is like a dance.”

Mrs. Henion regarding emotional environment, May 28, 2009

Student independence was evident from the beginning of my first observation in Mrs. Henion’s classroom (5/14/09). Mrs. Henion, the teaching assistant and the students were all actively engaged in quiet conversations as they entered the room
returning from music class. The students proceeded to their next assigned activity, a
continuation of the _ELA rotations begun before music class. The students’
conversations ceased without any visible instruction from the Mrs. Henion or the
teaching assistant. The students were divided equally into three groups to
accommodate the three centers (guided reading, word study, and computer lab) which
comprised ELA rotations. After the completion of the second ELA rotation activity,
the students proceeded to their final rotation activity, again with no need for
directions from Mrs. Henion.

The next activity was a whole group language lesson. Within just a few
moments, all students were sitting quietly at their desks awaiting the next lesson to
begin. The transitions from activity to activity during the remainder of my first
observation (5/14/09) as well as during my second observation (6/17/09) were all
similarly smooth. The phrase “like a well-oiled machine” came to my mind as I
watched how smoothly the transitions took place. My observations occurred during
the last two months of the school year (5/14/09 & 6/17/09). I realized that the
students’ efficiency with the transitions was largely due to months of guidance from
Mrs. Henion and continuous practice. However, my observations left me wondering
"was that all there was to it or were there other factors involved?"

Mrs. Henion has been teaching for twenty-three years in a rural school district in western New York. She began her career as a high school self-contained special education teacher in either a 15:1:1 or a 12:1:1 classroom and after five years decided to move to a primary classroom. Mrs. Henion spent the next nine years at the primary level in self-contained classrooms with a mixture of either kindergarten through second or first through third graders. She then transitioned again and has now been teaching in an intermediate classroom for the past eight years. She currently teaches a self-contained 15:1:1 special education class consisting of fourteen fifth and sixth grade students (seven boys and seven girls). Each student has an Individualized Education Program (IEP). Their literacy goals are broad and included skills such as developing a focus on comprehension and the ability to answer different levels of questioning (prediction, detail/fact, retell, and inference). Mrs. Henion’s lengthy and diverse teaching experience at different grade levels has helped her develop into an effective teacher in the intermediate grades. She is both familiar with the struggles her students had at the primary level as well as the struggles they will face in high school.
The physical environment of Mrs. Henion's classroom is typical of many other classrooms. The students sit in individual desks arranged in two rows with three of the students separated from the others due to distractibility issues. Mrs. Henion's and the teaching assistant's desks are in the back corner of the classroom not far from the hall door. However, neither of them spent much time at her desk during the school day. Instead, Mrs. Henion taught from a small station in the front of the classroom, which was equipped with her instructional materials, a white board and an overhead screen to facilitate whole group instruction. She also used one of the two small tables in the classroom for small group activities. Two computers for student use are located in the back of the room. There are many manufactured and a few teacher made posters displayed in the room. The posters contain concepts such as story elements, reading genres, traits of writing, punctuation, presidents, continents, place value, group rules and character traits. The character traits listed on one poster included responsibility, respect, trustworthiness, caring, citizenship and fairness. These are included in a school-wide effort to build students' character. Improvement of student character is helpful for classroom management especially in the area of
behavior management.

The environment in Mrs. Henion’s classroom also includes materials such as reading intervention books, speech phones, T-stools, and specialized computer programs such as “Write. Out Loud” and “REACH” to support the needs of her special education population. Some additional elements that contribute to the physical environment include a pet fish and an albino frog, plants, fresh cut flowers, a television and VCR/DVD player, a radio and CD player, three book shelves, and a variety of games (Observation, 5/14/09).

According to Mrs. Henion, many special education students have experienced a large amount of frustration. She said, “Teacher perceptions of events are not important. It is the student’s perception that matters. I need to help them get past the frustration. Watching a student’s body language tells me a lot about how they are feeling” (Interview, 5/28/09). The emotional environment in a special education setting must be extremely supportive in order to deal with student frustrations and to help move students along in order to close the academic gap that is present. Although these students are physically in a fifth and sixth grade classroom, their independent reading levels range from beginning third grade to beginning sixth grade.
Therefore, Mrs. Henion needed to differentiate all areas of her instruction in order to meet their diverse needs while keeping in mind their chronological age and interests. She also uses positive language that supports and encourages the students both emotionally and academically. During my observation (5/14/09), Mrs. Henion made comments such as: "I'll miss John too much if I send him away (to recycle duty)" and "It's hard to come up with a negative comment because you are all so awesome" (Observation, 5/14/09).

**Scheduling**

Mrs. Henion’s school administration determines the schedules for lunch and specials. It also requires that each classroom include a 90-minute literacy block. The rest of the schedule is up to Mrs. Henion’s discretion. When determining the classroom schedule Mrs. Henion said,

I must also consider the fact that four of my students mainstream into the regular education classes for science and four mainstream for social studies. Also, two general education students push into my classroom for science. I need to think about my own schedule and also
the schedule of the other classrooms in order to make everything fit.

I'm really confined by the schedule. Students come and go ten
minutes at the beginning or the end of the class so I can't start or finish
entire lessons every day or those students would miss out. Only about
twenty percent of the lessons are finished when intended. On a
positive note, this is good for review and repetition which is needed by
these students. (Interview, 5/28/09)

Figure 4.3 is the typical daily schedule, which Mrs. Henion developed for this
school year.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Activity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>9:00 - 9:50</td>
<td>ELA rotation (Guided Reading, Word Study, Computer Lab)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9:50 - 10:35</td>
<td>Special</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10:40 - 11:00</td>
<td>ELA rotation continued</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11:05 - 11:25</td>
<td>Group language</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11:25</td>
<td>Snack</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11:30 - 12:05</td>
<td>Math</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12:10 - 12:50</td>
<td>Science</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12:50</td>
<td>Break</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1:05 - 1:40</td>
<td>Lunch</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1:45 - 3:00</td>
<td>PM rotation (Writing, content vocabulary or comprehension, speech) OR Social Studies - alternate daily</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3:00 - 3:15</td>
<td>Break and dismissal procedures</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Figure 4.3: Typical Daily Schedule in Mrs. Henion’s Fifth/Sixth Grade Classroom**

**Transitions**

During the interview (5/28/09), Mrs. Henion stated that she does not feel she needs to “manage transitions as much in this grade level as she did in the primary grades partially due to the fact that the classroom activities are bound by the clock...
the schedule.” With so much movement in and out of the classroom, lessons must run according to schedule or wait until the next day. She keeps the ELA rotation schedule through the use of a timer. Regardless of the lesson, Mrs. Henion said, “It is important to give a definite end to the instruction. This concrete conclusion helps the students to mentally and physically prepare for the transition ahead” (Interview, 5/28/09). It may be because my observations came at the end of the school year (5/14/09 & 6/17/09), but I felt that the students were able to transition efficiently with little direction or guidance from either Mrs. Henion or the assistant. They appeared to know what was scheduled next and Mrs. Henion’s expectations for the transition.

**Student Groupings**

Mrs. Henion uses small groups frequently in her instruction, this allows her to focus her attention more specifically on individual students and give immediate feedback. Her classroom includes a teaching assistant who works collaboratively with Mrs. Henion in all aspects of instruction. This additional adult support is a benefit to the students when the teacher needs to leave the classroom for meetings or professional development. In these cases, the teaching assistant is able to easily step
in to the teacher's role because she is familiar with the students and the routines of the class. During my observation (5/14/09), Mrs. Henion was called into the hallway and the assistant effectively took over the whole group language lesson while she was away. Also, many of Mrs. Henion's students receive speech services. Instead of students being pulled continuously from instruction, Mrs. Henion has the speech teacher come to her classroom to address the students' speech needs. The availability of the teaching assistant and the speech teacher help make small groups easier to manage because there is teacher support in each group. For example, there were three small groups for the morning ELA rotation. The three groups rotated between guided reading (Mrs. Henion), word study (assistant), and computer lab. In the afternoon, there were also three groups. These groups rotated between writing (Mrs. Henion), speech (Speech teacher) and content area vocabulary or comprehension activities (assistant). All groups for both morning and afternoon rotations were formed based on the similar needs of the students. Mrs. Henion said, "Using small groups helps me teach at their level. The combination of teaching at the student's level and being able to give immediate feedback helps to take care of a lot of the behavioral issues that otherwise might occur" (Interview, 5/28/09).
There are other student groupings that were utilized in Mrs. Henion's classroom. Whole group instruction takes place in the content areas of language, science, social studies, and math where general concepts are presented. Partner work is used in science for additional practice. Independent work takes place during computer lab and writing. The variety of student groupings offer students a change of pace and a chance to move around the classroom. Mrs. Henion said that some of the children with disabilities benefit from frequent movement.

Rules / Routines

The entire class was involved in determining the classroom rules at the beginning of the year. Mrs. Henion outlined the process during our interview (5/28/09). She began the school year by having a discussion with the students about the purpose of establishing rules. She stated that rules are meant to help keep people safe. She then gave each student three post-its and invited the students to write three recommendations for classroom rules. The students discussed each of the recommendations and grouped them into similar categories. The result was three classroom rules that embodied all of the students' recommendations. The final three
rules were 1) Be kind to yourself and others, 2) Be responsible to your job of school, and 3) Be respectful of others space, feelings, safety, and belongings.

Different rules applied to small group activities. These rules included 1) Listen to speaker, 2) Take turns, speak one at a time, 3) Respect everyone in the group, and 4) Be confidential - keep other people’s information private (Observation, 5/14/09). Although establishing classroom rules was a whole class endeavor, Mrs. Henion revealed in our interview, “I do try to steer the students toward suggestions that would most benefit the class” (Interview, 5/2/09).

