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# Management Strategies in Elementary Inclusion Classrooms

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*Walden University*

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# Walden University

College of Social and Behavioral Sciences

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Ronnie Dean Lilie

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Walden University  
2018

Abstract

Management Strategies in Elementary Inclusion Classrooms

by

Ronnie Dean Lilie

BS, BBA, MEd

Dissertation Submitted in Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

Educational Psychology

Walden University

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## Abstract

The increasing popularity of inclusion classrooms has placed a large number of students with special needs with the ones without disabilities. Often, general education teachers lack sufficient training in proven inclusion practices that is necessary to cope with the increase in diverse learning needs. The absence of sufficient training can lead to disruptive behavior and also, induce more stress in the classroom for the educator and the students. The qualitative case study aimed to explore the strategies and techniques used by elementary school teachers to successfully manage inclusion classrooms and to learn how the teachers handled stress. Vygotsky's sociocultural theory provided the theoretical framework for this study. The data collection methods involved observing school classrooms and interviewing teachers. A total of 6 teachers were interviewed and 3 observations were made in the classroom settings of these teachers. All the participants were teachers located in a small rural district of South Central Texas. The collected data were analyzed using cross-case analysis. The findings of this study indicate the most common methods of classroom management, that include the centers formed by small groups of students, and the tailoring of activities based on students' needs. Further, it was learnt that the teachers used a variety of techniques to mitigate their stress levels and to manage their classrooms in a calm manner. Also, using appropriate classroom management techniques can help the students with special needs to learn ways in which they can adapt their own behavior through self-regulation, to function more effectively with others.

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## Dedication

This work is dedicated to my family, who provided steadfast support for my endeavor throughout the long process, to my long-suffering wife who put in the extra effort required to keep our household running smoothly while I was otherwise occupied, to my professors who provided so much support and encouragement, and finally to God who gave me the strength and health to keep pushing through to the end.

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## Chapter 1: Introduction

Inclusion classrooms have become more common, placing a larger number of students with special needs in classrooms with typically developing students (Toprakci, 2012). Often, the general education teachers do not have sufficient training in proven inclusion practices to cope with the increase in diverse learning needs, which may lead to disruptive behavior. This causes more stress in the classroom, both for the educator and the students (Cleve, 2012). An essential element for effective classroom management is thus, behavioral management (Rhoades, 2013). The adoption of successful behavioral management styles and techniques is critical for the success of special needs students in inclusion classrooms, as the success of the entire learning community is directly related to the success or failure of the management strategy (Sarason & Sarason, 2005).

The researchers who have addressed behavioral management and specifically the issue of maladaptive behavior, have often referred to various techniques that can be applied successfully in self-contained special education classrooms (Moore, 2008). Several researchers though have previously worked towards designing specific programs for certain groups of students with similar disabilities, they avoided a broader approach which is necessary in public education inclusion classrooms (Idol, 2006). Also, these specific methods generally addressed specific learning disabilities and were employed in environments where the teacher-student ratio was usually much lower in comparison to the inclusion classrooms; this makes it significant to understand whether the previously designed specific techniques are applicable to classrooms where, general education

teachers are managing and instructing students with and without special needs in a highly diverse environment. However, the particular styles of classroom management, or techniques and strategies used by teachers on a daily basis, which they found useful with a diverse and mixed student population in inclusion classrooms are unknown (Chafouleas, Sanetti, Jaffery, & Fallon, 2012; Oral, 2012). My goal in this study was thus to observe the strategies and techniques designed by teachers to successfully manage the inclusion classrooms and also, to examine the ways teachers mitigate stress.

Chapter 1 includes the background of the study, problem statement, purpose statement, research questions and definition of significant terms. It further, outlines the nature of the study and includes a discussion on the assumptions, scope, delimitations, limitations, and significance of the study.

### **Background of the Study**

Behavioral management is an important element of classroom effectiveness. The lack of calm and control in the educational setting can interrupt the effective learning for all students, including students with and without special needs. A teacher's use of an effective behavioral management style for inclusion classrooms is critical for the success of students with special needs in that environment (Sarason & Sarason, 2005). Harvey and Allard (2009) concluded in their study, that the educators, who regularly used the behavioral management plans that included social contracts and small group settings, were more successful in preventing behavioral incidents. Thus, the prevention of these incidents averted the negative impact on students' learning, providing a more solid educational foundation for all students in the inclusion classroom. Further, the



researchers working in specific areas of psychology concerned with behavioral management, and specifically the issue of maladaptive behavior, have often referred to various techniques that could be used in self-contained special education classrooms. Shimoni, Barrington, Wilde, and Henwood (2013) stress the significance of establishing specific techniques in inclusion classrooms, which the general education teachers have successfully used to manage and instruct students with and without special needs, in a highly diverse environment. The researchers studied several techniques for associated effectiveness, and they concluded that some techniques are much more effective than the others. The results revealed, the techniques that involved smaller groups, social contracts, and reinforced positive behavior are usually among the best performing types of classroom behavioral management systems; these techniques witnessed fewer discipline referrals, leading to an improved overall classroom performance (Parsonson, 2012).

The frequency of challenges in classroom management has increased with the acceptance of the idea of inclusion, rather than the isolation of students with special needs (Idol, 2006). Several teachers have marked the increase in inclusion assignments as a causal factor that affects the discipline of classroom, resulting in increased levels of stress (Oral, 2012). The teachers have also referred to the inclusion arrangement as a factor responsible for the reduced overall academic performance (Dwyer, 2007). The classroom management techniques are beneficial for the teachers also, as the teachers who are able to manage classrooms more successfully tend to remain in the teaching profession longer, which is further desirable for the continuity of student education (Sass, Flores, Claeys, & Perez, 2012).

My background research began with an examination of the various classroom management styles. I discovered several styles and their hybrids that are commonly observed in classrooms. For example, the authoritarian model has been an educational mainstay (Idol, 2006). Also, social contract management and the democratic styles have also been used and promoted as methods for effective classroom management (Wannarka & Ruhl, 2008). The previous literature on similar topic have indicated that rather than a particular style, mixed models of management styles are most appropriate for all teaching situations (Scanlon & Baker, 2012). The purpose of my study was thus, to observe and report on the general education teachers' behavioral management styles and techniques; as measured by fewer discipline referrals, these styles and techniques produced the most successful results, increasing students' exposure to effective learning time (see Sarason & Sarason, 2005). My objective in this research was to observe the methods used by teachers in the inclusion classroom and discover the most worthwhile technique for effective management of inclusion classrooms. To achieve the objective, I attempted to particularly observe stress management techniques, behavior management techniques, and diversification of strategies in the inclusion setting.

### **Problem Statement**

The teachers manage their classrooms in different ways by implementing different techniques and physical set-ups (Yamani, 2014). This is evident in the previous researches that have shown that teachers generally use a combination of classroom management styles and techniques as control points (Moore, Anderson, Glassenbury,

Lang, & Didden, 2013). However, I realized that most of the existing studies had been designed around the analysis of specific management styles; the studies failed to compare the use of a particular style or technique in detail with the other, and instead sought to ascertain whether the style being studied was effective in terms of grades or behavior (see Shimoni et al., 2013). Also, the researchers ignored the aspect of preference imparted to the methods, if teachers used a specific set of techniques and strategies more often, and if the selected methods were more effective than other types of classroom management styles. In the contemporary times, as more schools are adopting full inclusion programs for the students having special needs, it was important for me to determine the significance of a particular model or set of practices in the effectiveness of inclusion classrooms. The reported rates of discipline referrals and poor grades in inclusion classrooms have varied across teachers, and the evidence indicated that effective management skills could counterbalance the negative implications of behavioral incidents. Moreover, the need for this study is evident in the increasing number of students being placed in inclusion settings in the general education classroom and receiving special education services (Sarason & Sarason, 2005).

Thus, I conducted this study to observe the inclusion classrooms, and then to use the gathered information to help teachers predict outcomes in the classroom, based on the set of techniques and strategies they used by them.

### **The Purpose of the Study**

Behavior management is an important issue and a common topic of discussion among general education teachers. The classrooms without successful behavioral management systems are less likely to have students engaging in appropriate learning time activities for academic growth (Sarason & Sarason, 2005). The disruptions that result from poor or ineffective classroom management styles can further, impact the stress levels of teachers negatively (McDonald & Hudder, 2014). The information about methods used by teachers to regulate behavior in their inclusion classrooms would help to show that some styles of classroom management are more useful than other styles, as reflected in fewer discipline referrals and higher overall grades (see Parsonson, 2012). By providing data associated with various management techniques, I aim to assist teachers in modifying their classroom programs to academically benefit the students that are a part of the inclusion classrooms. Furthermore, the observations of my study about the methods used by the teachers to handle stress in the classroom will provide the other educators with effective ways to cope and reduce stress, making them more productive and effective in their professions.

### **Theoretical Framework**

The theoretical framework adopted for this study was cognitive behavioral therapy, which attempts to modify behavior by setting limitations and providing positive reinforcement (Sarason & Sarason, 2005). Additionally, I used Vygotsky's (1978) sociocultural learning theory to examine the statements which imply that individuals

learn from their environment within specialized cultures (Crandell, Crandell, & Zanden, 2009). Using the reasoning of the selected framework would help the teachers in producing a better behavioral management environment by creating expectations for behavior through the implementation of social norms and cultures in a specific classroom.

Further, it is evident in the recent studies that particular strategies encouraged self-regulation within the inclusion classroom setting and resulted in the best outcomes when the expectations were based on the input of the students (Moore, 2008; Loh, 2015). Loh (2015) referred to Vygotsky's work in socio-cultural theory as a basis for examining the possibility of micro-environments such as, the social environment that exists in a classroom being used as an effective management tool. Loh concluded that the interaction between peers, and between the teachers and students in a collaborative social-learning environment, created a connection between the participants. Moore (2008) on the other hand, focused more on overall classroom management, and not particularly classrooms with special education students integrated into the general education learning environment. Loh's research thus, focused on diverse collaborative learning groups in mixed and inclusive classroom settings.

### **Research Questions**

I developed 3 research questions to guide this study. These questions focused on the current strategies and techniques used by teachers in the classroom, the way teachers

perceive and deal with stress in the inclusion classrooms, and the perspective of teachers about successful classroom management.

RQ1: What strategies and techniques are used by teachers in successful inclusion settings based on classroom performance?

RQ2: How do teachers in inclusion environments perceive their stress levels as being affected by handling inclusion classrooms?

RQ3: What is the teachers' perception of successful classroom management?

### **Significance of the Study**

Through this study, I identify strategies for successful management of inclusion classrooms. As the number of students receiving special education is increasing, there is a need for additional information on this topic. The significance of this study is evident in the fact that the usual training for general education teachers imparts information about effective classroom management briefly, often leaving the teacher with no option but to a series of trials and errors to develop useful practices (Aloe, Amo, & Shanahan, 2014; Brackenreed & Barnett, 2006). The efforts made by teachers to develop practices proves successful in some cases, but students within these settings may fail to receive the benefit of an education that allows them to be successful, due to interruptions caused by behavioral issues (Chafouleas, et al., 2012). Additionally, teachers employed in an inclusion classroom without proper tools for managing the diverse population represented in this environment, may leave the teaching profession due to feelings of failure or high

stress levels (Dwyer, 2007). My aim in this study was thus, to provide a framework that would help both, the teachers and the students to be achieve academic success.

A framework for successful management of inclusion classrooms, would provide the professional educators opportunity to effectively provide all the students equal access to quality education. A study about the useful techniques of classroom management would be provided through this study, which can be used in this type of setting; through this study, I aimed to provide teachers with data they can use to develop a style that is acceptable to them and allows the students to learn according to their highest potentials. The practical application of the methods that worked for other professional educators will help teachers in inclusion settings, and develop a personal model for classroom management.

The positive social change the researcher aims to encourage by this study is that students with disabilities would not only be accepted warmly in the general education classroom, but they would also learn to regulate their own behavior, thereby achieving the utmost possible level of education. Lastly, the mismanagement of a classroom denies students the opportunity of academic success. I will assist in creating an atmosphere that is safe, well managed, and orderly through this study, to give all students the chance to succeed and become productive citizens. Not all students are equally successful, but it is crucial that each should be provided the opportunity to reach their full potential. The attempt towards providing the educators the tools they need to provide the desired atmosphere to students will help in realizing this ambitious goal.

### **Nature of the Study**

I used a qualitative case study approach. A qualitative approach was appropriate for this study because it allowed observation of a group of teachers using varied classroom management techniques in inclusion classrooms. This issue had not been studied properly by researchers, so it was necessary to use qualitative methods to conduct this study in a detailed manner and present useful information. The qualitative methods can be used to provide greater perspectives based on participant actions, when information about the existing practices is desired (Creswell, 2014). Further, I used a case study approach because the selected participants belong to the same location, and district. The observations are thus, based on a particular geographic location.

