Classroom Management’s Effects on Students and Teachers

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25 October, 2023
Abstract

Classroom management is one of the foundational aspects of any successful classroom. As of now, many teachers are entering into their first year of teaching without enough knowledge on classroom management (Poznanski et al., 2018). This study dives into how new teachers have been known to struggle with implementing these strategies successfully in their first years in the classroom. There is a clear lack of classroom management education for pre-service teachers, which sets them up for hardships. In turn, this not only affects the learning environment for students, but the experience for the teacher as a whole. This study examines classroom management education, teacher retention issues in the current education system, student outcomes as a result of these issues, as well as possible solutions to these problems.

Keywords: management, retention, outcomes
Classroom management is closely related to teachers' professional development, therefore the basis in which they build off of is important. In our current educational system, students are to obtain a bachelor's degree and a post graduate credential in order to work as a teacher (California Commission on Teacher Credentialing). Traditionally, the year of post graduate credentialing is meant to teach pre-service teachers about what is expected of them in the profession (Nancy Joseph, 2004). This includes many aspects, including classroom management. With each case, however, credential students may have drastically different experiences. Some may learn copious amounts of essential knowledge from their cooperating teacher, while others feel they lack knowledge. Credential students may have different experiences based on where they obtain their education, and credential. Although some feel prepared for the classroom, studies show that many new teachers feel unprepared for how to effectively manage their students to the best of their abilities.

In an unmanaged classroom, one may notice disruptive behavior, loud students, low retention rates, and stressed relationships between teacher and students. Although this study aims to detect the effects on students, it is important to note how this affects the teacher, and their longevity in the profession. Teacher retention is a pressing issue in the current education system. Those who are new to the profession may be blindsided by what the day to day responsibilities look like. The steps in which pre-service teachers take to prepare may not align with the realities of the classroom. Teaching students is a task that requires much self motivation. Teachers are more than likely prepared for the realities of this when they enter the profession. However, when not given the tools needed to be successful, they are faced with hardships that ultimately may push them out of the profession entirely. Having relevant education, such as CM practices, may help to solve part of the issue schools are facing with teacher retention.
Students need structure in order to be successful in the classroom. Especially in elementary education, student success is dependent on the environment in which they learn. When a teacher lacks in CM skills, the students in turn suffer. My exploration has included how this affects student outcomes (behavior, learning, etc.). Student behavior is very dependent on what they are, and are not allowed to do. These boundaries are tested over time, and it is up to the teacher to ensure student behavior does not overwhelm the room, or become distracting to other students. Teacher influence plays a role in student growth, and modeling what is expected of students should be done immediately. Sadly when this is not done it becomes hard for teachers to enforce structure after the fact. In effective CM, the teacher will establish expectations, rules, and procedures on the first day of school, and model good behavior for students. This sets up students for success, as they know what is expected of them and know what is, and isn't allowed. Having structure for students maximizes time on task, attention, respect, and fluidity of the room. This issue affects not only the teachers that are entering the profession, but the students in which they teach. It is important to set up all parties included for success, and as a future teacher myself I hope to bring awareness to this subject.

Statement of Problem

In primary school, students rely on structure to keep them focused, and on task. Although some of this is naturally self induced, much of it relies on environmental factors. (Tony Loughland et al. 2003) The teacher's ability to curate a structured room in which students thrive can be traced to their classroom management skills, as well as their personal motivation to execute these skills (Dickie T, et al. 2014). How do teachers begin to create this environment for their students? As of now, many teachers are entering into their first year of teaching without enough knowledge on classroom management (Poznanski, B et al. 2018). Although this in itself
is an issue, this study will also focus on how it has negative effects on student behavior, as well as learning outcomes. For my research I have proposed the question: how does the lack of classroom management affect student outcomes negatively, and what actions may be implemented to ensure first year teachers are prepared?