Behavior Management

According to Mrs. Henion, “This is the nicest class ever. There was no need for individual behavior management plans this year” (Interview, 5/28/09). She used two whole group management plans to monitor and deal with inappropriate behaviors. The one that she feels was most beneficial was the use of a daily chart. This provides a form of communication between school and home. Mrs. Henion described the plan during our interview (5/28/09). The daily chart gets filled out by Mrs. Henion at the end of each day and sent home with the student. The parents/guardians are asked to
sign and return the chart the following day. It is up to the family whether they return the chart. Mrs. Henion said,

At the beginning of the year I sent home a classroom handbook. This handbook gave families information regarding the class schedule, take home folders, homework, accountability, positive incentives and daily charts. The section on daily charts advises families that these charts are intended to be a way for students to be aware of their performance, homework expectations and for family/teacher communication.

(Interview, 5/28/09)

The daily chart has changed yearly based on the needs of the students/families. This year it contained sections labeled as AM, Special, Lunch, and PM. Each of these sections receives a circled +, a +, OK, - (with comments as needed). Figure 4.4 displays the daily chart. Mrs. Henion said, “This constant line of communication with the students’ families really helps keep behaviors under control because the students are more accountable for their actions” (Interview, 5/28/09).
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>AM</th>
<th>Special</th>
<th>Lunch</th>
<th>PM</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

Attended AM break detention: yes no
for missing homework behavior
AM had: warning one check two checks three checks

Attended lunch-detention: yes no
for missing homework behavior

Attended PM detention: yes no
for missing homework behavior
PM had: warning one check two checks three checks

Today's Homework Written in planner
Math

Science

Social Studies

Reading

Spelling

Parent/Guardian Signature

**Please write any comments on the back.**

Figure 4.4: Daily Behavior Chart
Many portions of the chart are connected to the second behavior management plan in the classroom, which Mrs. Henion referred to as “an assertive discipline program” (Interview, 5/28/09).

On the white board in the front of the room, there is a chart with the following sections: name, 5 minutes off, all break time, and lunch time/phone call. Student names are listed under the appropriate consequences heading on the board when inappropriate behaviors occur and for not completing homework (Observation, 6/17/09). This information is also transcribed onto the student’s daily chart at the end of the day. Mrs. Henion said,

If an assertive discipline program works well, you don’t need to use it a lot. I will put names up as a warning with one check but I don’t think we have had to go past that all school year. (Interview, 5/28/09)

In addition to the two formal management plans listed previously, Mrs. Henion utilizes incentives when appropriate. For example, if students did exceptionally well during an activity, they could earn extra free time outside. This reward is not immediate but the students are aware that good behaviors would be rewarded. Likewise, inappropriate behavior results in the loss of recess time outside.
Mrs. Henion said, “Outside time means everything to them. That’s why I give them two breaks each day. The afternoon break is there as an incentive to do well. The possibility of losing it is often enough to curb behaviors” (Interview, 5/28/09).

**Instructional Formats**

This was the third year that Mrs. Henion’s school district has primarily used Harcourt materials (2008) for its reading program. Mrs. Henion said, “During the first year of the program, teachers were expected to follow it verbatim. This year teachers were allowed to be more flexible. In addition, the special education department tends to allow us more flexibility for our instruction” (Interview, 5/28/09). She is now able to select the portions of the program that suit the needs of her students and make adaptations where needed. This year, Mrs. Henion worked primarily with the third and fourth grade Harcourt materials. On occasion, she also uses some of the fifth grade materials as needed. Each set of grade materials is divided into three instructional levels (below, on, advanced). Within her schedule, Mrs. Henion is able to use the Harcourt instructional manual during group language and the leveled texts during guided reading. The leveled readers facilitate the
instruction that Mrs. Henion delivers in guided reading groups. By conducting occasional assessments of the students’ reading performance such as running records and informal observations, Mrs. Henion is able to select the materials that are suitable for the students. Overall, Mrs. Henion feels that “the Harcourt program is good because it offers a consistent theme within each grade level and it helps keep gaps from occurring between teachers’ instruction and student learning” (Interview, 5/28/09).

I did not observe the writing instruction in Mrs. Henion’s classroom. However, I did observe the connection that is made between the reading and writing portions of the instructional schedule. For example, the group language lesson (5/14/09) dealt with writing friendly letters. Mrs. Henion selected students to read portions of a model letter from an overhead. She also reviewed the different parts of a letter and clarified unfamiliar terms when needed. Next, she reviewed a graphic organizer that they would be using to help them prepare for the writing activity they would do that afternoon. Also, during my second observation (6/17/09), I noticed how writing addresses was incorporated into a calendar activity involving seasons. During my interview with Mrs. Henion, she stated that her “primary focus for
instruction is to improve her students reading and writing skills” and that she “integrates them into all content areas whenever possible” (Interview, 5/28/09).

**Professional Development**

As an experienced teacher, Mrs. Henion told me that she has not received formal training in classroom management. She said, “I try to remain current on new techniques and gain ideas from other teachers. Most of my management plan is based on my students and how well techniques worked for me in the past” (Interview, 5/28/09).

**Biggest Challenge and Success in Literacy**

During her interview (5/28/09), Mrs. Henion said that writing instruction has been her biggest literacy challenge. She said,

> Although it gets better every year, there is still so much effort that needs to go into it. It is really difficult to teach different writing styles to students who struggle with basic writing. The students need immediate feedback about their work or they don’t get any good
writing accomplished. It is hard to be available enough to support each student. (Interview, 5/28/09)

Along this same idea, Mrs. Henion recognizes the “lack of time” as an additional challenge, stating “There isn’t enough time each day to cover all of the material and to give the support that the students really need” (Interview, 5/28/09).

Mrs. Henion considers two areas of her instruction as her biggest successes. The first success is her guided reading groups. She said,

Differentiated instruction has really helped to move these students forward, especially those students who have been with me for two years. Students seem to do better the second year. In order for struggling readers to catch up, they need to improve more than one grade level each academic year so I need to use interventions that are really helpful. (Interview, 5/28/09)

Mrs. Henion believes her second area of success is her ability to integrate literacy into all content areas. She feels that learning specific content material is not nearly as important for her students as making gains in their reading. According to her, reading will by far benefit them in the future compared to some of the incidental
content knowledge that most teachers are required to teach. Mrs. Henion said, “Integration of reading into all content areas really extends my literacy instruction and gives me extra time to cover more material” (Interview, 5/28/09).

“In general, I find encouragement and being right there can really get you through most of the potential behavior problems.”

Mrs. Henion regarding emotional environment, May 28, 2009

Mrs. Conley: Fourth Grade

“I have high expectations for what they can do and give them more responsibility to prove themselves capable of those expectations.”

Mrs. Conley regarding changes in her classroom management techniques due to increased experience, June 8, 2009

Mrs. Conley’s classroom appeared to be a home away from home for many of her students. The atmosphere was relaxed and informal. As I entered her room on 5/15/09, I felt as if I were being welcomed into her home. On the door of her classroom are photographs of her family including captions about each. I was introduced to her students and given a brief tour of the room. As I explored Mrs.
Conley's classroom that day, I discovered many other things that she did to help build a strong community. She had taken photographs throughout the year which she used in a variety of classroom activities and was in the process of creating a classroom yearbook as a gift for the students at the end of the year. She had also compiled a portfolio for each student that contained artifacts of their work for the year. In many ways the portfolio resembled a family scrapbook. Mrs. Conley encourages her students to help each other with problems/questions in an effort to build her team. She also used kid-friendly language periodically to bring her closer to her students. One example was “Ok, vamoos guys. Please put these books on my desk. Thank you.” Most teachers care about their students. Mrs. Conley seems to go one step further. She treats them as if they are her own family. Of the five classrooms I observed in this study, Mrs. Conley's appeared to have the least amount of behavior management problems. In fact, I rarely saw a need for Mrs. Conley to address an inappropriate behavior.

Mrs. Conley has been a teacher in this suburban elementary school for seventeen years. She has been teaching at the fourth grade level for fourteen of those seventeen years. She also taught fifth grade for three years and worked as a college
adjunct professor for six semesters. Her current classroom consisted of twenty-four students (thirteen boys and ten girls). None of the students have an IEP or 504 Plan. On the contrary, she has two boys and three girls who attend the ELA gifted and talented program as well as two boys who attend the math enrichment program in her school.

**Environment**

The physical environment of Mrs. Conley's classroom is divided into distinct areas. As her students enter the room, there is an information area, which contains student mailboxes, assignment trays, home/teacher communication tray, and extra copies of various classroom forms. The formal instructional area contains the teacher's desk, which is in one front corner of the room opposite of the hall door facing the students. The student desks are arranged in rows facing the front of the room. Mrs. Conley said, "Because the student are a talkative group this year, I chose this [seating] arrangement and have changed the students' desk each quarter" (Interview, 6/8/09). Also, the front right corner of the room is referred to as the "rug area" and includes a rocking chair for Mrs. Conley's use. This area is used for class meetings and informal instruction such as read alouds. Near this area are two
computers for student use. In the back of the room are two tables, one used for guided reading groups and the other for other small group activities.

Mrs. Conley said that her district does not have many textbooks and therefore does not mandate teachers' use of specific programs for instruction. Teachers are allowed to design their instruction as they choose. Mrs. Conley does have various bookshelves and displays for student independent reading. Some of the additional literacy materials that students use include ELA portfolios of their literacy work throughout the year, reader's notebooks, composition books for weekly writing prompts, and learning logs for note taking. There are also many posters adorning the walls, which offer encouragement and humor. One such example was a welcome sign in which each letter of welcome stands for part of the longer phrase "When you Enter this Little room Consider yourself One of the special Members of a group who Enjoys working and learning". Figure 4.5 offers other examples of encouraging posters in Mrs. Conley's classroom (Observations, 5/15/09 & 6/11/09).