In this study, I addressed various classroom management styles in the context of inclusion classrooms. The research is based in a single small district, with participants being teachers of third, fourth, and fifth grade inclusion classroom. In the study, a total of six classrooms were observed and six teachers were interviewed. A total of 91% student population was economically disadvantaged, and the dominant ethnicity of the student population was Hispanic at 87%. The observation included focusing on the techniques and strategies used by the teachers to address a diverse range of student participants in the learning environment of inclusion classrooms.

The participants who met the criteria of this case study, provided consent according to Walden University IRB standards and APA ethical requirements. I assigned participants pseudonyms to protect their identities, and did not identify observations based on the grade level to further protect the identity of the participants. Also, I will



disseminate results of this study to the school district's board of trustees through proper channels.

### **Definitions**

*Behavior management:* A system of techniques and strategies used to curb disruptive behavior in the academic setting, allowing progress in delivery of information and knowledge to students (Jones, Monsen, & Franey, 2013).

*Classroom management:* A system of techniques, strategies, and expectations that allow an educator to maintain order in the classroom with the aim of educating the students (Toprakci, 2012).

*Inclusion classroom:* A classroom that contains both, the students with and without special needs being educated with the same subject matter simultaneously (Idol, 2006).

*Maladaptive behavior:* Individual behavior that is outside the confines of societal norms; it is a disruptive or anti-social behavior; it can also be referred to a behavior that, when employed, prevents an individual from achieving personal goals or performing regular interactions with other individuals (Sarason & Sarason, 2005).

*Special education:* A term used to describe a type of education that uses specialized curriculum, behavioral management techniques, and/or specific accommodations for individuals with a specific or more disabilities/conditions (Sarason & Sarason, 2005).

*Special needs student:* A student who has been identified with a specific or more disabling conditions that affects academic processes or intellectual development (Crandell, et al., 2009).

*Typically developing student:* A student that is developing normally in the area of academics and social behavior, according to the general standards in education that have been set by educators, psychologists, and other professionals in the same field (Crandell, et al., 2009).

### **Assumptions**

Based on my experience and findings of the previous literature, I made three assumptions. My first assumption was that the teachers who utilized some form of social contract system for management of an inclusion classroom, would experience less stress than the teachers using other methods, due to the self-regulatory nature of the social contract. The second assumption was, that most teachers would use some hybrid form of classroom management; the teachers would implement various strategies from several classroom management methods, rather than using a single classroom management technique. My third assumption was that the students of teachers who used classroom management skills that helped in reducing behavior incidents would have higher academic scores than the students of teachers who could not successfully manage their classrooms.

### **Scope and Delimitations**

My focus in this study was on the teachers in inclusion classrooms having students of several types including students without special needs, children with special needs, and behaviorally challenged children. The study was set in a specific location in South Central Texas.

To study the issue of classroom management in this specific location, I chose participants based on specific criteria, including teachers who taught in grade levels 3 to 5, in an inclusion setting, and had students from diverse backgrounds, as described previously. The potential participants received information regarding the study in the form of a flyer, as shown in Appendix R. The participants, that is, the teachers agreed to be observed at least three times at random times during the study. The teacher provided consent to complete a pre-survey interview to be eligible to participate in the study. The pre-survey interview addressed the teacher's perceived management style which was necessary to compare the data collected during the observations. The observations and data collected was aligned according to the type of management programs and techniques used by teachers in their classrooms. During the observations, teachers' perceived stress levels, the number of discipline referrals, and the overall academic progress of the class were considered.

### **Limitations**

A research must be transferable, credible, dependable, and conformable to overcome or reduce its limitations (Creswell, 2009). As the current study was qualitative

in nature, the limitations included my personal biases. My prior knowledge and training from the field experience in teaching, which included teaching students with special needs, could have introduced researcher bias as I would have observed the techniques and commented on them in the data analysis. To regulate the biases, I first firstly, I collected the data directly from the participants and without filtering, added it to the data set; secondly, I categorized the raw observation data directly from observations; this type of data categorization and analysis helped mitigate personal bias. The next limitation included the sample selected for the study; the sample of participants was selected from a relatively isolated geographic area, with the population belonging to a very small community. Searching for another population, suitable to reproduce the study would prove challenging. Also, the universe of the study from which the sample was selected is overwhelmingly economically disadvantaged (91%) and of largely belonged to a particular race (87% Hispanic), making it difficult to find another sample with this demography.

### **Summary and Transition**

In this study, I address inclusion classroom teachers' behavior management strategies and technique and assess their stress levels. The purpose of the study was to identify the techniques and strategies used by teachers in varying proportions to manage the classroom, and also to manage their stress levels while teaching. The research plan involved collecting data from observations and interviews of the participants, consisting of teachers within a specific school district, and then using the collected data to compile

results that would indicate patterns of the employed techniques and strategies. The sample population was taken from a rural school district in South Central Texas.

Chapter 2 includes a literature review, in which I discuss the current ideas and trends of effective classroom management; it further, focuses on my observation in the participating classrooms. It is true that success in the inclusion classroom has many sides and is not based solely on a particular factor. Thus, I stress on the idea that teacher stress, passing grades, and discipline referrals are all components of a classroom management model, and I review literature on each of these in Chapter 2 to connect them to the research problem.

## Chapter 2: Literature Review

### **Introduction**

The teachers trained to teach in general education classrooms, are not always fully equipped to handle the complexities involved with teaching in an inclusion classroom, as instruction and behavior management of students with and without special needs requires different approaches. This inadequacy of general education teachers is a result of the insufficiency in institutional support (Idol, 2006). Often, the available resources and funding are not adequate to continue the teacher training program for this purpose (Dwyer, 2007). It is crucial to determine the teachers' notion about the effectiveness of inclusion classrooms; the notions and comments of the teachers are necessary to determine if the areas they deem ineffective are repairable with additional support or resources. The challenges faced while managing inclusion classrooms can lead to increased stress levels for both, the teachers and students (Aloe, Amo, & Shanahan, 2014). In addition, the resultant stress can lead to teacher attrition; as indicated by some studies, almost 40% of a teacher's time in an inclusion setting is spent in behavior mitigation (Acuna, 2011). Several researchers have suggested that the ongoing and intensive training of teachers in classroom management, is essential to alleviate the potential damage to learning in an inclusion classroom (Kantavong, & Sivabaedya, 2010). Kantavong and Sivabaedya (2010), further claimed in their study that the programs that focused on training not only the teachers but also the parents, were more effective because the structure provided in classrooms was then duplicated at home by

the parents. Further, it has been asserted that the stress that is assumed to occur in a classroom particularly as a result of a teacher's attempts to control behavioral issues is sometimes actually a result of a lack in coordination of effort by the entire educational team, including parents, teachers, and the administration (Kantavong, & Sivabaedya, 2010).

The studies conducted earlier, failed to address the strategies and techniques used by teachers to successfully manage inclusion classrooms and to mitigate stress. This study is thus, necessary to fill the gap. In Chapter 2, I will examine various types of classroom management practices and strategies, as well as some of the factors that increase stress for teachers in inclusion settings. Further, I will consider the teachers' understanding of successful classroom management given that it influences the amount of stress that teachers experience. Also, the theoretical framework of this study, that is, sociocultural theory, is described.

### **Research Strategy**

Several sources of information were instrumental in completing this literature review. The databases accessed by me, via the Walden University Library, including PsycARTICLES and EBSCO, were helpful in providing a broad base of current literature for reference and comparison. The other databases I used included, PsychCRITIQUES, PsychINFO, and ERIC. The keywords included *classroom management*, *inclusion classrooms*, *classroom behavior*, *effective management strategies*, and *teacher stress within grade school classrooms*. Additionally, interviews with teachers in inclusion

classrooms were invaluable for insight into teacher perceptions regarding inclusion practices. In some studies, teacher observations were also an important source of information regarding various types of management strategies in the inclusion setting (Scanlon & Baker, 2012). The classroom management preferences of teachers were considered significant, while preferences of the students were not treated as a factor (Scanlon & Baker, 2012). Thus, after the preliminary research, it seemed beneficial to further study the relationship between various types of classroom management techniques and the perceptions of teachers regarding the effectiveness of a particular method; also, the teachers' belief if their students thought that the teachers' methods of management were effective, will be studied. (see McDonald & Hudder, 2014).

### **Theoretical Framework**

The theoretical framework of this study was based on cognitive behavioral therapy, which is a method of modifying behavior at the cognitive level; this theory helped in setting limits and guidelines, ultimately providing preferred outcomes by the use of positive reinforcement (Sarason & Sarason, 2005). Additionally, the theoretical aspects of sociocultural learning theory, as developed by Vygotsky (1978), helped me in examination of the claim that individuals learn from their environments; this implies that they are influenced by specialized or created cultures and subcultures (Crandell, et al., 2009). According to this theory, behavioral expectations can be created successfully by developing a distinct culture in a classroom environment. This can be the reason why



certain teachers are successful in managing a group of students, while others are not with the same group.

In some recent studies, the researchers have discovered that the strategies that allowed for self-regulation within the inclusion classroom offered the best outcomes only when the expectations were set appropriately and the input from the students were incorporated in the social contract (Moore, 2008). Moore (2008), referred to Vygotsky's work in his socio-cultural theory, where he researched if micro-environments could be used effectively as a management tool.

### **Literature Review: Types of Management Strategies in Inclusion Settings**

The inclusion of students with special needs in the general education classroom is a relatively new practice in most states, including Texas. For decades, the accepted method of educating students with special needs was to separate them entirely from the students receiving general education (Reiser & Dempsey, 2012). It was believed that the special needs students were disruptive to the educational process followed in the general education setting; further, the belief was that as a result of their perceived inability to learn, it was better to keep them in a separate learning environment (Campbell-Whatley & Lyons, 2013). However, research on and advocacy for special needs students, in addition to implementation of laws such as the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), made the educators understand that at times, special needs students can learn better in settings with their peers (Campbell-Whatley & Lyons, 2013). In the state Texas, there is a requirement for the students with disabilities to be educated in the "least restrictive

environment”, according to the student’s needs, and also based on the needs, be placed in settings with their peers as much as possible (Campbell-Whatley & Lyons, 2013). This implies the idea that students with special needs can be placed separately from the students without special needs only when it is absolutely necessary for the development of their own education, and must thus, demonstrate an educational need for this environment (Hulett, 2009).

### **Co-Teaching Model**

The teachers have deemed some strategies that are useful in inclusion settings, which includes the co-teaching model (Scanlon & Baker, 2012). According to this arrangement, a general education teacher and a special education teacher develop accommodation for the lesson plans and classwork to address the needs of all learners in the classroom (Scanlon & Baker, 2012). A larger number of classrooms have been made completely integrated successfully by using this model in comparison to the others. However, this model also has some limitations in the behavioral monitoring sense. In the context of academics, there are lesser problems, but they still exist. For instance, does the co-teacher provide too much additional support to the students with special needs? Behaviorally the issue is that, the students tend to be more responsive to the person they feel is in charge or the person with whom they are most familiar (Acuna, 2011). Further, there is a possibility that the students with special needs students may respond only to the special education teacher, while the students without disabilities tend to respond to the general education teacher. Also, some disabilities may prove disruptive to the general classroom, even if proper accommodations are made (Cherry, 2013). Scanlon and Baker

(2012), also pointed out that some teachers may be reluctant to provide accommodations that are not relevant to the entire class as they may be disrupt the management of the classroom. Further, another concern is that the cost of this type of program can be prohibitive as providing a co-teaching arrangement in core classrooms may development the requirement for more teachers because more than 1 class would be conducted at any given time. This model consequently, may not be feasible in budget-challenged districts.

### **Social Contracts**

Many researchers ignoring the broader approach which is essential in the inclusion classrooms of the public education system, have worked towards designing specific programs that are relevant to only certain groups of students with similar disabilities (Idol, 2006). The researchers in a particular study presented the idea that lesser intervention is required in a classroom; they further contended that social contracts are used by one of the least invasive methods of classroom management as it incorporates self-regulation into the strategy (McDonald & Hudder, 2014). Social contracts imply that the involved parties have come to an agreement, or a deal on the functioning of a classroom. The idea specified here is that, self-determination and self-regulation are more effective than forced compliance. Another idea highlighted is that if given the opportunity, students want to belong to their group of peers and thus, will generally act according to the group to be accepted, whether it is for the good or bad. Social contract management strategies employ the theoretical underpinnings of Vygotsky's sociocultural theory (Crandell, et al., 2009).

However, a middle school study that incorporated social contracts into management systems showed that self-regulation strategies can be successful in classrooms with interventions that include positive reinforcements (Chafoulas, Sanetti, Jaffery, & Fallon, 2012). This study was conducted on 3 eighth grade classes and involved students in the general education setting. The data collected by the researchers indicated that behavior interruptions which disrupted the time for the task were fewer when reinforcing strategies were used (Chafoulas, et al., 2012). This study was conducted in settings involving students without special needs, who were capable of understanding the implications the and consequence of the reward after being applied in the classroom setting; the students were further capable of regulating their own behavior to achieve the reward (Chafoulas, et al., 2012).

