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Teachers' Perceptions of Teach for America Training and Classroom Management in Urban Middle Schools

Tenechia Platt
Walden University

Walden University

COLLEGE OF EDUCATION

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Tenechia L. Platt

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Chief Academic Officer

Eric Riedel, Ph.D.

Walden University

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Tenechia Platt

EdS Leadership, Nova Southeastern University, 2009

MEd, Mercer University, 2007

BS, Albany State University, 2001

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Abstract

Teach for America (TFA) is an alternative certification program that recruits and trains

college graduates and places them in urban public school settings to combat teacher

shortage and to decrease achievement disparities between urban and suburban school

districts. Teachers prepared by the TFA program have struggled to establish and

maintain effective classroom management. The purpose of this case study was to explore

TFA teachers' perceptions of the emphasis placed on classroom management during their

TFA training and to identify strategies that were taught to assist TFA teachers working in

urban middle schools. The conceptual framework for the study was comprised of

Bandura's self-efficacy and culturally responsive classroom management. The sample

consisted of 10 TFA teachers employed in a public school district for 2 years or less.

Data were gathered through teacher interviews. Constant comparative analysis was used

to analyze the data, and the TFA documents were used to cross-reference the analysis of

the interview data. According to study results, TFA teachers perceived the TFA

preparation program to lack training and practical classroom management strategies. To

address this need for additional training about culturally responsive teaching and cultural

awareness, a 3-month professional development training designed. This project provides

a plan to assist TFA teachers with understanding the culture of urban students and being

able to implement applicable classroom management strategies. The project could

enhance cultural awareness for TFA teachers in the TFA teacher training program and

improve the area of classroom management.

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Section 1: The Problem

Introduction

Teach for America (TFA) is one of the most widely recognized teacher

certification programs devoted to addressing teacher shortages in urban schools and

increasing academic achievement for low income and/or students of color. These goals

are accomplished by recruiting U.S. top college graduates defined as students with

reported SAT scores of 1310 and grade point averages of 3.5 or higher (Lapayese,

Aldana, & Lara, 2014) and assigning them to under resourced urban school districts

throughout the United States. The mission of TFA is to train teachers for 4 weeks during

the summer preceding their initial employment and to provide continued support over the

first year of teaching. The TFA educators commit to teaching students in kindergarten

through 12th (K-12) grades for 2 years in an urban area. The recruits identified through

the TFA selection process are comparable to successful entrepreneurs, as 10% of the

program's applicants are graduates of Ivy League universities (Labaree, 2010). The

process also is selective, with only 11% of applicants being accepted into the program in

2009 after a 40% increase in applications (Labaree, 2010). Therefore, TFA rigorously

recruits TFA educators from a large pool of individuals that have received education

from some of the best universities in the United States.

Teaching through the TFA alternative teacher certification program offers many

benefits to transitioning college graduates. The TFA teachers who complete 2 years of

teaching in an urban school district receive benefits that are not similar to any other

alternative certification program. These benefits include discounted fees for LSAT and

MCAT prep courses; waived graduate program application fees (Lapayese et al., 2014);

health insurance; retirement benefits; money for student loans; loan forbearance; and paid interest for 2 years, exclusive scholarships, and money for relocation (TFA, 2010). However, many TFA teachers commit to a 2-year program and then pursue their original career goals. The TFA teachers join the program for their own benefit (Lapayese et al., 2014). Although TFA teachers may care about the children they serve, they may not remain in education because they are more concerned with their individual career paths. Serving underprivileged youth could convey a kind, thoughtful, and caring individual to future employers. Essentially, the TFA experience can be used to further an individual's long-term professional goals.

TFA does not appear to provide support for an urban population of students. Lapayese et al. (2014) suggested that the TFA organization is focused more on providing a resume padding experience for its educators than providing education for students in urban areas. The practice of TFA does the opposite of its mission. According to Osgood (2014), TFA supporters suggested that the program addressed the lack of qualified teachers in low income areas; however, TFA did little to minimize the chances that students in low income areas were taught by an inexperienced teacher. In research obtained from teachers of color, Lapayese et al. (2014) revealed that the majority (90%) of students taught by TFA teachers was Black or African American, Hispanic or Latino, or American Indian, but only 24% of the teachers recruited by TFA were Black or African American or Hispanic or Latino. In addition to not recruiting teachers who identify with the students culturally, racially, or ethnically, the TFA also does not present the program as an opportunity for its teachers to begin a lifelong career as an educator. Lapayese et al. (2014) suggested that TFA was presented to potential applicants as a step

to other more financially lucrative careers. As a result, many TFA teachers are not truly vested in the education of urban students but participate in the TFA program merely as a strategic career path.

The TFA teacher training may need to improve teacher development of classroom management. According to Heineke, Carter, Desimone, and Cameron (2010), academics and practitioners have questioned TFA's preparation and career expectations of teachers and the impact of having TFA teachers in urban classrooms. After TFA teachers complete a 5-week training session, they are assigned to urban school districts across the United States. The TFA student teacher 5-week training program is rigorous but it fails to allow student teachers the opportunity to receive hands-on teaching experience. In addition to the rigorous training program, TFA teachers obtain a wealth of knowledge that is not mastered during preservice training. The objective of the TFA training program is to produce teachers who can accelerate the readiness and development of urban students but fails to produce teachers who can manage urban students in the fall (Heilig and Jez, 2010).

The TFA program has been implemented in 53 communities in the United States (TFA, 2016). Some of the participants in the TFA program include Houston, Seattle, New Orleans, Atlanta, Chicago, Detroit, and Milwaukee. One of the training sites, Southeastern Public Schools (SPSD), a pseudonym, was the focus of this project study.

Any type of alternative teacher program, such as TFA, offered at the post graduate level includes training on educational strategies and practices (Sandholtz, 2011). As a result, classroom management strategies and practices affect teachers, both in the education realm of society and in other careers. Alternative teacher programs that fail to

instill teachers with routines, organization, or cooperative learning could present difficulty for the teacher in future educational matters. Teacher preparation programs must prepare preservice educators to be highly qualified in their content areas and to be able to nurture learning environments that facilitate academic achievement (Rosas & West, 2010). Marzano (2011) noted that classroom management influences student achievement. A teacher must dedicate time to classroom management in which strategies and practices are implemented to maintain student organization, order, attention, time on task, and to promote an academically challenging environment.

A teacher's ability to manage a classroom has received attention from stakeholders. These stakeholders include reformers, educational leaders, and researchers who are investigating, analyzing, and documenting effective classroom management strategies used by prosperous teachers (Marzano, 2011). The growing importance on classroom management is founded on the overall acknowledgement that effective instruction requires effective classroom management and that solid management skills are the groundwork of resilient teaching (Desimone et al., 2013). No matter the setting, urban or suburban, learning takes places when effective classroom management is established and maintained (Marzano, 2011). According to Heilig and Jez (2010), TFA teachers' implementation of classroom management in urban schools has become the focus of research. Many alternative teacher preparation programs do not prepare teachers with the knowledge and skills needed to provide effective instruction and assessment and to implement classroom management (Tillery, Varjas, Meyers, & Collins, 2010). Marzano (2011) maintained that a lack of classroom management is a weakness for some

TFA teachers. Therefore, TFA program may inadequately prepare some of its teachers to use effective classroom management strategies in urban schools.

Classroom management poses many challenges for novice teachers (Willis, 2015). Teachers are charged with managing and cultivating the students of the 21st century. Hence, effective teaching and the ability to successfully manage a classroom have become significant skills for educators (Moore-Hayes, 2011). The ability to balance both effective teaching and successful classroom management is a challenge for novice and experienced teachers. Classroom management is an element of effective teaching (Fayne & Matthews, 2010), and ineffective classroom management often results in a disrupted learning environment where teaching and learning are impacted negatively (Rosas & West, 2010). Effective classroom management is a growing need, especially in urban public schools. Over the past 25 years, an influx of immigrant students has changed the racial composition of urban classrooms (Ullman & Hecsh, 2011). These students come from Latin American countries, the Middle East, and Asian countries (Ratcliff, Jones, Costner, Savage-Davis, & Hunt, 2010). If teachers are not properly trained to work with diverse students, cultural ignorance only intensify, and discrimination and inequity amongst the minority students may increase (Reiter & Davis, 2011). Minority and urban students are often educated by White teachers who may not be unaware of their students' cultural perspectives (Rosell & Liner, 2012). Students in urban middle schools can benefit the most from effective classroom management.

Middle school is a crucial time in the lives of adolescents. It is at this time that many students decide to either quit school or remain in school and graduate. Students who attend urban middle schools may believe that they are not capable of achieving

success and will perpetuate a self-fulfilling prophecy. Teachers who establish a nurturing environment that promotes academic performance and fosters desired classroom behavior are needed in urban areas (Fayne & Matthews, 2010). Hence, teachers who implement effective classroom management can help students be successful in their classrooms and within the larger community (Rosell & Liner, 2012). For these purposes, in this project study, I focused on examining TFA teachers' perceptions and practices regarding classroom management in urban middle schools.

Definition of the Problem

Some TFA teachers lack classroom management skills and may not be able to manage effectively an urban classroom. According to Garrett (2014), a vast majority of TFA alumni lack classroom management skills. Newly hired TFA teachers often are not prepared to manage classrooms with more than 10 students, and the number of students in urban classroom far exceeds this number. It can be difficult for TFA teachers to manage a classroom with a large number of students, especially when they have not had any practice (Veltri, 2012). There may be a disconnect between teacher preparation programs and theory and practice; consequently, some teachers enter the field with inadequate practical experience (Tillery et al., 2010). According to Roache and Lewis (2011), teacher preparation programs place more emphasis on the theoretical side of classroom management. Teacher preparation programs could be equipped to instruct, model, and provide hands-on applications in classroom management skills. Limited preservice teacher training is geared toward understanding, establishing, or maintaining classroom management. The small amount of time spent on classroom management is

insignificant, ineffective, and unrealistic (Heineke et al., 2010). Some teachers are unprepared to implement classroom management (Allen, 2010).

TFA student teachers are offered behavioral management sessions to teach them how to manage effectively a classroom. These sessions are not attended regularly and are optional. The TFA student teachers rely on their TFA corps member's advisor for guidance. Often, TFA corps member advisors give conflicting advice that leaves the student teacher feeling alone, confused, misguided, and inadequately trained. According to Veltri (2012), effective classroom management is expected to be obtained over time. It is not mastered during teacher training. TFA student teachers are not expected to become proficient in classroom management upon leaving the summer training program. They are, however, expected to apply the strategies learned in the classroom management professional development training to an urban classroom setting. According to Eisenman, Edwards, and Cushman (2015), teacher preparation programs that provide new teachers with actual experiences of resolving classroom management would be beneficial. Unfortunately, the TFA teacher training program does not provide its educators with actual experiences related to classroom management in the urban setting; therefore, many TFA teachers cannot master classroom management strategies when working with students in urban areas.

The majority of teachers in urban areas are White, female teachers from middle class backgrounds (Fayne & Matthews, 2010). Teacher candidates who identify as White and who are from middle class backgrounds may not be informed about the history and culture of other groups in the United States (Fayne & Matthews, 2010). Many teacher education candidates share few of the experiences and cultures of the students that they

usually teach. According to Lapayese et al. (2014), novice teachers are prepared to teach students who share their cultural backgrounds, but are not prepared to teach students who are from minority, immigrant, or low-income backgrounds. Students taught by novice, poorly prepared teachers are at further risk of deficiency, including prolonged patterns of rebellious behavior and behavior disorder (Lapayese et al., 2014). Students in urban schools enter the classroom with varied academic and social needs, and they require a teacher who is acquainted with their upbringing. Instead, TFA teachers are taught classroom management strategies using a blanket approach. TFA teachers are not equipped with the tools needed to work with diverse and at-risk populations (Perry, 2015). Neither classroom training nor student teaching experience adequately prepares TFA teachers for the low income, urban schools where they are placed.

It can be inferred that the TFA teacher training may need improvement. Perry (2015) argued that the TFA program needs revamping in the area of classroom management. Trujillo and Scott (2014) suggested that greater emphasis be placed on classroom management and behavior management when teaching urban students. Behavior management sessions are necessary and could be deemed mandatory (Trujillo & Scott, 2014). Setting realistic goals and incorporating effective management strategies can assist TFA teachers in managing a classroom. In order for teachers to obtain students' cooperation in urban classrooms, the teacher must establish a nurturing environment that supports students' cultural identities and their social, emotional, and cognitive needs (Fayne & Matthews, 2010). When teachers are able to establish a relationship with students formed by building a bond and supported by culture, teachers are more easily able to manage students' behavior.

The Local Problem

In some cases, TFA teachers are not prepared to teach in an urban setting. Their inability to manage a classroom and lack of cultural awareness stifle TFA teachers' ability to increase student achievement (Gay, 2012; Tartwijk & Hammerness, 2011). Cultural awareness associated with urban students and culturally responsive classroom management has been barriers that influence classroom management among TFA teachers (Boutte, 2012). Some TFA teachers lack classroom management strategies and cultural awareness needed to manage students in an urban setting. Despite the TFA *Classroom Management and Culture Toolkit (CMCT)* that serves as a guide to TFA teachers during the TFA teacher preparation, some TFA teachers are prepared to teach in an urban setting (Darling-Hammond, 2011). The TFA teacher preparation training is swift and rigid, and TFA teachers often leave the program unable to implement classroom management in an effective manner.

TFA teachers seem to lack classroom management skills. According to Fayne and Matthews (2012), many urban school districts in the United States have experienced similar issues with unprepared novice teachers as they relate to classroom management and cultural awareness. Moreover, in local school data reports released from a state audit of TFA, an estimated 38% of TFA teachers stayed in their original placement school a third year compared to an estimated 80% of non-TFA teachers (Donaldson & Johnson, 2011). The TFA teachers and traditional teachers were both placed in Title I schools that were located in lower socioeconomic status neighborhoods with 75% or more students

receiving free or reduced lunch. This is an indication that the traditional teacher is more likely to remain in an urban school than is a TFA teacher. It may further be inferred based on the interview data that some TFA teachers are not culturally aware and does not possess the classroom management skills needed to teach in an urban school.

Classroom disruptions may lead to additional behavior problems. Ladson-Billings (2011) claimed that students' behavior problems associated with urban students may influence the teaching and learning environment. Consequently, when misbehavior increases, student success tends to decline (Tartwijk & Hammerness, 2011). Inadvertently, the amount of efficient and effective academic instruction diminishes when misbehavior increases. These concerns represent possible causes of gaps between the TFA *CMCT* and cultural awareness that need to be addressed to help strengthen education in its entirety.

Rationale

Across the United States, the TFA alternative certification program functions in a homogeneous manner. The TFA student teacher receives an intense, yet brief, student teaching experience. The student teaching period supplies a limited focus on classroom management, and TFA student teachers are taught counterproductive management practices rather than strategies needed to maintain ongoing classroom management (Hartnett, 2010). Hartnett (2010) reported that TFA student teachers are reprimanded for failing to recognize positively behaving students and overlooking unruly behavior. Teachers who are able to establish class routines and patterns to impede misbehavior are able to teach more effectively (Greenberg, Putman, & Walsh, 2014). Applying

ineffective short-lived management practices throughout the school year is characteristic of a teacher with limited management experience (Emmer & Stough, 2014).

Classroom management must be effective to foster learning and achievement. A successfully managed classroom results in improved instruction and learning. Conversely, an unsuccessfully managed classroom perpetuates ineffective instruction and diminished learning (Allen, 2010; Marzano, 2011). Allen (2010) revealed that teachers must be equipped with the expertise to develop a climate that contributes to minimal student behavior challenges and supports student learning. Novice teachers should be trained with practical classroom management strategies that are effective with various populations of students. Teachers who implement classroom management strategies that do not cater to the population of students in a school will most likely have challenges.

Because classroom management is an important aspect of teaching, there is a need for more research in this area. Furthermore, it is imperative that researchers explore TFA teachers and classroom management, particularly in urban classrooms, because TFA teachers are usually placed in urban schools. Few researchers have explored classroom management by incorporating the voices of TFA teachers. Therefore, a deeper investigation of the perspectives and practices of in-service TFA teachers is warranted.

Definitions of the Terms

Behavior management cycle (BMC): The BMC is a classroom management strategy that is designed to promote a structured learning environment that will create rituals and routines and minimize disruptive behavior (Canter, 2015).

Classroom management: Classroom management, according to research, includes rules, routines, praise, misbehavior, and engagement, commonly known as the Big Five (Greenberg et al., 2014).

Classroom management strategies: Classroom management strategies are strategies used to manage or change behavior in schools, classrooms, or individual child-focused interventions (Parsonson, 2012).

Corps member advisor (CMA): A CMA serves as the advisor to TFA teachers teaching secondary education, Grades 6-12, during the TFA summer institute. The CMA's main role is to safeguard student teachers and implement the TFA image for effective teaching (TFA, 2015).

Faculty advisor (FA): An FA serves as a master teacher and mentor to student teachers teaching secondary education, Grades 6-12, during the TFA summer institute. The FA's role is to support, guide, and effectively advise newly hired TFA teachers (TFA, 2015).

Georgia Teacher Academy for Preparation and Pedagogy Program (GATAPP): The GATAPP provides nontraditional preparation for teachers (Beare, Torgerson, Marshall, Tracz, & Chiero (2012).

Teach for America (TFA): TFA is an alternative teacher preparation program that seeks to eradicate educational disparities by recruiting top college graduates from across the United States to cultivate students for 2 or more years in low-income, urban areas throughout the United States (TFA, 2015).

*TFA teacher*s: A TFA teacher is a recent college graduate whose path to becoming an educator is through the TFA alternative preparation program (Lapayese et al., 2010).

Urban schools: Urban schools, in most cases, consist of students whose families qualify for free- and reduced-priced lunches and are located in greater metropolitan areas (Catapano & Gray, 2015).

Significance of the Study

The need for this research is vital to the TFA teacher training program, specifically in classroom management. In this study, I revealed TFA teachers' perceptions of classroom management. The TFA can use the results of this study to improve the teacher training program. There is a need to maintain classroom teachers who offer a safe learning environment that fosters growth and prosperity of all students. The classroom teacher who can nurture student success by facilitating a well-managed classroom environment is valuable to urban school districts. Clement (2010) suggested that a teacher who has not mastered best practice strategies for managing student behavior cannot be considered highly qualified. Effective classroom management minimizes behavioral disruptions, maintains students' attention to learning, and improves academic achievement. Clement maintained that "there is no one correct way to establish classroom management and discipline. All new teachers must find their own comfortable balance between friendliness and assertiveness" (p. 43). Effective implementation of classroom management strategies will encourage learning and promote positive student behavior (Parsonson, 2012). Classroom management has become challenging, specifically when it involves amending teachers' actions in a way that nurtures an

optimistic climate for learning academically and socially (Canter, 2015). Confident teachers create enthusiastic interactions and instances of ideal learning, establish rituals and practices, implement strategies that promote student engagement, improve communication, and interject with wide ranging strategies (Canter, 2015).

A certification program that can prepare novice teachers for the job of educating students or mastering classroom management does not exist (Stratton, Reinke, & Newcomer, 2014). Although professional development is a required step for new teachers, professional development in isolation cannot improve teacher management strategies (Monroe, Blackwell, & Pepper, 2010). An effective transition program, however, can prepare new teachers with attention to classroom management. According to Mitchell and Bradshaw (2013), many teachers are minimally trained to implement classroom management strategies and lack the support of effective school disciplinary policies. As a result, many teachers implement ineffective classroom management practices that lead to increased behavioral issues (Tillery et al., 2010). Teacher preparation programs could be designed to produce a training program that would benefit both teachers and students. Allen (2010) argued that a solid teacher preparation program is one that provides an emphasis on effective classroom management strategies. Since classroom management is vital to any classroom, it is imperative that a teacher training program ensures that novice teachers receive proper training and experience implementing practical classroom management strategies.

There is literature dedicated to classroom management and its benefit to the classroom (Edwards & Watts, 2010; Marzano, 2011). However, few scholars have examined the TFA program and TFA training as it is related to classroom management

from the perspectives of TFA teachers. Urban schools need teachers with direct familiarity in urban settings. Fayne and Matthews (2010) argued that the most desirable teachers for urban settings are those who are willing to inquire into the circumstances of their students so that they can make connections within the instructional decision making and attempt to understand students' cultural practices. Because of the lack of research on TFA teachers and the TFA program, it is unclear whether TFA teachers perceive that they are prepared to apply classroom management in urban classrooms. Therefore, this project study is significant because it adds to the literature the perspectives of teachers from a program that is used in urban schools across the United States.

Research Questions

The following research questions were used to guide the data collection for this project study:

1. What are TFA teachers' perceptions of classroom management in an urban middle school and how has the TFA teacher training program prepared them to implement and maintain effective classroom management practices?