The posters are additional examples of the supportive and encouraging emotional environment present in Mrs. Conley's classroom. Mrs. Conley said, "I help build a positive emotional environment for my students by first reading their social
Figure 4.5: Posters for Encouragement

cues. I try to get to know each of the students on a personal level in order to understand their interests and needs” (Interview, 6/8/09). To do this, Mrs. Conley calls every student to her desk once each week for a “chat”. Her devotion to this task was demonstrated in the checklist she uses to ensure that she “chats” with every one of her students regularly (Observation, 6/11/09). Mrs. Conley also sends one positive postcard to each student’s home at some point during the school year. This postcard is used as a means of building and maintaining a personal connection with the student outside of school.

Each week a student is selected as VIP (Very Important Person) for the week.
A poster is created to honor the person and he/she is delegated many of the classroom tasks and honors, for example, line leader or messenger. According to Mrs. Conley, “Humor is an important part of building a positive emotional environment. I use it to ‘lighten up’ the continuous instructional time” (Interview, 6/8/09). Finally, Mrs. Conley believes in rewarding students for good work. She said, “Rewards are another way to focus on the positive instead of consequences which focus on the negative.”

**Scheduling**

During the interview, Mrs. Conley said, “There is not much flexibility in my scheduling because of the time constraints of the gifted and talented program and the reading intervention services that my students get” (Interview, 6/8/09). Unlike the other teachers in this study, Mrs. Conley’s schedule was not as consistent. Certain elements of the schedule remained the same each day such as morning mind work, recess, lunch, and math. Otherwise, the remaining portions of the schedule fluctuated daily. This was mainly due to the varying times specials are offered. In general, ELA instruction occurs in the morning and math, social studies and science instruction in the afternoon. In order for me to keep up to date with the schedule, Mrs. Conley provided me with a copy of the schedule she used in her planning book (Observation,
Transitions

The majority of transitions in Mrs. Conley’s classroom involved a one minute warning, which was followed by detailed directions to prepare students for the next activity. For example, Mrs. Conley said,

What I need you to do right now is clear off your desk and take out your reader’s notebook. Make sure you’ve got all the books listed that you’ve recently read. We’re going to do a reading survey like you did in September. Ok, bring your reader’s notebook to the rug.2

(Observation, 5/15/09).

All of the students completed the transition quickly, quietly and efficiently without any need for further instruction from the Mrs. Conley.

Student Groupings

Mrs. Conley’s choice of student groupings depends on the activity the students are doing. Reading groups are homogeneous while other groups are usually
heterogeneous. During guided reading group time, the remaining students work independently on reading assignments from their group or other activities assigned by Mrs. Conley. Mrs. Conley is then able to work relatively uninterrupted with her guided reading group. She also conducts whole group instruction for ELA, math or social studies either at the rug or in front of the students' desks (Observations, 5/15/09 & 6/11/09).

**Rules / Routines**

In general, Mrs. Conley’s school follows a Fountas and Pinell 20-day program in order to establish rules and routines. However, Mrs. Conley believes that most of this was unnecessary in her room. Instead, she spent the first couple weeks of school discussing with her students the concept of respect and how to put this rule into action. Her one overarching rule for the classroom is ‘respecting self and others’. According to Mrs. Conley, this one rule covers all other incidental rules that may be established in other classrooms. She said, “Too many rules are too hard for everyone to remember including me. Modeling respect is very important. After about a month, it’s smooth like butter” (Interview, 6/8/09).
Mrs. Conley modeled her expectations for each activity and routine in the classroom at the beginning of the school year. Teacher modeling combined with high expectations for student behavior can lead to many positive outcomes. No class jobs are assigned in Mrs. Conley's classroom. Instead, the VIP student for the week is in charge and is assisted by other students as needed. I noted from our interview (6/8/09) that no students from Mrs. Conley's classroom had been sent to the office for discipline this year.

**Behavior Management**

There is no formal behavior management plan in Mrs. Conley's classroom. She sent home a discipline plan at the beginning of the year but according to Mrs. Conley, she has never had to use it. Again, rewards appeared to be Mrs. Conley's behavior management plan of choice. Her school had an M & M award in which three students are recognized each week for good behaviors. Their names are read on the announcements and they receive a prize. Within the classroom, Mrs. Conley has a 'perfect performance' raffle at the end of each week. Students who have completed all of their work and displayed good behavior are randomly awarded a raffle ticket by
Mrs. Conley. At the end of the week, four raffle tickets are selected and the lucky recipients receive a small prize such as a candy bar. Mrs. Conley said, “Encouragement and praise are an important way to motivate students to behave the way I want them to” (Interview, 6/8/09).

Instructional Formats

The literacy instruction I observed in Mrs. Conley’s classroom (5/15/09 & 6/11/09) consisted mainly of guided reading groups. Mrs. Conley has four guided reading groups. She had previously determined a reading level for each group and prepared instruction to meet their needs. Although each group has different needs, Mrs. Conley tries to choose books for each group that had a related theme. Each student receives a copy of the group book and a teacher-constructed workbook, which included questions and writing assignments to compliment each chapter. During the observations, the groups had just finished their last book and were preparing to begin books with a summer theme. Mrs. Conley planned to pursue the new book as a literature circle format. She reviewed the various roles with the students and discussed the schedule of assignments. Mrs. Conley also had a folder for each group
with literacy categories that mirrored those categories on the student report cards. This is her major form of assessment. She discovered that this procedure made transferring information to report cards much easier at the end of each quarter (Observation, 5/15/09).

Unlike the other participants in this study, Mrs. Conley's district does not mandate a specific reading program. Each teacher is allowed to create his/her own form of instruction and to use materials of their choosing. For this reason, Mrs. Conley has created the individual workbooks to compliment each book she uses in guided reading lessons. She said, "I like the flexibility but I think it leads to inconsistency among teachers. This is the biggest downfall in our reading program" (Interview, 6/8/09).

Given the ability to create her own literacy instruction, Mrs. Conley has incorporated each of the aspects of a balanced literacy program. Based on information from our interview (6/8/09), she conducts read alouds primarily related to the genre theme or the social studies unit she is currently teaching. Shared reading is usually incorporated into the guided reading time. Independent reading is encouraged during guided reading time. Independent reading also takes place during DEAR
(Drop Everything And Read) time. Writing consists of both shared writing and independent writing activities.

Additional pull-out support is given to both struggling students and gifted and talented students during AISA (Academic Intervention Services for All). There is time allotted daily for work in small groups based on the students' ELA or math needs. During this time, Mrs. Conley instructs students who are "average performers". She is able to offer support in any area that she feels appropriate.

**Professional Development**

Mrs. Conley was the only participant who received any formalized training in classroom management. Mrs. Conley said that she was required to take one course in classroom management while she was pursuing her teaching certificate seventeen years ago. She expanded on this by saying, "Otherwise, classroom management is pretty much a figure it out as you go attitude. Most colleges and school districts don't offer the necessary training" (Interview, 6/8/09). She felt that the course was beneficial to her general knowledge about management as she entered the field of education and recommends it especially for new teachers. Mrs. Conley stated that she
still refers to some of the information from that course especially regarding classroom organization. She supported these statements by pulling out her binder from the course and pointing out some of the specific reference materials she has used. One of the biggest insights she learned from the course structure was that the professor “kept them so busy with jobs that they had no time to fool around.” Based on this insight, Mrs. Conley said, “Involving them [students] in really engaging activities is a really helpful way to manage the class. They don’t have time for anything else” (Interview, 6/8/09).

_Biggest Challenge and Success in Literacy_

In our interview (6/8/09), Mrs. Conley cited lack of materials and time as her biggest literacy challenge. She said,

District and school administration keep adding more things to the curriculum and school functions without taking anything away. We are left trying to make our own materials and lessons fit into a day or week that has no free time left. (Interview, 6/8/09).

Mrs. Conley felt that her biggest success has been positive feedback from
students regarding their literacy experiences in her classroom. She is delighted by comments such as "I love this author (or series) because of you" and "You got me hooked on this." In her words, "The fact that my kids enjoy reading because of me makes teaching literacy truly worthwhile" (Interview, 6/8/09).

"I believe in rewarding students who do good work."

Mrs. Conley regarding emotional environment, June 8, 2009

**Miss Moore: First Grade**

"We have so much curriculum to cover. It's insane how much we expect these six years olds to know."

Miss Moore regarding challenges for instruction, May 18, 2009

My observation in Miss Moore's classroom on 8/10/09 helped me understand how she interacts with her students during whole group instruction including the language that she uses with them. Whole group reading instruction took place just after the morning announcements. Miss Moore asked the students to come join her on the carpet. As they were getting settled she said, "I will wait. I should see you sitting criss-cross applesauce, bottoms on the floor and legs crossed." Her
introduction to the lesson was, “OK, we have some vocabulary words we have been working on all week. Today we need to practice using them.” She referred them to an easel with a manufactured display from the Macmillan/McGraw-Hill reading program she uses. The display included pre-printed sentences and a word box (circle, grew, leave, toppled, toward, welcome, wreck, your). Miss Moore read each sentence out loud and called on a student to complete the missing word with a word from the word box. Miss Moore then read the sentence again with the word and asked the students if they thought it was correct by saying “Do we like it”. She intentionally pointed to each word with a pointing stick as she read the sentence. I noted that most of the students were watching Miss Moore during this part of the activity.

When they had finished all of the sentences Miss Moore said, “Now, what we’re going to do is turn this way.” She moved to an adjacent side of the carpet area but all the students had to do was turn within their same spot. Then Miss Moore said, “We have been working with ‘oi‘ and ‘oy‘ all week. Now I need some help to make some words with those sounds. Who can help me remember where I find oi/oy in a word? They responded with middle and end of the word. Miss Moore called on students with their hands raised and wrote their words on the easel. She said, “I’m
seeing a pattern (soil, oil, foil, boil). Do they all sound the same?” She waited until some of the students said the word rhyme. As students had been offering their words, Miss Moore responded with “Good” or “Very good job.”