### **Peer Supported Management**

Another study included information supporting the role of teachers as supporters of peers while managing challenging behaviors within the classroom (Jones, Mosen, & Franey, 2013). The purpose of peer support is to provide fresh perspective to behavior incidents, moral support to teaching colleagues, and evidence to the students about support from the teachers (Jones, et al., 2013). The presence of additional personnel in classroom management provides a fresh perspective, and may provide insight into the cause of the problem, and therefore help to formulate a solution. It may also reduce stress levels for less experienced educators by providing dependable support in difficult situations (Jones et al., 2013).

Anxiety can have a profound effect on teachers with minimal experience in classrooms where behavior challenges are a matter of concern (Oral, 2012). This is true especially in the case of students and teachers. In a study on anxiety experience by teachers, Oral (2012) divided the topic into behavior management anxiety and teaching management anxiety. Oral used several scales to measure the level of the teachers' anxiety and found that the higher the level of anxiety, the higher the incidence of behavioral interruptions, and therefore less time devoted to tasks. Teacher anxiety can often be transferred to students, and it can negatively affect the student's ability to learn and retain information (Oral, 2012). The solution suggested by Oral includes providing support to teachers to lessen their anxiety, which would in turn reduce incidents of behavioral interruption. This research was conducted using student teachers in college, teaching in general education settings as suggested by their mentors as a part of their chosen programs.

Loh reported (2015) that when teachers used peer collaboration in a classroom environment, management was better, learning was more successful, better grades, and as a result, the atmosphere was less stressful, with students appearing more receptive to new learning and new ideas.

The teachers working exclusively with online courses at the high school and early collegiate levels also experience some degree of frustration when working with highly diverse groups that include students with special needs; such teachers can benefit from peer support in developing and implementing management strategies. In the classes that are conducted online but are synchronous in nature, teachers may not be able to control

behaviors based upon the needs of the students, leading to behavioral issues, or academic frustration for the remaining students (Shimoni et al., 2013). Teachers and professors may face specific challenges while providing support to students with special needs in an online environment; but these challenges are not dissimilar to those faced by teachers in the traditional inclusion classroom setting (Shimoni et al., 2013). Frustration resulting from the unsuccessful attempts to deliver quality instruction to all students can result in disruptions in the classroom in almost any configuration (Sass, et al., 2012).

### **Regulation of Seating Arrangements**

Another approach to successful classroom management is to regulate seating arrangements (Wannarka, & Ruhl, 2008). This technique has proven useful in a number of studies, and is often useful because seating students away from those they are inclined to talk with or to interact with at a high level removes the temptation to talk or be distracted to an extent (Wannarka & Ruhl, 2008). These researchers used data from 8 different studies to conclude that seating arrangement can be effectively used as a management tool (Wannarka & Ruhl, 2008). The result of the research also indicates that the arrangement of students in rows displays higher level of appropriate classroom behavior than the students seated in semi-circles or other configurations (Wannarka & Ruhl, 2008).

### **Student Journaling**

Other strategies that are working at several levels, including primarily the elementary school level, are student journaling, where students assess the academic

events of their day, and student self-assessment (Cleve, 2014). Both of these strategies are recognized as effective because it allows the student to reflect and internalize learning (Cleve, 2012). While this can also be effectively used in behavioral management, it is generally used for academic mastery. In the case of typically developing students, internalizing behavioral missteps can be effective. However, in students with special needs, the ability to internalize maladaptive behavioral events may not be present, and in some cases may not be possible at all due to type of disability. Therefore, this system would also require some modification within the inclusion classroom.

### **Student Self-Management**

Some researchers suggest that training of students in the process of self-management can be useful in classroom environment (Moore, Anderson, Glassenbury, Lang, & Didden, 2013). These researchers conducted a study in secondary general education classrooms, concentrating on students who are not disabled but exhibited low performance in the general education setting (Moore, et al., 2013). These researchers suggested that the spent time on behavior task increased when student behavior was controlled using the taught self-management strategies (Moore, et al., 2013). The researchers used self-rating scales and teacher input questionnaires to compile data.

Ideally, the success experienced by students within inclusion settings will ultimately translate to appreciation of learning and self-regulation of behaviors (Cleve, 2012). Early support in primary grades can help mitigate behavioral issues within the classroom setting, thereby reducing stress encountered by r teachers and allowing the students to become accustomed to providing proper responses to the structured

environment (Aloe, Amo, & Shanahan, 2014). However, the transition of students from elementary to middle school, can be problematic when the first environment has been less structured than the latter (Aloe, et al., 2014).

All of the above methods are used to manage behavior within inclusion classrooms, either as stand-alone techniques or in conjunction with the other, because without classroom control, successful delivery of academic information as attached to true learning is minimal (Moore, et al., 2013).

### **Teacher Practices**

Teachers tend to use a primary method of classroom management, modified to incorporate characteristics of others, to develop a modified approach of classroom management (Cherry, 2013). Drawing upon research from Lewin, Lippit, & White (1939), Cherry divides the basic management styles into 3e groups, which are authoritarian or autocratic, participative or democratic, and delegative, or laissez-faire leadership styles (Cherry, 2013; Lewin, Lippit, & White, 1939). Among the specified type of leadership strategies, authoritarian seems to be the most structured, but produces less creativity among students; while democratic strategies allow for more creativity but was overall less productive; delegative practices offered little structure, and were not productive in most cases as the students did not respond to the teacher's instructions (Cherry, 2013). This information suggests that there is a need of some hybrid form of classroom management style to accommodate both the structural aspects of classroom management as well as the creative support needed in education.



## **Inclusion Instruction and Teacher Stress**

Along with the positive social aspects of these inclusion practices, there are some challenges encountered by general education teachers. What works with typically developing students may not necessarily be appropriate for students who have learning, behavioral, or physical disabilities (Idol, 2006). Often, students with special needs have an individualized education plan in place (IEP) which may contain within it a behavior intervention plan (BIP). This plan is used to address specific behaviors that are inappropriate in the school setting, and usually applies specific consequences for specific actions. While this assists the teacher in addressing maladaptive behaviors in the classroom, it may also seem unfair to other students in the classroom because the consequences and triggers may look different than the standard rules of the classroom (Acuna, 2011). Classroom management styles that address the diverse nature of this need could be extremely useful. A by-product of reduced stress resulting from fewer discipline issues could mean a higher teacher retention rate, which is an issue in many districts today (Dwyer, 2007). In some at-risk school districts in Texas, for instance, yearly teacher attrition rates are as high as 46% (Sass, Flores, Claeys, & Perez, 2012). This has a negative effect upon student's success, and the associated stress for incoming replacement teachers is identified as one of the top contributors in teacher attrition (Sass, et al., 2012). Additionally, the social adjustment period between teachers and students who are new for each other, which is often required before the actual learning, can consume several weeks at the beginning of the new school year (Sass, et al., 2012).

For educators from different experience levels, it is important to exhibit confidence (McDonald & Hudder, 2014). Researchers state that confidence can overcome lack of experience in a classroom, enabling a new teacher to maintain control and orderliness in the classroom, even though the teacher may lack the years of experience held by veteran teachers (McDonald & Hudder, 2014). More importantly, confidence in the ability of the students will convey trust while implying that the educator is qualified to lead those students (McDonald & Hudder, 2014). Confidence can be achieved in teachers by having adequate training to become proficient in subject matter as well as classroom management training. Confidence is displayed in many ways, including body language (McDonald & Hudder, 2014). However, in the case where students having one or more disabilities are in a classroom setting that may not allow them to process subtleties, body language, and implied actions the same way students without disabilities could do, additional strategies may be needed. Applying strategies such as social contracts, democratic processes, and creative outlets can be effective in general education classrooms, as has been observed in previous studies; but using those strategies alone in an inclusion setting may not provide the same results (McDonald & Hudder, 2014). For some special needs students, who might have disabilities that affect their learning ability, the management processes may generally be effective. However, for students in inclusion settings that have behavioral issues attached to their disabilities, a wider array of strategies may be required.

Other researches have shown that pre-service teachers preparing for work in the inclusion classroom as a first assignment have many misconceptions about the way

should handle misbehavior in that particular setting (Brackenreed & Barnett, 2006).

These misconceptions can be a source of additional stress for the inexperienced teacher, which can negatively impact academic success of the students, and provide a feeling of failure to the teacher (Brackenreed & Barnett, 2006). Often, new teachers attempt to apply the strategies learnt academically, during their preparatory years for general education. This is a negative when these strategies are not successful in a setting where students have disabilities or emotional disorders (Brackenreed & Barnett, 2006). The extremity of stress and the feelings of inadequacy are some of the root causes of teachers leaving the teaching profession before completing 5 years (Dwyer, 2007).

### **Personal Variables**

The type of diagnosis or special need of a student can actually govern strategies with the assistance of prior researches, making the management practices recommended for students with various diagnoses look extremely different (Brackenreed & Barnett, 2006). For instance, a student with autism may require accommodations such as lower noise levels, subdued lighting, or opportunities to express themselves in formats not typically used in a particular classroom (Acuna, 2011). Attempting to manage a classroom according to the model according to which same strategy can be applied to all students and environments, may not be successful even in a classroom that is not an inclusion setting, and can certainly increase anxiety in a true inclusion setting (Cleve, 2012).

The students with special needs usually have some behavioral needs that accompany their disability and often, a student may have more than one diagnosis of the

needs (Campbell-Whatley & Lyons, 2013). The objective of education is to make every student a successful learner, but the methods that are used may be quite different for each student, depending on the diagnoses (Reiser & Dempsey, 2012). This means the training provided to in successful classroom management not only has to fit the personality and skill set of the individual teacher, but must be broad enough to cover myriad conditions that can occur in an inclusion classroom (Reiser & Dempsey, 2012). For instance, a student that has a specific learning disability in reading may only need some special accommodations, such as simplified language or pre-teaching, to be successful academically. The frustration may cause some behavioral issues, but they can be easily managed with the assistance of the teachers. However, a student with multiple learning disabilities, perhaps compounded with autism, might present a very different challenge and may require a system of rewards and demands to help them manage their own behavior within the classroom (Reiser & Dempsey, 2012).

### **Educational Regulations**

Today there are many rules that govern the methods and places students with special needs can be educated (Dwyer, 2007). Students with special needs are to be educated in the least restrictive environment as possible, depending on student. This implies that they will interact with their peers more frequently, and in many cases within the regular classroom, rather than a special education classroom (Harvey & Allard, 2009). As such, it is imperative that teachers understand the nature of the disabilities that might exist in their inclusion classrooms, and also what is required for accommodating and modifying instructions to provide support to these students (Crandell, et al. , 2009).

The management of inclusion classroom integrally includes behavioral support and academic support (Cleve, 2012).

### **Summary**

Teachers trained to teach in general education classrooms were not always fully equipped to be successfully teaching in an inclusion setting, where students with and without special needs require different approaches for instruction and behavior management. Understanding the strategies or combination of strategies that would provide the best overall outcomes was useful in helping teachers in these environments become more adept at classroom management, as well as differentiated instruction. Better classroom management leads to greater academic and social success for all students, and also reduces stress for teachers in these classrooms.

To provide this information about teachers, it was necessary to observe the teachers in their working atmosphere, utilizing various techniques and strategies. Observing these practices in action provided better information as to what styles and strategies worked best, either individually or in tandem. Additionally, understanding the teachers' perspectives and point of view about what constitutes effective practices within inclusion classrooms helped to shed light on the problem. Allowing teachers to develop techniques that worked best for them by using information obtained in observations and interviews is a valuable asset to the district and the students that they teach. In Chapter 3, methods for data collection will be described, along with the ways of disaggregation and

categorization of the data to understand the information obtained during the study period in a better manner.

## Chapter 3: Research Method

### **Introduction**

Inclusion classrooms can be a valuable tool in educating students with special needs as well as those who do not exhibit developmental issues (Brackenreed & Barnett, 2006). However, for inclusion classrooms to be successful, effective management strategies should be in place (Acuna, 2011). Additionally, what works for one teacher may not be effective for another teacher because of many factors including personality differences, levels of experience, and even time of day that a particular class is taught. In this study, I used observations of various teachers in inclusion settings and interviews with teachers involved in the study to gather information regarding various types of classroom management techniques used in inclusion classrooms. Additional information was gathered by observing strategies that are implemented to reduce stress for teachers in those settings. My use of interviews to gather information provided an opportunity for teachers to express their opinions concerning the effectiveness of the methods they use. Additionally, observations allowed me to see firsthand what strategies are actually being implemented in the inclusion classroom. The qualitative nature of the study enforced the need of a case study approach.

The purpose of this qualitative case study was to observe various strategies and techniques teachers used in designing successful classroom management in inclusion classrooms and to examine how teachers mitigated stress. I will share this information

with stakeholders in order to facilitate growth in teacher efficacy regarding classroom management in the inclusion setting.