2. What are TFA teachers' perceptions of their efficacy to implement classroom management in urban middle school classrooms?

3. How do TFA teachers describe their knowledge and use of culturally responsive classroom management and how does it relate to the tenets described in the TFA *CMCT*?

Review of the Literature

The literature obtained for this section was located using several education databases. These databases included ERIC, Educational Research Complete, SAGE Premier, EBSCO, ProQuest Central, Science Direct, and Academic Search Complete. The terms used to search these databases were *classroom management, Teach for America, urban schools, teacher efficacy, teacher preparation programs,* and *alternative certification programs.* The limitations for each search were set at 2010-2015. Limiting the search to peer-reviewed articles within the last 5 years resulted in a review of the literature that covers a recent body of relevant research. In the following sections, I address the existing literature and the conceptual framework on Bandura's (1982, 1997) self-efficacy theory and culturally responsive classroom management (CRCM). I also focus on the historical overview of alternative teaching and classroom management. The conceptual framework begins the sections and the subsections.

Conceptual Framework

The conceptual frameworks guiding this project study were Bandura's (1982, 1997) self-efficacy theory and CRCM. Self-efficacy and cultural awareness contribute to the overall success of teachers. Detailed discussions of each framework are provided in the following sections.

Self-efficacy. An individual's efficacy determines how a teacher may cope with classroom management. O'Neil and Stephenson (2011) maintained that prioritizing the importance of classroom management and identifying the factors that guides teachers' management are imperative to managing a classroom. Because novice teachers deal with many obstacles as a new teacher, self-efficacy and classroom management theories are

vital to the success of a new teacher. Teachers' anxiety about classroom management can fester in multiple ways; however, a perceived lack of familiarity with students or classroom management procedures may cause teachers to question their ability to effectively deal with conflict resolution in the classroom. Self-efficacy influences the choices of teachers for many courses of action as they integrate particular classroom management strategies (Putnam, 2013). Efficacious teachers explore multiple methods of classroom management. They understand that there is not a single solution to managing a classroom; less efficacious teachers exhibit a greater dependence on penalties and reprimand (Morris & Usher, 2011). Bandura (1982) defined self-efficacy as people's "beliefs about their capabilities to produce designated levels of performance that exercise influence over events that affect their lives" (p. 71). Gaudreau, Royer, Frenette, Beaumont, and Flanagan (2013) explained that Bandura's (1982, 1997) self-efficacy theory relates to an individual's confidence to achieve an objective grounded on his or her own actions. Confidence, self-belief, and self-motivation are self-regulated and contribute to a person's outlook.

Bandura's self-efficacy theory is the foundation to overall teacher success. There are four bases of self-efficacy development: "mastery experiences, vicarious experiences, social persuasion and physiological states" (Bandura, 2012, p. 13). Mastery experiences are the foundation of self-efficacy development. It is through these experiences that efficacy is established. The experiences obtained during preservice training help positively or negatively influence this perspective. These experiences include initial accomplishment, which elevates a person's belief in self-success, and failure, which diminishes self-efficacy. The second means of building self-efficacy is through

observations. Observations of groups that model ways to accomplish tasks help observers become more adjusted to completing the task (Klassen, Tze, Betts, & Gordon, 2011). The more diligently the individual observes the exhibiting behavior, the stronger the impact on efficacy enlargement. Social persuasion is the third source of self-efficacy development (Bandura, 2012). New teachers could be assigned experienced mentor teachers who have high efficacy levels. This mentorship could inspire prospective teachers and positively influence student learning. Prospective teachers who are mentored by experienced teachers with high levels of self-efficacy may exhibit the confidence needed to positively influence student learning. For prospective teachers, constructive criticism is valuable when received from experienced, skilled, master teachers in reference to teaching performance. Explicit commentary is beneficial (Bandura, 1971). The fourth source of self-efficacy is the physiological state. A prospective teacher may measure his or her worth on a physical or emotional level to determine self-efficacy. Being physically and emotionally in tune will minimize stress levels, anxiety, and preparation of prospective teachers.

Self-efficacy is grounded in social cognitive theory (Bandura, 1971, 1982, 1983; Tsouloupas et al., 2010). Social cognitive theory has been used to define how secure individuals sustain fixed behavioral patterns. Essentially, the social cognitive theory explains a person's ability to be in control of his or her self-development which is related to self-efficacy. This belief of perceived self-efficacy is a practical conceptual framework (Bandura, 1997) for researching the impact of toxic relationships. The social cognitive theory integrates a single conceptual framework as the foundation or basis of efficacy beliefs, their organization and purpose, the procedures through which they

produce varied effects and the opportunities for adjustment (Dinther, Dochy, & Segers, 2011). Researchers have supported the impact of self-efficacy beliefs on performance, even in moderately homogenous groups (Klassen et al., 2011). However, self-efficacy beliefs are developed through a process. They are formed by perspective as well as by emotional and physiological factors.

Self-efficacy theory has been used to analyze teachers' experiences and has contributed to exploration of teacher self-efficacy (Putnam, 2013). Bandura's (1971) social cognitive theory is the foundation to teacher self-efficacy. It was through this theory that self-efficacy was created (Bandura, 1982, 1997; Putnam, 2013). Teacher self-efficacy explains how a teacher's belief system regarding his or her abilities as an educator impacts instruction, classroom management, and implementation (Gaudreau et al., 2013). The evolution of teacher self-efficacy is repetitive in nature. If the teacher is fruitful in maintaining student engagement or enhancing achievement by explicit strategies, efficacy is expected to increase proportional to the performance of related tasks in the future (Ratcliff et al., 2010). Conversely, when the performance does not achieve the objectives of the task, the teacher's sense of efficacy is diminished.

Teacher efficacy is a mixture of self-confidence in teaching and the belief in his or her abilities to succeed (Bandura, 1982, 1983). General teaching efficacy refers to the notion that teaching guides students toward accomplishments despite familial influences, socioeconomic status, and other environmental factors. Personal teaching efficacy is the teacher's beliefs regarding his or her instructional abilities (Bandura, 1983). Bandura (1997) coined the term self-efficacy as belief in self and the ability to accomplish goals. According to Gaudreau et al. (2013), teachers' self-efficacy is the belief that they can

impact various aspects of students' experiences, including learning, achievement, and general accomplishments. According to Bandura (1982), a person's self-efficacy is a combination of self and external factors. Placing a greater emphasis on self-efficacy has proven to benefit personal beliefs and intensity. Self-efficacy also has the ability to guide better decision making, application of practices and policies, and general confidence.

Self-efficacy and self-esteem often have been used in similar contexts. The terms, nonetheless, cannot be used interchangeably. Bandura (2012) asserted that self-efficacy is an individual's perception regarding his or her own belief in self, self-motivation, and self-confidence. Self-efficacy centers on the likelihood to affect a set situation and the definitive outcome; however, self-esteem places emphasis on a value judgment of an individuals' worth. Gaudreau et al. (2013) determined that highly efficacious teachers were less likely to waste time focusing on correcting misbehavior, more likely to focus on methods to improve and perpetuate the correct behavior, and less likely to have a negative outlook on misbehavior. Teachers' self-efficacy can influence their orientation to classroom management and other areas of instruction (Bandura, 1997). For example, Bandura (1983) and Gaudreau et al. maintained that a relationship exists among teachers' self-efficacy, instructional practices, and academic achievement. Klassen et al. (2011) suggested that a person's level of self-efficacy, specifically in classroom management, is equivalent to student behavior. Teachers with high levels of self-efficacy place less emphasis on classroom management (Morris & Usher, 2011). Self-confidence and self-motivation are influential factors that contribute to classroom management success (Dicke, Parker, & Marsh, 2014). Students who are taught by efficacious teachers tend to outperform those taught by less efficacious teachers (Aloe, Amo, & Shanahan, 2014).

Typically, a teacher with a high level of efficacy tends to have higher performing students, and a teacher with a low level of efficacy tends to have lower performing students and an increased number of student disruptions.

Culturally responsive classroom management. Effective teaching in an urban setting mandates that cultural responsiveness and relevancy are the focal points. Although there is a demand for culturally relevant or culturally responsive teaching approaches (Cramer & Bennett, 2015), it is unclear how this path relates to classroom management. Similar to instructional practices and pedagogy, knowledge of cultural relevancy and responsiveness is also needed when addressing conflict resolution. Warren (2013a) feared that although most teachers are not blatantly prejudiced, many may be cultural hegemonists. The assumption is that all students are to behave according to the school's cultural principles of regularity. Although good intentions exist, some teachers' classroom management and behavioral strategies are discriminatory and do not align with the cultural and racial upbringing of their students. When teachers fail to understand culturally influenced behavior or penalize the behavior of minority students, they alienate students and inadvertently show favoritism (Warren, 2013a). Essentially, students of color are identified as challenging and troublesome. Educators must be more cognizant of any underlying prejudices or negative beliefs they have about particular groups of students (Cramer & Bennett, 2015). In addition to being aware, teachers must also address and monitor any prejudices or negative beliefs in order to prevent these prejudices from affecting their instructional and disciplinary decisions. Cramer and Bennett (2015) found that teachers views about their students' impact student

performance. Students' behaviors improve when they perceive their teachers as caring, approachable, and compassionate.

The CRCM is a system that deals with the management of all children in a culturally responsive way. This system goes beyond the traditional management practices already established. The CRCM is a used to ensure that all students receive equitable opportunities for learning (Gay, 2012). Teachers who are culturally responsive leaders recognize their existing prejudices. More importantly, they understand how these prejudices affect their perspectives, and they accept how these views may sway their opinions. Culturally responsive teachers also recognize that effective classroom management does not accomplish total control; but, it supplies the student with opportunities for success (Milner, 2010).

The CRCM begins with an understanding of self. These practices are not endorsed nor are they proposed as admirable or corrupt social practices. As stated by Dolby (2012), assistance is needed for all human beings with their views, preconceptions, and traditions about human behavior. If teachers identify and address existing preconceptions, the discriminatory treatment of students of color may be minimized (Cramer & Bennett, 2015). Misconceptions and practices for culturally different students can be addressed with impartiality. Second, the distinguishable dissimilarities are addressed (Gay, 2012). Third, CRCM may change the climate and culture of schools that unintentionally support discriminatory acts toward students of color (Milner, 2010). Cramer and Bennett (2015) created a five-part concept of CRCM starting with the understanding of culturally mindful pedagogy, multicultural guiding and caring, acknowledgement of identity or social convictions and prejudices, commonality of social

upbringings, care of the larger social, budgetary and political context, and culturally suitableness management strategies to make nurturing classroom groups. The goal of classroom management is to create, foster, and promote an environment where student behavior is appropriate, and students take ownership of their actions. CRCM is more than traditional artifact posting or memorization of terminology. It is an extension to the customary approach.

Students of color, specifically African American students who attend urban schools, are inadequately represented in regular education settings and are more often placed in in-school suspension (Losen & Skiba, 2011). African American urban students with disabilities receive more disciplinary referrals than any other race, with the most racial discrepancies that amount to suspensions or expulsions greater than 10 days (Ullman & Hecsh, 2011). This is a contradiction of equitable (National Middle School Association, 2010) equitable education where knowledge is obtained is the right for every student. The urban teacher may place an emphasis on the importance of establishing and maintain nurturing relationships with urban students in an effort to maintain a culturally responsive classroom. This emphasis fosters genuine relationships, promotes positivity, and encourages student learning.

The culturally responsive teacher assists in acknowledging, recognizing, and understanding the cultural distinctions that many students of color bring to school daily (Gay, 2010, 2013). Public schools can disserve students of color by offering them minimal education (Toldson & Lewis, 2012). Ladson-Billings (2009) offered research that serves as a guide for determining teachers' ability to support African American children. The educational inequities between African American and White youth were

substantiated through cultural deficit theories prior to the research of Ladson-Billings's research. Ladson-Billings defined culturally relevant teachers as those who possess cultural knowledge and sociopolitical awareness and the ability to produce students who are academically successful. Teachers who seek to become culturally responsive will become familiar with the culture, thought patterns, and lifestyle of students of color. A culturally responsive teacher implements classroom management with empathy.

Teachers who are employed in urban schools and who create a nurturing environment and psychological protection can assist urban students with their academic success (Boutte, 2012; Jolivette & Steele, 2010). Warren (2012) mentioned that vulnerable urban youth lack thoughtfulness, direction, sympathy, and compassion. Some urban youth have poor connections with adults in their families. Toldson (2013) found that teachers who form relationships with students who do not have bonds with family members generally develop individual connections with students that other teachers could not develop. Warren (2013b) revealed that urban students are more receptive to teachers who display a concern for the whole child in and outside of the classroom. Generally, an urban student may form a bond with a teacher who is concerned with the student's holistic experience in school and at home.

Building relationships through culture may assist in establishing a strong foundation of classroom management. According to Weinstein, Curran, and Tomlinson-Clarke (2003), the culturally responsive classroom manager should learn aspects about students' cultures. The teacher who establishes a willingness to obtain this cultural knowledge demonstrates an enthusiasm and sustains an effort to become educated about students' family backgrounds, parents' expectations for discipline, and culture norms for

interpersonal relationships. The goal of classroom management is to supply all students with equal opportunities for learning, not to control students (Weinstein, Tomlinson-Clarke, & Curran, 2004). Neither consequences nor rewards are the driving force behind student behavior. Students behave appropriately because they have a sense of responsibility.

Teachers may inadvertently discriminate against students because they do not recognize culturally influenced behavior. Weinstein et al. (2004) believed that novice teachers could eradicate difficulties in implementing classroom management when multicultural competences are mastered. Brown (2003) suggested that in order to maintain the authentic engagement of urban students, teachers should be willing to address the various cultural and ethnic differences in themselves and the children they teach. According to Weinstein et al. (2003), teachers can avoid any confusion in classroom management by creating clear expectations, modeling the desired behavior, and providing students with opportunities to practice. Additionally, the teacher must be caring, assertive, authoritative, and effective in their communication with students (Weinstein et al., 2003). Bringing cultural biases to the forefront minimizes the opportunity for culturally different students to be treated inequitably. Brown revealed that students of urban schools are more difficult to manage than rural or suburban students. The management of urban students involves building relationships with students while catering to various language, safety, ethnic, identity development, cultural, and academic growth needs.

Review of the Broader Problem

Over the past few decades, there has been an increase in the number of alternative teacher preparation programs. Alternative certification pathways to becoming a teacher were limited in the 1980s. In 2009, 49 states in the United States utilized some type of alternative certification program (Grossman & Loeb, 2010). In fact, according to Kee (2012), one-third of newly hired public school teachers are certified through an alternative teacher certification program. Teachers certified through alternative certification programs are increasing at a time when preparation, performance, and recruitment are under scrutiny. The most growth has been seen in the last decade.

However, there are differing levels of popularity for alternative certification routes. For instance, roughly 40% of New Jersey teachers found their pathways into teaching careers through alternative routes, whereas alternative options were not used as frequently in Vermont, Washington, Alaska, and North Dakota (Grossman & Loeb, 2010). Many urban districts including Atlanta, New York City, Washington D.C. and Chicago, employ teachers that participated in various alternative preparation and certification programs (Grossman & Loeb, 2010).

Alternative teacher preparation programs attract individuals with diverse professional backgrounds. These programs often focus on increasing the gender, racial and ethnic diversity of America's teachers (Grossman & Loeb, 2010). A more diverse teaching force helps to fulfill the critical needs in low-income areas (Quigney, 2010). There are a vast number of alternative certification programs offered across the country. Alternative certification programs include the rigor needed to produce effective teachers. Regardless of the type of alternative certification program, one very clear and necessary

element of an effective program is a well-designed and supervised field experience (Jacobson, 2011). In fact, the lack of field experiences provided to educators in alternative certification routes limits teachers' ability to provide the needed teaching and learning quality required in low income schools (Grossman & Loeb, 2010). Alternative certification programs, however, could ensure that teachers are secure in their content knowledge, are skilled in teaching the content, and receive full professional licensure only after demonstrating effective classroom practice (Van Roekel, 2011). The objective is to deepen the wealth of information previously established about alternative teaching programs and their effects on classroom management practices.

Alternative certification routes gained popularity in Georgia in the late 1990s as a response to the booming student population in Northwest Georgia (Beare et al., 2012). According to Swanson (2011), because of the continued growing number of students, alternative certification programs have continued to grow and are a staple in the preparation of teachers. There are several alternative teaching programs offered in the state of Georgia. Some of those programs include Georgia Teacher Academy for Preparation and Pedagogy (GA TAPP), Teach Now, and TFA. Like many alternative certification programs, a swift and intensive path to the classroom is introduced (Albina, 2012). Although different in the requirements, length of commitment, and training institute, each alternative teaching program goal is to prepare teachers to work in urban schools. Most importantly, the goal of alternative teaching programs is to supply new teachers with the tools needed to be successful in urban schools (Beare et al., 2012). The effectiveness of alternative certification for teachers is crucial in urban districts, since such a high percentage of teachers in these areas participated in some alternative

certification program. The growth of alternative certification routes in urban schools and the expanding definitions of the teaching profession mandate an exploration of the programs that are used to prepare educators.

Alternative Certification: Teach for America

TFA was developed in 1990 with the goal of preparing teachers to contribute to minimizing the academic achievement gap present among different racial and socioeconomic groups (Donaldson & Johnson, 2011). The program recruits are intellectually strong and driven recent graduates from selective colleges and graduates. Each participant must complete 4 weeks of formal teacher training and preparation and are subsequently assigned to high-poverty schools across the country. The TFA program serves 53 cities and rural areas across the country. Specifically, TFA teachers are placed in public schools in the West, Southwest, Mid-west, Southeast and East. Some of these cities include but are not limited to the Bay Area, Houston, Chicago, Charlotte and Buffalo (Teach for America, 2015). In these cities and metropolitan areas, TFA teachers are placed in high-poverty, understaffed schools where they serve countless students (Donaldson & Johnson, 2011). TFA teachers remain in the classroom upon completing the first two years at a high rate of 88% (Teach for America, 2015). Of the TFA teachers who teach beyond their initial 2-year commitment, 48% stay in a public school, 42% shift to a public charter school, 6% switch to private schools, and 3% work in other education settings. In addition, 70% are female, 29% are male, and 1% is unknown (Teach for America, 2015). The TFA mission is to "enlist, develop, and mobilize our nation's most promising future leaders to grow and strengthen the movement for educational equity" (Teach for America, 2015, para. 2). TFA's mission is to eliminate education inequality;

however, only 28% of TFA teachers continue to teach beyond 5 years and only 5% remain in their initial placement (Donaldson & Johnson, 2011). Darling-Hammond (2011) reported that TFA teachers are misguided, unprepared, and lack effective classroom management strategies needed to manage a classroom. Yet, TFA teachers are placed in urban districts across the country, and the minimal training provided leads to clusters of less-prepared teachers disproportionally at schools serving our most vulnerable children. As a result, the movement for educational equity is challenged. Hartnett (2010) suggested that TFA provide stronger preparation to its recruits and demand longer commitments. Failure to make these changes could result in TFA teachers further damaging the country's already troubled public education system (Darling-Hammond, 2011).

Theoretically, a prepared novice teacher has an increased likelihood of being successful during the first-year of teaching. Conversely, an unprepared teacher is more likely to struggle. TFA teachers are not prepared to manage a classroom and are inadequately prepared for the diverse population of students. According to Rosas and West (2012), novice teachers often do not have a clear understanding of classroom management, and the lack of understanding leads novice teachers to implement ineffective classroom management strategies. Novice teachers are more inclined to control and implement survival skills to manage students. Novice teachers develop perceptions of teaching from their experiences as students and utilize those perceptions to shape their own practices in the classroom. These perceptions continue well into teachers' initial years of teaching (Allen, 2010). According to Heineke et al. (2010), TFA teachers suggested that their classroom management experiences could have been

improved if they received more training about cultural diversity and working with at-risk populations. Any teacher preparation program that does not incorporate cultural relevance and the experiences of diverse learners does teachers a disservice (Fayne & Matthews, 2010).

Other Alternative Certification Programs

In many states, alternative certification programs are perceived as effective ways to recruit teachers. Often, the shortage of teachers is the driving force for alternative certification programs. As a result, states look to alternative certification programs to produce teachers. Alternative certification helps with the teacher shortage in states. Alternative certification programs recruit individuals with degrees in non-education fields and provide a faster route to becoming a teacher (Kee, 2012). Cochran-Smith et al. (2012), opponents of alternative certification programs, contended that alternatively certified teachers will not last, are not effective, and are not adequately prepared.