Then, some of the students began getting distracted. Miss Moore said, “I will wait. What is the problem Jane?” She waited for the student’s response. “I’m still hearing voices. Maybe we need to move clothespins.” She had all of the students stand up to stretch and touch their toes four times. Then she said, “Don’t argue with me. You are so wiggly this morning. Who can read this word (construct)? This is a very big word (architecture).” Miss Moore had all of the students read the words with her. She then took the opportunity of a teachable moment by saying, “Our school is a square architecture. Some buildings are more round with arches.” One of the students asked what an arch is. Miss Moore drew a picture on the white board along with a verbal explanation. She then called on students to create sentences with some of the words. Miss Moore counted the words on her hand and reminded the students that they need to have at least eight words in each sentence.

Upon completing this portion of the instruction Miss Moore said, “You need to go to your seat and open practice book to page 62.” She wrote the page number on
the board. She dismissed them from the carpet by saying, “Ladies may go. Gentlemen may go.” When they all were seated quietly at their desk with their practice books open, Miss Moore read the directions and the first sentence on the page. Then she said, “When you’re done, you may put your book away and get ready for centers.” She reviewed the directions for two of the centers and reminded students of which group would start in each center.

Miss Moore is a second year teacher in a rural district in western New York. Her prior teaching experience consists of student teaching in grades one and three as a reading specialist and grade four as a special education consultant teacher. Her classroom consists of twenty students (nine boys and eleven girls): There is one student with a 504 plan and none with IEPs in her classroom.

Environment

The most prominent feature of Miss Moore’s classroom’s physical environment is the enrichment that is offered to students in the form of posters using the Spanish language. Every wall of the room introduces the students to one or more categories of Spanish words along with the English translation. For example, students...
have access to Spanish numbers, colors, months, days of the week, seasons, Happy Birthday, school words, and nature words. There was another poster with colors listed in four different languages. When I asked Miss Moore about the vast exposure to Spanish she said,

That’s me enriching. Last year I had two Spanish speaking students. I like the language and I took many years of it in school including AP (advanced placement) Spanish. Early exposure to a language is good. Enrichment is great for higher level students. Families appreciate “stretching” the students. The kids feel “so smart” when they learn a new language so it’s totally worth it since I have the support.

(Interview, 5/29/09)

In addition to the Spanish posters, there are many additional posters that support students’ literacy. At least half of these are teacher created. One poster “Tips for ‘Rockin’ Readers’” reviews comprehension strategies such as picturing, wondering, connecting, guessing, noticing, and figuring out. It includes additional notes such as observe or notice, what do you wonder, and link it to your life. A complimentary poster, “Tips for ‘Rockin’ Writers” addresses the writing activities.
The poster details the essentials of good writing including organization, sentence fluency, voice, ideas, and conventions. Another poster supports students' ability to decode new words. This untitled poster offers suggestions such as check the picture, think about the story, go back and reread, and check the first letter. The suggestions also included picture cues to correspond with the strategy.

The physical setup of Miss Moore's classroom is divided into sections that correspond with specific activities. There is a carpet area for whole group instruction. Masking tape is used to outline the area as well as label each student's assigned seating. There is a half circle table used for guided reading groups and individualized assessments. There are three designated areas for the three literacy centers and one computer in the front of the room. Miss Moore's room is located in a "cluster" with two other classrooms. The exterior wall of each classroom is open to a central area near the hallway. Each of the teachers has formed a temporary wall using portable boards. Within the central area of the cluster are all of these teachers' desks including Miss Moore's desk. Student desks were organized in groups of four during my first observation (5/18/09) and in alternating boy/girl rows for my second observation (6/12/09). Each arrangement consisted of three students who were seated alone in
order to keep them on task. Regardless of the seating arrangement, Miss Moore said,

I probably change my seating every month. I like variety, so leaving the room the same way for too long drives me up a wall. I also like to give The students someone new to sit next to an work with so they aren’t working with the same person all the time. I always try to keep students paired up with another student for support. This also serves as an easy way for me to break up students who start to argue, or those who talk to each other too much. It’s a very social group this year and changing things up frequently keeps me sane and the kids on task. (Interview, 5/29/09).

There is a multitude of materials available for student use. Many of these materials are in the classroom as support to literacy instruction. For example: computer, word games/puzzles, Leap Pad phonics games, Treasure reading textbooks, Scholastic First Dictionary, letter tiles, Macmillan/McGraw-Hill leveled readers, small white boards, word wall, and puppets. In addition, there are book bins, boxes, and displays throughout the classroom.

During the portion of our interview regarding the emotional environment
Miss Moore said,

I try to stay positive but also use a firm hand with inappropriate behaviors. I use a lot of joking to keep things light and the students on task. I encourage them to use humor too and they do. But they know when they have gone too far. (Interview, 5/29/09)

Miss Moore includes a joke of the day. Students are encouraged to contribute their own jokes along with those provided by the teacher. Lastly, Miss Moore attempts to be as supportive as possible with all students and to “encourage students to help each other.”

For example, the rules for centers stated that students with questions must ask two friends before they sit in the answer chair awaiting help from Miss Moore (Observation, 5/1/09).

**Scheduling**

According to Miss Moore her schedule is partially determined by the school and partially by herself. During our interview on 5/29/09 Miss Moore said, “The morning schedule was already decided for me because of reading block, special and
lunch but I got to decide what to do with the afternoon.” The morning consists of the school mandated curriculum including a 90-minute reading block, special and lunch. During the reading block, students participate in whole group instruction, independent practice, three literacy centers and a guided reading group. The afternoon consists of math, writing, calendar, science/social studies, and free time. Miss Moore also said in our interview, “spelling, grammar, and writing go hand in hand so I try to keep them together in the afternoon.” Both the daily schedule and the specials schedule are posted on the white board near the calendar. Figure 4.6 is the daily schedule that was posted during my observation on 5/18/09.

Announcements
Reading
Centers
Library
Lunch
Math
Writing
Calendar
Switches
Free Time

Figure 4.6: Daily Schedule Posted on White Board for 5/18/09
Transitions

In general, Miss Moore announced the transitions by giving detailed directions in advance. One example, occurred when Miss Moore said, “We’re going to go back to our seats. Listen to all the directions. You will go back to your seats and open practice book and open to page 230, 2-3-0”. She then said each number individually and wrote the page number on the board as students began to move (Observation, 5/18/09). During literacy centers, Miss Moore uses a timer is used to signal transitions. She said that she and the students used the first month of school to establish the routine for literacy centers including standing and moving clockwise between the centers (Interview, 5/29/09). I observed plenty of opportunities for guided practice and how scaffolding is used in Miss Moore’s classroom. She models the activity and routine, provides guided practice, and then allows students to practice independently (Observations, 5/18/09 & 6/12/09). Miss Moore said, “Usually in the afternoon I resort to counting down for transitions because the students are getting tired. When this happens, my expectation is that they complete the transition by the count of five or their clothespin gets moved” (Interview, 5/29/09).
**Student Groupings**

Miss Moore utilizes a combination of heterogeneous and homogeneous groupings in her classroom. Heterogeneous groups are used during literacy centers in order to offer student support among the various levels of achievement. During centers, Miss Moore pulls homogeneous groups for guided reading instruction. I asked her what she considers when deceiving how to group her students. She said,

I look specifically at where the child is struggling. Do they have problems with sight words, decoding, self monitoring, etc? I also look at how fluently they read and how much decoding they have to do versus how many words are automatic. Lastly, I look at the levels of books they can read and then group accordingly. (Interview, 5/29/09)

We also discussed how often Miss Moore meets with her guided reading groups. She said,

I try to meet with each group [5 groups] daily but some of them need less time than others. Right now, I have two book study groups that are boy vs. girl. Each time we meet, they read two chapters and do a literature response. They are much more independent than the other
three groups so we basically meet to discuss our connections to the book. (Interview, 5/29/09)

Also, there are various whole group lessons that take place throughout the day in order to cover basic curriculum concepts such as reading genre, spelling, grammar, science, social studies, and math (Observations, 5/18/09 & 6/12/09).

**Rules / Routines**

Two distinct sets of rules - general and center - are established and followed in this classroom. Different center rules are in place in order to offer Miss Moore and her students uninterrupted time during guided reading lessons. Figure 4.7 depicts the general classroom rules and center rules. Also, there are two posters that give examples of the expectations for centers displayed in the classroom. Figure 4.8 represents the expectations for centers. There are also specific routines in place for all activities that occur throughout the day. During our interview, Miss Moore said,

I make up all the rules for my classroom but I do talk to the kids about The rules at the beginning of the year to get their support. It's just easier to have something already established that I know I can live with. (Interview, 5/29/09)
General Rules | Center Rules
---|---
Be Respectful | Have a ?, Ask a Friend
Follow Directions | Wait in the Question Chair
Listen | Need to Use the Bathroom or Get a
Keep Your Hands and Feet to Yourself | Pencil Break? Borrow One
Finished Early? Follow the “I’m

Figure 4.7: Classroom Rules in Miss Moore's First Grade Classroom

| What Do Centers Sound Like? | What Do Centers Look Like? |
---|---
Children use whisper voices | Children sitting in their seat or at the
Children are cooperating | Children working hard
Children ask 3 then ask the teacher | Children doing their best work

Figure 4.8: Literacy Center Expectations in Miss Moore’s First Grade Classroom

**Behavior Management**

There is one primary behavior management plan in Miss Moore’s classroom. It consists of clothespins with each student’s name and a signal light display. Near the display is a poster that begins with the phrase “If I make a bad choice....” It
continues with three levels of consequences: 1) Warning: Visual reminder, Put clip on the green circle, 2) Second Warning: Lose ½ of recess. Put clip on yellow circle, and 3) Final Chance: Lose all of recess and get a parent phone call. Put clip on red circle. At the bottom, the poster reads, “Three Strikes and You’re Out.” A student’s good behavior may earn him or her the right to move his or her clothespin back to the starting place.