In Chapter 3, I will describe the methodology adopted for this study and my role as a researcher. I will also present the research questions and discuss the research design, sample, setting, instruments, procedures, and data analysis.

### **Research Design**

I used an observational qualitative case study design, given the small sample in a specific geographic location. It was a multiple case design, since the study dealt with more than one participant or groups in various classrooms, using information from all participants of the study to compare and contrast. It also dealt with a specific population in a setting that may not be easily reproducible in other areas (Creswell, 2014). The study was conducted to provide observational data regarding a unique population.

Case study is used when a researcher is using data obtained from existing groups in various ways, and is not introducing a variable or measuring a response to the variable. The case study design is used to observe and record data from existing participants in existing situations (Yin, 2011). The research in this case was intended to produce observational inferences that could be used to direct participants in developing their own methods for effective classroom management based upon their own skill sets and circumstances within their classrooms. The case study method was most appropriate for this project because the participants were already using management methods in inclusion classrooms. I did not wish to disrupt the learning environment by introducing



experimental methods or changing internal practices, but instead sought to observe what was being done and then provide outcome commentary on the usefulness of applied methods in the eyes of the participants.

### **Research Questions**

RQ1: What strategies and techniques do teachers use in successful inclusion settings based upon classroom performance?

RQ2: How do teachers in inclusion environments perceive their stress levels as being affected by handling inclusion classrooms?

RQ3: What do teachers perceive as successful classroom management?

### **Setting and Sample**

The setting was a school district in a rural, economically depressed area of South Central Texas. The target population from which I drew the sample population consisted of teachers from two classes and from 3 different grade levels. The school was a Title I school, which addressed some of the student's needs by providing free meals to all students. I planned that all inclusion classroom teachers from third, fourth, and fifth grades would be the participants, resulting in a total of 6 classrooms to be observed and 6 teachers to be interviewed. I conducted a pre-study briefing with the participants that served to inform them of observations that were to take place, and what information would be shared at the end of the study. These grade levels were chosen since they involved 2 critical benchmark testing grades and 1 transitional grade level in the state accountability system.

I collected the data from a finite population using interviews and observations. The sampling strategy in this case is most accurately described as a criterion sample, since the population was available and accessible to me (Patton, 2002). It was also a criterion sampling strategy because the participants meet certain standards, such as being teachers in inclusion classrooms.

### **Instruments**

In this study, I included two main forms of data collection: interviews and observations. For the observations, I observed the participating teachers in the inclusion classrooms to note what strategies and techniques were used by them to successfully direct behavior and academic function. Techniques used by teachers to address discipline, successful redirection for learning purposes, and stress management procedures were observed and noted for comparison among classrooms. I expected that a total of three observations per classroom for one class period each would be necessary to assemble data. These observations took place at a rate of no more than two in a given week. I conducted a total of 18 observations in a period of 9 weeks. Successful behavior redirections were determined by the student resuming work, or using a replacement behavior that is not disruptive to the remaining students in the classroom. The successful redirection would also not have resulted in a discipline referral.

I used semi-structured interviews (see Appendix A) to understand the stress faced by teachers', explore teachers' philosophy and practice of management strategies in their inclusion classrooms. The interviews were conducted after the classes had been

conducted for the day. I also used records kept by the school districts showing the number of discipline referrals in each participant's classroom, and overall grade averages for the same participating classes. This information was used for comparison purposes only, as applied to the unique classroom management styles of each teacher.

Pre-observation information included teacher responses to questions about what methods and techniques they used for classroom management in the inclusion setting, and what stress reduction techniques they used both to prepare for class, and within the classroom setting (Appendix B). The post-observation interviews included questions about the emotional impact of participating in the study to debrief the teachers' experiences and reactions. I also used this time to review with the teacher the accuracy of the data collected. I asked a question about the perceived usefulness of the data collected during the study (Appendix C). The post observation information was collected at the time of conducting the semi-structured interviews.

### **Procedures**

In order to get permission to conduct the study on this campus, I sought permission from the superintendent of schools. The superintendent was aware of doctoral research practices and had experienced the process himself. He was open to research that can be used to enhance the academic success of students and provide support for teachers in the district. I contacted the superintendent personally.

The prospective participants were approached by their campus principal after I gained permission from the superintendent and explained the process and procedures to

the campus principal. The campus administrator met with teachers together to ask about volunteering for the study, and when all questions were answered and potential participants were comfortable, I obtained their consent.

Students in the participant classrooms were used to observations because the school district requires regular observations in all classrooms weekly, so another individual observing the classroom was not detectable as unusual. Observations were part of the campus improvement plan for this district. Observation schedules for participant classrooms were arranged with the campus administrator as not to interfere with any other school activities. These dates were provided to teachers in advance so that there were no surprises or disruptions with student learning. The dates were recorded on individual teacher's electronic calendars.

Procedures for the study included a pre-study briefing informing the participants of what was to be observed, what results would be shared, and how the interviews were to be conducted. Study observations were to be performed in each classroom every 3 weeks, for 3 observations in a 9-week grading period. The individual semi-structured interviews occurred after the third observation. I then categorized the data categorized and summarized them for review.

### **Data Analysis**

I disaggregated and categorized the information and data collected from records and participants so that the more frequently used strategies and techniques could be seen and described for the reader. I also categorized information obtained from teachers

regarding successful stress management techniques associated with implementation of certain classroom management techniques. I categorized all data with the goal of explaining them in ways that other teachers could benefit.

During observations, I specifically targeted the way the teacher maintained control of the classroom, allowing all students to learn with limited interruptions. Also targeted was how the teacher handled stressful situations and potential discipline issues to maintain order, and the effectiveness of the strategies used, as judged by successfully re-directed discipline issues, or if behavior instead resulted in a referral.

One advantage of case study research is that the information is so specific to the group and location being studied that it is possible for the participants and stakeholders to apply the information immediately without modification (Yin, 2011a). The data I collected from the study group can provide insight into the functionality of the specific study group, and by doing so allow for introspective change (see Yin, 2011a). This does not exclude value for others outside of the participant group whose situations may be similar, but rather provides alternative perspectives from within actual practice (Yin, 2007).

### **Researcher's Role**

In this study, I performed the role of an observer, interviewer, and data analyst. I did not measure effectiveness of any particular method, and attempted to provide only the observational data, by combining it with interview information to allow the reader to be exposed to various types of classroom management strategies and stress reduction ideas

in the classroom. I intended that this information would allow classroom practitioners to develop personalized strategies that increase effectiveness for educating students in an inclusion setting, while also developing ways to help them manage stress. I also intended that through more effective management practices, the learning environment would be enhanced and more conducive to learning.

### **Issues of Trustworthiness**

It was important for the study to produce accurate findings to ensure that it would benefit participants in the field of psychology. The findings of any psychological study of merit should also be valid so that the future researchers can effectively use the information (Creswell, 2014). This means that qualitative studies must be trustworthy, because validity and reliability are not measured in the same numerical sense as in a quantitative study. In order to ensure a study's trustworthiness, researchers use several markers such as accuracy, credibility, and dependability (Creswell, 2014).

#### **Accuracy**

In this study, accuracy was addressed by checking the responses of the participants versus what was observed in the classroom. Any discrepancies found between the stated methods and techniques used in the classroom as compared to observed procedures and techniques were verified in face to face follow up interviews to make sure that the original response was accurate, and that understanding of terminology was complete. Responses in surveys as well as observations were provided to participants for verification. A difference in the survey and observation results were noted.

Participants had the opportunity to review data pertaining to them to verify they were in agreement with the interpretation of data collected. Data from this study will be retained in a secure and confidential location for a period of five years after the study concludes.

### **Credibility**

The credibility was ensured by making the participants check and sign off on data that was collected. Participants were observed several times during the course of the study, and also participated in a survey, so I believe that the teachers became comfortable with the process, and since 3 observations took place, any information that was inconsistent was addressed with further interviews to clarify why some responses or practices had changed. This, along with the participant verification signature, helped to promote credibility for the study.

### **Dependability**

This term is reflective of the word reliability in quantitative research. To secure dependability, complete records were maintained, including a continuous and unedited summary of the study processes as it progressed. This was through audio and/or video methods, and copies of the research process were securely maintained, along with transcripts of the information. Using the audio and/or video record as well as authenticated transcripts through participant review helped ensure dependability of the information.

### **Ethical Procedures**

The issue of trustworthiness within the study was addressed through observations, and actually provided the reasoning for several observations to take place within settings. To handle the possibility of prepared presentation versus authentic classroom activity, windows of possible observation were provided, but not exact times or days. To ensure that students' privacy was protected, the study was focused on the teacher and applicable strategies and techniques, and not on observation of the students as independent participants. Only statistical data was used concerning discipline referrals, not information directly linked to individual students. In these cases, for this data, the interest was in the number of referrals, not a particular person. This proposal was presented to the IRB by the researcher and dissertation chairperson in September of 2015, and the response was positive, and approved as long as the teacher was the focus and not the students. As long as the researcher does not have supervisory capacity over the teachers being observed, and teachers are the focus of the study, not minor children, then the observations will be acceptable. Additionally, pseudonyms will be assigned so that the identities of the participants are protected.

### **Summary**

Teachers often struggle with classroom management within inclusion classrooms because they do not have sufficient training or because they have not developed strategies and techniques to help them be successful. In this study, a broad range of inclusion classroom management styles were observed and then compared for the perception of



success by the participating teachers, and the discipline referrals originating in the observed classrooms. Also, observing the stress levels, or perceiving stress levels, provided an indicator of strategies and techniques that are successful. It was important to discuss what strategies and techniques were being used by the teachers in the inclusion setting that may be available for the utilization of others. The methods of study as outlined above were useful in creating a document that provided insight and ideas in successful inclusion classroom management.

To ensure a proper description of the research design, sample selection, and responsibility of the researcher, the methodology of this study was presented in detail. Additionally, Chapter 3 elaborated on the data collection techniques, methods of data analysis, and data interpretation. Also, presented in this chapter were the means to protect participant's rights and efforts to ensure confidentiality. Finally, the means to ensure verification and validity of the study and dissemination of findings were detailed. In Chapter 4, the analysis and interpretation of findings will be discussed and in Chapter 5, the conclusion will be presented.

## Chapter 4: Results

### **Introduction**

The purpose of this study was to explore and understand strategies used by teachers to regulate student behavior in their inclusion classrooms. Further, I aimed to understand the ways teachers in inclusion environments perceived their stress levels, the way they were affected by handling inclusion classrooms and the method of describing successful classroom management techniques. I used a qualitative case study approach. Qualitative study in this instance was appropriate because it allowed me to observe a group of teachers as they used varying classroom management techniques in an inclusion classroom setting. This issue has not been studied in depth as presented, and so it was necessary to use qualitative methods to observe and report in detailed fashion so that useful information could be reported. The use of qualitative methods in this study provided greater perspective based on participant actions during the time information regarding existing practices was desired (Creswell 2014). I used the case study approach because I drew participants from one location, in one district, and the observations took place in one geographic location.

I developed 3 research questions to guide this study. These questions focused on what strategies and techniques were currently used in the classroom, how teachers perceived and dealt with stress within the inclusion setting, and what teachers described as successful classroom management.

RQ1: What strategies and techniques do teachers use in successful inclusion settings based upon classroom performance?

RQ2: How do teachers in inclusion environments perceive their stress levels as being affected by handling inclusion classrooms?

RQ3: What do teachers perceive as successful classroom management?

In the following sections of this chapter, I will discuss the setting, demographics, data collection, data analysis, evidence of trustworthiness, and results of the study.

### **Setting**

This study addressed various inclusion classroom management styles in a single small South Central Texas school district, with participants comprising all inclusion classroom teachers from third, fourth, and fifth grades, which resulted in six classrooms to observe and six teachers to interview. The student population was 91% economically disadvantaged, and the dominant ethnicity of the student population was Hispanic at 87%. During classroom observations, I observed the techniques and strategies teachers used to address diverse student participants in the same learning environment. Behavior control was of particular concern as an impacting factor for stress and student time on task.

I observed participating teachers in their inclusion classrooms for 45 minutes each observation. The six teachers in this study were each observed three times, for a total of 18 observations. During these observations, I used a protocol instrument that I developed to guide the observation, and to check for the same components consistently during all

observations. I also took notes regarding the types of strategies and techniques teachers used so that this data could be compared to the interview data collected in the pre-study stage. The interviews were conducted in a private office used for visiting professionals to the campus.

The period of data collection extended from April 16, 2017 to May 29, 2017. Observations were planned for different times of the day as much as the participants' schedules would allow, and to minimize interruptions in instruction. The instrument I used for the semi-structured interviews with teachers can be viewed in Appendix A. The interviews took place outside of class time. I also used records kept by the school districts showing the number of discipline referrals in each participant's classroom, and overall grade averages for the same participating classes. This information was used for comparison purposes only, as applied to the unique classroom management styles of each teacher.