Georgia Teacher Alternative Preparation Program (GA TAPP). Georgia's program, Georgia Teacher Alternative Preparation Program (GA TAPP), is only one of many programs used in Georgia to provide alternative certification for teachers. There are several eligibility requirements and steps to becoming a teacher through GA TAPP. Eligibility standards require that GA TAPP participants have obtained a bachelor's degree with a minimum grade point average of 2.5 on all college coursework, a passing score on Georgia Assessments for the Certification of Educators I (GACE), a satisfactory criminal background check, and an offer of a participating school system. If potential educators meet these requirements, they are accepted to the program and a plan of study is developed. Teachers are placed in schools and take the GACE II assessment at the end

of the first semester of teaching. Teachers that do not receive a passing score on the GACE II are provided with a revised plan of study. This plan includes time for reassessment on the GACE II. If the teacher is successful on the revised plan, the principal makes a recommendation at the end of the first year of teaching.

GA TAPP fills teaching positions by targeting college graduates interested in a teaching career and Georgia teaching certification (Beare et al., 2012). According to the Professional Standards Commission in Georgia (2014), GA TAPP prepares teacher candidates to be successful during their initial year of instruction and supports them with supervised internship. The GA TAPP program centers on developing effective teachers in minimal time. According to Reese (2010), GA TAPP is not easier than the traditional path, but it is certainly quicker. In fact, the GA TAPP program is standards-based and provides candidates with similar foundations as a traditional program (Beare et al., 2012). Graduates interested in this alternative teaching program must successfully pass the GACE and attend a GA TAPP informational prior to acceptance into the alternative teaching program. Subsequently, GA TAPP teachers complete a 4-week introduction to teaching session in which participants create lesson plans, evaluate student progress, and administer discipline to students (Reese, 2010). According to Reese (2010), GA TAPP teacher Cheryl Clayton suggested it is impossible to train a teacher in 4-weeks. Therefore, there is a need to continue education courses.

The GA TAPP non-traditional teaching alternative program requires its teachers to complete a 2-week course titled "Essentials of Effective Teaching" during the summer and two online courses during the first-year of the program (Metropolitan Regional Education Service Agency, 2015). Throughout the school year, a GA TAPP school-

based administrator, GA TAPP school mentor/coach, GA TAPP supervisor, and GA

TAPP content specialist are housed at the GA TAPP teacher assigned school to assist in

the teaching transition. Additionally, the GA TAPP teacher must complete 400 hours of

instruction to include field-based activities, individualized mentoring sessions with GA

TAPP mentors and content specialists, and eight Saturday seminars (Metropolitan

Regional Education Service Agency, 2015).

The GA TAPP program is rigorous, although many GA TAPP teachers initially

struggle once placed in classrooms after brief training sessions. According to Koehler,

Feldhaus, Fernandez, and Hundley (2013), GA TAPP teachers struggle to manage job-

related stress and suffer from the lack of a student teaching experience. For example, in

2012, nine of the 89 candidates left the program prior to the end of the year in Savannah

Chatham County. Many candidates prematurely left the program in other areas as well

For example, the DeKalb County schools lost two of its 137 participants; two of the 18

participants in the Albany State University program did not complete; and five of the 13

participants in the Henry County program did not complete (Koehler et al., 2013).

Troops to Teachers (TTT). Troops to Teachers **(**TTT) is a program supported by

the United States Department of Defense. This program helps existing and previous,

honorably serving members of the United States Armed Forces transition to from military

to the teaching profession (Dermott, 2012). Eligible applicants apply for TTT assistance

to become classroom teachers. The TTT program operates on the premise that military

teachers utilize leadership skills and understanding to influence positively the youth.

TTT were created in 1994 as a Department of Defense program. The TTT

function is to (1) convert service members to become employed as teachers, (2) engage

our nation's adolescence by supplying outstanding role models, and (3) offer schools

teachers in crucial subjects (math, science, special education, foreign language, and

career-technical) for disadvantaged schools (Troops to Teachers, 2015, para. 1).

TTT members teach in grades pre-k through 12 at public and charter schools

throughout the United States. In a survey of principals and teachers, Owings, Kaplan,

Khrabrova and Chappell (2015) found that teachers in the TTT from 2005 to 2009 were

employed in low income urban schools, taught critical subjects, and used research-based

strategies for instruction and classroom management. In addition, many of the teachers

surveyed stated that they planned to remain in the profession. Owings et al. (2015)

discovered that existing cohorts in the TTT program credited the program with their

ability to prosper in the classroom.

The TTT program supplies monetary resources to prepare and retain current and

previous military service members as teachers in high poverty schools. The stipends are

provided to support teachers' coursework and training for certification (Ludlow, 2011).

Teach-Now. Teach-Now is an online teacher preparation program that offers a

direct, innovative and cost effective pathway to teaching. Eligible individuals must have

a bachelor's degree, a passing score on the GACE and a satisfactory criminal background

check. Teach-Now is a 9 to 12-month alternative teaching program that exposes

participants to activity-based inquiry, fosters collaboration, and supports technological

literacy. Teach-Now attracts national and international candidates from varying

professional backgrounds. The alternative certification offers a program that also

provides an alternative to a Master's degree. The learning experiences provided consist

of activities, individualized feedback, assessments, and projects. Teach-Now is a virtual,

collaborative, and project-based learning program that focuses on preparing teacher candidates for the classroom.

Unlike GA TAPP, Teach-Now teachers complete modules of interactivity. The eight modules include program introduction, culture of schooling, learner and learning in a digital age, managing the learning environment, planning and preparation for learning, student assessments, clinical experience: subject and grade specific pedagogy, and clinical experience: teacher practice and proficiency (Teach-Now, 2015). During the eighth module Teach-Now teachers serve as student teachers for 12 weeks with the supervision of a master teacher. During the 12-week student teaching, Teach-Now teachers are recorded, provided immediate feedback, and used as a teaching tool. Essentially, Teach-Now teachers are taught and supervised by a master teacher throughout the 9-month program. At the completion of the 9 to 12 months of training, Teach-Now teachers are eligible to teach (Teach-Now, 2015). There were not any available scholarly articles that support Teach-Now except for its website. A need to conduct an evaluation of this program may possibly exist.

Classroom Management

In recent years, classroom management has become a concern for teachers across all grade levels. It is a plausible concern for teachers as it is focused on receiving and providing a safe learning environment that will support students' academic success. Classroom management is more than just theoretical; it is seamless. According to Rosas and West (2012), the teaching profession is one where teachers are expected to sustain a structured learning environment and implement rigorous instructional strategies.

Classroom management is most challenging for new teachers. Mastering classroom management can be attained with consistency. Researchers expressed concern that classroom management receives limited development and discussion, which perpetuates the teachers' challenges implementing effective classroom management strategies in their classrooms (Eisenman et al., 2015). Creating a positive learning environment is the first step to establishing effective classroom management. Effective classroom management is essentially having insight about students' behavior and conduct and using those insights to implement strategies that are research based (Jones, Bailey, & Jacob, 2014).

Although a restricted or more customary interpretation of effective classroom management may concentrate essentially on obedience, teachers generally explore countless opportunities to become successful in classroom management and promote academic achievement. Some of these factors include behavior, environment, expectations, materials, or activities (McCready & Soloway, 2010). Lessons that are ineffectively designed, monotonous learning materials, and blurred expectations could contribute to greater student apathy. Thus, classroom management cannot be effortlessly detached from all the other choices that teachers make.

Classroom Management Practices

Although it is the general perception in education that effective classroom management is indispensable to commendable teaching, there is often discussion about which practices are deemed most effective (McCready & Soloway, 2010). For example, some educators might contend that effective classroom management arises with student behavior and classroom organization, since learning cannot ensue when students are not

attentive, when they are defying the teacher, or when they are disturbing other students in the class. In this circumstance, the teacher needs to create behavioral and academic expectations for a class and make certain that students adhere to those expectations. Other educators, conversely, would contend that teachers approach classroom management by keenly including students in the process. For instance, some teachers build mutual classroom expectations and pacts in partnership with students. In this case, students play a part in constructing the expectations, thus taking ownership over the development. The teacher then supports the students' efforts to meet those expectations. This is accomplished by reiterating earlier agreements they made or by asking the class to reflect on their work and behavior as a group in comparison to the student generated expectations. The mounting prominence on classroom management is grounded on the general premise that effective instruction necessitates effective classroom management and that solid management skills are the basis of strong teaching (Emmer & Stough, 2014).

It may be inferred that there is a nationwide cry for a resolution has yet to be addressed. In fact, an insignificant number of researchers have considered themselves specialists in the arena of classroom management (Evertson & Weinstein, 2013). The American Education Research Association has an annual conference that addresses strategies to improve American education. The conference consists of approximately 13,000 attendees that include researchers, graduate students, and classroom teachers. There are approximately 3,000 presenters and 1,500 program slots. Of those 1,500 program slots, no more than three slots were geared explicitly to classroom management. It may be inferred that many of the attendees are either not interested in classroom

management or the need does not exist. More importantly, teacher preparation programs neglect classroom management as well (Hoy & Weinstein, 2013).

An exploration of research found that the necessity to address classroom management did not occur until the mid-20th century (Brophy, 2013). The research during these times was dedicated to styles of teacher leadership such as stimulating versus indulgent, candid versus inadvertent, or teacher facilitated versus student facilitated. Researchers concluded that positive corroboration rather than negative reinforcement motivates students' participation and self-regulation (McCaslin et al., 2013). Evertson and Weinstein (2013) established a description of classroom management. The general term is delineated as a setting formed and established by the teacher that not only supports but also simplifies both emotional and academic learning. Unquestionably, teachers determine the climate necessary to construct an atmosphere favorable to learning. These types of classroom management strategies incorporated the following: the use of management methods that fosters student engagement; developing lessons that intend to optimize learning; form and maintain supportive relationships; implementing strategies to minimize behavior problems; and nurtures self-regulation (Evertson & Weinstein, 2013). Therefore, the ability to establish classroom management is much more that rituals and practices.

Similarly, other researchers such as Gettinger, Schienebeck, Seigel, and Vollmer (2011) echoed Middleton's (2013) belief about educational philosopher Jacob Kounin that instruction and environmental variables can have a lasting effect on the overall ability to effectively manage a classroom. Gettinger et al. (2011) categorized the operational and organizational classroom development trainings that have contributed to

positive classroom results. These development trainings are behavior management, instruction management, and relationship management. Novice teachers could explicitly concentrate on developing procedures and maintenance of management, transitional periods, and elevating learning times as fundamental features of classroom management and codes of conduct. Effectively organizing produces stages of student engagement that assist in effective classroom management. Personalized lessons, providing styles of instructional delivery, applying Bloom's level of questioning, an abundance of student practice, differentiated instruction, and student conversations are enormously critical in preserving effective instructional management. Lastly, Gettinger et al. (2011) revealed that those who exemplify effective classroom management will be more likely to have students who meet their behavioral expectations. Furthermore, when teachers allow students to set personal goals and provide teacher commentary students are able to monitor their own progress.

Classroom management is vital to the development of a teacher. Monroe et al. (2010) claimed that the foundation of classroom management is the consistency of teacher-student interactions. A teacher who creates a relationship with students beyond the classroom typically has fewer behavior problems, fewer students who break rules, and fewer connected problems over the school year than did teachers who did not have high-quality interactions. Monroe et al. (2010) found students were more eager to conform to procedures, practices, and conceivable consequences when positive teacher-student interactions were established. Teachers can facilitate high-quality interactions with students by being attentive to the students' needs (Monroe et al., 2010). According to Monroe et al. (2010), high-quality interactions are initiated by creating realistic rules,

procedures, consequences and serving as an advisor to students in both behavior and academics. High levels of collaboration were noted in teachers and students who functioned as a team. Furthermore, Monroe et al. (2010) recognized students' needs and developed practices to meet those needs.

The effectiveness of classroom management is extremely important. Teachers who display a genuine concern and care for their students generally engage in a mutual respect relationship. Surprisingly, students will perform and behave accordingly, whether in the classroom or halls, without redirection. Furthermore, a student who has developed a mutually respectful relationship with her teacher will most likely develop a sense of faithfulness to school, show accountability toward schoolwork, earn higher grades, and display satisfactory behavior (Hughes, 2011).

Classroom management is essential. According to Edwards and Watts (2010), teachers should provide daily opportunities for students to practice classroom management. Practice will support classroom management and ensure that attention to classroom management is ongoing. Classroom management must be structured with procedures and practices that develop into rituals. Procedures and practices could be monitored until they become second nature. Once procedures become rituals, it is only then that learning can take place (Edwards & Watts, 2010). Through this lens, Edwards and Watts (2010) developed three practices for successfully supporting and promoting positive student behavior. These practices include presenting students with various options, maintaining a positive attitude with students, and allowing students to reflect on appropriate and inappropriate behavior. Successful teachers promote classroom management and encourage students to take ownership for their actions. Stevens and

Lingo (2013) maintained that teachers should set clear, easily understood norms and behavior expectations. The environment could be student friendly, positive, and conducive to learning. Most importantly, emphasis could be placed on learning and less emphasis on disruptive student behavior. A proactive approach to classroom management establishes expectations and sets the tone for the remainder of the school year (Stevens & Lingo, 2013). Jennings, Hanline, and Woods (2012) corroborated the importance of rituals and routines as an essential component of classroom management. Researchers Stevens and Lingo (2013) found that teachers who are proactive to classroom management tend to have a more structured classroom. This type of teacher starts each school year with a set of rituals and routines and celebrates students regularly for behaving appropriately.

Effective classroom management can be accomplished by starting the academic year off with a positive perspective on classroom management. It is also helpful to arrange the desks in a way that fosters classroom management (Patra, 2014). Wong, Wong, Rogers, and Brooks (2012) stressed the importance of teachers creating a classroom management plan. A classroom management plan is the foundation of effective classroom management. According to Wong et al. (2011), an effective classroom management plan would include explicit procedures for turning in completed assignments, participating in group activities, or movement in the classroom. An effective classroom management plan will reduce the amount of classroom disruptions. Most importantly, the teacher can place more emphasis on instruction.

The necessity for a repertoire of management strategies is imperative when teachers are confronted with unmanageable conduct. In response to scenarios where

defiant behavior was described, consequences such as verbal reprimands, sending students to the office, or teacher/parent conferences were commonly utilized by teacher participants (Van Tartwijk & Hammerness, 2011). Nonetheless, participants reported limited strategies that could prevent misbehavior (Van Tartwijk & Hammerness, 2011).

Novice teachers who establish effective responses that support suitable and unsuitable behavior are able to maintain an environment conducive to learning. Teachers acknowledged evidence-based classroom management that succeeds by using rituals and routines along with positive reinforcement. Teachers reported using ineffective management tactics. Essentially teachers want to integrate the most effective management strategy that will circumvent misconduct. Even though novice teachers divulged that they utilized evidenced-based classroom management strategies, they expressed a clear need for training in effective classroom management strategies (Patra, 2014). According to Moore-Hayes (2011), the general method of managing a classroom has transformed considerably through the years. In the early 20th century, teachers utilized a customary approach to classroom management that involved corporal punishment. In the late 20th century, teachers adopted a humanistic approach to classroom management that did not embrace corporal punishment of students.

Classroom Management in Urban Schools

Some issues in urban schools are reflective of community challenges that are closely aligned to location. It may be inferred that the potential problem exists beyond academics. Many students who attend urban schools experience challenging home environments that affect their school behavior (Milner, 2012). Historically, "low-income students with histories of low achievement, who reside in high-crime/high poverty

neighborhoods, may be at greater risk for engaging in behavior resulting in office disciplinary referrals and school suspension" (Gregory, Skiba, & Noguera, 2010, p. 60). In the United States, the term "urban" is associated with poverty, low income, non-white, single parent households, low family values, violence, drugs, mischief, dilapidated housing, and low performing schools (Catapano & Gray, 2015). Students from these types of environments are said to have difficulty maintaining positive behavior in school. In fact, studies suggest that urban students are suspended far more often than students in suburban schools (Gregory et al., 2010).

Fayne and Matthews (2010) cited school readiness studies of adolescents that suggest children raised in an urban area confirm that exposure to various risk factors associated to early health and caretaking, birth to an underage single parent, low birth weight and child cruelty can lead to significantly and negatively affect school adjustment. These uncontrollable external factors create distinct differences between urban and suburban schools and students. These external factors often leave children from urban environments at an extreme disadvantage (Boutte, 2012). Fayne and Matthews (2010) contended that students' background experiences should not have any bearing on implementing classroom management in a manner that increases learning opportunities.

Many schools are plagued by the problems of the environments in which they are located. Education, as a whole, has been consumed with inequalities and unequal playing fields for low-income minorities. Because of this ongoing dilemma within education, metropolitan districts such as those in Chicago, New York, Atlanta, and many other urban districts throughout the United States are affected. Urban schools are inadvertently associated with negativity. According to Bridwell (2012), the parents of urban students

are generally not involved or participate in school related activities. They may live in deplorable conditions, come from dysfunctional homes, lack the discipline and resources needed to be successful in school, and speak languages other than English. Urban schools may be identified as dilapidated buildings, graffiti, gang activity, low student performance, and an uneducated community (Boutte, 2012). Generally, urban schools consist of primarily African American and Latino students. Thus, the term "urban" is most often used to refer to African American and Latinos (Buendia, 2011).

Unlike urban schools, suburban schools may not require organization in order to ensure structure. Suburban schools, conversely, are much more flexible in establishing order (Kupchik, 2010). Urban students are accustomed to an assertive management style and expect authority figures to practice a directive management style (Fayne & Matthews, 2010; Jones, Jones, & Vermette, 2013). Jones et al. (2013) found that mothers from working class communities use more directives than mothers from middle class or suburban communities when speaking to their children. Thus, urban students tend to be more responsive to directives and are not as responsive to questions. Evans and Lester (2012) maintained that order, structure and compliance found in urban schools reflects a need by urban students to feel safe, secure, and managed.

These undeniable differences between urban and suburban schools establish the need for all teachers to have a strong foundation in classroom management. Primarily, urban schools tend to experience more challenges involving classroom management as compared to suburban schools. The management of urban schools may implicate a disparity in ethnic, social identify development, language, and the academic growth of students (Boutte, 2012). There is a significant difference in the way in which urban and

suburban students are treated. Ladson-Billings (2011) and Milner (2010) noted the harsher treatment of urban students as opposed to suburban students. Negative preconceived notions of urban schools are contributing factors in the decisions of many new teachers in urban schools who resign within the first 5 years of teaching; roughly 24% quit after the first 3 years (Kaiser, 2011). An educator assigned to an urban school must recognize the complexity of his or her job and must, therefore, be prepared to maintain a highly productive, safe and respectful environment.

Alternative Certification and Classroom Management

The ability to manage a classroom of students is crucial for novice and experienced teachers. Unfortunately, many of these teachers are not properly prepared to address the demand of the classroom (O'Neil & Stephenson, 2013). Novice teachers find that classroom management is an area of extreme difficulty (Rosas & West, 2010). According to Donaldson and Johnson (2011), classroom management is classified third among teachers as the motive for exiting the profession, lack of administrative support and poor salary precede. Effective classroom management is important in all school systems. Teachers employed at urban schools are "almost twice as likely as rural teachers to report that they spend at least 1 hour per week maintaining order in their classes" (Lipman, 2011, p. 46). This suggests that teachers in urban areas require more support in implementing classroom management. According to *TFA On the Record* (2014),

> TFA teachers are more likely than others to stay in the classroom during the first two years: 90% of our first-year teachers' return for a second year, compared with 83% of first-year teachers in high-poverty schools and 86% of all new teachers.

> The fact is that nearly half of all teachers leave the classroom within five years, and for schools in low-income communities, the proportion is even higher. We believe more can be done to keep effective teachers in under-resourced schools and hard-to-staff positions, no matter which path they have taken to the classroom (Teach for America, 2015, para. 5).

Classroom management is a process in which rigorous teaching occurs frequently, student progress monitoring is apparent, room for growth is noted, and curriculum is planned and aligned (Wong et al., 2012). However, teachers who obtain alternative certification are unable to master skills in classroom management (Albina, 2012). The swiftness of alternative certification programs does not afford new teachers the opportunity or time to gain classroom management experience nor apply any of the skills learned (Albina, 2012). New teachers need time to conceptualize, process, and develop a method of implementing classroom management strategies. Like students, new teachers require time to master skills learned. Generally most teachers become strong teachers within three to five years (Albina, 2012).

Teachers certified through alternative certification programs reported lower efficacy related to instruction and behavior management (Quigney, 2010). A sense of readiness helps teachers establish their level of self-efficacy in teaching. Teachers reporting high self-efficacy also reported an ability to utilize time and manage student behavior more effectively. Conversely, teachers reporting lower efficacy spent more time attempting to respond to students and manage behavior more effectively (Lee et al., 2012). Teachers' sense of efficacy and preparedness are related to their teaching experience. A survey completed by pre-service teachers highlighted teachers' beliefs

regarding classroom management (Rosas & West, 2010). Results indicated that a minimal level of self-confidence existed among novice teachers when asked about their ability to refocus a disruptive student. According to Lee, Sugimoto, Zhang, and Cronin (2012), some teachers feel less prepared because of the student population. Teachers often perceive behavior as an intersection of development, positive and negative behaviors and the appropriate developmental stage (Tillery et al., 2010). Teachers assigned to urban schools are less prepared than traditionally prepared teachers to understand the needs of diverse students. In essence, teachers who perceive themselves as being more prepared also have a greater sense of classroom management (O'Neil & Stephenson, 2013).