All children naturally push their limits to learn what is allowed and how to act in any setting. This is how they navigate the world, and is not the issue at hand. With little routine in place at the beginning of a school year, students are allowed to push these limits past the point of repair. This in turn has a negative effect on both student outcomes, as well as the teachers' experience in their first year of teaching (Korpershoek et al. 2016). I have witnessed classrooms in which there were first year teachers with little experience which brought this topic to my attention. Even further, the lack of awareness on this topic is what has pushed me into studying it myself.

**Justification of the Study**

With more teachers taking unconventional routes such as an internship, there is a higher rate of first year teachers entering the classroom with no experience (McKibbin, M. D. (2001). There are external reasons many are choosing to take these unconventional routes. With teacher shortages in many areas, graduates are being asked to take on teaching positions with an emergency credential, meaning they jump into teaching alone with little experience (McKibbin, 2001). With the current structure of student teaching in California, many cannot afford to both student teach and pay tuition, pushing them into internships. As of now, our education system relies heavily on student teaching to relay classroom management skills and knowledge to new teachers. This, however, is not reliable, as all potential teachers have different experiences in this process.
Positionality

As a future educator myself, the topic of classroom management has been a pressing issue in my own observations. I have worked in multiple classrooms, and have noticed the impact it makes on students' learning environments. In the professional setting active teachers have relayed its importance, as well as their own experiences. As a student, I am aware of the lack of classroom management education in undergraduate settings. As a peer I am aware of how many are leaping into internships, and how this affects their abilities to manage their students effectively. As the daughter of an elementary school administrator, I am aware of teacher retention issues and how this affects schools and students as a whole. This topic is not only urgent, but not spoken about enough. Effective classroom management can create a healthy environment for both students and teachers. On the other end of this argument, the lack of classroom management can do the opposite. With classroom management being at the heart of so many successful classrooms, I have chosen to do my research on its effects and how teachers can be better prepared to implement these practices and strategies into their professions.

Literature Review

This study aims to explore how the lack of classroom management (CM) affects student outcomes, as well as how new teachers may be successful in this field. How can pre-service teachers be set up for success? Through my review of literature, I dove into how these research studies relate and support my problem of practice. In my review, I noticed many themes that directly relate to my overarching question: how does the lack of classroom management affect student outcomes, and what actions may be implemented to ensure first year teachers are prepared? The three themes I will describe below are the lack of classroom management education, teacher retention, and the effects of classroom management on student outcomes.
Lack of Classroom Management Education

Teacher preparation programs are tasked with providing pre-service teachers with the skills needed to succeed in the classroom. “Research has shown that classroom management strategies have an impact on student achievement; however, teacher education programs often lack the courses and hands-on experiences needed to prepare future teachers for the classroom strategies they will need to be effective in today’s world” Rebecca Rockey(2008). In the wide spectrum of classroom roles and responsibilities, it is vital that CM practices are implemented, as it enhances all other aspects of the classroom. Rockey found that many preparation programs do not implement courses specific to classroom management, and most of the time it is skimmed over as a course topic. There are many courses that need to be completed to become a credentialed teacher. Candidates go through many years of schooling, credentialing, and testing to make it into the profession. It is a pressing issue that a topic as relevant and important as CM skills get skimmed over in the process. Research shows that in order to be successful in management, there are a number of specific strategies that can move behavior in the right direction. Rockey states, “Thus the only way for the pre-service teacher candidates to contextualize classroom management and utilize judgment, adaptability, and flexibility along with reasoning, deliberation, and decision-making is to utilize what they learn theoretically in their coursework simultaneously with practical application in the field setting.” This directly supports the idea that teachers should be able to obtain all the skills necessary during their extensive schooling.

Andrea Flower, and colleagues (2017) found that many teacher preparation programs are not preparing teachers for the challenges they will face. The authors believe in evidence-based strategies for controlling behaviors. In this study, 74 teacher preparation programs were
surveyed. They state, “An average of 54% of teacher certification programs reported that they covered behavioral assessment within their courses of study. Again, college/university special education certification programs offered this content most frequently (78.70%)” Flower, A. et al. (2017). These findings show that this subject tends to be skimmed over, and deemed as an unimportant aspect of preparing for the profession.