### **Teacher Participant Demographics**

The teachers observed in this study consisted of six female teachers, all teaching in classrooms that included both typically developing learners and learners with special needs. The participants had a wide range of experience teaching in inclusion settings, from 1 to 14 years ( $M = 6.5$ ,  $SD = 5$ ). Of the six teachers observed, four were White and two were Hispanic. One teacher of Hispanic origin held a master's degree in education, and one Caucasian teacher also held a master's degree in education. The remaining participants held bachelor degrees in various subjects. The teachers on average had two

special education students in their classrooms and an additional two students with special needs who classified as 504 students, requiring accommodations and/or modifications. The disabilities included speech therapy recipients, students with specific learning disabilities in math and reading, students suffering from autism, students with ADHD or ADD, and a student diagnosed with emotional disturbance disorder. Teachers indicated several routines and techniques used to manage classrooms and reduce stress, such as deep breathing exercises, use of music, incorporation of the CHAMPS system of behavior management and positive behavior reinforcement, as well as journals and office referrals.

All the teachers in this study had received some level of training to teach in an inclusion setting. All teachers had the prerequisite 30-hour training to teach gifted and talented students, and further, all of them had their certification as an ESL (English as a Second Language) instructor. The range of teaching experience ranged from 7 to 28 years, with the average being 11.3 years.

### **Data Collection**

In this study, I used non-participant observation and semi-structured interviews as the means of data collection. Data collection occurred in one school in a single small district, with participants consisting of all inclusion classroom teachers from third, fourth, and fifth grades, which resulted in six classrooms to observe and six teachers to interview. The 91% student population in this district was economically disadvantaged, and the dominant ethnicity of the student population was 87% Hispanic.

In phase one of the data collection process, I conducted interviews with each participant. The questions provided for the interviews are shown in Appendix A. These interviews were held in the teachers' classrooms during the time allotted for their conference so that no one else was present during the interviews, including students. This provided a level of comfort to the teachers since they were in familiar surroundings. The interviews typically lasted about 20 minutes, but one particular interview lasted approximately 35 minutes.

Observations were conducted as the second phase of data collection. I conducted three observations for each of the six participants, for a total of 18 observations. Each observation was planned to last approximately 45 minutes. The teachers were given a range of dates that the observations would take place. This allowed the teachers to request exclusion of dates that were not convenient, but also still provided for more authenticity rather than a planned observation where some staging might occur. During these observations, I focused on the techniques and strategies teachers were using to address diverse student participants in the same learning environment. The data were recorded using the protocol developed for this purpose (Appendix D). This was a general protocol that I created based on previous literature, and I used it in all observations across the classrooms. I created a second specific protocol for each participant based on results of their interview. Each participant described the methods they used to manage their classroom setting, and I created their particular protocol to see how teachers applied their own ideas to classroom management.

Upon entering the classroom and choosing an unobtrusive vantage point, I recorded what was happening in the classroom according to the prepared protocol, along with commentary notes to clarify what was observed. I prepared summaries the same days as the observations took place to make sure that details were fresh. The observations were conducted in the teachers' regular classrooms to get a close observation of the normal processes of the school day. There were no data collection variations from the processes that have been described in Chapter 3 of this study.

### **Data Analysis**

Data analysis consisted of three major tasks. The first task was to analyze the participants' interviews; the results of this analysis resulted in generating useful observational protocols based on each teacher's preferences on how to handle classroom management. The second data task, which occurred after the observations took place, was to examine how teachers actually managed their classrooms. I generated an individual analysis of each teacher's management strategy. The third task was cross checking information across cases.

#### **First Step of Analysis: Interviews**

I used a system of line by line coding. With this system, as the interview data was transcribed and evaluated, I reduced each line of the data to the idea of the statement or action. I then refined this into what is termed focused coding, which is a system that removes extraneous wording and information to focus on only main themes and ideas in

order to be able to use that data for comparison to other data to look for a common theme or patterns.

### **Second Step of Analysis: Observation**

The second step involved the analysis of classroom observation data. There were two observational protocols: the first that I created as a general guideline based on current literature on integration strategies (Appendix D), and the second e that I created based on each participant's interview. Thus, analysis consisted exploring both results of the specific observational protocol and the general protocol. I compared the data received from the specific protocol used for observation of each participant to the data from the observations with the information received from the interviews. This was useful to determine if the teachers actually used the methods described in the interviews. I have included examples of the protocols in the appendices. The general observation protocol created based on literature for Participant 1 is shown in Appendix D. Appendix E shows the second protocol developed for Participant 1 based specifically on interview answers

The process of data analysis included looking for the relevant techniques, strategies, and supporting classroom structures from the information collected during each observation. After I organized data from each interview into line by line coding and then in focused coding, I wrote a memo to summarize the relevant portions of data. Specifically, a comparison to the initial interviews was important, since it was necessary to look for practices, strategies, and techniques that the teacher stated were in use in classroom regularly. Comparisons were done to determine if the participants' perceptions of what was being used during instruction actually matched what I observed during data



collection. After this process was completed, I compared the observations for patterns in the data. In the sample provided, recurring themes in the data were noted, such as the use of music, or the use of the CHAMPS system of positive behavior reinforcement. The following is an example of a memo that I drew up subsequent to an interview.

This participant finds that the inclusion model does add stress to the learning environment, and actually states that she believes more personnel are needed to effectively manage the inclusion classroom. The participant also stated that she breathes deeply to relieve stress so that it does not become evident to students, when possible.

This participant believes that keeping students engaged and busy is an important component to effective classroom management. Participant 1 stated that she uses positive praise and rewards as the main component of her classroom management technique. She described the inclusion classroom as being more challenging because she believes that students who are struggling tend to be more disruptive. She said also that she believes the positive comments and rewards are successful because other students want to receive that same praise. Other components of her classroom management system are first to ignore, then proximity, then re-direct, then signing a behavior book that records the undesirable behavior, followed by a phone call home, then if necessary, and office referral. She stated that she listens to music and drinks coffee to prepare for day, and has 8 years of inclusion classroom experience

### **Third Step of Analysis: Cross Case Analysis**

The third and final step of analysis consisted of cross-case analyses. Cross-case analysis refers to the examination of patterns of results across the cases that were

individually analyzed in a previous step (Yin, 2014). I conducted cross-case analysis by comparing the participants across two main areas: strategies to manage inclusion classrooms, and techniques to handle stress. For example, the pattern that emerges for Interviews 2, 3, 4, and 6 included these participants believing that small group work, and proper grouping overall, was the key to successful management. They further believed that not all students work in the same way or at the same pace, so grouping is the primary element to success.

## **Participant 1**

### **Interview Results**

Participant 1 noted that students with special needs act out. The interviewee stated that students with special needs struggle and act out, and then followed that up a few minutes later with the statement that students with special needs are disruptive. The participant's opinion seems to be that special needs students are the root of behavior issues in the class.

In this interview, Participant 1 listed types of consequences for actions and strategies for controlling behavior, such as proximity control, or using a behavioral management system called CHAMPS, which involves providing directions for actions based upon the activity, and a clip that moves up or down according to behavior in class. The CHAMPS program is one that stresses positive behavior reinforcement via rewards. Likewise, consequences are laid out, and are immediate, such as having one's clip moved

down a behavior chart that may mean missing a preferred activity later in the day.

Participant 1 reported,

The struggling students tend to be more disruptive in some way. I try to ignore, then I use proximity, then re-direction, and then consequences. After that, if behavior is not managed, I use a phone call home, followed by an office referral if necessary. My stress levels are much higher during the school week. Most stress stems from behavioral issues, and behavioral issues come from struggling students or really advanced students.

It was reflected in the opinion of the participant that successfully managed classrooms consist of students that are engaged, and show mutual respect between students and between teacher and students. A technique mentioned in the interview involves positive behavioral reinforcement, rather than only consequences for undesirable behavior. Another item this interviewee shared is that the playing of music helps alleviate stress. The participant stated that she uses music at least some of the time to reduce stress either for herself or her students. An additional coping device mentioned by her was breathing control.

It can be asserted that the interview for Participant 1 reflected that the teacher's belief that mixing special needs students in classes with students without special needs causes issues, such as increased behavior incidents, and that to manage the classroom she uses music, consequences, and the CHAMPS system. She believed that a successful classroom has students that are engaged and are respectful to the teacher and each other.

This information was used to help develop the observation protocol shown above for data analysis.

### **Observation Results**

The teacher leveraged multiple techniques for managing her classroom, which primarily involved positive rewards and applaud for students who exhibited preferable set of actions and behaviors. During three observations, I observed her using positive rewards practically (See Appendix F) for the students abiding the protocol used. The teacher used positive praise for more than one student when they followed directions and completed their tasks. In addition to this, the teacher used the CHAMPS framework for classroom management. However, I did not observe whether CHAMPS was utilized profoundly and religiously. While observing the CHAMPS chart, I marked that all clips were on and remained in the designated place, i.e., at “Doing Well”. This was the case even when a student was not compliant. During the second observation, the teacher made two students to move their clips. One moved the clip upwards for very good behavior and one downward for noncompliant behavior. It was not observed that the students wrote in behavior journals while the observations took place.

Using the general protocol (Appendix D), I observed the teacher abided by all of the best practices outlined in the protocol. Stress was managed adequately and thus was not evident. Furthermore, there were no discipline referrals present when I made the observations. During the classroom activities, the teacher kept her voice low and remained calm, which followed by the students as well. She ignored task behavior from a student for keeping the disruption manageable. I observed only one office referral for

behavior who was not controlled through other methods. The teacher prepared a note addressing the parents, and stated that she would contact them over phone to discuss about the incident. The student seemed upset about this consequence. The overall grade average in the class once all observations were completed was found to be 77, with 1 office referral and 5 classroom corrections during the observation period.

I could infer from the Participant 1's data that she was able to adequately manage the behavior of students present in the classroom. In her interview, she stated that she uses the CHAMPS system of behavioral management, which includes positive rewards as well as moving the clip in a negative direction which results in the loss of privileges. She did not use the clip consistently during my observations, and there were times when all clips remained in the same category, even though every student acted differently. For instance, during the first observation, all student clips were in the "Doing well" slot, though some instances of re-direction existed. She also mentioned about using immediate feedback in her management strategies. She did provide feedback; however, few instances were marked during Observations 1 and 2 when students raised up their hands and tried to ask questions, but the teacher's back was toward them for a long time. This lack of attention frustrated the students, which led to minor behavioral disruptions. The most effective strategies adopted by her were proximity control and very quick redirection. Sometimes she preferred to ignore the misbehavior of students, however, this kept continuing for long and consequently disturbed students trying to work. Mostly, Participant 1 adopted the strategies mentioned by her during the interview. While making observations, I preferred not to observe Participant 1 using music in order to maintain

peace during her morning routine, however, she used music to calm the students during one observation when the students seemed particularly animated.

## **Participant 2**

### **Interview Results**

Participant 2 stated that her classroom management strategy incorporated small groups organized on the basis of capabilities and experience with hands-on activities. She also posited that she does not believe that the inclusion setting actually affects the way she directs her classroom because she uses instructions according to the requirements of all the students, and inclusion does not modify that.

Participant 2 reported,

I don't feel that having Special Education students in my class gives me any more stress than if they were not in the class. I technically don't treat them or the situation any differently because I differentiate for all students. Communication seems to be the biggest challenge.

Participant 2 also stated that she does not believe that the additional instructional communication required for special needs of students adds no additional stress than the regular classroom but only few challenges. She said that she practices deep breathing in order to control stress. Challenges include interaction with the resource teacher, who also works with some of her students at certain times of the day. The major challenges encountered by students while discussing their needs with the resource teacher were lack

of time or schedule alignment. However, it also relates to how students interact differently with various teachers, even with the same information.

To begin with the day, she plays music, and is prepared with a plan. She has 1 year of teaching experience in the inclusion setting. Based upon the findings of this interview, a protocol was developed specifically to compare these responses to the observations made (Appendix G). Sometimes the teacher uses vocal numbering, where students call out a number in sequence, to form small groups. This adds an implication of randomness to keep students from arguing about their groups. She was also observed using proximity control to minimize or prevent inappropriate or off-task behavior. In one instance, she used her parental voice to state firmly, “I said to sit down!”, which resulted in the desired action. This is an example of an authoritative strategy. The main strategy employed noted during all the observations was keeping students engaged from bell to bell, and keeping them moving from one task to another. This strategy proved to be the most effective one to keep students engaged with the task.

In summary, the interview for Participant 2 revealed that the teacher did not believe that having students with special needs along with the normally developing students caused any problem, and that to manage the classroom she used some social contract methods as in the CHAMPS system, and some authoritarian methods. In the interview portion of the study Participant 2 said that she believes she uses social contract management most of the time, but that she expects compliance, which alluded to authoritarian management. She believed that a successfully managed classroom has students who are engaged and also interact respectfully.