Neither alternative certification programs nor traditional certification programs can provide in-depth knowledge of how to manage a classroom. Teacher certification programs could provide classroom management strategies that can give teachers a foundation of the goals and challenges of being an educator (O'Neil & Stephenson, 2013). First-year teachers, whether alternative or traditional certified, felt somewhat unprepared to handle behavior problems. Teachers perceived themselves as more prepared to handle defiant behavior and disobedience and less prepared to regulate threatening and combative issues (O'Neil & Stephenson, 2013). Teachers felt more confident in their efforts to prevent and correct initially adverse behavior than they did with correcting behavior after it had occurred (Reupert & Woodstock, 2011). New teachers perceive classroom management as discipline, order, and communication. However, some new teachers implement ineffective classroom management strategies. An appropriate approach to minimize unfavorable student conduct encourages students to

focus on learning and enhance student achievement. Adversely, an inadequate approach to minimize unfavorable student conduct will diminish student involvement and amplify unwanted student misconduct (Stratton et al., 2011). According to Wong et al. (2012), many teachers utilize ineffective strategies and statements when attempting to address undesired behavior. Classroom management is a complex process that new and veteran teachers navigate daily.

Implications

Classroom management can be understood as not only the management of possessions but also the management of individuals (Clement, 2010). Teachers who implement effective classroom management focus on student outcomes and show genuine concern and reverence. These teachers are not only concerned with the positions of the desks or neatness of the room. Although the arrangement of the desks and purpose of the classroom cannot be detached from the equation, the arrangement is indicative of the cause and concern by the teacher for the student and subsequent respect and admiration of the student for the teacher (Greenberg et al., 2014). The core of management in the classroom could be considered the support upon which student achievement is designed and actual retention and student development are attained. A genuinely concerned teacher creates an atmosphere that fosters productive communication and supports student achievement. Given the scope of education in America, the exact number of teachers exposed to high-quality classroom management during their preparation training is unknown. However, it is the responsibility of the teacher to observe the culture of the school and students in order to develop a classroom management style that is aligned with the community and cultural standards (Willis,

2015). Further research can be directed at understanding the student and teacher beliefs and applying this information to further develop teaching practices and teacher preparation programs.

Exploring TFA teachers' perceptions of the TFA training program as it relates to classroom management has the potential to bring about change. This project study could be used to implement methods in which TFA teachers could be further supported. A cultural awareness professional development would deepen TFA teachers' cultural knowledge and cultural awareness. Also, TFA teachers' summer training program could be longer, which would allow TFA teachers the opportunity to gain more experiences with students. Thus, a professional development training is the genre of the project developed. The development of this project may encourage districts that employ TFA teachers to also develop specific classroom management professional development programs aimed at providing support to TFA teachers. Providing these types of learning and training opportunities could nurture TFA teachers who are capable of effectively managing a classroom in an urban setting. The outcomes of this project are directed to TFA leaders who could place greater emphasis on classroom management.

Summary

The review of the literature revealed those teachers' perceptions of and the training directly impacts experience with classroom management and professional development received throughout their teacher preparation programs (Gaudreau et al., 2013). Teachers who foster a positive classroom environment while increasing student achievement simultaneously are the foci for this literature (Dicke et al., 2014). Several research studies suggested that teachers who use effective classroom management skills

establish genuine relationships with students and are culturally responsive in their classroom management (Aloe et al., 2014; Bandura, 1983; Gay, 2012, 2013). Wong et al. (2012) suggested that teachers make certain classroom management is evident prior to expecting to see student success. Students cannot learn in a disordered, unmanaged classroom (Wong et al., 2012).

In the literature review, alternative teacher certification programs and findings from research on classroom management were provided. In addition, a detailed discussion on the conceptual framework is included to provide the reader with information on the framework's application to this project study. Section 2 contains information on the methodology used for this project study. Additionally, in the latter part of Section 2, the results of the teacher interviews are discussed.

Section 2: The Methodology

Introduction

In this project study, I used a qualitative case study and a constant comparative analysis approach. This approach allowed me to explore and understand the meanings ascribed to a phenomenon by individuals or groups (Creswell, 2010). A constant comparative analysis was selected because it allowed me to compare and contrast various sets of data. An exploration was conducted on the overall perceptions of TFA teachers and their interpretations regarding classroom management.

In this project study, I provided a detailed explanation in a narrative format to address the teacher interview responses in relation to the TFA *CMCT* and CRCM. This section features the methods used in this study, themes and subthemes, and a conceptual analysis of the TFA teacher response. Data were collected from interviews with teachers. As identified in Section 1 of the study, the research questions were geared toward answering questions regarding TFA teachers' use, perceptions, and preparation to implement classroom management. Data collected for this project study assisted in determining a solution to these inquiries to support teachers in schools with comparable populations that manage the primary classroom in a fashion most effective for today.

The objective of this project study was to obtain TFA teachers' perceptions of the classroom management training received through the TFA teacher preparation program to determine TFA teachers' perceived efficacy implementing classroom management and to explore whether CRCM strategies were used by TFA teachers. According to Eisenman, Edwards, and Cushman (2015), classroom management is often neglected by teacher preparation programs, which leads to teachers' inability to effectively manage a

classroom. Students are in need of teachers with effective classroom management strategies (Brophy, 2013).

Qualitative Research Design and Approach

Qualitative Research Design

Qualitative research was preferred because the data collected allowed for the exploration of TFA teachers' perceptions and experiences of classroom management within a bounded system. In project study, I focused on the individuals' experiences as they interacted with their social world, and I attempted to understand the meaning these interactions had for the participants (Marshall & Rossman, 2010). In interpretative qualitative research, the researcher attempts to understand meaning as constructed by the participants. Qualitative researchers seek to understand how people navigate and make meaning of their lived experiences. Qualitative research "enables you to conduct in-depth studies about a broad array of topics in plain and everyday terms" (Yin, 2010, p. 6). Qualitative researchers attempt to understand and make sense of phenomena from the participant's perspective.

Justification of Design

For the purpose of this project study, qualitative research was more effective than other research methodologies primarily because teacher interviews created an opportunity to gain, gather, and understand the perspectives of TFA teachers in an in-depth manner. The TFA teachers' perceptions of the TFA training and preparation related to classroom management were revealed. For instance, the interview data revealed that some of the participants described the TFA teacher experience with classroom management as theoretical. The lack of actual experience and implementation of practical strategies

created temporary solutions to classroom management. Participants also felt unprepared to manage urban students based on the strategies learned during the TFA teacher training. In qualitative research, each participant can respond spontaneously during the teacher interview. Because participants had the opportunity to provide their honest responses during the interviews, the findings from the study provide readers with a depiction of the participants' perceptions and experiences.

A quantitative research design would be less effective for this project study. A quantitative research design was not used in this project study because it was my goal to collect participants' detailed descriptions and perceptions. This type of information cannot be collected in numerical form. Teacher interviews were used to gather TFA teachers' perspectives. Numerical data in the form of graphs, tables, and raw data are reported as quantitative data. Survey methods also can be used to conduct a quantitative study. A survey that includes numerical data could address the research questions of this project study. Closed-ended interview questions during the teacher interview could have generated numerical data or data that could be categorized. However, numerical data would have limited the opportunity for detailed exploration. I gained an understanding of the perceptions and experiences of TFA teachers in an urban district. Therefore, quantitative methods did not support the purpose of this project study and were not used.

Case Study Approach

A case study design was used in this project study. The goal of a case study is "to gain an understanding of complex social phenomena and real life events such as organizational and managerial processes" (Yin, 2013, p. 93). A case study is the most common type of qualitative approach because this approach can be used to reveal

similarities and differences that extend beyond the individual case (Yin, 2011). This

project study was best suited as a case study because the potential results could promote

an in-depth investigation of the TFA training program and place emphasis on classroom

management and strategies taught to assist TFA teachers in managing a classroom in an

urban, public middle school setting. In this project study, a case study was most

appropriate for investing phenomena (Yin, 2011). Additionally, the case study was

bounded in that it was a study of one particular program that was bounded by time and

activity.

Participant Selection and Protection of Participants' Rights

The project study took take place in Southeastern Public School District (SPSD)

in Georgia, where nearly 100 TFA teachers are hired each year. In order to select schools

and teachers in the district, a purposeful sampling strategy was implemented. Purposeful

sampling is convenient and most often used in qualitative research (Harsh, 2011).

Creswell (2012) noted that when selecting a purposeful sample, the researcher must

identify participants who contribute information that provide answers to the research

questions. Purposeful sampling was used to identify schools in SPSD that were described

as urban. An urban school was defined as a school located in a nonrural, lower

socioeconomic area with 75% or more of the students receiving free or reduced lunch.

Based on this definition, middle schools in the district that qualified as urban schools

were used to select teachers. There were 11 noncharter middle schools in SPSD, and of

those 11 noncharter middle schools, nine of them met the criteria of receiving 75% or

more students receive free or reduced lunch. Only these nine schools were contacted to

recruit TFA teachers because they were considered traditional schools.

The participants selected were all TFA teachers. TFA teachers were defined as teachers who entered the field of education through the TFA program and who had completed the required TFA teacher training. The study sample consisted of 10 TFA teachers who had been employed as a TFA teacher in one of the nine SPSD urban schools for 2 years or less. Each year SPSD hires an estimated 100 TFA teachers. The TFA teachers selected were able and willing to provide a comprehensive understanding of the TFA teacher training program and be willing to discuss their TFA and classroom management experiences. A study sample of 10 TFA teachers was designated because this quantity could sustain the research, research design, and the research inquiries. This approach was applied to ensure that teachers employed at schools located within urban settings with low socioeconomic status and free and reduced lunch contributed to the study.

All participants' identities remained private. A number was allocated to each participant, permitting the participants' identifying characteristics to remain confidential. Furthermore, as data were organized and coded, participants' identities remained confidential. Audio-recorded interviews stayed with me throughout and upon the end of the research. Participants were not addressed by their names. All data remained confidential and were stored in a combination lockbox. No information was saved to a hard drive. The data were accessible only by me. The data, responses, and combination codes were not shared with participants or individuals who were not participants of the project. The results were reported in a narrative format, as this presentation is naturally understood and reader friendly. All data files and information related to the study will be kept in a locked cabinet in my home for 5 years after the completion of the study. An

organized demographic chart and a descriptive narrative dialogue were used to report the results. A demographic chart categorized the similarities and differences between the personal or demographic information for each person or site in the research. A narrative dialogue was also used in order to summarize the results from the data analysis.

Consent was obtained from each TFA teacher prior to participation in this project study. In the consent form, I detailed the title of study, purpose of the study, the participant role in the study, time required, risks, benefits, confidentiality, participation, and withdrawal. I outlined the procedures that would be taken if any participants' rights or dignity were infringed upon. All interview responses and data collected were treated confidentially, and the participants were not identified. All TFA teachers who chose to contribute to this project study were identified with a numerical code and could opt to discontinue participation at any time throughout the progression of the study. This safeguard was used to ensure privacy. The principals were informed of the number of willing participants in the school; however, participants' names remained confidential.

There were several steps that were taken to gain access to participants. After a successful proposal defense, approval from the Walden University Institutional Review Board (IRB) and SPSD Department of Research and Evaluation was obtained. The IRB approval number for this study is 169750. An e-mail was sent to each SPSD middle school principal. In the e-mail, I requested a list of the names of TFA teachers. TFA teachers' e-mail addresses and length of employment (if known) also were requested. Once the list of names and e-mails were provided, an e-mail was sent to each TFA teacher requesting participation in the study. Each TFA teacher's length of employment since leaving the TFA teacher preparation program was verified. This information was

verified by the school of employment. Consent forms were then e-mailed to those TFA

teachers who agreed to participate in the study. The initial e-mail to each invited

participant included a brief researcher biography, the purpose of the study, and an

invitation to participate. During the interviews, active listening strategies were

implemented to ensure that the participant was comfortable and his or her thoughts were

genuine.

Data Collection

A qualitative case design was used to achieve an understanding of TFA teacher

perceptions of classroom management. Participants were able to share their perceptions

of classroom management and the TFA teacher preparation program. Data were

collected through teacher interviews. Data for this project study were collected through

semi structured interviews. In the interview, I addressed each teacher's perception of

classroom management and the effectiveness of classroom management. The teacher

interview was intended to assist in understanding TFA teachers' perceptions of the TFA

training related to classroom management and understanding their practical experiences

with classroom management. Moreover, the interviews allowed participants to express

their understanding of the classroom management structure. The interviews provided me

the opportunity to gather detailed descriptions of TFA training and classroom

management from each participant.

A TFA *CMCT* training manual (TFA, 2011) made available to the public was

used during throughout this study. The training material addresses the need to develop a

culture of achievement. A culture of achievement is a climate in which students are

motivated to learn, are inspired to succeed, and are eager to collaborate with peers. The

manual details six principles that encourage TFA teachers to create classrooms where rules, consequences, and routines are minimized and self-regulating and self-motivated learners are nurtured. This manual was used in this project study to analyze teacher interview responses in comparison to the TFA preparation training.

The interview protocol was based on a previously used interview protocol from the research of Roadhouse (2015). The interview protocol used for this project study was modified from Roadhouse's protocol to better suit the needs of this project study. However, the interview protocol used for this study was comparable to Roadhouse's in its function to gain perceptions. Permission to use this tool was granted from Roadhouse. Numerous questions were omitted, as they did not relate to this project study; nonetheless, the majority of the questions remained as they were applicable to the purpose of this project study. The interview protocol obtained from Roadhouse encompasses three opening questions, four unrestricted classroom management questions, and one final question. This arrangement allowed the teacher the chance to expound upon the justification behind each approach implemented. Additional questions were added to solicit teachers' perceptions related to classroom management and TFA training and to focus on teachers' efficacy and use of CRCM.

Interviews took place in a private location on or off of the school grounds. Before the interview, each participant was supplied with the purpose of the study. Each interview took 45-50 minutes and was recorded digitally for accuracy of the transcription. Additionally, each participant had the option to request the recording be stopped at any time during the interview.

Trustworthiness

Throughout this research, numerous precautions were applied to maintain the

fidelity of the data collected. Two of Creswell's (2012) procedures to contribute to

trustworthiness were used. These procedures include peer review and member checking.

In peer reviewing, a peer who does not have any affiliations with the TFA program was

asked to review the findings. No attempts were made to sway the review and supply the

reviewer with a secluded location where he or she may discuss their review with me.

According to Lee, Sugimoto, Zhang, and Cronin (2013), peer reviews are not used to

encourage impartiality. Typically, peer review involves a third party person not affiliated

directly or closely with the participants, researcher, or institution. In some cases, peer

reviewers are known to one another and compare their evaluations of the materials.

Member checking validates the data. According to Creswell (2012), the interview

transcripts should be offered and corroborated by each participant. A reproduction of the

transcribed interview and preliminary analysis were provided to each participant for his

or her review.

Role of the Researcher

My role as the researcher throughout the study was to gather data, refrain from

injecting personal views, and to remain impartial. I had never served as a TFA teacher,

though I had functioned as a faculty advisor to TFA teachers and had formed connections

with some TFA teachers. However, any previously formed relationships did not have

any influence on the outcomes of the study.

As a method to eliminate biases, a reflexive journal was used to monitor

subjectivity. According to Roller (2012), a reflexive journal can eliminate subjectivity in

a qualitative study. Using a reflexive journal, details were logged about the study or how I was influenced to ensure the results of each interview are unbiased. The journal was used to monitor my preconceived notions and subjectivities while research was gathered and the findings were reported. The reflexive journal served as a diary of thoughts, perceptions, and prejudices that may have an influence on the findings.

Data Analysis

Data analysis in qualitative research is an evolving process. It is a process in which a researcher interprets data to present the findings while creating rich qualitative research (Creswell, 2012). According to Chenail (2012), I must focus on portions of the data that have the most potential. Glaser and Straus's (1965) constant comparative analysis was used as the data analysis process evolved, and all data were examined for recurring themes. It was through this process that I was able to determine whether there were new concepts emerging from the data or whether I had reached saturation. With a constant comparative analysis approach, the data were broken down into units and coded into categories. These codes were used to establish patterns in the participant language that pertain to the focus of inquiry. The initially developed codes were grouped into categories and further analyzed until themes developed. Therefore, a constant comparative analysis led to descriptive and explanatory categories. The constant comparative analysis approach was used to associate the newly collected data to previously collected data. Any new themes formed were confirmed, enhanced, or discounted as new data were collected and analyzed. I used this ongoing procedure to analyze data continuously throughout the study. Furthermore, the data analysis process was done by hand to eliminate any technological errors.

Memos also were recorded during the coding process. According Chenail, memos are notes taken by qualitative researchers to outline what has occurred during the research process, what has been learned, and what future actions should be taken. This detailed process included dating each memo, aligning it with a code, creating a title based on the main idea, and listing quotes that pertain to the data noted in the memo. I used memos to inspect the data segment by segment. For instance, I listened for best practices. Alertness, student balance, and so forth were of supreme importance. Afterward, each teacher interview transcript was analyzed by discussing each category and theme. A chart that consisted of teacher interview responses was then created. In the chart, I outlined how categories and themes were developed as well as a thorough and detailed explanation of the key words used to create those categories and themes.

Teacher interviews were audio taped. The audio recordings were transcribed and returned to the participant for review and approval. Each participant was provided a print out of the interview transcript for approval. Once approved by each participant, each response was typed and printed out. Each transcript was printed on its own color paper. According to Chenail (2012), this can be very effective to obtain a visual picture of the distribution of comments across interviews within a code or them. Each response was then cut into strips and grouped based on the corresponding question.

Data were analyzed by coding. According to Creswell (2012), codes consist of a word or words that provide a synopsis of the data collected. This analysis process was created through an inductive process of data analysis and used open coding. Creswell (2012) explained that open coding is the initial step in the analysis process where

categories of information about the phenomenon being studied are identified by segmenting information.

Each statement within each response was then separated to establish a code. Separately, each response was coded line by line. Codes were reviewed within each response to see if any codes were similar, can be combined, or should be re-coded. After data had been sorted into codes, codes were organized. Throughout the study, constant inquiries were: Can the code be manipulated over time or can the code be altered based on the experience of the participant? These questions were implemented to ensure the codes created were logical and made sense. After the procedure of creating codes to investigate the interview, the responses were revised. Rubin and Rubin (2011) specified that data exploration entails categorizing, associating, weighting, and joining material from the interview to interpret the implication and inferences, to disclose patterns to position together, and develop a lucid description. The subsequent stages involve evaluation and interpretation of the entire interview transcription, studying research transcripts and audio recordings.

Once finalized, each code was reviewed and created from the interview responses to determine if a theme or themes emerged. Transcript conversations were converted into themes. Themes were based on reoccurring statements, words, or a general idea. Data were investigated through perusing and reviewing information to identify common themes and patterns that developed. The themes were reviewed to determine if any theme or themes were similar, could be combined, or should be reworded.

The TFA teacher responses to questions regarding the TFA training were compared constantly to determine if teachers were performing as trained. Those results

were compared to determine if the training contained the tenets of CRCM. Finally, the tenets of TFA *CMCT* (Teach for America, 2011) and the tenets of CRCM were compared to identify any similarities or differences.

Data Analysis Results

The TFA teacher interview protocol was created to obtain TFA teachers' perceptions of the classroom management experience received through the TFA teacher preparation training. The TFA teacher interviews also provided me with the opportunity to investigate TFA teachers' perceptions of classroom management since leaving the TFA teacher preparation program.

Data were obtained by meeting with TFA teachers in a secluded location that isolated and removed us from social contact and activity. TFA teachers answered several questions related to their implementation of classroom management. Transcribed responses were combined based on similarity. The responses were sorted to correspond to relevant research questions. Once each response was sorted to its appropriate research question, the coded responses were reread to determine if codes could be combined or restructured. Themes were developed to represent the TFA responses and provide answers to the research questions.

Each subsection in this section includes a restatement of the research question and a discussion of the themes associated with TFA teachers' responses. The results were compared to Bandura's (1971) framework and CRCM (Brown, 2003; Weinstein et al., 2003; Weinstein et al., 2004), and the TFA *CMCT* (Teach for America, 2011) respectively. The results for each research question concludes with an interpretation of

the TFA teachers' responses. Finally, a summary provides a synopsis to the information presented in this section.

Research Question 1

What are TFA teachers' perceptions of classroom management in an urban middle school and how has the TFA teacher-training program prepared them to implement and maintain effective classroom management practices?