In addition to the whole group behavior management plan, Miss Moore uses individual plans with two students. One student receives daily notes that he took home reporting on his off task behavior, out of seat, avoidance and homework issues. Notes that depict good behaviors are rewarded by the family at home. The second student’s plan deals with meltdowns. The student earns computer time for absence of meltdowns.

Miss Moore also uses some supplemental whole group programs to offer students incentives for positive behaviors. The first is an individual student sticker chart. Miss Moore randomly distributes stickers for various positive behaviors. When students fill their chart, they are able to select a prize from the prize box. A second program is no longer in place. It was a pearl system in which the whole class
could earn pearls toward a class treasure hunt. The students destroyed the program’s display and Miss Moore ended the program. A third program “Hallway Mouse” is also no longer in place because the students no longer needed it as the year progressed. If students behaved well in the hallway, they could earn holes in a paper piece shaped like a piece of cheese. Five holes in the cheese earned a prize such as cheese related foods. A final program “Great Work Stickers” is specific to developing reading behaviors. If students read fluently they can earn a sticker. The length of fluent reading depends on the activity as well as the students’ ability. When their chart is full, they may choose from a prize box. Miss Moore said, “I give out stickers randomly because I want them to read fluently all of the time, not just for a prize” (Interview, 5/29/09).

*Instructional Formats*

Miss Moore teaches in a Reading First school district, which means she is required to use a designated reading program and assessment. This district uses the Macmillan/McGraw-Hill program (2007) including the *Treasures* text. Within this program, teachers must teach vocabulary, comprehension, fluency, phonics, and
phonemic awareness. It is up to the individual teacher to determine the specifics of how these will be delivered in his or her instruction. Some teachers choose to read the scripts from the teacher’s manual while others only use them as guidance. Miss Moore uses them primarily as guidance. The program is accompanied by an assessment, which follows the Reading First framework. Each unit is designed to be five weeks in length. Each Friday students are tested and then tested again at the end of the unit. The unit test resembles the third grade ELA test. In addition to these assessments, this district also uses the Dibbles assessment required by Reading First.

Miss Moore incorporates all of these requirements into a 90-minute reading block. She begins with whole group instruction. During my observation on 5/18/09, she read the big book story *A Good Trip Into Space* aloud and then asked two comprehension questions of the group. She then reviewed the concept of “dream” and the “oo” sound they would be working on for the week. Miss Moore had individual students read “oo” words and then had the whole class practices these words. She then did a rhyming activity. This was followed by individual student practice on two worksheets as she circulated the classroom to support students who needed help.
After this portion of instruction, students begin literacy centers and guided reading groups. There were three centers: word work center, comprehension center, and book center. Figure 4.9 represents the center chart posted for student reference. The word work center involves dictionary skills with a worksheet based on one vocabulary word from the week. The comprehension center involves word games and puzzles. The book center is independent reading from browsing boxes. Within each center group there are one or two students from each of the four reading groups. Therefore, materials at each center are color coded to correspond with the reading group levels.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Center #</th>
<th>Group Names</th>
<th>Activity 1</th>
<th>Activity 2</th>
<th>Activity 3</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Bee</td>
<td>Word Work</td>
<td>Comp.</td>
<td>Book</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Flower</td>
<td>Comp.</td>
<td>Book</td>
<td>Word Work</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Butterfly</td>
<td>Book</td>
<td>Word Work</td>
<td>Comp.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 4.9: Literacy Center Rotation Chart in Miss Moore’s First Grade Classroom

Although I did not observe the writing instruction in Miss Moore’s classroom,
she briefed me on how she approaches it. The writing activity is one week long and based on that week’s story. Each day of the week has a specific task: Monday (brainstorm), Tuesday (planning page), Wednesday (rough draft), Thursday (edit with teacher or classmate), and Friday (publish and share writing with illustration). Miss Moore said,

This writing schedule makes planning easier. I know the story for each week and the writing activity that I will focus on each day. The kids seem to like the consistency too. It’s also a natural scaffold for writing instruction. (Interview, 5/29/09)

Professional Development

Miss Moore has received no formal classroom management training. She said,

There are no formal professional development sessions offered for classroom management. It is taken into consideration when we are being observed for observations. It is also something that is observed for new teachers by our mentors. But other than that all of our
professional developments typically revolve around reading and how we can improve specific areas of reading. That's because I’m in a Reading First building so I’m sure it’s different in the other buildings. (Interview, 5/29/09)

Although Miss Moore has been teaching for only two years and has had no formal training in classroom management, she appears to have a solid management plan based on my observations (5/18/09 & 6/12/09). During our interview, Miss Moore told me that she does not like the “flounder” feeling so she goes to others for support on topics that she is struggling. She said,

Other staff are my best friends!..I sit down frequently with the reading coach to go over my test data and running records to get their professional opinion on what to focus on. I also work with other classroom teachers to get additional strategies to use with my kids when they are all struggling with a topic, for example money. I also work a lot with the reading intervention teachers to see what my intervention kids are doing and keep strategies consistent. We make sure we’re all focusing on the same areas of improvement with the
intervention children. In addition, we have monthly data meetings at which we bring up children we are worried about to discuss what they are struggling with and what we could do differently to meet their needs. (Interview, 5/29/09)

**Biggest Challenge and Success in Literacy**

Miss Moore believes that her biggest challenge is getting her students to understand the requirements that she has regarding reading and other core programs. She said, “We throw so much material at them in first grade and many are not ready for it. We need to find a way to make the Reading First program a success story” (Interview, 5/29/09).

Miss Moore recognizes her differentiated literacy centers as her biggest success. She is proud of all of the work that she has put into them and what they have evolved into as the year has progressed. During our interview Miss Moore said, My differentiated centers include the leveled book bags and learner needs based games. For example, the low group needs to work on phonics skills and sight words so their games reflect these concepts.
whereas the high group has sentence building games and comprehension games. I also use different level worksheets for my listening center. For example, the low group draws a picture of their favorite part and writes one sentence about it. The high group relates the book to others they have read and write about connections they made personally with the story.

(Interview, 5/29/09)

Her pride in her differentiated literacy centers also included the fact that all of the students are able to work independently during center time so that she may work with her guided reading groups. Each student is receiving instruction and activities that are based on his or her needs. At one point this year, the principal brought all of the administrative candidates to Miss Moore’s room to observe her literacy centers. According to her, “Each of the candidates said that they saw something good”

(Interview, 5/29/09).

“I don’t like the ‘flounder’ feeling. I’m not afraid to ask for help regarding issues in my classroom.”

Miss Moore regarding her limited teaching experience, May 29, 2009
Miss Burke: Kindergarten

"Learning is social. They need to talk about it."

Miss Burke regarding student groupings, May 20, 2009

The chronological age of kindergarteners is only five or six. Play is still a large part of their social interactions and learning processes. Miss Burke took advantage of this idea during my observation in her classroom on 6/5/09. As I entered the classroom, students were sitting at their assigned seats and were actively engaged in a guessing game called ‘mystery canisters’ that involved using many of their senses. Miss Burke had placed a variety of items in five film canisters which she passed around to each student. They were instructed to use their senses to make a guess at what the canister contained and then write their guess on a simple worksheet. They were not allowed to look into the canister or taste the contents. The noise level in the classroom was a little loud but it was due to the fact that they were talking with each other and comparing their guesses. All of the students appeared to be on task even when Miss Burke was on the other side of the room. Upon completing their guesses, Miss Burke asked them to tell her what they guessed for each canister. After
students had done so, Miss Burke provided them with the answer. This activity allowed the students to play and socialize with other students while they were learning and practicing the use of their senses.

Although Miss Burkes’ students are chronologically young, they also displayed a sense of maturity in the way they handled themselves during literacy centers for both of my observations (5/20/09 & 6/5/09). For example, after completing whole group instruction on both days, Miss Burke played a game of hangman with her students in order to transition them to centers. This allowed her to dismiss each colored literacy center/group one at a time. Student helpers were dismissed from the rug area first in order to place center ‘bins’ in the predetermined positions around the classroom. As each group was then dismissed, they took a moment to view the center chart to determine which center they would begin with. Within approximately one minute, all students were in their designated center and were working on the assigned task. Students were allowed to move independently among the five assigned centers for that day in order to accommodate their individual work pace. As I looked around the room, most of the students were talking with each other but appeared to be discussing information relevant to their center. During
centers, there were four adults present in the room: Miss Burke, the reading teacher, and two teaching aides. Both teachers were working with small guided reading groups and both teaching aides were circulating to assist students as needed. Again, for the most part the students seemed to work independently regarding the assigned activities for literacy centers.

Miss Burke has been teaching kindergarten in a rural school district in western New York for three years and has no prior teaching experience. Her current class consists of twenty two students (twelve girls and ten boys). None of the students have IEPs or 504 plans but two students do receive speech services.

Environment

Miss Burke said, “I change my room every year based on the successes and challenges of the previous year” (Interview, 6/3/09). During my observations (5/20/09 & 6/5/09), I noticed that Miss Burke’s room was full of materials which she could use to support her students. The most important factor of her physical arrangement was that quiet and noisy activities were in separate areas of the room. Through the use of bookshelves, counters and other moveable materials like a piano,
Miss Burke was able to create small nooks to house the various classroom activities. The center of the room was comprised of four color coded tables to reflect table groups. Miss Burke's desk was located right near the hall door but she never sat at it.

Another important consideration was that Miss Burke posted commonly used words everywhere in the room so that they could be used for "read around the room" and "write around the room" activities. In addition to the commonly used words, I noticed that there were a large number of environmental print that were present. Environment print are words, signs, images, or logos that are present in normal daily activities. Some examples of these present in Miss Burke's classroom were Pepsi, STOP, Crayola, ESL, Disney, Subway, and Pizza Hut. In addition to the environmental print, there are other word displays such as word walls and popcorn words (Observations 5/20/09 & 6/5/09).