## Observation Results

Participant 2 used a combination of authoritarian and social contract methods to manage her classroom. Examples of authoritarian strategies included a slightly elevated voice, very firm, in which she reminded the students of what she assigned them to do. This varied from the social contract type of management where she often reminded students of what was agreed upon as acceptable classroom behavior, and along with that utilized the CHAMPS methodology. During the first observation, when the students entered the room, there was a high level of noise, but the students were returning from a recess break. The students quickly got settled as per their scheduled routine and moved easily from task to task. Management shifted from authoritarian to social contract and back depending upon the situation. When the students were engaged with task and moved between activities properly, they abided by the social contract they had made through CHAMPS at the beginning of the year. When noise levels shot up, or a student was distracted, sometimes the teacher used an authoritarian approach. For example, when one student took some objects from another, she could have referred to the classroom rules developed as the social contract, but instead preferred to react more like a parent, which did work for the described infraction. She often used the phrases “What are you doing?” “What are you supposed to be doing?” and “What are you going to do about it?” This was meant to have the student reflect upon their actions and how he or she could amend them. Following up with having the student move their behavior clip on the CHAMPS chart, and log the behavior into the journal seemed to be quite effective, and did not take much time. Students seemed to be aware of the routines.



Participant 2 reported in the second observation,

I like to exhibit a high level of energy in order to keep kids engaged. I sometimes use a chant of ‘Class, class, class!’ to which the kids respond ‘Yes, yes, yes!’ to get them to become silent. I don’t believe that having students with special needs in my classroom adds any more stress than in regular classrooms, but there are more challenges.

During the third observation of Participant 2, when the students were exhibiting high levels of energy, I noticed that the teacher used the method she described, when she clapped her hands and simultaneously said, “Class, class, class!” and the students did respond immediately with, “Yes, yes, yes!”. Participant 2 stated during her interview that she likes to categorize students according to their ability to perform some of the classroom activities. This was marked on all three occasions when observations were made. This system was a type of combination with thorough planning, because when she was working with a group of students, the other two groups had to know what they should be doing and be able to complete the tasks on their own with minimal supervision. This division of students and the applicable groupings seemed quite effective for keeping students engaged.

She was also put under observation using proximity control to minimize or extinguish inappropriate or off-task behavior. In one instance, she used her parental voice to state, “I said to sit down!”, which resulted in the desired action. This is an example of an authoritative strategy. The main strategy that was in place in all observations was

keeping students busy from bell to bell, and keeping them moving from one task to another. This was the most effective to keep students on task.

The classroom was well organized and under control. No office referrals were written during the observation period. Only four classroom referrals were written during the observation period, and the behavior journal was used. The classroom average by the end of the third observation was 80. The techniques used by Participant 2 were majorly matched with the protocol designed for her. She used small groups, hands-on activities, and differentiated activities to match student requirements. She was not put under observation at the beginning of the day, so the use of music was not reported in the observation, but planning was evident due to the flexibility of the class aiding in transitioning from activity to activity with no real interruption of instruction.

I inferred from the analysis of the data for Participant 2 that she was successful in managing her classroom for behavior. She used techniques that involved lots of planning and small-group activities. The students were motivated, and there were very few instances of disruptive behavior. This teacher also used CHAMPS, but as in the case of Participant 1, she did not always use it with accuracy. She is a parent, and often used parental techniques with the students, such as “I said sit down”, or “because I said so”, which were effective, but were not mentioned in the interview. Differentiation was the most effective tool she used, because all students remained engaged and this allowed for movement as well.

### **Participant 3**

#### **Interview Results**

The initial interview took place in a private office by the means of the interview protocol developed for all interviews, and the result of which is shown in Appendix H. Participant 3 stated that she used lots of planning and pre-planning to manage her classroom. She also said she used small groups and centers (areas where small groups participate in predetermined activities), timely grading/feedback, student led corrections of tests, and CHAMPS to help her keep the classroom orderly and ready for learning. Participant 3 reported,

I do think that special needs students add to my planning time because while it is what I do for all students, I sometimes feel I cannot devote enough time to their specific needs. There are challenges regarding English Language Learners and communication, but they are not insurmountable. Keeping Students engaged and busy is the key, which requires high levels of planning.

Participant 3 stated she utilized seating charts to help keep students in the optimum areas for learning. She said she did not have a specific routine for starting with the day, but does read educational literature for tips of the day, etc., in order to derive inspiration from them. She stated that she used a computer-based program with her Smart Board called Go Noodle, which allowed the students to move as a group, and gave her a bit of time to decompress. This participant commented that she uses a social contract style of classroom management to control the behavioral aspect of the learning

environment. The information from the interview was used to prepare the observation form to be used exclusively for this participant (Appendix I).

In summary, the interview showed that this teacher believed students with special needs added to the diligence and time required for proper planning, and she was certain that the most effective measures for classroom management were planning and pre-planning. She stated that students need to be aware about their roles and should be able to shift from activity to activity easily with little or no confusion. The other aspects of classroom management that she uses tools facilitating the actions that are expected as a result of the detailed planning, such as CHAMPS, which provided a visual reminder of how students should be acting at any given moment.

### **Observation Results**

Participant 3 exhibited a primarily social contract form of classroom management, however, she also used authoritarian skills, as when students were not responding to the required movement to prepare to leave for lunch.

Participant 3 further reported,

It is time to stop playing around and get in line order so we can leave for lunch.

Do it now!

The students did comply and get back on task. There was also a minor display of democratic management, when she asked the students if they would prefer Go Noodle or Jeopardy and the class stated the responses.

During the first observation, the students were slightly off-task, and the agitation was evident in the teacher's actions. She was somewhat anxious and talked very fast, but

as the situation settled, the students were back on task and the teacher took charge of the room. She used the CHAMPS chart and a task reminder from the lesson plan to regain order. While she was working with one group of students, she still managed to address other students whenever required and re-directed off-task behavior.

In the second observation, one student became off-task and disruptive. The teacher quickly addressed the behavior, and switched from social contract, CHAMPS-based management to authoritarian mode. She told the student that they were not allowed to act like that in this classroom. The teacher recorded about student in the behavior journal, which the student was required to sign, and assured a phone call to home. I observed the phone call made by the teacher after class was over.

The third observation revealed that the teacher was once again well prepared, having the day's objectives written on the board in "kid friendly" language. This time the teacher was working at a table with students correcting test answers, while other students either read from books or worked on a computer program about math. Behavior was within allowable parameters.

During the observation period, this teacher had a total of 5 classroom referrals, and no office referrals for discipline. The average academic grade was calculated to be 79 at the end of the class in contrast to the value of 71 that was calculated in the beginning of the class. The classroom was well organized and the teacher was in control, and students were engaged for the majority of the time.

It could be concluded from the analysis of the data for Participant 3 that the teacher's techniques allowed her to adequately manage this inclusion classroom. She

used a primary management style of social contract, but also utilized some authoritarian aspects when the situation was appropriate, and also used a democratic style in at least one instance. She also used CHAMPS, as the first participants did, but in her case, she utilized that system with greater frequency and fidelity than the first two teachers. Being well-prepared through planning seemed to be the most effective tool this teacher used, and the success was evident in few behavioral interruptions to the learning time. While she said that she believed students with special needs enhanced the workload somewhat, it was also evident that Participant 3 has developed effective strategies to address that enhancement.

### **Participant 4**

#### **Interview Results**

During the interview, Participant 4 explained that she used systems that aided her to “work wisely”, such as splitting learning into chunks, allowing student to get some time to think about responses, in-depth questioning to check for understanding, responses signals such as cards or sticks, and allowing students to change their answers after gaining further insight or reflecting upon the question. The teacher also stated that she used applaud for correct behavior and responses, and awarded school currency called Paw Prints which they can use to buy items from the school store. The behavior control methods also included stickers and having students move their behavior clip up or down on the behavior chart, which is used in conjunction with redirection to get students back on track. The teacher said that teaching in an inclusion classroom has transformed her

perception about the amount of work and stress that builds up when students with special needs are present in the same classroom along with the normally developing students. She said she sometimes feels overwhelmed as if she cannot devote enough time to the student's individual needs. She has 5 years of experience as an inclusion teacher at the time of this interview. The standard interview protocol was used to collect this information (Appendix J).

On summarizing the interview data obtained from Participant 4, I inferred that the teacher used a number of systems within the classroom that helped her to manage behavior in an effective manner. She said that she preferred to use positive rewards rather than punitive measures, but at times those are necessary. The positive reward system is in keeping with the CHAMPS method of classroom management. She states that she uses a variety of positive rewards such as stickers, positive words, and Paw Prints, as well as indicators on a behavior chart. From this information, the specific observational protocol was developed (Appendix K).

### **Observation Results**

During the first observation, I observed that Participant 4 was talking more than the students. She presented material and then asked in-depth questions. The students were slow to respond at first, but then became more engaged with time. One student was observed to be working on a computer, but not participating in the assignment. No effort was made to engage the student, and after the observation I queried the teacher about the underlying reason. She responded that this student has emotional issues, and rather than upsetting the entire class, some days when she refuses to participate, she allows her to

“do her own thing”. The teacher used the countdown method to gain attention, and the classroom was fairly engaged with the assigned task, even when another adult entered the room.

Participant 4 reported,

What are you doing? What are you supposed to be doing? What are you going to do about it? What does our classroom agreement say about staying on task?

This was an example of the social contract method of management she typically used during observations.

During the second observation, one student was absent due to being placed under detention/ ISS (in-school suspension). The behavior event did not happen during any observation, so no details were known. Other students were receiving stickers for adequate completion of work, and one student was made to move his clip down on the behavior chart for talking loudly more than once. After he moved his clip, he returned to work.

The third observation provided insight for small group work. I put the class under observation to mark the transformations in their behavioral pattern as per the teacher’s instructions. She categorized them into groups, and this seemed to be effective for behavior control. She consistently praised them when they were engaged with the assigned task, and made students to appreciate each other’s work by posting positive comments. This seemed to be effective in keeping the environment positive. No stress was visible between students, but the teacher seemed somewhat anxious.



Summarizing the data, Participant 4 is highly dependent upon the social contract method of classroom management. This was effective for her, allowing her to deliver educational insight to her students. There were times when some authoritarian methods were most effective, such as when one student was attempting to leave the room after getting angry on another student. The teacher had to state forcefully that he was not allowed to leave. The teacher took whole classroom into full charge, but she said she did not feel so, and stated that at any time she felt the classroom could devolve into chaos, indicating an underlying amount of stress.

## **Participant 5**

### **Interview Results**

Participant 5 stated that she uses time outs, student-teacher conferences, behavior warnings, and behavior journals to manage her classroom. She felt that she uses a blend of authoritarian and social contract methods as the basis for her management style. Her favorite strategy was the “two choices” strategy, where she gave the student two choices to complete a task, where one choice incorporated punitive measures involved. She uses CHAMPS as a basis for students to measure appropriate behavior in the classroom. She also said that students with special needs sometimes increased the stress in the classroom based upon the difficulty of the material.

Participant 5 reported,

Sometimes the student who is not successful or has special needs will interrupt because the material is too hard.

This teacher explained that she found it difficult to keep everyone busy while providing grade, appropriate materials and assigning activities for all the students. She also believed that inclusion classrooms do add a great deal of stress to the classroom environment due to the needs of such a diverse group of students with varying needs. She coped with stress in the classroom by smiling a lot and remaining positive outwardly, no matter how she feels inside. She used deep breathing techniques, and closed her eyes briefly to alleviate her own stress. She stated she did not know about any special methods for relieving stress at the end of the day, and that she uses prayer to prepare for the day ahead. She has over 30 years of classroom experience, and 13 years of inclusion classroom experience. The standard interview protocol was used to collect data for these responses (Appendix L).

In summarizing the interview answers and general observational data, the teacher stated that she used time outs, conferences, behavior warnings and behavior journals to manage her inclusion classroom. The “two choices” tool works in a positive reinforcing manner for her, according to her statements during the interview. She also uses CHAMPS as a behavior tool, and reinforced a calm classroom through smiling and keeping a positive attitude. Deep breathing is a technique she used to remain calm during the day and prevent spreading stress to the students. Participant 5 said she felt that the inclusion setting was challenging for both teachers and students, and that she does not have a specific routine for relaxing at the end of the day, and uses prayer to start her day. The information gathered in the interview phase was used to create the specific observational protocol for this participant (Appendix M).

## Observation Results

In observing this participant, the first time, I saw one of the students was off-task. The teacher had the student sit at a small table to “chill out” as she put it, and after three minutes, the student returned to the task. This was an example of using time outs, as she claimed in her interview information. She also had a short conference with this student as the ESL worked with the group, and so the teacher’s statement of using conferences was supported. The use of behavioral warnings was also observed.

Participant 5 observed,

Please move back to your area.

It was also seen during the observation that students were required to write in their behavior journals when an off-task behavior occurred. The teacher was smiling most of the time, presenting a friendly demeanor, though she was able to do that and still be seen as the person in charge of the classroom. She was complimentary regarding the students’ work.