Two themes were developed by the TFA teacher interview responses. The first theme was *Neither Effective nor Applicable to Urban Students,* and the second theme was *Unprepared to Manage an Urban Classroom.* These themes are presented and discussed in this section.

Theme 1: Not Effective nor Applicable to Urban Students. The theme of *Not Effective nor Applicable to Urban Students* was used to describe TFA teachers' perceptions of classroom management in an urban school. All of the TFA teacher participants agreed that classroom management must be consistent, operational, and relevant to the population of students. The research of Ladson-Billings (2011) suggested that some urban students may require a classroom management style that is similar to urban students' culture. Thus, the management style of some urban schools must be realistic and deemed appropriate to maintain the engagement of urban students.

The theme of *Not Effective nor Applicable to Urban Students* was categorized as two subthemes. The first subthemes, *In-Practice*, includes commentary on the factors that TFA teachers perceived were needed in order to be implement classroom management effectively with their students. The second subtheme, *In-Training*, focuses on the TFA teachers' perceptions of how the TFA training prepared them to implement classroom

management in an urban setting. This subtheme also highlights the specific TFA

classroom management strategies that TFA teachers actually use in their classrooms.

Subtheme 1a: In-Practice. This subtheme focused on TFA teachers' perceptions

of how they implemented classroom management. Specific areas discussed by all

teachers included the following: specific routines and procedures; their ability to control

the classroom; the importance of forming relationships; and the difficulty of

implementation of classroom management strategies based on TFA training.

The effectiveness of classroom management is developed in maintaining clear

expectations and creating operational routines and procedures. TFA teachers 1, 2, 3, 4, 5,

and 8 were aware that clear expectations must be established and engaging instruction

must consistently take place. TFA teacher 6 proclaimed classroom management to form

in the way "a classroom is organized." TFA teacher participant 2 compared the greatest

benefit to classroom management to the classroom running like a "well-oiled machine."

It is only when classroom management is evident that instructions becomes endless.

Effective routines and procedures must be present. TFA teacher 1 referred to classroom

management as "creating a harmonious and healthy academic learning environment for

all students." Likewise, TFA teacher 4 described classroom management as "having

different techniques and strategies" that assist in the effective management of a

classroom.

According to TFA teachers, control also is a factor in maintaining effective

classroom management. TFA teacher 10 stated that classroom management is, "simply

having control." Similarly, TFA teacher 2 defined classroom management as, "being able

to control all of the behaviors and obstacles in a classroom environment in order to

ensure the safety of all students while delivering adequate instructional material that are needed in order to teach students." There was an indication that TFA teachers felt there is a need to control students in order to classify themselves as effective classroom managers.

Maintaining control was noted as an imperative to effective classroom management, TFA teachers also recognized the importance of forming relationships as a strategy for classroom management effectiveness. All TFA teacher participants confirmed that interpersonal relationships were established and the consistent fair treatment of all students existed. Forming relationships with students enhances students' level of engagement. Teachers who build relationships with students tend to gain students' respect much more quickly than teachers who do not build relationships (Jones et al., 2013). This was also stated by TFA teacher 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 9, and 10. Teacher 10 described an innocent bantering session that took place in an attempt to form a bond with students: "I come down to their level. I yell. We will go back and forth until one of us gets tired." The bantering discussed by Teacher 10 might be an unconventional method of building relationships. However, concrete strategies to build relationships with students were not taught according to TFA teacher 7: "I had no idea how to build relationships with students. I expected them to respect me simply because I am the person of authority." Therefore, TFA teachers tried innovative strategies to form relationships with students.

TFA teachers' responses indicated a firm grasp on theoretical strategies for implementation, but the dilemma occurs during the practical implementation phase. TFA teachers recognized that effective classroom management looks different depending on

the students; however, many TFA teachers had trouble with implementation. According to TFA teacher 3, the first few weeks of teaching was trial and error. "As time progressed, the classroom management strategies executed begin to represent what worked best for my students." However, some teachers did not grasp that concept as quickly. TFA teacher 2 stated that the biggest challenge to classroom management was that, "expectations are so high that some students feel they are unattainable." TFA teachers 3 and 6 struggled with consistency in routines. TFA teacher 3 confirmed that it was difficult to find a management style that works. TFA teacher 2, 3, 4, and 7 reported a struggle and the need for additional support, maintaining consistency in routines, and setting realistic expectations.

Efforts were made by TFA to support struggling TFA teachers. TFA teachers 1, 6 and 9 discussed real time coaching received during TFA teacher preparation program. TFA teachers were supported with real time coaching when a TFA teacher had difficulty implementing classroom management. Real time coaching is when a corps member advisor (CMA) provides a TFA teacher with a headset while the CMA has the microphone. The CMA observes the TFA teacher as he or she teaches. While teaching, the CMA guides him or her through the lesson specifically saying how to manage the classroom effectively. This effort was helpful for some of the TFA teachers.

Classroom management is continuously shifting. The teacher must create classroom management strategies that are applicable to the environment. TFA teachers have learned over time that the "one size fits all" model taught during the TFA teacher preparation program does not work for all students, according to TFA teachers 1, 2, 3, 8, 9, and 10. According to TFA teacher 9, "I was provided a framework but the actual

implementation of the strategy was not as clear. I had to adopt what works best for my students." TFA teacher 10 realized "the strategies taught by TFA were not realistic for an urban classroom." TFA teacher 5 quickly began "speaking the language of my students." These TFA teachers, over time, learned to manipulate the strategies taught in the TFA teacher preparation program to better suit the needs of students.

Subtheme 1b: In-Training. Several of the TFA teachers reported implementing strategies learned in the TFA teacher preparation program. TFA teachers 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, and 7 used positive narration to assist with classroom management. Positive narration is a strategy where teachers provide students with positive accolades when students are observed displaying desired behavior. In turn, students who are not displaying desired behavior are encouraged to get on task. TFA teacher 2 stated that positive narration is the most prevalent classroom management strategy implemented. TFA teacher 5 explained that TFA training spoke in depth about positive reinforcement and how it is more beneficial to students than issuing consequences.

TFA teacher 6 implemented TFA teacher confidence strategies. Many TFA teachers are novice teachers and therefore a lack of confidence can sometimes exist. The classroom management experiences afforded during the TFA teacher preparation program allowed TFA teacher 6 to become present and the person of authority. TFA teacher 6 stated, "TFA taught me how to position myself as the authority in the classroom." Other teachers reiterated this sentiment. For example, according to TFA teacher 7, "TFA was the most helpful in confidence building which allowed students to see that I was in control."

Conversely, TFA teachers 8, 9, and 10 did not implement any of the TFA classroom management strategies. TFA teacher 9 recalled positive narration being discussed in theory but did not have any recollection of it being put into practice. The opportunity for practice did not exist, according to TFA teacher 9. Therefore, positive narration did not become a classroom management strategy applied consistently in the classroom. TFA teacher 8 did not find any of the TFA courses helpful because they did not seem applicable to urban students. TFA teacher 10 added that the abundance of courses were too theoretical and did not supply TFA teachers with enough realistic management strategies.

The TFA teachers also explained that TFA workshops focused on implementing and maintaining classroom management, but there was limited focus on practical implementation. TFA teacher 9 confirmed "we attended daily workshops discussing how to react in various situations, [but] rarely did we get the opportunity to practice it." TFA teacher 10 explained "we attended various classes and simulations on how to establish order, how to address student misconduct and safety." TFA teacher 7 detailed that most of the exposure received is conceptual. "We were not able to see the strategies in real time." TFA teacher 6 stated, "we are taught basic procedures and theory of classroom management." Because the classroom management strategies presented during the workshops were conceptual and theoretical in nature, TFA teachers had limited practical understanding of how to implement classroom management.

Several of the TFA teachers noted that although some strategies were beneficial to effective classroom management, many of the strategies learned were not effective. TFA teachers 8 and 9 did not consider any of the classroom management strategies from the

TFA teacher preparation program applicable to his or her placement school. TFA teacher 9 stated, "We are provided with strategies that do not apply to an urban setting." TFA teacher 9 stated that the TFA teacher program did not provide TFA teachers with enough classroom management strategies. Many of the teachers explained that most classroom management strategies currently implemented were either learned through trial and error or from veteran teachers.

The significant findings conveyed by TFA teachers were that there was a need for relevant classroom management strategies in an urban classroom. All TFA teachers cited specific areas such as: specific routines and procedures; their ability to control the classroom; the importance of forming relationships; and the difficulty of implementation of classroom management strategies based on TFA training. It is clear that the TFA teachers who participated in this study could easily distinguish between effective and ineffective classroom management strategies. The issue that most TFA teachers experienced was transferring the classroom management strategies learned in an unrealistic classroom experience to a more realistic classroom experience. TFA teachers were aware that classroom management is implemented differently depending on the students. The difficulty occurred during the process of TFA teachers attempt to select or create a strategy that works best. Many TFA teachers received real time coaching support during the TFA teacher preparation program. Other TFA teachers received real time coaching at their placement school. This support establishes the classroom management strategies needed for student success and academic achievement.

The majority of the participating TFA teachers implemented positive narration, a TFA classroom management strategy, in their current classroom. Other TFA teachers

focused on confidence, a classroom management strategy needed to effectively manage a classroom. TFA teachers noted that the TFA teacher preparation program supplied its teachers with various workshops that addressed classroom management; however, there was not much opportunity for practice. Without a considerable amount of practice by TFA teachers, the TFA preparation program classroom management strategies could not be deemed effective.

Most of the TFA teachers participating in the study did not feel prepared for an urban classroom. The TFA preparation program failed to provide its teachers with an accurate representation of an urban classroom. TFA teachers openly expressed their lack of honesty received from the TFA teacher preparation program. Many TFA teachers cited being provided general facts about urban school districts and urban students. However, there was a lack of truthfulness in the TFA teacher preparation program, according to TFA teacher 3 and 4. TFA teacher 3 explained that TFA teachers would benefit from TFA trainers discussing that every classroom management strategy taught may not be successful in every classroom. TFA teacher 4 stated that TFA trainers withhold pertinent information about urban school and urban districts. TFA trainers were getting TFA teachers so excited about their teaching journey that they failed to discuss the reality. The TFA teacher preparation program often led TFA teachers to believe the urban classroom would consist of ideal students with ideal behaviors. TFA teacher 1 stated that during the TFA training a typical classroom may consist of 12-15 students. This is not typical for a classroom during the traditional school year. The TFA teacher preparation program inadequately represented the dynamics, necessity of classroom management, and high levels of stress associated with urban schools. TFA teacher 10 described the

discussion of urban schools as informational. Data such as failure rates, socioeconomic status, and percentage of students receiving free or reduced lunch were discussed. TFA teachers were in favor of receiving more training from the teacher preparation program. Training experience that is similar to that of their placement school was requested by the TFA teachers.

Overall, TFA teachers perceived that some of the strategies presented during the TFA teacher preparation program lacked effectiveness. TFA teachers were taught various strategies but were not afforded the opportunity to implement these strategies successfully. Additionally, many TFA teachers did not feel prepared for an urban setting.

The results in this study are parallel to and support Bandura's (1971) self-efficacy theory and CRCM (Brown 2003; Tomlinson-Clarke, 2003; Weinstein et al., 2004). Efficacy allows TFA teachers the ability to identify which classroom management strategy is most applicable for his or her classroom. TFA teacher 3 and 6 had a low self-efficacy level that showed in the classroom management strategies implemented. TFA teacher 4, 7, and 9 identified their self-efficacy levels as progressing. Although TFA teachers were taught various classroom management strategies in the TFA teacher preparation program, their levels of efficacy determine the success of implementation. The TFA teacher preparation program classroom management strategies may be effective in some settings but lacks the cultural responsiveness needed to motivate students in all settings, particularly those settings that employ a large number of TFA teachers. The TFA teacher preparation program, specifically in classroom management, has deficiencies in preparing its teachers for an urban classroom.

Theme 2: Not Prepared for the Urban Classroom. TFA provided its teachers with general information about urban schools, according to TFA teachers. This information included general facts about urban school districts, urban schools, and urban students such as standardized testing results, demographic information, the neighborhoods of urban students, and family composition. The general information provided was an effort to allow TFA teachers to understand the background of urban students. Unfortunately, TFA teachers felt the TFA training lacked honesty. According to TFA teacher 3 "I wish TFA would just keep it real." TFA teacher 4 stated that urban schools were discussed with a "glossed" over outlook. In other words, TFA instructors did not discuss urban schools in detail. According to TFA teacher 7 and 9, TFA teachers were persuaded to believe they could potentially change the reputation of urban schools. The dynamics, importance of classroom management, and high levels of stress were not communicated with a sense of urgency. TFA teacher 3 expressed the concern as to why TFA leaders did not disclose specifically the obstacles that may be associated with urban schools.

TFA teachers 6 and 10 would have liked more training as the teacher preparation program was fast paced and quite stressful. TFA teacher 10 wanted "more hard core training on how to reach urban students." More practice and experience implementing procedures, rules, and consequences could have improved the experience. TFA teacher 9 wanted a co-teaching experience that involved shadowing a veteran teacher during the first year of teaching. TFA teacher 7 wanted real-time coaching experience to be offered during the summer preparation program and during the academic school year as well for additional support. TFA teachers 1, 2, 5 and 8 wanted more experience with similar

students as placement schools. Because TFA teachers are trained during the summer months, the observations of classrooms are not accurate representations of what teachers might observe during the traditional school months. According to TFA teacher 10 "summer school and regular school are completely different."

TFA teachers did not feel prepared by the TFA teacher preparation program. TFA teacher 3 described the placement school teaching experience as trial and error, more emphasis placed on error. TFA teacher 4 felt lost and confused when little to none of the strategies learned in the TFA teacher training were as effective as they were during the TFA teacher training. As a result, the confidence level was negatively affected by the lack of preparation. TFA teacher 6 expressed a mediocre level of confidence during the TFA teacher training which quickly deteriorated to a much lower level at the placement school as some of the TFA classroom management strategies were not effective. The lack of cultural responsiveness classroom management may be the reason why many TFA teachers felt unprepared. A change in the classroom management strategies taught during the TFA teacher training could potentially increase the number of TFA teachers prepared for an urban classroom.

Interpretation of Findings about Preparation for Classroom Management. The first research question focused on teachers' perceptions of and preparations for classroom management in the urban classroom. Themes identified from the data indicate that TFA teachers perceived that the TFA training should be applicable to the urban setting and that they had not been adequately prepared to implement classroom management in the urban classroom. As a result, teachers had a limited sense of efficacy regarding implementing classroom management in their urban classrooms. Bandura's

(1971) self-efficacy theory and CRCM (Brown, 2003; Tomlinson-Clark, 2003; Weinstein et al., 2004) provides the grounding in research Question 1. The TFA teacher responses indicated there is a need to provide TFA teachers with classroom management strategies, support, and a system that is effective. Although new to the field of education, TFA teachers were aware that their implementation of classroom management was ongoing; TFA teachers are works in progress. Most importantly, the TFA teachers wanted authenticity from TFA leaders. Providing TFA teachers with realistic accounts of urban classrooms would have prepared them for their environment.

In Bandura's (1971) self-efficacy theory, the effectiveness of classroom management is of utmost importance in identifying factors that guide teachers' management. TFA teachers are faced with various obstacles and therefore effective classroom management is crucial. During the TFA teacher interview, several teachers confirmed that the TFA teacher preparation program provided its teachers with positive narration as a classroom management strategy. The choice to dismiss the strategies taught during the TFA teacher preparation may have led to alternative methods of classroom management that were successful or unsuccessful. The apprehension about classroom management can build in ways that may lead TFA teachers to begin to question their preparation and ability to manage a classroom.

Self-efficacy impacts TFA teachers' attempts to decide which strategy is most applicable for their current classroom culture (Putnam, 2013). TFA teachers who are considered less efficacious employ one particular management strategy but those who are efficacious discover alternate methods of classroom management. Less efficacious teachers tend to use penalties and reprimands as the first solution to classroom

management. Data gathered from TFA teachers indicated that some of the TFA teachers were less efficacious. These TFA teachers felt the TFA classroom management strategies were not realistic for urban students. Hence TFA teachers felt unprepared, which resulted in ineffective classroom management strategies. TFA teacher 3 and 10 revealed that yelling and slamming doors were used to manage an out of control classroom. This strategy obtained the students' attention. Both TFA teachers tried to implement the positive narration classroom management as it was taught in the TFA teacher preparation program. However, when the strategy failed or did not seem to motivate students, both TFA teachers began to lose control of the classroom and themselves. It is apparent that a lack of familiarity of classroom management along with anxiety can fester, causing TFA teachers to question their ability to effectively manage a classroom.

CRCM is a system that extends beyond traditional classroom management (Gay, 2012). It deals with the classroom management of all children in a culturally responsive way. TFA teachers 4, 8, and 9 did not implement any of the classroom management practices taught during the TFA teacher preparation program. TFA teacher 8 acknowledged the objective of achieving classroom management through culture will not attain classroom without any interruptions but it will create opportunities for student success. Nine of the 10 TFA teachers described the importance of creating, fostering and cultivating relationships with urban students in an effort to sustain a culturally responsive classroom. This method establishes authentic relationships and endorses positivity and inspire student learning. TFA teacher 3 stated that the TFA teacher preparation program presents "a one size fits all" positive narration model. It is not culturally responsive and does not always support TFA teachers in implementing classroom management.

Research Question 2

What are TFA teachers' perceptions of their efficacy to implement classroom management in urban middle school classrooms?

The results determined that TFA teachers perceived their efficacy in an urban middle school classroom as growing with time. The single theme developed for this question is *Slowly but Steadily Improving*. This theme is connected to Bandura's (1971) self-efficacy theory.

Theme 3: Slowly but Steadily Improving. The theme *Slowly but Steadily Improving* best describes the TFA teachers who participated in this study. TFA teacher responses revealed that some TFA teachers lacked confidence in regards to implementing classroom management. Some TFA teachers were not certain that the TFA classroom management strategies taught were relevant to urban students. Therefore many TFA teachers did not feel comfortable in implementing them.

Some TFA teachers' confidence began to increase as effective classroom management strategies were learned. Teachers TFA teacher 8 described his experience as "making progress." The participant further explained, "I felt like I was finally making progress. I felt that I was growing in the right direction." TFA teacher 9 explained, "I was not as confident at first, but as time went on, I became more confident in my management strategies." TFA teacher 6 stated, "I still have issues with confidence in classroom management but I've started developing procedures that actually work. These systems have increased my confidence and my success rate."

Although each TFA teacher explained his or her own initial struggle, each TFA teacher described efficacy as improving with time. Some TFA teachers were optimistic

that their level of efficacy would improve once effective classroom management

strategies were learned. TFA teacher responses revealed that some TFA teachers

experienced a difficult time applying classroom management strategies taught in theory

to the actual classroom. TFA teacher 3 expressed the difficulty implementing the type of

classroom management needed in an urban setting. "Classroom management strategies

that are considered effective for suburban schools should not be viewed the same in urban

schools." TFA teacher 6 felt prepared through conversations and discussions of

classroom management but not in implementation. "We had several conversations about

urban students' home life and reprimands for misbehavior. But that's all we did was have

conversations." TFA teacher 10 felt prepared during TFA teacher preparation training

when class sizes consisted of seven students or less. "I felt prepared during the summer

program but after leaving and entering the classroom, I felt lost." The need to revamp

everything learned during the TFA teacher preparation seemed to be the norm. Overall,

TFA teachers viewed the strategies learned as worthy but there was a need to create more

applicable strategies that were applicable to various settings.

A large number of TFA teachers lacked confidence because they felt unprepared.

Some TFA teachers felt that much of the TFA teacher training was spent learning

classroom management strategies that were applicable to suburban students. TFA

teachers were not exposed to classroom management strategies for urban students. The

lack of exposure to various classroom management strategies caused some TFA teachers

to become less confident in implementing classroom management strategies to urban

students. TFA teacher 7 stated, "My confidence is growing because initially it was

crumbled when I walked into the classroom. It is being rebuilt." TFA teacher 4 explained,

When I first came into the classroom, I was not confident because this was my

first experience. I was so worried about messing up. Now I have come to realize

that this is a learning opportunity and I have to take that perspective into account.

TFA teacher 3 detailed her confidence as "not too confident. A million people were

giving me a million different suggestions. I just had to figure out what worked for me."

According to TFA teacher 3, "We all learned the same classroom management strategies

regardless of our placement school." TFA teacher 6 also candidly discussed confidence

as still an area of concern.

Over time, these TFA teachers were able to learn and apply suitable classroom

management strategies that were effective for urban students and similar to their

management style. "Experience in my placement school was my best teacher," according

to TFA teacher 9. "It took a little time but I finally got it." TFA teacher 3 and 8 partnered

with veteran teachers in implementing management strategies that were effective. TFA

teacher 6 researched and implemented various research based classroom management

strategies. These TFA teachers were able to encounter success with classroom

management that consequently impacted self-efficacy.