The materials present in Miss Burke's room were age appropriate. There were plenty of games, a doll house, a play area, four computers, two listening centers, Magna Doodles, rest blankets, a television and a radio. All of these materials were labeled and often had corresponding pictures for those students who are unable to read. Miss Burke said, "Labeling encourages student independence and helps make
the task the focus instead of trying to locate materials” (Interview, 6/3/09). The activities that were conducted during centers involved the use of crayons, scissors, glue sticks, stamps, pocket charts, and magnetic letters. There were a variety of purchased and teacher created posters. Again, these were targeted specifically for kindergarten or at least the primary grades such as Curious George and I-Care posters. There were two letter swats, ABC with pictures, calendars, seasons, weather, colors, shapes, pledge of allegiance, and short vowels to name a few more.

Miss Burke said,

I try to maintain the most positive emotional environment I can. Even when students lose steps on their behavior management chart, I try to follow it up with some type of positive comment or response.

(Interview, 6/3/09)

I also observed (5/20/09) a great deal of verbal praise for appropriate or good behaviors which helped reinforce classroom expectations. Miss Burke made comments such as “Very good, nice.“, “I like how _____ is sitting quietly the whole time.”, and “Good, I like that.” Because these students were so socially young and new at the school routine Miss Burke needed to present books and discussions
regarding social issues such as sharing. This was always followed up with a reminder that they should all be good friends to each other because they are all part of the classroom community. In fact, quite often Miss Burke referred to her students as “friends” when addressing the whole group.

**Scheduling**

The daily schedule was always posted with both words and corresponding pictures. It was reviewed daily in order to prepare students for the upcoming routines as well as any changes to the regular schedule. Miss Burke stated that she uses corresponding pictures to support student reading. She said, “After awhile, students don’t need the pictures anymore and don’t even realize that they are “reading” the schedule” (Interview, 6/3/09). An overview of the daily schedule follows: group language, centers, calendar, lunch, special, playground, rest, snack, math, show & tell, pack up, group, and home. There seemed to be flexibility in the schedule as it was slightly different on my second observation (6/5/09). All of the components were present but not in the same order as they had been on my first observation (5/20/09). Figure 4.10 displays the daily schedule during both of my observations.
There were a variety of techniques that Miss Burke used to help make transitions smooth. Miss Burke said,
At the beginning of the year, I began with “1-2-3 Eyes on Me”. Then, I started using the countdown from five technique. As I count down slowly, I like to remind specific students of what they should be doing and give praise to the ones who are doing a good job. (Interview, 6/3/09)

According to Miss Burke, another technique that seemed to come naturally with this class was the use of the clock. For example, she was able to tell them that they would be changing activities when the big hand is on the six. This technique works well with the verbal five minute warning signaling the end of literacy centers. Miss Burke also used sign language, a music box, and games such as hangman to assist with transitioning. As a last resort, she also turned off lights in order to get students’ attention. The use of the previous techniques was dependent a great deal on the activities they are transitioning between.

Student Groupings

Miss Burke used a combination of whole group and small group instruction during both of my observations (5/20/09 & 6/5/09). She said, “During whole group
literacy instruction, I focus on a specific book or skill” (Interview, 6/3/09). Small groups were used for guided reading, literacy centers and math centers. The guided reading groups had a homogeneous makeup based on student needs while the literacy centers were heterogeneous to allow students to support each other.

**Rules / Routines**

Rules and routines were established collaboratively with Miss Burke and her students during the first two weeks of the school year. Miss Burke said that she asks for the students suggestions for appropriate behavior. In our interview, Miss Burke said an example would be, “If we were meeting on the rug, would we raise our hands first to speak or shout out our answers?” (Interview 6/3/09) One corner of the room displayed a poster with tips from the previous year’s students regarding how to survive kindergarten. According to Miss Burke, this was used to help students select appropriate rules to support these tips. In addition to the rules formed by the class, there was also an “I-care Rules” poster with the following items: 1) We listen to each other., 2) Hands are for helping not hurting., 3)We use I-care language., 4) We care about each other’s feelings., and 5) We are responsible for what we say and do. Miss
Burke posted a “helping hands” list of classroom jobs and the assigned student names. She said that these jobs help to create a sense of responsibility among all of the students (Interview, 6/3/09).

Behavior Management

We discussed behavior management during our interview on 6/3/09. Miss Burke said that it is approached from both a class and school effort in her classroom. There is a school-wide “caring kids” program in place. Two students from each class are recognized each Friday for positive behaviors they had displayed throughout the week. Small tokens of appreciation such as a pencil or certificate are presented to the students by the school office. Within the classroom, there is one primary behavior management plan. Miss Burke selected a story about Wise Bear that she presented at the beginning of the year. This story encourages students to “stay on the path to Happy Forest”. This program has both whole class and individual student components. There is a display in which the class could randomly earn steps forward to a party goal. Miss Burke said, “The kids rarely have to take a step backward on the display” (Interview, 6/3/09). This reinforces the positive environment that she
tries to maintain. Each student also has an individual behavior card that corresponds
to the story. At the beginning of each day, four steps are displayed on the card. If
students show inappropriate behaviors, they lose a step and the card is changed to
reflect three, two or one steps. Consequences accompany a loss of each step.
However, there were many warnings given before steps were lost. At the end of the
day, students who still have four steps receive two high fives from Miss Burke and
those with three steps receive only one high five. Students who are down to either
two or one step lose playtime and receive no high fives. Miss Burke said, “Students
are usually in tears if they are down to three steps” (Interview, 6/3/09). A final
component of this behavior management plan is targeted to both small groups and
individual students. During centers, there is a challenge. The group who performs
best during centers receives honey from Wise Bear. Each student in the group is
presented with a “honey ticket”. On Friday, two honey tickets are selected from the
honey pot. These students receive a prize and lunch with the teacher.

Instructional Formats
The setup of literacy instruction in Miss Burke’s classroom was similar to the
general premise in Miss Moore’s first grade classroom. There was whole group
instruction which was connected to a book that was used in the listening center or
reading program flip chart. An example of this was evident in my second observation
(6/5/09) as the whole class referenced a book about beavers that they had read
previously in a shared reading format. Students were then presented with a variety of
pictures on a flip chart page. These pictures included a lake, river, stream, paddle,
lodge, and beaver. Miss Burke first asked questions regarding the difference between
photographs/illustrations and fiction/non fiction. She then selected various students
to label each of the pictures. The student responses were their best phonetic attempts
(LAK, rivr, sem, PaDL, loch, Bevr). As students were labeling, Miss Burke
encouraged them to stretch out the sounds. Their final product was not corrected for
spelling.

After whole group instruction was completed, students were directed to begin
centers. As each of the five groups were dismissed from the rug, they referred to the
centers chart in order to discover their first destination. Each group had five centers
listed in their rotation. The last two centers in each group were centers that the
students would have in their rotation two times during the week. Therefore, it was
not a problem if they ran out of time to complete all of the centers. Each of the centers was on the chart in the form of a picture symbol. Figure 4.11 are the hands-on literacy centers in Miss Burke's classroom (words instead of symbols). There were bins placed throughout the room with the corresponding picture symbol on the exterior and all needed materials inside. As students completed center activities, they placed them inside folders that were color coded to match their group color.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Red</td>
<td>Browsing box</td>
<td>Magnetic letters</td>
<td>Computer</td>
<td>Partner read</td>
<td>My name is _______</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Orange</td>
<td>Letter swat</td>
<td>Literature circle</td>
<td>Word identification</td>
<td>Magnetic letters</td>
<td>Listening center</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Green</td>
<td>Games</td>
<td>3-column sort</td>
<td>Write &amp; color sheet</td>
<td>My name is _______</td>
<td>Computer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yellow</td>
<td>Read around room</td>
<td>Last name</td>
<td>Letter swat</td>
<td>Browsing box</td>
<td>Partner read</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Blue</td>
<td>Computer</td>
<td>Listening center</td>
<td>Writing</td>
<td>Read around room</td>
<td>Literature circle</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Figure 4.11: Hands-on Literacy Centers in Miss Burke's Kindergarten Classroom**

During literacy centers, Miss Burke pulled students for guided reading groups.
Each guided reading group consisted of one or more students from each of the five literacy center groups.

**Professional Development**

As with most of the other teachers in this study, Miss Burke has received no professional development regarding classroom management. Instead, managing her class has been left to her discretion. In our interview Miss Burke said, “I rely on observations of other classrooms, discussions with other teachers, and tips from other professional development topics to get my ideas” (Interview, 6/3/09).

**Biggest Challenge and Success in Literacy**

Miss Burke believes that her biggest literacy challenge is providing differentiated instruction to meet all of her students’ needs. She said, “When these kids came to me at the beginning of the year, some did not know their letters and sounds, others were beginning readers. I had to teach everything from concepts about print to leveled readers” (Interview, 6/3/09).

In our interview, Miss Burke said that she loves working with the borderline
readers in kindergarten and feels successful with the integral part she plays in each student’s ability to read. She continued by saying, “At some point in the year, all of a sudden it [reading] clicks and they start reading everything. I love being part of their lives when that happens (Interview, 6/3/09).

“I try to make everything in the room related to literacy.”

L. Burke regarding her use of balanced literacy, June 3, 2009

Looking Across the Case Studies

Research Questions: How do elementary teachers use the classroom environment to support their students’ literacy development? and What are the similarities and differences among the techniques across grade levels and/or school districts?

When looking across the case studies, I see similarities among the teachers’ use of the environment and the other factors that encapsulate classroom management. Below I offer a cross-case analysis of five teachers’ approaches to and use of classroom management strategies and techniques.
Environment

The physical environment in each of the five classrooms is intended to support students' growth and development in a variety of ways including independence of various activities. All five of the teachers have established designated areas within their rooms for the regularly occurring activities such as whole group instruction, guided reading, and literacy centers. They all had an abundance of literacy posters for students to use as reference and a source of encouragement or inspiration. The five teachers also had a variety of literature ranging from independent to instructional levels available for students' use.