Jennifer Freeman and colleagues (2014) believe that pre-service teachers are not given the necessary tools for adequate behavior management. There has been no issues with identifying management practices, and studying how students may react to these practices. Rather, there is a gap between this information, and what teacher preparation programs are relaying to pre-service teachers. In a sample, it was found that “Within individual certification areas, teacher preparation programs may provide even less support: only 16% of sampled secondary teacher preparation programs, 27% of sampled special educator preparation programs, and 4% of sampled physical educator preparation programs contained a specific classroom management course. It has been found that sampled programs emphasized reactive, rather than proactive, strategies” (Freeman, J. et al. (2014). Through these studies I can conclude that teachers, most of the time, are in fact unprepared in classroom management practices.

**Teacher Turnover**

Within the last 20 years, there have been numerous studies aimed to determine what causes teachers to leave the profession early on in their careers. Ingersoll, R. M. (2001) found that age plays a large role in teacher turnover. Young teachers are more likely to leave the profession. Rates of turnover drop after five years, and then spike up again, close to retirement. I can conclude from this, that the reasons first year teachers are leaving the profession are different from those who are close to retirement. “The relative odds of young teachers departing are 171%
higher than for middle aged teachers” Ingersoll, R. M. (2001). This article gives relevant insight into turnover rates of young teachers, and the issue this brings.

“One recently reported study of 13,000 teachers in Michigan showed that 15% left after two years; an additional 9% quit within three; and by the end of five years, a total of 38% had left the profession. After the sixth year, only 56% were still teaching.” (Kelly, J. (1997) These numbers are shocking. Although there are numerous reasons as to why teachers are leaving the profession, the lack of classroom management is a factor that cannot be dismissed. When teachers enter the profession unprepared, it is not likely they will last. Many teachers do not make it through an entire school year, which directly affects students. The constant ‘revolving door’ of teachers creates an unstable environment for students. Teachers in this study were asked, “What recommendations would you make to improve the quality of teacher education programs?” 29% said ‘more emphasis on classroom management’, 22% said ‘more early classroom teaching or field experiences or practice prior to students teaching’, and 21% said ‘two semesters of student teaching & start-end with public school calendar.’ (Kelly, J. (1997). This connects teacher turnover, and lack of preparation.

Bolich, A. M. (2001) dives into how we can keep teachers in the classroom, and set them up for success. “After five years, nearly half of new teachers left teaching in the state where they began teaching, according to SREB supply and demand studies. Nationally, more than 30 percent of new teachers leave the classroom by the end of their fifth year” Bolich, A. M. (2001). There are many efforts to recruit teachers into the profession. However, do these efforts contradict themselves when these teachers do not stay? This study gives insight into why teachers are leaving, and how pre-service teachers may be set up for success. Bolich, A. M. (2001) states that one third to one half of students who have obtained their bachelor's degrees are employed right
out of college. These students do not feel adequately prepared in classroom management, or discipline. It has been shown that these graduates do not believe their preparation programs taught them useful skills for the field. “A Public Agenda survey sampled K-12 public school teachers throughout the nation who had no more than five years of experience. Sixty-two percent of these new teachers said that their preparation program did a "fair" or "poor" job of preparing them to deal with the pressures and stress of teaching” Bolich, A. M. (2001). These findings are relevant to my problem of practice, as they show statistics in which real teachers express their link between preparedness, and teacher turnover.

**Classroom Management’s Effects on Student Outcomes**

Gage, N. A. et al. (2018), focuses on how classroom management can have a positive effect on student behavior outcomes. Classroom management has much to do with student engagement and student behaviors. New teachers can use this to their advantage when in their beginning years. The result of the analysis shows that there is a direct link between student engagement, and classroom management. The analysis focuses on the negative impact of below average classroom management. “This finding, based on a large sample of classroom observations, supports the importance of the classroom management practices and suggests that students educated in the classrooms of teachers with average and above average classroom management profiles are more highly engaged than students in classes taught by teachers with low rates of classroom management and low interaction profiles” Gage, N. A. et al. (2018). This is relevant to my research, as it provides evidence of the link between classroom management, and student outcomes.