Interpretation of Findings about Teacher Efficacy. Gaudreau et al. (2013)

related Bandura's (1971) self-efficacy theory as an individual's self-confidence, self-

belief, and self-motivation. Essentially these are the motivating factors that shape a

person's outlook. Bandura's self-efficacy theory applies to the TFA teachers who

participated in this study. These particular TFA teachers could be classified as teachers

with low self-efficacy initially. The lack of familiarity hindered TFA teachers from

exploring multiple methods of classroom management. Over time, however, TFA

teachers began to gain familiarity, were able to observe veteran teachers exhibiting effective classroom management strategies, and were eventually able to apply stronger classroom management strategies.

Teacher self-efficacy is the long-lasting effect on educator's instruction, classroom management, and implementation. Teachers who are generally successful in sustaining student engagement, efficacy is anticipated to enhance proportionally to the performance of related tasks (Ratcliff et al., 2010). Some of the TFA teachers in this project study explained that they continued to struggle with cultural awareness and needed more training and support.

As mentioned above, the single theme associated with this research question is *Slowly but Steadily Improving*. A few TFA teachers described the classroom management strategies taught during the TFA teacher preparation program as ideal for a suburban school but not necessarily applicable for an urban classroom. Because of the unfamiliarity, some TFA teachers experienced difficulty managing an urban classroom. When TFA teachers attempted to implement classroom management strategies taught during the TFA teacher preparation program would fail, they would implement classroom management strategies that were effective temporarily. Thus, self-efficacy levels diminished. TFA teachers were confident as long as the classroom management strategies implemented were effective.

Overall, the TFA teachers' perceptions of their efficacy to implement classroom management in an urban classroom are described as steady. TFA teachers were not initially successful in classroom management because of the unfamiliarity in the classroom management strategies taught during the TFA teacher preparation program.

However, many of the TFA teachers learned classroom management strategies through trial and error, researching best practices, or partnering with veteran teachers. Thus, developing an effective classroom management strategy that was more applicable to an urban classroom.

Results indicate that Bandura's (1971) self-efficacy theory is applicable to the TFA teachers' responses. TFA teachers deemed a classroom management strategy taught during the TFA teacher preparation program as ineffective when implemented in an urban setting. The classroom management strategy ineffectiveness led TFA teachers to implement ineffective classroom management that are commonly used among efficacious teachers. Gradually, TFA teachers began to increase self-efficacy through the assistance and support of veteran teachers. Thus, TFA teachers learned and implemented effective classroom management strategies. TFA teachers, over time, were able to exhibit a higher level of self-efficacy. Although many TFA teachers in this study were not culturally aware, their level of efficacy was growing. Previous literature linked self-efficacy to self-confidence, self-belief, and self-motivation (Gaudreau et al., 2013). TFA teachers' self-efficacy was directly linked to their ability or inability to implement classroom management strategies effectively or ineffectively in an urban classroom.

Research Question 3

How do TFA teachers describe their knowledge and use of culturally responsive classroom management and how does it relate to the tenets described in the TFA Classroom Management and Culture Kit?

The results established that culture was missing from the TFA CMCT. The TFA *CMCT* is a guide to TFA teacher and it serves as the framework that provides TFA

teachers with various classroom management strategies that infuse a focus on the culture. The toolkit described classrooms that are not comparable to the classrooms of the TFA teachers' placement schools. There is not a relationship between what is emphasized in the toolkit and why it is needed in an urban school. According to TFA teachers, their cultural responsiveness was unrelated to the chapters described in the TFA *CMCT*. Therefore, the single theme developed for this research question is *Culture is missing from the TFA CMCT*.

Theme 4: Culture is missing from TFA CMCT. The TFA teacher interview responses demonstrated that TFA teachers had some awareness of culturally responsiveness. TFA teachers viewed culture as an essential aspect of classroom management. TFA teachers were unanimous in expressing the role of culture and the impact it may have on developing effective classroom management strategies. Phrases such as "school culture," "relationships with students," "firm and fair," and "depends on students" were used to describe TFA teacher responses to how they implemented classroom management and perceived the cultural responsiveness. TFA teacher 8 stated, "Culture plays a major role in the classroom management strategies I implement." TFA teacher 10 explained, "When you truly know the type of students you have, you know which classroom management strategies work best." TFA teacher 5 described culture as, "having a major role. Urban students are accustomed to a firm, authoritative voice." TFA teacher 2 explained, "Culture and building relationship is everything. When you establish a relationship with students, they are more apt to follow directions and meet expectations as opposed to not building a relationship with students." In addition, TFA teacher 4 maintained that promoting a strong classroom culture is, "the easiest way to have good

classroom management." TFA teachers were novices but were eager to utilize CRCM to build relationships, make connections, model desired behavior, and address conflicts.

Several TFA teachers did not attribute their use or knowledge of CRCM to the TFA teacher preparation program. TFA teacher 2 explained, "We were in daily workshops that emphasized classroom management but not much time was devoted to cultural awareness." TFA teacher 4 stated, "I felt TFA was failing in that area. Culture specialists are supposed to teach incoming teachers about the neighborhood of their placement school, exposing us to different things, making connections, and introducing us to different stakeholders." According to some of the TFA teachers, CRCM was not a phase of the TFA teacher training program. Emphasis was placed on discussions that centered on classroom management. Thus, some TFA teachers became knowledgeable of CRCM through observations and adapting to the setting.

Many TFA teachers' use of CRCM was learned over time. According to TFA teacher 2, "the best experience is on-the-job experience. We were given experience during the summer but not much. So everything I learned was during my first few months of teaching at my placement school." TFA teacher 10 stated, "instead of attending more workshops I would have enjoyed more time in the classroom." TFA teacher 9 explained that she, "learned how to have cultural awareness from students. Students essentially show you how they want to be treated. If and when you do not treat them appropriately, they will misbehave." TFA teacher 5 added, "I wish we were offered more workshops that addressed cultural awareness specifically. That could have been one less thing I need to master." It is evident that some TFA may need additional support in this area. The

TFA teacher preparation program may mention culture in the toolkit, but a deeper focus on culture and CRCM could be beneficial.

It was evident that TFA teachers executed the strategies outlined in the TFA *CMCT*. During the TFA teacher interviews, some responses were an exact replica of the toolkit. The chapters in the TFA CMCT contain detailed explanation.

Chapter 1 addresses holding high expectations for behavior specifically asserting authority. According to the TFA *CMCT* (Teach for America, 2011) "asserting your authority means standing firm on your expectations" (p. 9). TFA teacher 5 described asserting authority as firm and direct. "I am straight to the point. I say it is my tone of voice." TFA teacher 9 defined authority as clear and unwavering expectations. "I greet students as if they are coming into my home. I want students to feel that my classroom is not a dictatorship but a democracy where everyone can add to the decision making process."

Chapter 2 describes creating and implementing effective rules and consequences. TFA teacher 4 created a clear, self-created set of rules for the first few days of school which may change based on the culture of students: "I observe students' behavior and determine which behavior needs to stop and which behavior would negatively affect my classroom the most." TFA teacher 8 established rules within the first month to ensure all rules and consequences were aligned: "I did not want my rules to be unrealistic and the consequences too harsh. I also wanted to make sure students had the opportunity to correct the misbehavior." The TFA *CMCT* describes rules as general. They should apply to student behavior in all classrooms, regardless of the activity.

Chapter 3 outlines how TFA teachers should maximize the efficiency and structure in the classroom. According to the TFA *CMCT* (Teach for America, 2011), TFA teachers should create procedures to ensure excellent behavior by teaching students specific behavior for specific circumstances. TFA teachers' responses also aligned with this tenet. TFA teacher 2 explained,

> There is a rule for everything in my class. Simple procedures such as how students enter the room, how the paper should be headed, how to pass in papers or how students transition from small groups to large groups or all procedures that are taught. I have a million procedures to ensure every part of the lesson has structure in order to maximize the time allotted in class.

Most of the TFA teachers expressed some sort of procedure and routine in regards to maximizing the efficiency and structure in the classroom.

Chapter 4 examines responding to student misbehavior. According to the TFA *CMCT* (Teacher for America, 2011), TFA teachers must address all interruptions immediately while ensuring that "the verbal response is minimal, does not interrupt the lesson flow, and invest very little emotion" (p. 51). TFA teacher 10 explained that she responded to interruptions quickly and to the point. TFA teacher 4 made eye contact to redirect students' focus: "I found that addressing student behavior non-verbally is a good way to nip misbehavior in the bud."

Chapter 5 highlights the need to build a sense of community. The TFA *CMCT* (TFA, 2011), indicated for some students, a teacher's care and concern is the number one factor that influences student learning. Taking the initiative to learn about students' personal lives, interests, and goals is crucial to forming bonds with students. TFA teacher

9 bonded with students by showing a genuine interest: "I support students even when they do not have confidence in themselves." TFA teacher 4 made time to create personal relationships with students: "Although my lunch is my safe haven, I will invite students to have lunch with me." Eating lunch with the teacher allowed TFA teacher 4 to bond with students and incorporating conversations that allowed the teacher to become more familiar with the student.

The last chapter, Tenet 6, is valuing hard work, team effort, and academic achievement. TFA teacher 4 loved to highlight students that display great examples of hard work, team effort, and academic achievement within the classroom: "The students can make a connection right there and I think it's better because student relationships may influence other students to work hard." TFA teacher 2 related hard work, team effort, and academic achievement to coincide with college and career readiness: "The board is separated into five sections: magna cum laude, summa cum laude, cum laude, college level grit and college level zest. Hard work is encouraged to gain recognition at the end of the month." All of the areas discussed by Teacher 2 relate the TFA *CMCT* (TFA, 2011). The toolkit indicates that the most successful students are those who recognize that academic success does not come easily. True achievement requires hard work.

Interpretation of Findings about CRCM and CMCT. TFA teacher responses were closely aligned to that of the TFA *CMCT,* which is a clear indication that the TFA teachers were performing as they were trained. Unfortunately, there is little connection between the TFA *CMCT* and the tenets of CRCM. TFA teachers replicated the classroom

management strategies that they were taught. The following list outlines the chapters of the TFA *Classroom Management and Culture Toolkit*:

- Creating a culture of achievement

- Holding high expectation for students, teachers, and asserting authority

- Clear rules and consequences are created

- Class routines and procedures promote appropriate behavior and allow the teacher to maximize efficiency and structure

- Teachers respond to misbehavior by implementing consistent consequences and providing students with some control over the outcome

- Successful teachers develop a sense of team and unity that competes to meet high expectations

- Teachers value and celebrate achievement in their classroom

The second following list outlines the tenets of *Culturally Responsive Classroom Management:*

- Teachers reflect upon their assumptions, attitudes, and biases

- Teachers become knowledgeable of students' cultural backgrounds

- With regard to classroom management, teachers need to examine how current policies and practices in discipline might discriminate against certain children

- Teachers make decisions about the environment through the lens of cultural diversity

- Students are more likely to succeed if they feel connected to a school and positive respectful relationships with teachers help create such an environment.

An analysis of the chapters and tenets in both the TFA *CMCT* and the CRCM framework reveals that there is not a correlation between the two frameworks. One of the most glaring differences is that in the first chapter CMCT is focused on establishing authority and the first tenet of CRCM focuses on teachers' reflections of their perceptions and biases related to working with students in urban areas. This is an important difference to note as researchers in the field of culturally responsive and relevant teaching maintain that teachers cannot work effectively with students of color and/or students living in urban or low-income environments if the teachers do not first examine their own subjectivities (Gay, 2012, 2013; Ladson-Billings, 2009). Only Chapter 5 and Tenet 5 in each framework seem to have some level of alignment. This area represents TFA teachers' budding focus on culturally responsiveness once they are in their classrooms.

TFA teachers are not prepared to implement CRCM. Boutte (2012) suggested that TFA teachers who are placed in urban schools districts have some knowledge of cultural awareness. Although they were not prepared through their TFA training, the TFA teachers in this study learned the importance of exploring cultural responsiveness in the classroom through trial and error and observations of veteran teachers in urban schools. The TFA *CMCT* prepares TFA teachers for a classroom where cultural responsiveness is not a focus. Therefore, the training and toolkit do not adequately prepare TFA teachers for the urban schools where they are placed.

The TFA *CMCT* serves a guide to TFA teachers. It provides TFA teachers with various classroom management strategies. The existing dilemma concerning the TFA *CMCT* is the classroom management strategies are not similar to that of TFA teachers' placement schools.

TFA teachers' responses confirmed that an understanding of cultural awareness is needed when implementing effective classroom management strategies. An absence of cultural awareness when implementing classroom management strategies in an urban setting could create ineffective classroom managements strategies that will most often not work. TFA teachers who have developed an understanding of cultural responsiveness do not acknowledge the TFA teacher preparation program. In fact, many TFA teachers became culturally responsive through observing veteran teachers and adapting to the urban setting. The TFA *CMCT* mentions culture but the emphasis of CRCM should be improved throughout the toolkit. The CMCT is based on a very different set of theories and beliefs that are not similar to CRCM.

The TFA *CMCT* and the responses of the TFA teachers during the interview were aligned. TFA teacher responses were so precise that it was like TFA teachers were reading from a script. It is evident that the TFA *CMCT* lacks CRCM. It was apparent that many TFA teachers could describe how each chapter was implemented in his or her classroom; however, the lack of CRCM in an urban setting could make the implementation of TFA classroom management strategies ineffective. This is no fault of TFA teachers who are performing based on what was taught during the TFA teacher preparation program. However, the vast differences between each chapter and tenet were that the toolkit does not allow room for the CRCM of students of color and/or students living in urban or low-income environments. It can also be inferred that TFA teachers were not adequately prepared to manage urban students in urban schools where the TFA *CMCT* is not applicable. The results from this project study suggest that the TFA *CMCT* toolkit could be considered an ineffective guide to TFA teachers.

Conclusion

This section explained the research methodology used for this project study. Qualitative methods of data collection were used to gain TFA teachers' perceptions of the TFA teacher preparation program and identify significant themes affecting TFA teachers' perspective. Overall the findings suggest the necessity to revamp the TFA teacher preparation program. There is a need to redevelop the TFA teacher preparation program to place more emphasis on classroom management in order to bridge the gap between the teacher preparation program and an actual classroom.

The results of this qualitative case study bring attention to the TFA teacher preparation program and TFA teachers in order to improve students' academic achievement. TFA teachers' perceptions of the TFA teacher preparation program were in the interview results that various views of the TFA teacher preparation program. TFA teachers provided ideas that could have made the TFA teacher experience an easy transition into the classroom. However, the swiftness of the program does not allow room for TFA teachers to fully master management strategies.

The four themes and two subthemes that emerged from the interview responses were creating classroom management strategies that are appropriate for all classrooms regardless of the location, implementing management strategies that can prepare TFA teachers for their placement schools, and allowing room for growth in teacher ability. It is evident that TFA teachers desired effective and genuine classroom management strategies that support student achievement. Additionally, TFA teachers' classroom management style aligned with the TFA *CMCT* but lacked CRCM that was not offered during the TFA teacher preparation.

Although most of the TFA participants experienced a feeling of success in regards to classroom management, it was only through trial and error that this feeling was acquired. Most likely than not, TFA participants needed additional support in classroom management that was not learned during the TFA teacher preparation. The development of stronger classroom management strategies that are culturally responsive would allow the TFA teacher preparation program to create TFA teachers who are prepared to manage urban students in an urban setting. Also, the TFA program should consider implementing culturally responsive awareness to its classroom management strategies. This improvement can potentially increase TFA teachers' level of self-efficacy and ability to effectively manage a classroom.

Section 3: The Project

Introduction

I conducted a qualitative project study in one urban school district located in Georgia. The genre selected for this study was professional development training. The TFA teachers who participate in this cultural awareness professional development have the opportunity to receive CRCM and awareness associated with managing urban students. I selected and designed this professional development training for TFA teachers to address cultural differences and to better understand how to manage urban students. The implementation of this professional development training involves allowing TFA teachers the opportunity to explore urban students' culture through various cultural immersion activities and class discussions. Through this lens, I can provide TFA teachers with the tools that could assist them in the management of urban students. In the literature review, I focus on cultural immersion activities through professional development trainings. The resources, activities, and timetables are also discussed in the project. The primary goal of this project is to build TFA teachers' knowledge about urban students. This section includes the description and goals, rationale, review of literature, project description, project evaluation, project implications, and a conclusion.

Project Goals

The suggested 3-month TFA cultural awareness professional development training is designed for TFA teachers to receive directly after completing the TFA teacher training. The study participants indicated the need for the professional development training geared toward cultural responsive teaching and management. The goal of the TFA cultural awareness professional development training is to provide TFA teachers

with CRCM and awareness that can increase management of urban students and offer

TFA teachers the opportunity to identify cultural differences. The professional

development training will last for 3 months (July, September, and October) after TFA

teachers have completed the TFA teacher training program. The TFA teachers will not

be encouraged to participate in the professional development training during the month of

August because school begins late in the month. The participants will include TFA

teachers and TFA teacher trainers. The professional development training includes group

collaborations, class discussions, and cultural immersion activities.

Rationale

The TFA cultural awareness professional development training includes a focus

on minimizing prejudices and addressing inequities within education, as well as

developing TFA teachers who can manage urban students. In the results of the study,

some TFA teachers expressed the need for more training in the classroom management of

urban students. The primary purpose for designing this professional development

training is to seek to provide TFA teachers with cultural immersion activities that will

enhance TFA teachers' ability to manage urban students while y forming TFA teachers

who are culturally aware. The TFA cultural awareness professional development training

can be used to address culturally responsive classroom management. Cultural immersion

activities can be used to offer TFA teachers exposure to various cultures and to provide

TFA teachers with cultural awareness that can help in enhancing their understanding of

diversity within the learning environment.

Review of the Literature

Introduction

According to the literature review, research-based practices on culture, CRCM, and self-efficacy may be effective. These routes to improve teacher preparation include developing preservice trainings that include culture awareness, implementation of CRCM, and self-efficacy. The focus of this literature review is on the research-based best practices of implementing a teacher training program that bridges a gap between the TFA *CMCT* and the CRCM. The following databases were used: ProQuest, ERIC, Sage, and EBSCOHost. The search terms included *teacher training program, 21st century teacher, teacher training, new teacher training, teacher cultural awareness, cultural awareness,* and *cultural competency.* A total of 25 peer-reviewed articles on professional development studies and TFA were reviewed. It was not until information was repetitively duplicated that I gained total saturation. This literature review consists of literature on the genre of professional development. Teacher training programs, cultural awareness in teacher training programs, and professional development programs were addressed to promote evaluations of the characteristics of such training programs.

Teach for America Preparation Training

Numerous scholars have identified the advantages and disadvantages of TFA's teacher preparation program (Donaldson & Johnson, 2011; Harding, 2012; Hartnett, 2010; Heilig & Jez, 2010; Heineke et al., 2010; Labaree, 2010; Lapayese et al, 2014; Osgood, 2014; Perry, 2015; Veltri, 2014). However, because of the diversity of the school districts and the urban student population, a change is necessary from the current TFA classroom management practices. Although a one size fits all model is not

appropriate for students, the current TFA classroom management practices, in particular, employ this model. Urban schools need teachers who implement CRCM (Milner & Tenore, 2010). According to Khalil and Brown (2015), school officials seek teachers who have content knowledge. Teachers who have cultural awareness, communication, and commitment are equally desired. Khalil and Brown (2015) and Fitchett, Starker, and Salyers (2012) suggested that the efficacy of preservice teacher can influence the implementation of culturally responsive teaching strategies. Incorporating CRCM in an urban setting can be beneficial to preservice teachers.

Teachers who are placed in urban schools benefit from having an understanding of the students' culture. According to Khalil and Brown (2015), the necessary qualities of teachers of an urban school are determined by policy makers and urban communities. New teachers' exposure to cultural awareness while in the teacher education program is the focus of many teacher preparation programs (Bauml, Castro, Field, & Morowski, 2016). Multicultural attitudes of preservice teachers can also be influenced by experiences gained during teacher preparation (Watson, 2012). According to Squires and Kubrin (2005), racial disparities between cities and suburbs support the need for cultural awareness and diversity. There is a need for teacher preparation programs to implement research-based strategies that have the ability to prepare future teachers for the diverse population of students. In addition to the suggestions of Khalil and Brown, Dicke et al. (2014) proposed that preservice teachers should also receive self-efficacy training. Well-developed coping mechanisms could be taught to novice teachers who lack classroom experience as well as CRCM. Emphasis should be placed on self-efficacy as it is crucial for TFA teachers because they are novice teachers.