At one time during the observation there was a slight display of stress. A student with special needs was off -task and would not be redirected. The teacher did not want to escalate the situation, so allowed the student to do an alternate assignment. However, soon other students were requesting to do the alternate assignment. There was a very short period when the educator seemed perplexed about managing the situation. Her solution was to allow all students to participate in the alternate activity for a short period if they would agree to get back to the regular assignment after five minutes. This was presented as the “two choices” option.

Participant 5 also observed,

Do you want to continue to work on the first assignment, or would you rather work on the coloring assignment for five minutes, then return to the regular work?

The choice was to color for five minutes then return to work, which provided a means for the teacher to regain control. The observations of this participant ended with a class grade average of 80, eight classroom referrals, and one office referral, for which the parent was contacted and a conference was arranged.

Summarizing the observations, Participant 5 had many years of experience which were useful in managing the classroom. The students were generally engaged with the task, and the educational environment seemed under good control. Many of the techniques that the teacher mentioned in the interview stage were seen in use during the observations. The teacher used social contract management techniques about equally with authoritarian methods to control behavior in her classroom. It seemed to be effective and allowed for all students to learn. The environment was not chaotic, and even though the teacher expressed some doubt as to the appropriateness of the inclusion model, these observations provided evidence of this teacher's effectiveness in this setting.

## **Participant 6**

### **Interview Results**

During the interview with Participant 6, the teacher stated that she used routines, social contracts, behavior binders, and phone calls home to manage her class's behavior. She believed in positive reinforcement, using paw prints as currency for the students to

buy items from the school store. She also said that using lots of positive comments is important, and often told students how she liked their work, or praised them for their innovation in finding a solution, even if it yielded an incorrect answer. She said that she uses CHAMPS as a behavior reminder in class, and that proximity control and issuance of consequences are all tools she regularly employs. She used small groups to differentiate instruction, and tried to provide instruction at the level of the student. She also offered that she used the first three weeks of the new school year to establish routines, set boundaries, and set up the social contract, so that there is a good understanding of expectations.

Participant 6 was adamant that the inclusion setting adds a great deal of stress. She was careful to explain that she believed every child deserves an education, but is not convinced that an all-inclusive model is the most effective setting to teach children. She shared that she recently started taking a blood pressure medication due to her elevated blood pressure, which she attributed to the high stress experienced by her. She stated during the interview that this was her most stressful year so far.

This educator said that she tried to reduce stress in the beginning of the day firstly by preparing herself, listening to music, and trying to re-focus her positive energy. She greeted all the students at the door in order to lift their moods and to provide a smile and a welcome. The teacher tried to remain positive and on track to prevent stress from transmitting to the students. The standard interview protocol was used to collect data for these responses (Appendix N).

Summarizing the interview portion for Participant 6 reveals that she believed that social contracts were important for managing a classroom, as well as setting expectations, setting boundaries, and being positive as often as possible. She used small groups to provide customized instruction for students at their own level of understanding. This teacher also believed that the inclusion setting is extremely stressful, and she attempted to minimize the effect of this stress by using positive comments, smiling a lot, and trying to display positive behavior in the classroom. She stated that she has taught in the inclusion model for about 14 years. The information gathered during the interview phase was used to create the specific observation protocol for Participant 6 (Appendix Q).

### **Observation Results**

Participant 6 said that it is important to use schedules, planning, routines, and behavior binders to manage student behavior in the classroom. She also said that she uses CHAMPS as a tool to regulate classroom behavior and that consequences such as reduced recess time, are effective as well. This teacher stated that the use of positive praise is useful, and that interactions and meeting with parents are essential for good management.

During the observations, it was noted that the teacher began class with specific routines. The classroom seemed a bit cluttered though, to which some students responded by exhibiting frustration with haphazard movements within the class. The students seemed productively engaged for most of the observation time. The teacher greeted the students at the door, and used that to lift mood and attitude for the impending class time. She used proximity at times to keep students on task, and other times asked them about

their expected roles. This usually ended with the student returning to on task behavior. In two cases, the students ignored the teacher's questions, and one of them received a punishment of 5 minutes' loss of recess time, and the second, that occurred at a separate time, received a classroom write up, requiring the student to note her behavior in a behavior journal.

It was observed that although the CHAMPS chart was in place, there were no clips on it during the second and third observations, so it may have served as a reminder, but was not part of the active discipline routine. The teacher did smile a lot, and tried to make students feel at ease irrespective of the difficulties associated with the task. She was supportive and offered praise that seemed sincere. She also used authoritarian methods at times, though infrequently.

Participant 6 observed,

I said that we are done coloring for now, and you need to put up the crayons!

This was in response to reluctance of students to stop this preferred activity, since they were supposed to have another 3 minutes to finish.

In summary, Participant 6 was observed using the techniques she described in the interview. The teacher was observed issuing paw prints as rewards for good work, and she used routines to move students around from small group activity to small group activity.

Participant 6 observed,

Ok students, yellow.

This was the code word they used for meaning it was time to move to the next activity. The students were all aware of this, and moved to the next activity. The combination of strategies and techniques that were employed by the participant seemed to allow the teacher to be in control of her classroom and teach effectively.

### **Cross Case Analysis**

Cross case analysis focused on findings patterns and common trends among the six participants on two specific sections: strategies to manage inclusion classroom and techniques to handle stress.

#### **Strategies to Manage Inclusion**

As a strategy, differentiation was mentioned throughout and across the interviews. Differentiation refers to acknowledging that different activities are essential for different types of learners. Virtually all of the participants either mentioned differentiation of instruction directly, or practiced it in their classrooms, or both. For instance, interviewee #5 utilized small groups for instruction, and each of these groups performed assigned educational tasks utilizing slightly different methods. The same subject matter is being taught, but presented or represented differently.

These teachers have a view of a successful classroom that includes students that are engaged and on task. Also, everyone within the classroom treats each other with respect. Additionally, there seems to be a common list of techniques or strategies that are used to control behavior, including the use of CHAMPS involving behavior clips and movement instructions, use of small group instruction, and implementation of social



contracts to define proper behavior for the classroom. Frequent reminders to stay on task and positive behavior recognition were also common themes.

It was noted during the observations that although many techniques were commonly mentioned, they were not always utilized in the same manner or with the same emphasis. For instance, Participant 2 uses social contracts, the same as the other participants. But when a student becomes overly obstinate or non-compliant, she would quickly revert to authoritarian techniques, much as a parent might. Other teachers using social contracts would work through a list of questions, asking them what they are doing, what are they supposed to be doing, and what are they going to do about it? This was also the case when the teachers implemented CHAMPS in their classrooms. Some would use the CHAMPS chart with fidelity, moving clips and referring to the instructions on the chart. Other teachers would use CHAMPS more broadly, referring to the chart only periodically or in cases where it suited the situation more specifically. Table 1 was created to help track those techniques and strategies for managing inclusion classroom.

Table 1 tracks the strategies used by each participant (x indicates this strategy was used).

Table 1

*Management Strategies used by Participants*

Particip	CHAM	Sma	Behav	Journ	Call	Differentia	Planni	Proxim	Positi
ant	PS	ll	ior	al	s	tion	ng/	ity	ve
		gro	chart		ho		outline	control	praise
		up			me		s		

---

1	x	x		x	x			x	x
2	x	x		x	x	x	x		
3	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	
4	x	x	x			x		x	x
5	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
6	x	x			x	x	x		x

---

The techniques and strategies used most commonly within this table are CHAMPS and Small Group with all participants utilizing these. The second most popular items are Calls Home and Differentiation. These had 5 of 6 participants utilizing them. The next most common techniques had four of six participants using them, and included Journal, Planning/Routines, and Positive Praise. The last group of strategies and techniques had 3 of 6 participants employing them, and included Behavior Chart and Being Positive.

The first research question asked what techniques and strategies were used by teachers in inclusion classrooms based upon performance. During the data collection phase, information about the overall classroom grade averages and the number of discipline referrals was also collected. The grade averages and number of referrals were compared to the techniques and strategies being used in each classroom. The classroom ranks according to grade averages were Participant 2 (average of 80), Participant 5 (average of 79), Participants 1, 4, 6 (average 77), and Participant 3 (average 72). The

ranks (fewest to most) according to classroom referrals were Participant 6 (2 classroom referrals), Participants 3 & 5 (3 classroom referrals), Participants 3 & 4 (4 classroom referrals), and Participant 1 (5 classroom referrals). The ranking of participants according to office referrals, from fewest to most, was Participants 2 & 6 with no office referrals, and Participants 1, 3, 4, & 5 with one office referral each. The grade averages and number of referrals were collected from the beginning of the study period until the end of the study's data collection phase.

### **Strategies to Handle Stress**

Breathing techniques and music are mentioned as effective methods to manage stress. Participants 1, 2, 5, and 6 mention that deep breathing helps to relieve stress. Some of them mention that deep breathing exercises form part of their daily routine, and others mention that it is part of a situational stress reliever.

Table 2 refers to strategies participants use to relieve or reduce their own stress, and that of their students. By relieving their own stress, they reduce the possibility of transmitting it to the students.

Table 2

#### *Strategies to Relieve Stress*

Particip ant	Think time	Seatin g chart	Being positiv e	Prayer	Close eyes	Deep breathi ng	Music	Hobb y	Exerci se
1				x		x	x		

2	x	x				x	x	x	
3		x			x	x			x
4	x		x				x	x	x
5			x	x	x	x			
6	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x

---

The most popular stress reduction technique was Deep Breathing, which was utilized by 5 of the 6 participants. 4r of the participants used music as a stress reliever, while several stress reduction techniques were used by 3 of the 6 participants, including Prayer, Closing Eyes, Hobby, and Exercise. Two of the stress reduction strategies are also classroom management strategies, since they are employed to reduce stress in students and reduce anxiety to prevent behavioral episodes. These are Think Time, and Seating Chart. Three of the participants used these methods. Allowing think time reduces stress for the student, and prevents other students from making fun of the student, which can result in classroom disruption. Seating charts help to place students in areas where there may be less conflict, reducing stress, and managing behavior.

Participant 3 used a program called Go Noodle as a reward for on task behavior, which is also instructionally related. This was the only participant that utilized this program. It seemed to serve the purpose of allowing both students and teacher to decompress a bit, as stated by the participant in the interview, while at the same time keeping the students engaged to prevent off-task disruptive behavior. This participant also referenced an author of books related to classroom management, Harry Wong, who

provides tips for greeting students at the beginning of the day, developing routines, etc. This was a unique reference as well, since no other participant referred to this author.

### **Evidence of Trustworthiness**

The study produces accurate findings such that benefits can be derived from the work for the field of psychology, and for the participants. The findings of any psychological study of merit must also represent valid findings so that future applications of the information contained in the study may be effective (Creswell, 2014). This study does this by analyzing data collected directly from participants in their authentic classroom settings. This also means that qualitative studies must be trustworthy, since validity and reliability are not measured in the same numerical sense as within a quantitative study, and in order that this is true, qualitative studies use several markers to indicate that the study is trustworthy, such as accuracy, credibility, and dependability (Creswell, 2014). In this study, the researcher has attempted to maintain accuracy by recording the actual interviews and classroom observations of the participants, and the data analysis uses only participant sources using their actual techniques and methods. Credibility has been maintained here as well since several observations were conducted of each participant, in an effort to reduce the event of sporadic anomalies. Dependability was also addressed through careful recording of responses, multiple observations, and participant input.

## Summary

I addressed the research questions stated in this section of the study by analyzing the responses provided by each of the participant. First research question asked what strategies and techniques do teachers use in successful inclusion settings, based upon classroom performance. This question was analyzed using the data gathered during observations of each of the participants within their respective classrooms. Tables were designed for the exhibition of these strategies and techniques, and how often they occurred within the observations of the participants. Some were repeated in each of the observations, and others occurred frequently throughout several observations, while others were utilized less often within the pool of participants.

The second research question focused on how teachers in inclusion environments perceive their stress levels as being affected by handling inclusion classrooms. The questions used in the interview and on the observation, protocols allowed the teachers to state their preferences for stress management both for themselves and for classroom management. Observations provided the opportunity to see firsthand if these stress management techniques were actually employed in the classroom, or in some cases, at the beginning of the day for a preparation routine.

The third and final research question addressed what the teachers believe is a successfully managed inclusion classroom by asking how they perceive successful classroom management looks like to them. The interview portion of the study, as well as data collected through the observation protocol, provided insight into the answer of this

question. The universal response was that students are engaged and on task, and that everyone within the classroom environment treats each other respectfully.

In Chapter 5, I will discuss the study, commenting on the observations and results. The study revealed some conceptions that could be addressed for accuracy among the participants, which could ultimately provide a positive impact for future development. The conclusions will also be mentioned in Chapter 5, along with recommendations regarding current practices and future study possibilities.