Postholm, M. B. (2013) believes there are multiple purposes for classroom management. Establishing a positive environment in which students can thrive, as well as the contribution it
makes to their development in ways such as moral and emotional. Although there is limited research on these topics in comparison to others, the findings are cohesive. The author relays the notion that it is necessary for classroom management to be present, when creating a productive, positive classroom. The analysis suggests that teachers who have unmanaged classrooms do not know how to correctly redirect students, therefore retreat to punishment. This aggression creates a negative atmosphere and is hard to correct. “The teacher’s main duty is to facilitate and maintain pupil cooperation in the ongoing activities and that this is what organizes and creates life in the classroom. In such a perspective, classroom management is about creating conditions that involve the pupils in subject activities” Postholm, M. B. (2013). This article shows the reader that classroom management does more than handle behavior in the classroom, but it controls the learning environment as a whole. This correlation is relevant to this theme, as it shows how students are collectively affected by positive CM.

Korpershoek, H., et al. (2016), believes the definition of classroom management is ‘the actions teachers take to create a supportive environment for the academic and social emotional learning of students. Once again, supporting the idea that classroom management is not only aimed to control behavior. The author is in favor of preventative strategies to control behavior, as well as positive reinforcement strategies. In this analysis, the author focused on how CMS can have an affect on student behavior as well as learning outcomes. Enhancing student performance academically is one of the hidden features classroom management has the ability to do. Within the 47 studies reviewed in this article, many had similar results. “We would like to stress that understanding the link between classroom management and social-emotional development seems to be of particular importance for
(student) teachers. Better social and emotional skills have positive effects on various educational outcomes at the individual student level” (Korpershoek, H., et al. (2016). This analysis provides insight into the link between various student outcomes, and CM practices.

**Conclusion**

In my review of literature, I ran into many relevant themes relating to my problem of practice. Classroom management education plays a huge role in future students outcomes, both academically and socially. Without this preparation, teachers may struggle in their first years. This directly relates to teacher turnover and is a factor that is affecting new teachers in their early years. Students do not get to choose the environment in which they learn. Having the skills to create a positive, fluid learning environment is something that all students deserve. By implementing specific practices into teacher preparation programs, we may see progress in these areas. As I move forward with my community partner interview, I hope to further deepen my understanding of this topic, as well as gain new insights from the experience of the current educator I speak with.

**Methodology**

The following section introduces the theoretical framework of this paper, choice study. It also includes a semi-structured interview with a veteran teacher. I conducted the interview based upon a list of questions, with the assumption that it would spark conversation. *Appendix A* includes the questions used in this interview.

**Theoretical Framework**

Choice theory is a framework that suits my problem, with my topic being centered around classroom management. “The theory is based on the five basic principles of human needs. William Glasser identified survival, belonging, freedom, power and fun as the driving force
behind displaying desirable or undesirable behavior in the classroom.” (Manoj Praveen G et al, 2017). Some may know this as control theory, as ultimately this aims for the teacher to gain control of student behavior. Teachers lay out expectations for students with the hope they will hold themselves to high standards. Although teachers cannot ensure this happens, choice theory believes they can play a part in directing students to make good choices on their own. This brings a sense of self for the student, and ultimately results in positive results. Choice theory also brings in the base level needs of students. Students' basic needs must be met before they can be expected to achieve higher goals. “The need for survival includes food, shelter, physical comfort, etc. are the basis for human functioning. If the survival need is unsatisfactory then the students in the classroom may not feel safe and secure.” Gabriel & Matthews (2011). This theory dives deeper than surface level behavior, which is needed in today's classrooms. Behavior is a matter of personal choice because a learner’s behavior is based on their choices (Glasser, 1998).