Self-efficacy is determined by mastery experiences. Mastery experiences are missing in the TFA teacher training. According to Bandura (1977), self-efficacy beliefs are developed by independent performance, knowledge, and skills. The higher the level of self-efficacy, the better the performance. Self-efficacy is linked to classroom management in that a teacher who lacks efficacy generally has more classroom disturbances and development of teacher burnout (Parker, Martin, Colmar, & Liem, 2012). There is more than one method of developing effective teacher training programs. Researchers support various routes of adequately preparing TFA teachers (Sass, 2011; Swanson, 2015; Tillery et al., 2010; Willis, 2015).

Cultural Awareness in Teacher Training Programs

A cultural gap exists in many of U.S. schools as an increasing number of teachers struggle to address the needs of students from cultures other than their own. In the United States, schools need to make a connection between teacher training programs and the needs of the school districts they serve (Wilhoit, 2012). Thus, researchers have initiated a movement to encourage institutions to change the direction of effective training. In 2014, Thorpe suggested that prospective teachers be mandated to complete a 1-year residency to replace student teaching (as cited in Bushaw, 2014). This change in teacher training would allow prospective teachers to gain more of the practical experience needed to be successful. Additionally, this would allow teachers to work with diverse populations of students and prepare them for the various behavior management scenarios that are to be expected (Bryant, Moss, & Boudreau, 2015). These ideas suggest that novice teachers could learn from veteran teachers, observe and participate in classroom

management that is culturally responsive, and most importantly be prepared to teach in an urban school.

Currently, mainly White teachers comprise the teaching force (Fehr & Agnello, 2012). School districts in the United States employ more White female teachers than any other race or gender. The change in racial composition within schools has caused schools to be more culturally diverse, which has increased the need for cultural awareness among teachers. According to Batey and Lupi (2012), diversity has increased in classrooms, which is an indicator that there is a need for teachers to be well-versed in working with students from diverse backgrounds. To increase the level of diversity competence, teacher preparation programs could offer preservice teachers classes on race, class, and culture. Early exposure to the realities of urban schools is vital to teachers' success (Gross & Maloney, 2012). Orchard and Winch (2015) explained that classroom experience in a setting that is similar to the expected environment plays a role in the development of teachers. Because classroom teachers remain predominantly White and female and students in public schools increasingly represent a variety of cultural identities, it may be advantageous for those teachers to receive cultural awareness professional development courses. These courses could be designed to increase and address the management of diverse populations.

There are many criticisms of U.S. teacher preparation programs. Teacher preparation programs are scrutinized for relying on theoretical experience and failing to provide practical experiences to prepare teachers to be effective in the classroom (Liu, 2013). According to Pecheone and Whitaker (2016), several states are reshaping teacher training programs to reflect new policies, standards-based teaching, and performance-

based assessments. The New York City Teaching Fellows, an alternative teacher

preparation program, is a teacher training program created to develop a hybrid teacher

who allows the discussion of social issues (Mungal, 2015). The state of Oregon engaged

preservice teachers in meaningful dialogue to assist teachers in understanding what it

means to be a disadvantaged student or minority in the United States (Bryant et al.,

2015). During the teacher preservice in Oregon, preservice teachers viewed a three-part

film series in regards to race entitled *The House We Live In,* to assist in raising awareness

in White teachers. After viewing the film, preservice teachers were asked to provide a

reflection (Bryant et al, 2015).

In preparation for diverse settings, teacher education programs are beginning to

rely on multicultural education courses (Wallace & Brand, 2012). Through these

courses, teachers learn strategies for teaching culturally diverse populations. Pollock,

Deckman, Mira, and Shalaby (2010) proposed that theoretical experiences alone cannot

alter teacher behaviors. Cultural awareness is a necessity in understanding various

cultures. According to Keengwe (2010), multicultural courses are designed to address

educational practices and social cultural patterns in regards to race, ethnicity, culture, and

other exceptionalities. Specifically, the courses are designed for teachers to acquire an

understanding of self and to recognize perspectives on socioeconomic class roles and

racial self-images. Wallace and Brand (2012) highlighted that preservice teacher develop

cultural awareness by participating in a multicultural education course. Through this

course, cultural differences and biases are challenged and acknowledged.

Multicultural courses that support cultural awareness may assist in the

development of new teachers. Wilhoit (2012) suggested that often multicultural

education courses integrated into teacher preparation programs are beneficial for novice teachers. For example, when teachers automatically associate failure with students of color or with students living in impoverished areas, those students are affected negatively by these perspectives. According to Keengwe (2010), multicultural education courses allow preservice teachers the opportunity to appreciate, understand, and explore diversity through reflective writings, discussions, and viewing and analyzing of cultural films. According to Bryant et al. (2015), preservice teachers are challenged to acknowledge social injustices while promoting social justice through innovative methods and strategies. A focus on social supports equal opportunity for everyone despite their race, especially those with the greatest need for cultural awareness (Wells, 2015). Through multicultural education and social justice activities, pre-service teachers are able to develop cultural competency. Therefore, there is a need for multicultural education courses to educate preservice teachers to avoid perpetuating social inequities.

Teacher training programs that develop cultural awareness among teachers are significant to the development of new teachers. A teacher's ability to tailor and adapt instructional practices and classroom management strategies to meet the needs of diverse students is crucial (Martins-Shannon & White, 2012). When all students are considered in the development of rituals and routines, classroom disruptions may be minimized. Teacher training programs could implement traditions, languages, and cultures of the students into daily lessons. Martins-Shannon and White (2012) suggested that teacher training programs can be used to educate teachers on how to create activities that negate cultural stereotypes and myths. These types of activities would allow students to express themselves freely and create an inclusive culturally responsive classroom.

Teacher training programs could also support teachers in developing culturally responsive behavior. Vincent, Randall, Cartledge, Tobin, and Swain-Bradway (2011) suggested that cultural awareness applies to social skills more than academic content. According to Cartledge and Kleefeld (2010), to teach a culturally diverse population, teachers must be well versed in culturally diverse social skills.   In an effort to support staff in cultural awareness, school districts should urge teachers to participate in cultural knowledge and self-awareness workshops. MacPherson (2010) proposed that cultural awareness leads to CRCM, which will establish a greater cultural understanding among various cultures. A strong understanding of culture and cultural awareness will allow teachers to implement rituals and routines that are appropriate for a diverse population of students.

Teacher training programs could use the same model of cultural competency as corporate organizations. In corporations, training programs are designed to address cultural competency by focusing on culture intelligence and teamwork skills. Culture competency is tailored to ensure that proper training and experience is developed. It is through this approach that Goodman (2012) suggested cultural competence is acquired. Evetts (2011) proposed that teacher training programs should implement new professionalism that is based on managerial- or organized-based professionalism. The new professionalism could supply improvements to teaching and learning.

Community-based service learning opportunities can also strengthen cultural awareness in teachers (Gross & Maloney, 2012). Keengwee (2010) suggested that teachers learn the expectations of students from various cultural backgrounds that may influence the way lessons are taught. Teacher candidates who complete service learning

opportunities have a greater understanding of cultural diversity and are able to build relationships with members of the community (Batey & Lupi, 2012). Teacher preparation programs could assist in the development of teacher candidates by allowing more experiences with students who are similar to those they will teach one day.

Cultural immersion projects that support community involvement are essential components of gaining cultural awareness. Stachowski and Mahan (1998) proposed that teachers are able to understand and appreciate students when they spend time in the community. Community experiences assist teachers with viewing the strengths within a culture. Active participation in community events is an aspect of teaching (Dacosta, 1994). Teachers who do not have cultural immersion experience that is built from community involvement may experience difficulty bridging the gap between cultures (Clayton, 1995). Thus, community involvement creates a path for teachers to develop an understanding of their students. According to Ladson-Billings (2000), within the African American culture, churches, social clubs, community events, and lodges play a role in the culture. Neighborhoods are essentially shaped by community events.

Professional Development

Experience may be the best teacher. According to Klieger and Yakobovitch (2012), teachers learn through their own experiences, conversations, and inquiry. Professional development where teachers reflect on and analyze their experiences, have conversations, and explore inquiry could be improving teachers' cultural awareness and management practices. This type of professional development could be helpful for teachers in the TFA teacher training program. The purpose of this professional development is to support teachers and increase an understanding of the urban student.

Hunzicker (2011) suggested that professional development is effective when the needs of teachers, along with the school district, are considered. Desimone (2011) argued that professional development for teachers is key to creating change in schools and contended that a professional development program should include opportunities for teachers to grow in instructional and management strategies, professional practices, and reflection. Professional development that provides opportunities for teachers to further their understanding of students would help teachers to provide opportunities for students to gain knowledge (Hunzicker, 2011; Van Driel, 2012).

A professional development can benefit teachers and also support the success of students. When a professional development is relevant and allows teachers the autonomy to evaluate the session, teachers are more likely to implement the plan of action (Smolin & Lawless, 2011). Teachers tend to develop a comfort level that fosters success when they are able to participate in the designing and creation of the professional development session (Pyle, Wade-Woolley, & Hutchinson, 2011). Professional development sessions that are led by teachers or individuals who share the same experiences are important to teachers (Pella, 2011). Smith (2012) explained that awareness, goal setting, and environmental factors have a positive impact on teachers' academic performance. When teachers have the opportunity to explore, have discussions, and learn various teaching and management styles, teaching practices are addressed (Gonzales & Lambert, 2014). In fact, a professional development session is beneficial to teachers when students' emotional development and academics improve (Evans, 2013).

A professional development can maintain its effectiveness by ensuring teacher collaboration is positive, establishing a sense of empowerment and understanding, setting

goals, and exposing teachers to different styles of learning and management (Pella, 2011). A lack of willingness defeats the purpose of learning new teaching and management styles, setting goals, gaining exposure, and promoting positive collaboration (Smolin & Lawless, 2011). New professional development sessions are frequently encouraged by governmental education authorities; however, improperly implementing a training session can cause the entire program to fail (Costly, 2013). Thus, a follow up evaluation should be conducted by school districts to make certain trainings reflect a productive change. Poor professional development trainings result in gaps in the implementation process (Strieker, Logan, & Kuhel, 2012). Furthermore, a professional development that is improperly implemented could prevent teachers from properly implementing an action plan. Evans (2013) suggested that all professional development sessions maintain an alignment with the school's common vision, support the purpose of the trainings and encourage teachers to grow professionally.

Project Description

This 3 month professional development training program was designed to develop TFA teachers' cultural knowledge. The training will begin during the TFA teacher summer training program and will continue 2 months thereafter. There are six objectives to ensure the success of the professional development training that include: examining personal cultural experiences, the influence of personal and cultural experiences, stereotypes, communication styles, and cultural differences. There are three units that are parallel to the objectives of the training. The units consist of cultural awareness, cross cultural understanding, CRCM, classroom management strategies, and reflections. Each unit is concluded with a cultural immersion activity. Through the

various cultural immersion activities, TFA teachers will explore values and biases that perpetuate stereotypes.

The components of each session include a text that raises cultural awareness and cultural factors. The text is comprised of seven chapters but for purposes of this project only chapters 1, 4, and 5 are used. These chapters are selected as the primary focus because the focus of this training is to strengthen TFA teachers' cultural awareness knowledge and the classroom management of urban students. Each session will also include the viewing of a video that addresses relevant topics that support the chapter focus. The discussions thereafter will be a conversation related to the video, while exposing them to the culture of urban students. Each session will conclude with a cultural immersion activity. The purpose of the activity is to immerse TFA teachers in the culture of urban students, TFA teachers could gain an understanding of urban students and effectively implement classroom management.

Resources and Existing Support

The materials in this training support cultural awareness and classroom management of urban students. The discussions will be geared toward understanding urban culture and how urban culture can be applied to classroom management. The videos selected shed light on the impact urban culture has on classroom management. Finally, the cultural immersion projects are a mix of cultural awareness and classroom management activities that offer TFA teachers the opportunity to become fully submerged in urban culture while learning effective classroom management strategies.

Implementation of the TFA cultural awareness professional development training can be achieved by allocating both financial and human resources. The human resources

include securing individuals who are capable of providing TFA teachers with CRCM and cultural awareness. Financial resources are needed to secure a program director and teaching staff. Although school district employees may potentially qualify for a position in the TFA cultural awareness professional development training and the school district may be able to financially support the training, the manpower needed to determine its potential is beyond the limits of this study. School district curriculum supervisors are presently responsible for providing teachers with professional development trainings. This program will allow curriculum supervisors to attend various trainings and become employed as a cultural awareness trainer. Those who qualify will teach evening or weekend sessions on a contractual agreement. All TFA teachers would receive an annual reimbursement of up to $1,000 in books and materials for completing all professional development trainings.

Barriers and Solutions

To accomplish all 3-months of TFA cultural awareness professional development training, I had to secure a school calendar for the district. The first potential barrier for this project include scheduling a time to conduct each professional development training session for each TFA teacher that did not interfere with any scheduled holidays, professional development trainings for educators, or district activities. The second potential barrier was attendance of each TFA teacher to the scheduled professional development training. It was essential that TFA teachers attended each professional development training or rescheduled the training. The third potential barrier may be disagreements among TFA teachers that may discourage class discussions and impede the success of the cultural awareness professional development training.

The solution to the first barrier was to utilize the school calendar to my advantage. The school calendar allowed me to schedule each training session for dates that were potentially available to each participant. The second solution entailed sending a follow up confirmation email the day before the training session to ensure the TFA teacher would attend. The third solution is to encourage genuine class discussions but also to respectfully accept and honor the opinions of others.

Implementation and Timetable

The proposed cultural awareness professional development can be implemented within 2 months of school board approval. Incoming TFA teachers would be required to begin the training at the commencing of the TFA summer teacher training. Because of the various alternative certification programs located in the state of Georgia, some teachers will be exempt from participating in this professional development program. Any teacher who does not possess a Georgia teacher license but completed the coursework may not be required to enroll in the training. However they can be required to enroll in other professional development training deemed appropriate by mentors and local principals.

Implementation of this training would require no more than 2 months of planning and preparation. The process of hiring qualified instructors must take place, a venue must be obtained, and resources must be secured prior to the commencement of this training. An invitation to participate in this training will be provided to TFA teachers 2 weeks into the summer training. The sessions will begin in July. TFA teachers will complete a survey immediately after the final training session as a form of feedback. The results of the survey will be used to make improvements to the training. Instructors of the professional development will be required to conduct follow-up conferences with each

training participant. This conference may be held in person or by phone. The purpose of the conference is to determine if the professional development was effective.

Roles and Responsibilities of Student and Others

My primary role, as the program developer, will be to function as the program director. My responsibilities will consist of crafting and maintaining an accurate list of TFA teachers partaking the training program, creating a list of interested professional development trainers in various school districts, ensuring the organization and proper development of prospective trainings, providing TFA teachers with guidance, selecting mentors, participating in various professional development trainings as an instructor, and conforming to federal and state regulations. In addition to my role as the program director, I will also ensure that TFA teachers' development is monitored and reported to the director of licensing who will notify the necessary district officials or complete the required documents needed to obtain licensing. Local school board members, superintendents, and district officials will be responsible for ensuring that resources are allotted for purposes of this professional development training program.

<div align="center">

Project Evaluation

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Integrating CRCM may consequently result in higher levels of the self-efficacy of TFA teachers employed in the school district of this project study. An examination must be completed to warrant the effectiveness of its implementation and quality of each component. Therefore, a formative evaluation initially will serve as the main evaluation method in establishing efficacy. Fretchling (2002) suggested that formative evaluations are completed in the initial phase and will remain for the duration of the project. The purpose is to decide how to efficiently propose, revise, and modify for improvement. The

proposed modifications to the TFA *CMCT* will be the first of its kind and therefore meet

the characteristics of this type of evaluation. Formative evaluations provide critical

feedback that is essential to the development of a newly developed program. The

feedback can ensure that improvements to the TFA *CMCT* are effective and necessary.

A formative evaluation will be conducted for the duration of the integration of

CRCM and the TFA *CMCT* to establish its effectiveness. The objective of the integration

is as follows:

- Program guidelines are clearly defined so that TFA teachers would easily

  understand the expectation of the suggested improvements.

- Integrate a new TFA *CMCT* within the TFA teacher preparation program in order

  to develop teachers that are better prepared to manage urban students.

A goal based evaluation will also be used to establish goals and objectives for the

TFA teacher preparation program. Goals will be evaluated at various levels of the

implementation process. According to Elliott, Murayama, and Kobeisy (2015), goal

based evaluations involve measuring whether predetermined goals are met. Goal based

evaluations are S.M.A.R.T. (smart, measurable, attainable, relevant, and timely)

objectives. The goals of the evaluation are as follows:

- Obtain TFA stakeholders' perceptions of the improvement to the TFA *CMCT* that

  will consequently have an effect on the TFA teacher preparation program

- Obtain TFA teachers' perceptions of the improvements to the TFA *CMCT* that

  will consequently have an effect on the TFA teacher preparation program

- Ensure all TFA teachers successfully complete the TFA teacher preparation

  program

TFA stakeholders will collect qualitative data on TFA teacher perceptions of those that completed the training. Quantitative data could also be collected in the form of surveys and counts of discipline referrals. The formative evaluation data will be communicated to course instructors and professional developments trainers to make informed decisions about changes to the TFA teacher preparation program. Stakeholders such as participating school districts that employ TFA teachers and TFA teacher preparation program developers will receive a formal report that outlines the results of this formative evaluation. TFA teacher preparation program developers will incorporate these results to make modifications to the TFA teacher preparation program.

Project Implications

Local Community

The school district in this project study is located in an impoverished area that primarily serves urban students. The school district is comprised of 80.8% African American, 11.1% White, 3.4% Hispanic, 2.1% American Indian, 1.5% Bi-racial, and 0.8% Asian with 82.5% of all students received free or reduced lunch. It is an accurate assumption that the participating school district consist of a large number of urban students. The suggested policy recommendation to the TFA teacher preparation program may be beneficial to the participating school district in that it provides a method of adequately preparing TFA teachers in managing urban students through CRCM. Shevalier and McKenzie (2012) proposed that CRCM is valuable to urban school districts

and received positively by urban students. More importantly, the literature supports the project study findings. TFA teachers indicated a relationship between CRCM and the self-efficacy of TFA teachers. Implementing these changes to the TFA teacher preparation program is vital to the students, families, instructors, administrators, community partners, and stakeholders because the changes will provide TFA teachers with adequate training and development needed to manage urban students.

Far Reaching

Georgia's public schools are dependent on the state of Georgia to produce teachers who become certified teachers through alternative certification programs. Programs as such are endorsed by state legislators that support programs that are developed by non-traditional organizations such as institutions of higher learning or the state. CRCM will serve as the framework for this professional development and manipulated to best suit the needs of TFA teachers in school districts across the state. There are far reaching implications associated with the development of the TFA cultural awareness training that may apply to other districts in the state or even beyond.

<p style="text-align:center">**Conclusion**</p>

Across the nation, the attrition rate of TFA teachers is high, particularly in Georgia. Thus, the development of a self-governing program is supported by legislators. There is not a way to develop a cultural awareness program that will maximize awareness in TFA teachers; however, there is a consensus that some practices are more effective than others. The use of culturally relevant professional development better meets the needs of the TFA teacher. The professional development training was developed to incorporate cultural awareness deemed appropriate for TFA teachers.

Section 4: Reflections and Conclusions

Introduction

This project study findings, along with the literature, were used as a guide to developing the TFA cultural awareness professional development training program to focus on CRCM and cultural awareness of the school district in the study. In this section, I highlight various elements of the project consisting of the project strengths; recommendations for remediation of project limitations; project development and evaluation; the project's potential implication for social change; and implications, applications, and direction for future research. Scholarship and leadership change is also discussed in this section, as well as a scholar, practitioner, and project developer self-analysis.

Project Strengths

One of the strengths of the TFA cultural awareness professional development training was in using the case study findings and literature to focus on CRCM and cultural awareness in TFA teachers. Throughout this program, TFA teachers will receive guidance in becoming CRCM teachers. A second strength of the program was that each professional development training session will be geared to focus on cultural awareness in TFA teachers. The professional development training is structured in a way that allows flexibility for additional modifications as considered necessary. The final strength of the professional development is that all instructors will have background knowledge of the school district that outside sources may not comprehend.

Recommendations for Remediation of Limitations

The two most significant limitations of this project study were limited data sources and generalizability. Like most qualitative case studies, the study results cannot be applied universally. I acknowledged this limitation. The findings of this study were supported by the literature. Because this support existed, researchers may be able to conduct generalizable quantitative studies using this case study as a foundation. As a result of the participants consisting of TFA teachers from Title I middle schools in the district, limitations exist. Participants in the study may not represent other middle schools in surrounding school districts. The results may not be applicable to small or larger populations. Additionally, the results were applicable to a comparable population and may not be applicable to TFA teachers representing Title I middle schools in a different geographic area.