In the primary grades, the materials were well labeled for easy locating. Each teacher selected what he or she believed to be the optimal seating arrangement for the students, this ranged from clusters of desks to straight rows. Regardless of formation, the seating arrangements were changed at various points throughout the year in order to maximize instructional efficiency, to create alternative peer supports, and to build community: The primary and fourth grade classrooms each had a rug area for meetings and whole group instruction.

The emotional environments in all five classrooms were both positive and
supportive. Although the teachers needed to occasionally firmly regain order, the transaction always ended on a positive and encouraging note. Humor was present in varying degrees in all of the classrooms as a way to lighten the atmosphere and to connect with the students. Each of the teachers had a teacher’s desk but I never saw any of them sit at it except when students were out of the room. Instead, the teachers often circulated throughout the room in order to use proximity to students as an additional instructional and management support. Overall, the teachers attempted to build classroom community in a variety of ways including getting to know the students on a personal level. All five teachers indicated that knowing their students allows them to cater to their interests, backgrounds, needs, and abilities.

**Scheduling**

The five school districts involved in this study have mandates for the amount of time each grade level and teacher should devote to ELA instruction. Because of the time requirements and parameters for specials such as music, art, physical education, and lunch, teachers often devote a block of uninterrupted time for literacy, most often reading, instruction in the morning. Writing is the one aspect of literacy
that is sometimes separated and taught in the afternoon. In all five of the classrooms, the teachers have taken into account other considerations such as students’ support services when finalizing their schedule. Once the schedule is set, it is posted in the classroom and often reviewed on a daily basis.

Transitions

The teachers mentioned a practice of sharing their expectations for transitions with the students at the beginning of the year and then modeling and practicing transitions to ensure students’ understanding and success. During my observations, I witnessed all five of the teachers giving students advanced warning of the transition in the form of a “X-minute warning.” The transition was often accompanied by explicit, detailed instructions of how to make the transition and move to the upcoming activity. If needed, teachers used countdowns to prevent excessive socialization or dawdling. Also if needed, teachers used a variety of techniques such as lights out, verbal signals, or hand signals were used to regain students’ attention so further instructions could be given.
Student Groupings

Unlike educational practices of the mid twentieth century, instruction in these classrooms was not delivered solely in a whole group format. Instead, the whole group instruction that did occur consisted of the general concepts such as “oo” sounds, rhyme and rhythm, writing friendly letters, and editing. The teachers used more detailed instruction, usually delivered in need-specific small groups such as guided reading lessons. The small groups better suit the differentiated instruction format common in twenty-first century classrooms. Miss Moore and Miss Burke used literacy centers in which small groups of students (approximately four to six) work side by side. These groups consist of a mix of abilities to encourage both independence and peer support when needed. All five of the teachers cited a practice of flexible groups and changing the members of groups as necessary.

Rules / Routines

All five of the teachers said that classroom rules were established during the first week of school. Three of the teachers asked for student input in order to encourage student ownership of the rules. The five teachers held high expectations
for student behaviors and encouraged students to reinforce this in the way the rules were developed. The number of rules varied among classrooms with Mrs. Conley's classroom having only one general rule and Miss Moore's classroom having approximately ten. At times the rules depended on the activities in the classroom such as in Miss Moore's classroom where there were different rules for classroom, centers, and writing. In general, the teachers seemed to agree that a few effective rules were better than a lot of ineffective ones. I noticed that the overarching rule in all of the classrooms was to "respect each other". The teachers indicated that once established, the rules and routines are practiced over and over during the first few weeks of school in order to ensure student understanding and compliance.

Three of the five teachers assigned classroom jobs to the students. These teachers felt that this helped to make every student responsible for a specific activity in the classroom, assure that all jobs were completed, and help lift the responsibility for these tasks off of the teachers themselves. The two teachers who did not assign classroom jobs believed that the students in their classroom were equally responsible for the overall classroom environment and that assigning jobs was not necessary.
Behavior Management

Each of the five classrooms teachers used one dominant behavior management plan to keep students' inappropriate behaviors in check. Figure 4.12 offers some insights and recommendations for behavior management from the five teachers. In all of the classrooms, students and families were made aware of the plan at the beginning of the year. Appropriate consequences accompanied inappropriate behaviors and adjustments to the plan were made based on the students' needs. Several teachers including Mr. Reynolds, Mrs. Henion, and Miss Moore indicated that individual behavior management plans such as behavior contracts, charts, and incentives may be needed to help students achieve success.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Prevalent Behavior Problems</th>
<th>Strategies to Refocus Off-task Students</th>
<th>Classroom Management Techniques</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Talking/socializing</td>
<td>Humor</td>
<td>Visible and well-known expectations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gossip</td>
<td>Address off-task behavior immediately</td>
<td>High expectations and accountability for behaviors</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not listening/paying</td>
<td>Engaging / hands-on activities</td>
<td>Predictable and constant schedule</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>attention</td>
<td>Allow appropriate movement - stretch</td>
<td>Proximity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inappropriate behaviors</td>
<td>Restate directions</td>
<td>Scaffolding - modeling, practicing, independence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disagreements</td>
<td>Reminders of appropriate behavior</td>
<td>Ask student why behavior is happening</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Temper tantrums</td>
<td>Small groups or peer support</td>
<td>Appropriate level of instructional challenge</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Immediate feedback on Assignments</td>
<td>Individual plans if needed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Incentives as last resort</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 4.12: Teacher Insights and Recommendations for Behavior Management

Regardless of the behavior management plan that was used, all of the teachers preferred the use of positive reinforcement of appropriate behaviors over consequences for inappropriate behaviors.

**Instructional Formats**

Four of the schools in this study have a mandated literacy program especially for the reading portion of instruction. These programs included recommended
materials, scripts, and assessments and shape what count and is possible in terms of literacy instruction. However, the degree to which the teachers must adhere to the program varies from school to school. Although the 90 minute framework was common across multiple sites, each teacher crafted their own unique instructional format within that time to coincide with their districts desired reading curriculum. Regardless of the literacy program, it appeared that all of the teachers attempted to incorporate all areas of a balanced literacy curriculum: read aloud, shared reading, guided reading, independent reading, shared writing, guided writing, and independent writing. Although some, Mr. Reynolds, for example, indicated that he could incorporate more read alouds into his day-to-day instruction. All of the teachers used whole group reading/grammar, guided reading, and writing. During guided reading time, each of the teachers utilized independent or small group activities for the remaining students. In the primary grades, literacy centers were used. In the intermediate grades, students rotated between two other activities with one of them conducted by another adult and the other independent work. I was able to speak with all of the teachers during their interview regarding their writing instruction. However, I did not have a chance to observe any of their writing instruction in action.
Professional Development

None of the five teachers had opportunities to engage in school or district level professional development focused on classroom management. Mrs. Conley did have a course as part of her initial teacher preparation coursework. Mrs. Reynolds, Mrs. Henion, and Miss Moore cited specific texts that they have purchased as a way to enhance their repertory of strategies. In general, techniques and strategies related to classroom management are learned primarily by trial and error.

The looking across cases section is intended to reflect the similarities among participants that were present in each classroom management category that I observed. As noted previously, there were many similarities in the classroom management techniques used by these five teachers. However, even the similarities had varying degrees of nuances. For example, each teacher referenced the fact that he or she manages his or her classroom according to his or her beliefs as well as the classroom’s composition and students’ needs. I also believe that the variations of similar practices correlate with the teacher’s dispositions and personalities. A final factor is the relationship between the teacher, other teachers, and school administration. In each classroom, the extent of issues related to school mandates,
educator collaboration, and personal reflections contributes to the trial and error process of each teacher's approach to classroom management.
Chapter Five: Summary, Conclusions and Recommendations

As I began this study, I believed that there would be significant differences in classroom management techniques between teachers, grade levels, and school districts. Instead, I discovered that there were more similarities than differences. This does not mean that all of the teacher participants approached classroom management in the same way. In fact, there were many considerations that influenced the teachers’ final management plan. They needed to know their students, work within constraints of their school, and execute techniques that were suitable to their personalities and dispositions. I include a summary of the findings listed in chapter four in this chapter along with my personal conclusions from the data and analysis. I conclude the chapter by offering several recommendations for future research.

Summary

The physical environment of each teacher’s classroom was rich with literature and materials to support students’ literacy development. The National Council of Teachers of English (NCTE) agrees with the importance of a print-rich classroom environment. In fact, they urge professionals to provide an environment that includes
a variety of children's literature, such as information books, stories, nursery rhymes, song charts, poems, and books with predictable language and themes familiar to children (Routman, 2000).

I also recognize that there was a support of students' literacy development in the emotional environment of each classroom. The teachers knew their students personally and were able to provide instruction that was suited to their students' needs and interests. Owocki and Goodman (2002) recommend kidwatching as one way to learn more about students. Kidwatching takes place through formal and informal observations which are analyzed in order to shape curriculum and instruction. It was evident to me that each of the teachers in this study practice kidwatching as a way to inform their decision making process.

All five of the teachers used a variety of techniques to help build classroom community early in the school year. Owocki and Goodman (2002) said, “The community must be caring, the environment must be rich, and the children must feel safe to take the kinds of risks that enable them to show their understandings, explore their questions, and work with challenging concepts and materials” (p. 2). The teacher participants attempted to maintain a positive and encouraging demeanor even in the
presence of inappropriate student behaviors. Positive reinforcement was the primary means of encouraging intrinsic motivation in the students. However, incentives and rewards were used occasionally to inhibit students’ inappropriate behaviors and promote positive ones.