**Community Partner Interview**

In my exploration through my problem of practice, I have naturally had many thoughts and questions arise. With my research being classroom management’s effects on student outcomes, every teacher may have an opinion based on their own experience. For my community partner interview, I chose an individual that has shown exemplary classroom management skills, and is highly respected among staff and students. Working at East Elementary School, this teacher has had thirty years of classroom experience through her time teaching kindergarten, third, and fifth grade. She is a highly respected professional, as well as a stellar teacher.

I started out the interview with a straightforward question, aiming to gauge her thoughts on what she notices about new teachers regarding classroom management. She informed me that there are usually many misunderstandings about communication between teachers and students.
She believes that it is natural for people, in general, to raise their voice when getting frustrated or upset in any way. This in turn is usually what new teachers resort to when behavioral issues arise. Instead, she believes communicating expectations and staying firm with those expectations is more effective. If a teacher raises their voice too often, the students stop responding to it as a management tactic. She believes that positive, functional classroom management does not require you to raise your voice. Many confuse firm classroom management with being mean, although the two are completely unrelated.

The next question prompts her thoughts on what she believes plays the largest role in managing behavior. In her own personal experience, she believes that organization and structure are the best ways to ensure student behavior stays on track. She believes that positive, functional classroom management stems from being in tune with students, and where they are in terms of attention. Zoning in on the idea of first year teachers specifically, she notes how important it is to establish these expectations. Creating a relationship with students is highly important, but so is gaining and keeping their respect. First year teachers are at a disadvantage immediately, if they do not establish this aspect of their classroom culture. Children tend to naturally push their boundaries, it is part of how they learn their environment. As teachers, it is also our responsibility to guide them through this process in a way that is going to benefit both the teacher and student in terms of having a safe, stimulating learning environment.

When asked about how this directly affects student learning, my community partner firmly believes that it all comes down to time on task. One of the great things about classroom management practices is that they allow students to stay on task for longer periods of time. When the room is noisy, students are not on task, and the teacher is scrambling to fix these issues, it
takes away from the potential time that students have to dedicate to their learning. Having structure eliminates many of these issues and distractions.

Following this, my community partner noted that she has noticed a huge shift in student behavior in the last six to eight years. With this, it is more important than ever to ensure our new teachers are prepared for what they are entering. There are more obstacles than ever before, much of which are hard for even veteran teachers to overcome. She believes there are a higher number of students in need of exterior support. She relays her opinion that new teachers are not given all the skills they need to succeed in the first year. I asked her what solutions she believes may fix this problem. Although it is hard to pinpoint, there are many things that can be done in preparation. Having management courses in undergraduate requirements that studies this specifically, may help teachers to understand what is to come. For those who do student teaching, create an entire space focused on building up your own future management tactics. For those going into internships, it is a little more complicated due to not having this experience.

This interview gave me immense insight into today's classroom. My community partner was so gracious in her advice, as well as her honesty. Many of the topics that are being researched and discussed are those in which are measurable, and can be made into statistics. Many of the questions I brought to this interview were open ended, prompting her to take it in any direction. Her ideas fit perfectly in line with what knowledge I have acquired thus far. Having a look at an outside source's opinions gives individuality to my research.

**Findings and Discussion**

Here I will discuss the relationship between my exploration of literature and my findings from my community partner interview. Not only is classroom management important, and the basis of an efficient classroom, but it is an aspect that highly influences the experiences of
teachers. Initially, my assumption was that it only boils down to lack of CM education in credential programs. I have since recognized that there are many factors that play a part in this issue.

My community partner gave insight into reasons students are skipping the traditional route of student teaching entirely. After four years of school, students are put in the position of not only paying tuition for an extra year, but they are expected to do it alongside countless volunteer hours. From a financial standpoint, many are unable to afford this and seek alternate routes. My community partner relayed her knowledge of student teachers whom students teach all day, attend class in the evening, and work night shifts just to make ends meet. This shows me that the current system is not working in the way it is meant. Through my research, this has been one of the recurring issues relating to teachers' preparedness. This directly relates to the ideas of Bolich, A. M. (2001) as he states that one third to one half of students who have obtained their bachelor's degrees are employed right out of college. These students do not feel adequately prepared in classroom management, or discipline.