Furthermore, TFA teacher responses could have been influenced by the school district. For example, the TFA participants may have felt a bit of apprehension to honestly answer questions because of their affiliation to their school district and their reluctance about research confidentiality. Similarly, TFA participants may have hesitated to participate due to adverse outside influences and minimal comprehension of the research process. Though important, these limitations did not have any significant effect on the results in this project.

Recommendation for Alternative Approaches

In this project study, I revealed TFA teacher perceptions toward the TFA teacher preparation program after teacher training took place. According to findings from the data collected and analyzed, the TFA teachers did not feel prepared for teaching in an

urban setting. When incorporating the TFA classroom management strategies, teachers

indicated that although they felt comfortable applying the strategies learned, the

classroom management strategies could have been more effective if they were relevant to

urban students. These findings are important to the area of study; however, there are

several alternative approaches for this project study that could have been developed. The

alternative approaches include the following:

1. A study that provides a more in-depth examination of teachers'

    perceptions by including a larger sample of TFA teachers

2. A study on classroom management by comparing the number of

    disciplinary referrals submitted by TFA teachers and non-TFA teachers

3. A study that incorporates observations of the TFA training sessions in

    order to have a direct analysis of the training procedures

4. A study that follows TFA teachers throughout the school year

Scholarship, Project Development, and Leadership and Change

The term scholarship varies from college to college. Most often, scholarship is

applicable to research. Glassick (2011) referred to the term scholarship as "having

academic rank in a college or university and being engaged in research and publication"

(p. 3). The level of dedication that I have given to this project study has afforded me the

opportunity to learn what it means to be engaged in research. The research, cultural

awareness, and the TFA *CMCT* assisted me in identifying the problem. Current research-

based classroom management strategies that are geared toward urban students solidified

this concern. Incorporating cultural awareness in the TFA teacher preparation program

could potentially minimize the lack of cultural awareness. It is crucial that TFA

stakeholders understand the importance of transforming the TFA preparation program that fosters teacher success in urban middle schools. Through this multifaceted understanding of urban students, I am able to support or add to the current literature regarding causes of some TFA teachers' inability to manage students in an urban setting. While researching, I was sure to review all articles on classroom management strategies for urban students, TFA, and its current classroom practices and cultural awareness. As I studied the articles, I kept a reflective journal. The peer-reviewed articles were used to make connections between the current research and TFA classroom management practices.

Limited research exists on TFA teachers' perception of the training received during the TFA teacher preparation program in classroom management. I applied a qualitative methodology. I used current research to develop a practical problem and to create a purpose. Thus, the results from this project study could guide the TFA teacher preparation program when planning for professional development programs that are geared toward classroom management. These results could also support changes in the TFA program that may better serve the future TFA teachers in learning how to manage an urban classroom successfully.

It was crucial that I present the facts that existed in the TFA teacher preparation. In developing the project and evaluation, I discovered that the TFA *CMCT* contained a section that is dedicated to culture. I reviewed this section that included TFA teachers forming bonds with families and communities and creating a sense of community in the classroom. Reviewing this section will supply the TFA teacher preparation program with recent TFA teachers' perception of its program. It will also assist in identifying whether

the classroom management strategies taught during the TFA teacher preparation program is effective in managing urban students.

As all of the contributing factors for the improvement of the TFA teacher training were identified in the collection of data, I highlighted a lack of cultural awareness in the TFA teacher preparation program. I proposed a TFA cultural awareness professional development training with CRCM as the end result of TFA teacher development. Subsequently, I had to create a practical solution to the lack of cultural awareness in TFA teachers. In reading and evaluating peer-reviewed articles, I discovered various routes of addressing the lack of culture in TFA teachers. I found several teacher training programs and improvement strategies for classroom management and cultural awareness, including preservice training. I developed a TFA cultural awareness training. Throughout the cultural awareness training, constructive feedback will be solicited to ensure its effectiveness. Each unit of the TFA cultural awareness training must be outlined to make certain culture is a priority to the TFA teacher preparation program to benefit TFA teachers who are placed in urban schools.

This project study strengthened my appreciation that change does not occur without intent and scholarly effort. Although not confined by the ability to communicate a vision, leadership expectations should maintain a level of professional excellence. This project study has supplied me with the leadership skills necessary to suggest a change in the TFA teacher preparation program with the intent to provide a resolution.

Reflection on the Importance of Work

As I reflect upon my experience in completing this project study, I feel I have matured as a professional, an educator and a scholar. This project study has also

increased my ability to participate in educational ideas and communicate those ideas to other professionals within an educational setting. I am now able to apply research in an effective and scholarly manner which can contribute to existing bodies of research. The tremendous amount of growth and scholarship I have experienced has created a desire for knowledge.

As an education practitioner, I have always been aware of my influence on the lives of those around me, especially the lives of students. Therefore, I insist on staying current with best practices, research based strategies, and any other educational resources that can benefit the educational experiences of students. My attendance at various professional development sessions and education conferences is essential. My efforts to engage students at the highest have not gone unnoticed. I have received several local and district recognition awards to highlight my contributions to education. As I transition from a classroom teacher to a leadership role, I recognize that knowledge is endless. I must apply the knowledge I acquired during this project study to influence the lives of those around me. If I would like to make a change in those around me, I now understand that I must display change within myself.

As I reflect upon the change I would like to see within the TFA teacher preparation program, I recognized that the basic skills needed to accomplish this goal were already embedded within me. Those skills include the ability to engage in scholarly research needed to ensure this project study is useful, credible, and applicable. Throughout this project, I struggled with the project evaluation aspect. As a result, I am using my creative strengths to build upon this weakness. This is accomplished through developing a project and guiding its implementation and evaluation. My experience in

creating this project has supplied me with the confidence to evaluate a project and consequently have a positive impact on the lives of students.

Implications, Applications, and Directions for Future Research

The project study findings may be applied to other urban public school districts across the United States that employs TFA teachers. Implications suggest that TFA preparation program developers should consider amending the TFA *CMCT* chapters to incorporate the tenets of CRCM. The current classroom management strategies as outlined in the TFA *CMCT* are not considered applicable or effective to an urban setting. In fact, TFA preparation program developers could use the results of this project study as a springboard to explore the effectiveness of the current classroom management strategies as outlined in the TFA *CMCT*. Creating an amended TFA *CMCT* that incorporates CRCM will assist in creating TFA teachers who are culturally responsive and improve in their implementation of classroom management strategies.

The findings of the project study were also instrumental in promoting cultural awareness in TFA teachers and identifying root cases of social inequities in education that would transform the TFA teacher preparation program so that the needs of urban students are satisfied at the local setting, state, region, and around the nation. The TFA teacher cultural awareness training is designed to assist TFA stakeholders in identifying classroom management strategies, cultural awareness, techniques, CRCM, and methodologies that are beneficial when applied to urban students. TFA teachers' feedback and suggestions to the TFA teacher cultural awareness training will play a vital role and will also be considered in making the implementation plan significant.

TFA stakeholders could discuss the validity of the TFA *CMCT* to determine if other urban public school TFA teachers' perceptions of the TFA teacher preparation program are the same as those from this project study. Further research is needed to address the cultural awareness of TFA teachers. Studies are necessary to establish if TFA teachers need additional support in classroom management, if the TFA *CMCT* needs amending, or if specific components should be modified to address cultural awareness. Also, studies could determine whether TFA teachers' perceptions vary from teacher to teacher or from school to school. TFA teacher preparation program developers need current research and knowledge to increase their understanding of managing classroom behavior in schools today.

The data analysis and outcome of this project study validate that TFA teachers do not feel prepared by the TFA teacher preparation program to manage students in an urban setting. If TFA teachers are taught classroom management strategies that contain cultural awareness, they could better manage students in an urban setting. It can be inferred that TFA teachers were able to learn culturally responsive classroom management strategies from experienced teachers. Thus, if TFA teachers were given the opportunity to become culturally aware during the TFA teacher preparation, the success rate of TFA teachers could grow significantly. Bandura's (1982, 1997) self-efficacy theory was the conceptual framework of this project study. Bandura (1982, 1983, and 2012) found through his numerous studies that self-efficacy has a correlation with an individual ability to accomplish unfamiliar tasks.

A recommendation for future research is to explore the influence TFA teachers have on the academic status of the urban students. Research studies that are comparable

could be evaluated to determine the influence of TFA teachers on the academic status of suburban students and urban students. Another recommendation for a future study is a mixed methods study where the discipline referrals of TFA teachers are used as quantitative data. Administrators, teachers, and staff have an obligation to ensure urban professional developments are maintained with fidelity. Through professional training sessions teachers are able to gain knowledge about urban culture that can be applied to the management style of urban students. Potential future research could address a solution to the number of TFA teachers who are not prepared and lack cultural awareness. The project study investigated TFA teachers' perceptions of the TFA teacher preparation program as it relates to classroom management; however, there are questions for future research such as why some TFA teachers are successful while others leave education prematurely. A professional development is a possible solution to enhance cultural awareness in TFA teachers. Working to build culturally strong TFA teachers will assist in improving TFA teachers' understanding of urban students.

Conclusion

The findings in this qualitative project study suggest that implementing an effective classroom management strategy that is applicable to the setting is crucial in successfully managing a classroom. This project study was used to explore the voices of TFA teachers in an attempt to determine if changes were needed to the TFA teacher preparation program or the frameworks used to prepare TFA teachers, specifically in classroom management. The findings support Bandura's (1982, 1997) self-efficacy theory and the importance of implementing CRCM in an urban school.

The major strength of this project was that the program is geared specifically to meet the needs of TFA teachers. Limitations of the case study suggest that the findings are not generalizable and limited data sources can possibly have an impact on the project developed. Despite its limitations, this project has the potential to increase TFA teachers' use of classroom management practices that demonstrate an appreciation for and understanding of students' cultural identities and experiences.

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Appendix A: TFA Teacher Cultural Awareness Training

Goals of the Course:

The goal of this three-month course is to deepen TFA teachers' knowledge of cultural awareness. This course will address specific values and biases with an emphasis on race, culture, and stereotypes.

Course Duration:

This three-month course is designed to begin during the TFA teacher summer training and extend four months after TFA teachers have been employed in an urban school. TFA teachers will meet once a month for a three-hour period.

Text: Tomalin, B. & Stempleski, S. (1993). *Cultural Awareness*. Oxford, NY: Oxford University Press.

Course Objectives:

1. To examine personal cultural experiences and their impact TFA teachers' perceptions of race and ethnicity.
2. To explain the influence of personal and cultural experiences on TFA teachers' sense of self.
3. To identify various stereotypes, prejudice, racism and discrimination.
4. To compare and contrast various communication styles that are unique to diverse racial and ethnic groups.
5. To facilitate discussions on cultural differences.
6. To identify classroom management strategies that are applicable to urban students

Course Breakdown:

Unit 1 – July (initial training)
Topic: Cultural Awareness & Cultural Identity
Course Materials: Tomalin, B. & Stempleski, S. (1993). *Cultural Awareness*

Chapter 1 - Recognizing cultural images and symbols
YouTube Video "Them and Us: Cultural Awareness"
- What is culture?
- Identify similarities and differences within cultures
- Identify distinguishing characteristics between cultures
- Increase awareness and knowledge about one's own culture
- Culture bias in testing
- Determine your cultural competence rank, complete the Cultural Proficiency Receptivity Scale

Cultural Immersion Activity: Interview 3 people in an urban community in regards to cultural awareness and cultural identity

*There will not be any sessions held in the month of August since school starts late.

Unit 2 – September (follow up session)
Topic: Cross cultural understanding & Intercultural Communication
Course Materials: Tomalin, B. & Stempleski, S. (1993). *Cultural Awareness*
Chapter 4 - Examining cultural behavior
YouTube Video "Cross-Cultural Communication: How Culture Affects Communication"
- Cultural bias, perceptions, and stereotypes
- Cultural misunderstandings
- Cultural responsiveness
- Respect characteristics of various cultures

Cultural Immersion Activity: Visit a local church, mosque, temple or place of worship that is a different from your own

Unit 3 – October (follow up session)
Topic: Culturally responsive classroom management for urban students
Course Materials: Tomalin, B. & Stempleski, S. (1993). *Cultural Awareness*
Chapter 5 - Examining patterns of communication
YouTube Video "A Tale of Two Teachers" by Melissa Crum
- Understanding urban students
- Bridging the gap between home and school culture
- Identifying the management style that works best for urban students
- Cultural Immersion Activity: Select a teacher from your school or a different school to observe who has been identified as an effective classroom manager

TFA teachers will complete a 5-question open-ended questionnaire at the end of the course. This feedback will be shared with the class and used to make improvements to the course.

Cultural Proficiency Receptivity Scale

The Cultural Proficiency Receptivity Scale is a non-scientific instrument designed to guide you through a process of self-reflection. This is not a test. Read each statement and indicate your level of agreement on the 1-7 Likert scale. A response of 1 indicates strong disagreement and a response of 7 indicates strong agreement.

1. I believe that all children and youth learn successfully when informed and caring teachers assist them and make sufficient resources available to them.

Strongly Disagree   Agree   Strongly Agree

1   2   3   4   5   6   7

2. I want to do whatever is necessary to ensure that the students for whom I am responsible are well-educated and successful learners.

Strongly Disagree   Agree   Strongly Agree

1   2   3   4   5   6   7

3. I am committed to creating both an educational environment and learning experience for our students that honor and respect who they are.

Strongly Disagree   Agree   Strongly Agree

1   2   3   4   5   6   7

4. I am willing to ask myself uncomfortable questions about racism, cultural

preferences, and insufficient learning conditions and resources that are obstacles to

learning for many students.

Strongly Disagree　　　　　　Agree　　　Strongly Agree

1　　2　　3　　　　　4　　　　　5　　6　　7

5. I am willing to ask questions about racism, cultural preferences, and insufficient

learning conditions and resources that may be uncomfortable for others in my school or

district.

Strongly Disagree　　　　　　Agree　　　Strongly Agree

1　　2　　3　　　　　4　　　　　5　　6　　7

6. I believe that all students benefit from educational practices that engage them

in learning about their cultural heritage and understanding their cultural background.

Strongly Disagree　　　　　　Agree　　　Strongly Agree

1　　2　　3　　　　　4　　　　　5　　6　　7

7. I believe that all students benefit from educational practices that provide them

with hope, direction, and preparation for their future lives.

Strongly Disagree　　　　　　Agree　　　Strongly Agree

1　　2　　3　　　　　4　　　　　5　　6　　7

8. It is important to know how well our district serves the various cultural and

ethnic communities represented in our schools, and it is also important to understand how

well served they feel by the educational practices in our schools.

Strongly Disagree   Agree   Strongly Agree

1   2   3   4   5   6   7

9. It is important to know how the various cultural and ethnic communities

represented in our schools view me as an educational leader and to understand how well

my leadership serves their expectations.

Strongly Disagree   Agree   Strongly Agree

1   2   3   4   5   6   7

10. Our district and schools are successful only when all subgroups are improving

academically and socially.

Strongly Disagree   Agree   Strongly Agree

1   2   3   4   5   6   7

11. Cultural discomfort and disagreements are normal occurrences in a

diverse society such as ours and are parts of everyday interactions.

Strongly Disagree   Agree   Strongly Agree

1   2   3   4   5   6   7

12. I believe that lack of cultural understanding and historic distrust can

result in cultural discomfort and disagreements.

Strongly Disagree   Agree   Strongly Agree

1   2   3   4   5   6   7

13. I believe we can learn about and implement diverse and improved

instructional practices that will effectively serve all our students.

Strongly Disagree   Agree   Strongly Agree

1   2   3   4   5   6   7

14. I believe we can use disaggregated data to understand more precisely

the achievement status of all students in our schools, and that we can use that information

to identify and implement effective instructional practices for each of them.

Strongly Disagree   Agree   Strongly Agree

1   2   3   4   5   6   7

15. As a leader, it is important for me to be able to communicate across

cultures and to facilitate communication among diverse cultural groups.

Strongly Disagree   Agree   Strongly Agree

1   2   3   4   5   6   7

Compute your baseline score and record it here (the range of scores is from 15 – 105.)

What does your score mean?

• Are you highly receptive? Score of 90 – 105

• Are you middle of the road? Score of 45-70

• Are you less receptive? Score of 15-30

Adapted from Cecil County Public Schools, Office of Staff Development Originated from Lindsey, Randal B., Lindsey, Delores B., Robins, Kikanza Nuri, Terrell, Raymond D. (2006). Cultural Proficient Instruction: A Guide for People Who Teach. California: Corwin Press

Unit 1: Cultural Immersion Activity

Hi, my name is _____ and I would like to interview you about Cultural Awareness and Cultural Identity in regards to your personal experiences. Does that sound okay to you?

Interview Questions

1. What is your definition of culture?

2. What is considered most respectful in your culture?

3. Have you ever experienced racism? In what form?

4. What can be done about racism and prejudice, in your opinion?

Thank you for taking the time to participate in this interview. Is there anything you would like others to know that we have not included here about you or your culture?

Adapted from San Jose State University

http://www.sjsu.edu/people/linda.levine/courses/HRTM111/s1/Cultural_Intervxw_Questi
ons.doc

Unit 2: Culture Immersion Activity

Name of church, temple, mosque, synagogue, or any other place of worship:

Describe the features of the temple, mosque, synagogue, or place of worship. .

What is the attire of the attendees?

List two similarities and two differences from your own place of worship.

Unit 3 : Cultural Immersion Activity

Observation Notes

Begin time: _____   End time:

_____   Date: _____

Time	Observations	Comments/Reflections

Cultural Immersion Activity Reflection

(Must be completed for each activity)

Answer the following questions:

What are some key things you've learned about this culture through interacting

with activity? (300 words)

Are there any current surprises in what you're finding out about this culture?

(about 100 words)

How do your expectations vary since your immersion activity? (about 200 words)

Learning Experience from the TFA Cultural Awareness Training

Open-ended questionnaire

As we conclude this course, I would like to welcome your feedback on the course as to learn what is working well for you and how we can further enhance the course. I appreciate your honest and concrete feedback and will share the results with you as a class to identify any modifications we can make to enhance your learning experience. Thank you.

☐ What helped you learn in this course? Be specific and provide examples.

☐ What aspects of this course hindered your learning?

☐ What was the most enjoyable aspect of this course? Why?

☐ What was the most surprising/significant concept/fact you have learned in this course?

☐ What was your best learning experience in this course so far and why?

Appendix B: Interview Protocol

Introduction

1. In today's interview, we will talk about instruction and classroom management in regards to your experience as a TFA teacher. Does that sound okay to you?

2. Tell me about your experience as a teacher in the TFA program.

3. How long have you worked in your current position?

Classroom Management

1. What is your definition of classroom management?

2. What factors need to be in place for a classroom to be considered a well-managed classroom?

3. How would you describe the classroom management that you implement in your classroom?

4. What challenges to classroom management have you experienced?

5. What benefits to classroom management have you experienced?

Classroom Management and TFA

1. What classroom management opportunities or information were provided to you during the 4-week TFA training?

2. What classroom management strategies have you used since entering the classroom?

3. Were the strategies you learned during the TFA training effective? Please explain

4. What adjustments, if any, did you have to make in your classroom management style or strategies since you completed your student teaching experience through TFA?

Classroom Management and the TFA Classroom Management and Culture Toolkit

1. What are your expectations for student behavior?

2. How do you demonstrate high expectations for student behavior?

3. In what ways to you hold high expectations for yourself?

4. How do you assert authority?

5. How do you implement rules and consequences?

6. How are rules and consequences determined?

7. How are your expectations of rules and consequences communicated?

8. How do you reinforce good behavior?

9. How do you maximize the efficiency and structure in your classroom?

10. What are some common rules and procedures in your classroom?

11. How do you respond to student misbehavior?

12. What do you perceive to be the causes of student misbehavior in your classroom?

13. How do you respond to minor interruptions?

14. How do you respond to major interruptions?

15. How effective are these responses?

16. How do you build a sense of community?

17. How do you establish a bond with your students?

18. Would you describe your classroom as a community where all students are
    valued? How do you communicate this to students?

19. How do you help students resolve conflicts?

20. How do you demonstrate hard work, team effort and academic achievement to
    students?

21. How do you promote a value of hard work and team effort?

22. How do you promote a value of academic achievement?

Classroom Management and Conceptual Framework

1. How would you describe your confidence related to classroom management?

2. Did you feel prepared to implement classroom management in an urban setting? Please explain.

3. What do you perceive you would have needed during your TFA training in order to be prepared to implement classroom management in an urban classroom?

4. What role, if any, does culture play in identifying the classroom management strategies you use?

5. What experiences or knowledge were provided during the TFA training program in order to prepare you to implement classroom management in an urban school?

Closing

Thank you for taking the time to participate in this interview. Do you have any questions related to the study that I could answer for you?

If yes, answer the questions as related to the study.

If no, thank the participant again and end the interview.

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