Scheduling was another area of classroom management that the teachers used efficiently to support students’ literacy development. The teachers were careful to provide literacy instruction in lengthy blocks of time in order to provide all of the elements of balanced literacy. Alvermann, Swafford and Montero (2004) are advocates of integrating literacy into the content areas. They said, “When you provide literacy instruction that connects a child’s everyday experiences with learning from content area texts, you are almost guaranteeing that such instruction will be motivating and conducive to maintaining high interest and engaged learning” (p. 14).

To some extent, the five teachers integrated literacy skills into other content areas to give students additional exposure and practice.

Each of the teachers had specific expectations and procedures for transitioning between the scheduled activities. Students were given plenty of opportunities to practice transitions at the beginning of the year. This helped students prepare for
transitions and to complete them in the most efficient manner possible. Efficient transitions allowed the teachers to take advantage of the maximum amount of instructional time available during the school day.

The teachers provided literacy instruction in a variety of ways. Four of the teachers—Mr. Reynolds, Mrs. Henion, Miss Moore and Miss Burke—used school mandated literacy programs but were allowed to use the materials selectively to the advantage of the students. They all attempted to deliver a balanced literacy program; however, the allotment of time for each activity varied by teacher. Both whole group instruction for general literacy concepts and small group instruction for guided reading and literacy centers were used. The small groups were homogeneous for guided reading and heterogeneous for most other activities. Whether small group or whole group instruction, teachers considered the needs of the students as they differentiated instruction in order to provide the appropriate amount of challenge and independence.

Providing appropriate rules, consequences and routines in the classroom was the foremost means of behavior management for these teachers. They all established classroom rules during the first week and most of them elicited input from the
students. The students were then provided with frequent opportunities for practicing the procedures and were given immediate feedback regarding both positive and negative behaviors. As a means of monitoring student behaviors, all of the teachers had one prominent behavior management plan. Individual student plans were developed for students with extreme behavior issues.

The pattern set by teacher preparation programs and school districts for professional development regarding classroom management indicates that it is less of a priority than strategies related to assessment, subject matter or content. Although classroom management is considered highly important to many teachers, they are often left to “discover their own path” through trial and error methods. All five teachers in this study were testaments to this fact. I hope that my research will be an additional resource that teachers can use when creating their own plan. The ideas provided through the case studies as well as the resources that I cited may be references that other teachers find useful.

Conclusions

In addition to the specific similarities among the teachers that I have listed
above, I discovered some general conclusions from my analysis of the data, which I present in Figure 5.1. These conclusions are a combination of recommendations by the teachers and core techniques used by each of them in their classroom management plan.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>General Conclusions</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Know the students and what works best for them.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Build community by fostering good character traits, supporting each other, collaborative groups, and creating rules together.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Establish a good foundation at the beginning of year for expectations, rules and consequences</td>
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<tr>
<td>Maintain high expectations for behavior as well as academics.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Encourage intrinsic motivation through the use of positive feedback instead of rewards.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Provide structure and consistency to allow for student independence.</td>
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<td>Reflect on past experiences in order to make improvements.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Allow flexibility to make adjustments as needed.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Differentiate instruction to provide optimal challenge and independence.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scaffold instruction to move students forward academically.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Collaborate with students, families, teachers and administration.</td>
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</table>

**Figure 5.1: General Conclusions of Effective Classroom Management Techniques**
I have drawn three main themes from these conclusions: supportive and encouraging environment, engaging and appropriate instruction, and collaboration with available education and family supports.

**Supportive and Encouraging Environment**

First and foremost, the teachers in this study invested a significant amount of time and energy to provide a supportive and encouraging environment for their students. In fact, when discussing features of environment during my interview with Miss Moore (5/29/09) she said, "I didn't realize I had all these in place. I guess it's just second nature now. I know what needs to be done and I just go ahead and do it."

The teachers spent time getting to know their students and what works best for them. This was the teachers' primary consideration when creating a classroom management plan. The beginning of the school year was dedicated to building a classroom community, expressing expectations, and establishing rules. This coincided with holding high expectations for students' behavior and academics. Immediate, positive feedback was used to promote intrinsic motivation so that students did not become
reliant on rewards or consequences. Throughout the year, the teachers provided as much structure and consistency as possible to enable student independence and success. However, teachers reflected on past experiences and were flexible in order to make improvements as needed. It was sometimes difficult to do this during the course of a busy day but finding time to reflect helped these teachers to modify their management techniques in order to maximize productive outcomes. Realizing his or her strengths and needs, teaching styles and dispositions also helped lead to a better understanding of how the classroom community is functioning.

**Engaging and Appropriate Instruction**

A second overarching conclusion resulting from this study was that the teachers provided instruction that was effective with the needs of their students. The teachers continuously observed and assessed students in order to provide appropriate differentiated instruction which allowed for optimal challenge and independence. In order to move students forward, teachers scaffolded instruction, which enabled students to practice new concepts with guidance from an adult.
Collaboration with Available Education and Family Supports

Finally, there was consistent collaboration with students, families; teachers and administration which helped to make all aspects of classroom management run more smoothly. Brainstorming with other professionals helped these teachers to expand their repertoire of available management techniques. In some cases, brainstorming may also be beneficial in the creation of new and improved techniques. Collaboration with families also helped teachers to better understand their students and to create a cohesive bond between education and home.

Discussion

Many of the topics discussed in this study were not new to me. However, my in-depth observations and analysis across a variety of teachers, grade levels, and school districts have helped reinforce the importance of each. The fact that multiple teachers use these techniques speaks for itself. These are techniques that have been used and trusted over the years and throughout the teachers’ careers. My research can only help support and recommend the use of these techniques to other teachers as well as myself. As I began my study, I wanted to discover classroom management
techniques that I could use to promote effective literacy instruction. I also wanted to know which ones to avoid. I knew that classroom management is an area that creates stress in the classroom and is, unfortunately, often overlooked in teacher preparation. Like the teachers in my study, I have not been exposed to professional development in classroom management. I used my research as an independent study plan for collecting ideas on classroom management.

**My Plan for the Future**

In addition to the findings that I have presented, I have a multitude of other information that will help me to mold my own classroom management plan. The one teacher in my study who had attended a course on classroom management shared the binder she created as her own preliminary classroom plan with me. She said that she still refers to it from time to time for specific ideas. I plan to create a similar binder with my own evolving plan and recommend that other new teachers do the same. It could be beneficial for new teachers to begin with a management plan that they feel comfortable with maintaining. As they get to know their students, they will likely need to make adjustments as needed, but starting with something in place could be
Recommendations for Future Research

Study Replication

My study provides a small glimpse of the vast number of classroom management techniques that teachers use in their work with students. Future research on the topic of classroom management specifically related to literacy instruction will help teachers to learn about the variety of techniques used in the field. I recommend that other researchers conduct studies similar to mine in a variety of classroom settings. My study represents a small sample of teachers across several grade levels. I worked with teachers in western New York; three of the teachers attended the same university for their teacher preparation program. Other institutions may provide alternative instructional techniques that would influence the overall classroom management style of the teachers.

Exploring these and other possibilities might reveal trends in teacher preparation programs. Future research that explores different teacher participants at different grade levels would, most likely, provide different conclusions. However,
repetitive findings over a variety of samples would signify those techniques and strategies which are most effective in classroom management.

**Long-term Studies**

I also recommend that further research be conducted over the course of an entire school year to study the development of teacher management techniques as the teacher modifies his or her methods in relationship to his or her students. What choices, for example, does a teacher make over time as he or she gets to know his or her students? Also, a long-term study involving a single teacher’s changing management plan over multiple years of teaching would add another perspective to the entire concept of classroom management development.

To conclude, this study was beneficial to my personal exploration of classroom management techniques. I believe that an effective classroom management plan should be an essential element in every classroom teacher’s repertory. The components that comprise the plan have the ability to effect each student’s literacy development. Therefore, it is crucial that teachers be knowledgeable about the various techniques that may be used successfully in promoting this development.
rather than hindering it.

In conclusion, literacy is one of the most valuable assets of a person’s life and schools are devoted to improving each of their students’ literacy capacity.

Conducting this study has enabled me to see that working in combination with parents and students can contribute to each student’s literacy success through the use of classroom management techniques, methods and strategies that authentically support the student’s abilities to move forward. Effective classroom management is more than just the control of student behaviors. It is the act of discovering how to piece together various elements within the classroom to create a supportive learning environment for all students. The combination of exemplary literacy instruction and exceptional classroom management is the key to fostering students’ literacy success.
Appendix A. Observation Record, p. 1

**Observation Notes**

**Grade:** 

**Date:** 

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Categories Observed</th>
<th>Analysis/Reflections</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Class size:</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Physical environment:</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Emotional environment:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Materials:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Student groupings (Whole group, small group, cooperative groups, partner, independent):
Transitions:

Daily Schedule:

Time per day for each literacy activity and examples of activity structure:
- Read Aloud
- Shared Reading
- Guided Reading
- Independent Reading
- Shared Writing
- Independent Writing
- Literacy Centers

Instructional format (ex. Hands on, worksheets, independent, teacher directed, etc.):

Class Rules:

Management Plan(s):

Other:
Interview Questions

Grade: __________
Date: __________

1. How many years of teaching experience do you have at this grade level?

2. How many years of teaching experience do you have at other grade levels?
   What grade levels were they?

3. What do you do about students who have a difficult time focusing on a literacy activity? (How do you refocus these students?)

4. What classroom management techniques have you altered due to your increased teaching experience? Why?

5. How much time do you spend on behavior problems daily?

6. What types of behavior problems require most of your attention?
Appendix B. Teacher Interview, p. 2

7. How do you structure each of the following to promote effective literacy instruction and student learning?
   - Physical environment
   - Emotional environment
   - Schedule
   - Student Groupings
   - Transitions
   - Rules
   - Management Plan
   - OR Ask this question regarding read aloud, guided reading, etc.?

8. What is your biggest challenge in teaching literacy?

9. What is your biggest success in teaching literacy?

10. What classroom management training have you received?

11. Other
References