Through my study of literature, one of the things I found to be most pressing was that of how classroom management affects the efficiency of learning in the classroom. My community partner relayed the ideas that efficiency ultimately affects time on task, as well as the environment in which students learn. It does not only affect behavior in students, but CM can be used to nurture students strengths. Korpershoek, H., et al. (2016), agrees and believes the definition of classroom management is the actions teachers take to create a supportive environment for the academic and social emotional learning of students.

Within these correlations, it can be hard to state that this is the case for all teachers. Teaching is an experience that is unique to a given teacher, students, and school. Knowing this, I
was able to pose questions in my interview that were directed towards teachers in their first few years in the classroom. I was also able to narrow down literature that had this same point of view. Both my community partner, as well as the authors included in my literature review, agree that teacher retention is an issue that most commonly arises in one's early career. “The relative odds of young teachers departing are 171% higher than for middle aged teachers” Ingersoll, R. M. (2001).

Conclusion

Classroom management has many effects on both the students and teacher. In this exploration I dove into these correlations with the intention of relaying the importance of this subject. With so many teachers struggling in their first years in the classroom, it is imperative that they are set up with all the tools necessary to succeed. Within my research, I hoped to not only diagnose this problem, but to find solutions that are applicable to an individual student. In my interview, I received first hand advice on this problem, as well as new insights as to what is happening inside of the classroom currently. Implementing the theoretical framework, choice study, into the classroom can ensure that all student needs are being addressed before moving forward with other strategies. Giving students the tools they need to want to be better, is a long term solution to behavioral issues. For future or current educators, staying in tune with students as well as staying on top of classroom management practices, may help to ensure both the students and teacher have comfort and support in the classroom.

Implications and Recommendations

Although this problem would be more efficiently addressed from an educational standpoint, I do not believe it will be changed anytime soon. Instead, I aim to help those in my same position to find ways in which they can prepare themselves for this aspect of their careers.
Along with online classroom management courses, there are many books that are aimed to relay information to teachers. Many of these books are written by experts in the field, as well as teachers themselves. Leaning on mentors, as well as colleagues can also be helpful. If needing advice as a whole, seek the words of a veteran teacher who has experience in all different scenarios. If needing help with a specific student, seek the advice of their prior teachers. If possible, lean on administration for help with resources such as paraeducators and aids.

Classroom management aims to promote active learning, and incorporating social emotional practices may help to increase the quality of learning in a given classroom. Creating relationships with students, and supporting them in the ways they need can look different on a case to case scenario.

Using choice theory in order to provide students with self motivation, may help to create a positive atmosphere to create positive change. Staying consistent and organized will ensure students and teachers have the tools necessary to thrive. Creating a routine for students will make them feel secure and comfortable in the room. Implementing external tools can be a huge help. Teachers may use reward systems and classroom jobs to keep community and individuality in their rooms. Many teachers implement visual timers, attention getters (doorbell), and voice level lights into their rooms to ensure timeliness and current expectations. Creating routines at dismissal times will ensure accountability of each student. Nonetheless, each classroom is unique in its needs. In all, remember that although you may prepare yourself to the best of our abilities, it is inevitable and okay to fail. It is how we grow and learn. Teaching is an evolving process, and it is important to give yourself grace through that process.
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Appendices

Appendix A

Questions: Community Partner

What have you noticed about new teachers in terms of understanding classroom management?

Do you think student teaching prepares new teachers for managing their own classroom?

What do you think of internships without classroom experience?

How have you come to where you are in terms of class structure?

How do the different grades you have taught differ from one another?

Did you learn new management ideas from teaching these different grades?

How long did it take, as a new teacher, for you to create your class structure?

How do you believe classroom management affects student behavior?

How do you believe classroom management affects classroom learning?

Is there any advice you would give to new teachers to boost classroom productivity and motivation?