## Chapter 5: Discussion, Conclusions, and Recommendations

### **Introduction**

Inclusion classrooms present specific management challenges for teachers. At times teachers may feel that stress levels are elevated due to the requirements of providing quality instruction for typically developing students as well as those who are diagnosed with various disabilities. Teachers use various techniques and strategies to accomplish this task, and some of these are more widely used than others.

Additionally, teachers must manage stress in their own lives as well as the classroom. Some have specific morning routines to relieve stress and prepare for the day, and others decompress after the school day. Some educators use techniques throughout the school day to keep stress in check. Handling stress allows teachers to function effectively during the delivery of academic lessons, and it helps prevent transferring stress to students. Transferring stress to students can affect their academic performance and behaviors at school (Oral, 2012).

The purpose of this qualitative case study was to explore and understand the strategies teachers used to regulate behavior in their inclusion classrooms. I interviewed teacher participants to find out what techniques they think are most effective for them to manage the inclusion classroom setting and to manage stress at the personal and classroom levels. I also conducted observations to compare actual classroom practices to what the participants had stated in their interviews.



Results of this study revealed the various management techniques leveraged by teachers for handling inclusion classrooms. These techniques benefited students academically. Additionally, results of the study showed the different stress management techniques teachers used to be productive and effective in their profession. In Chapter 5, I present key findings of the study, along with my interpretation of the results and recommendations for possible future research. A discussion of the limitations of this study, including possible impacts for social change, is also included in this chapter.

### **Key Findings**

There were several shared characteristics in participant interview responses. All of the participants stated that they used small group instruction and used the CHAMPS method of behavior management, and four of the six participants agreed that differentiation was important in reaching all students and keeping them engaged. Five of six of the teachers also mentioned that calls home to parents and positive praise were important in effective classroom management. Additionally, the participant teachers all shared similar definitions of a successfully managed classroom, which included that all students were engaged and on task, and that all members of the classroom were respectful to each other.

During the observations, I observed that only three of the participants used the CHAMPS system with fidelity. In one participant's classroom, the clips on the behavior chart connected the CHAMPS were never moved. Three teachers did use the CHAMPS process during every observation, and one used the process in two out of three

observations. Most of the time when it was implemented, the outcome was successful. On the other hand, my observations revealed that the use of small groups was a frequent strategy among all of the participants. I observed calls home seven times during my observations, and four teachers also used positive praise as a management technique.

There were also commonalities in how the participants stated that they manage stress, five of them prepare through a routine for the beginning of the day. These routines involved music, coffee, prayer, and planning. Deep breathing was also mentioned by five of the six participants as part of their stress management plan. When exploring the topic of stress in the teaching profession during the literature review, I found that the literature indicated that higher stress loads resulted in teachers leaving the profession more readily (Rhoades, 2013). The literature also showed that collaboration among teachers is a way to minimize stress by providing both a method of expressing frustration and also for planning by comparing what means are effective when managing the classroom (Rhoades, 2013). In the study that I conducted, Participant 1 and Participant 5 mentioned in conversations that they attended weekly staff meetings where they could plan professionally and compare ideas for instruction. However, none of the participants listed this as a stress reduction method during the initial interviews.

Other information showed that there are many factors that affect teacher attrition rates, but that stress related to classroom management issues, including inadequate support from administrators, was a highly rated cause for leaving the profession (Sass et al., 2012). Other factors that can create stress for teachers include perceived lack of support by administrators, and lack of parental support (Sass et al., 2012). In this study,

none of these were mentioned specifically. The participants focused on what they were doing personally to reduce stress, which did not include sharing ideas or discussing difficulties with their colleagues and peers. Other researchers have reported how important it is to use the collaborative model to help teachers develop better management skills for students with disruptive or aggressive behaviors (Jones et al., 2013). Though collaboration was not mentioned as a stress reduction technique, I believe that it did take place given participants' comments made during observations and interviews. These participants viewed this collaboration as part of the planning process, not as an actual stress reduction method, but two purposes were served.

My observations provided confirmation of some of the stress reducing strategies teachers used, but not for all strategies. For instance, deep breathing was used by five of the six participants in the observation portion of the studies, and I observed four of the six participants using music as a technique for stress management at the classroom level. Other practices for managing stress included exercise, allowing think time, being positive, prayer, closing eyes, hobbies, and I observed each of these strategies with three out of six, or 50%, of the educator participants.

### **Interpretation of the Findings**

The following interpretation of findings is arranged according to the specified research questions. Both the interview data and observation information are combined in this interpretation.

### **Research Question 1**

The first research questions asked: What strategies and techniques do teachers use in successful inclusion settings based upon classroom performance? This first research question focused on what actual strategies and techniques teachers use in their inclusion classrooms. The study began with an interview, which allowed teachers to explain what they believed they used in their classrooms as tools to manage behavior, provide instruction, and relieve stress associated with working in a setting where general education teachers had both typically developing students and students with special needs. In *most* cases, when comparing participant interview answers with classroom observations, the interview answers and the observations matched. However, I observed some discrepancies. For example, all participants stated that they used the CHAMPS model of classroom management during their interviews, and during observations all participants were observed using that system at least once. However, the level of fidelity, with regards to CHAMPS use, varied a great deal. Participant 2 on at least one occasion did not move the clips of the students during the classroom observation. She had all clips placed on the behavior chart in the area that indicated everyone was doing fine. But during my observation, she did have some minor behavior disruptions for which she did not use the CHAMPS method. In this case, the value of the CHAMPS tool is questionable. For this teacher, the value of the CHAMPS system was greatly reduced due to lack of fidelity and was provided to the classroom as a specific plan of action in the event of disruptive behavior but was not used in practice to assist in controlling the actions of students.

When conducting the literature review, I found that some researchers reported that social contract methods of management in inclusion classrooms were effective (Parsonson, 2012). The social contract method is a key method for keeping students on task and focused by reducing chaos (Rhoades, 2013). The CHAMPS system that was in use in the classrooms during the study is a social contract type of classroom management system designed to reduce confusion about what is acceptable behavior at any given time. In addition to the social level contract, the importance of self-management was a focal point in some of the literature, which again applies to the use of CHAMPS in the classroom (Toprakci, 2012). Educators who routinely use behavioral management plans that incorporate social contracts are more successful in preventing behavioral incidents that negatively impact learning (Harvey & Allard, 2009). In the case of my research, I found that some teachers used a social contract method of management more than others. Four used it with fidelity, and two used it only sparingly. There were some differences in the outcomes of using CHAMPS with fidelity or not, though those differences were not vastly disparate. For instance, Participant 1 had a class grade average of 77 and Participant 2 had a class grade average of 80. Participant 1 however did not use the CHAMPS method with as much fidelity as Participant 2. Participant 1 also used a great deal of positive praise, while Participant 2 used a lesser amount. Since the grade averages between the two classes are so close, it is difficult to determine if CHAMPS usage could be attributed to the academic grade difference.

Another technique that participants mentioned in their interviews was the use of small groups to make the students access their teachers more easily, provide varying

activities, and differentiate instruction. The sum of these strategies was to keep students engaged and active because the teachers believed that active engagement was a major key to make students behave appropriately in the classroom while also addressing the needs of all students. Use of small groups was one of the most effective strategies for classroom management that I observed. In these cases, all students received some direct instruction, and were able to have movement incorporated into their day when going from task to task. An additional benefit of small group work was the movement to and from the groups. As research shows, movement is another key classroom management technique (Rhoades, 2013).

Not only did I observe greater classroom management via the use of small groups, small group instruction was perceived as effective by the participants as well. Participants noted in the interviews that small groups were used to provide instruction in a setting more focused on individual students, and provided a deeper level of support for students. In some of the scholarly literature, small groups were supported as an effective strategy for classroom management (Reiser, & Dempsey, 2012). However, researchers also found that this strategy is less effective if there is no other adult support in the room to supervise activities while the primary teacher is engaged with the students in small groups (Scanlon, & Baker, 2012). While self-directed learning can help reduce off-task behavior when students are familiar with processes and procedures, the overall efficacy of small group work is lessened when the teacher has to divide her attention between room monitoring and instruction (Scanlon & Baker, 2012). This research is supported by

the comments of Participants 2, 3, and 5 in their interviews when they stated that inclusion classrooms need to have co-teachers as support in inclusion classrooms.

Differentiation, another technique that was mentioned by five of the six participants, often was observed to work hand in hand with small groups. Students seemed to be more engaged during an activity that more closely met their ability level. In fact, Participant 5 referred to this as ability grouping when she discussed the small group technique. Some researchers found that differentiation was crucial for addressing students in classrooms possessing highly diverse student populations, both in ability and background (Shimoni, Barrington, Wilde, & Henwood, 2013). Again, the participants demonstrated various levels of differentiation during the student led lesson delivery, and the small group strategy described above is how the differentiation was delivered most effectively for keeping students engaged.

Use of behavior journals, in which the students were required to write down their behavior, whether good or bad, seemed to be effective against most students. The maladaptive behavior was noted and then a proposal for correction of that behavior was added by the student. The participants stated that they made calls to homes to discuss issues with parents, and the information in the journals was shared during those calls. During observations, the mention of the behavior journal was sometimes a deterrent to engaging in off-task behavior. This strategy seemed to be useful in guiding and controlling behavior. Other researchers have also identified the efficacy of the use of a behavior recording technique to have the student acknowledge their behavior and provide an opportunity for them to correct the action on their own (Scanlon, & Baker, 2012).

Researchers have found that this is a form of self-directed behavior control, and is more effective than educator required behavior correction (Pickard, 2009). In effect, it is offering the student a choice. Correct the off-task behavior on their own, or choose to accept the consequences, which in this case means writing in a behavior journal or in some other recording device, in congruence with Parsonson's research findings (2012).

Proximity control is a fairly standard teaching practice. In this study, several participants used this technique. It was not effective with every student every time, but generally, it was successful and noninvasive. Prior research has indicated that this is a basic form of management that is effective (Moore, Anderson, Glassenbury, Lang, & Didden, 2013). Positive praise was used in conjunction with proximity control during some observations. Participant 6 stood near a student who had been talkative and off-task, but when the teacher praised the work the student had done, the student returned to task. Positive praise was especially effective for certain students and personality types, but in others, it had little effect on modifying behavior. Some classroom management models have been designed using the positive praise model, relying on praising the desired behavior, rather than punishing the off-task behavior (Simonsen, Myers, & DeLuca, 2010). Positive reinforcement can be highly effective for students that need positive reinforcement and validation, (Shimoni, Barrington, Wilde, & Henwood, 2013).

Stress management adopted many forms, and generally was observed in this study as it was used to provide primary stress relief for teacher participants so that it was not transferred to the students. Deep breathing techniques and the use of music were the two techniques mentioned most commonly by the participants. Deep breathing did seem to be



effective in helping the teachers center themselves on more than one occasion. Music was observed in the classroom on some occasions as well, which also provided focus for children, occupying them with something other than having them seek other stimuli.

Previous studies regarding stress and educators have indicated that budgetary constraints resulting in fewer support staff, combined with wider diversification of classrooms, increase teacher stress, especially in success-oriented teachers (Sass, et al., 2012). Also, lack of time to collaborate with peers and colleagues has been shown to be an additional stressor for teachers (Oral, 2012). During this study, teachers did not mention lack of time to collaborate as adding stress to their job, but Participant 3 and Participant 5 stated that they believed having classroom support in addressing students with special needs would make their jobs less stressful, and that instruction would be more effective.

Use of other strategies like think time, for both teacher and student, prayer, being positive, hobbies and exercise were the activities performed by the participants to manage stress. Some of these were observed, such as exercise, and some were listed by participants in the interview process. Exercise, specifically, was observed. For example, Participant 3 identified a need for students to move around, especially after lunch when students might be less attentive. Participants 1, 3 and 6 would lead the students on a fast-paced walk around the room or down the hallway and back. Participants found that this was a quick way to bring everyone's focus back to academic tasks. Using routines, drills, stopping points and objectives that allow for a change in action helped to keep students interested and focused, as supported by Moore, et al., (2013). Exercise and motion were

indicated to provide an outlet for energy and increase blood flow to the brain (McDonald & Hudder, 2014).

### **Research Question 2**

The second research question asked: How do teachers in inclusion environments perceive their stress levels as being affected by handling inclusion classrooms? The answer to this question varied from participant to participant. Some of the participants stated that they experienced no difference and that their stress levels remained the same or were high regardless of the composition of the class, and that special needs students added no extra stress to the environment. Other participants stated emphatically that special needs students in the same environment with typically developing students added more stress. What I observed in the classrooms supported both assertions. My observations showed that stress due to the composition of the classroom relied on two key aspects. First of all, I observed that teachers who feel unprepared for the day added stress to the classroom environments, specifically when observing the stress levels of teachers dealing with students with specific needs. Second, different special needs diagnoses affected how some participants perceived added stress. For instance, Participant 1 had 4 students with a learning disability in reading comprehension, and another with sight impairment. This would have been more stressful if the teacher had been ill-prepared, or lacked experience in differentiation. Participant 4 had a student who had a behavioral disability that caused a great deal of disruption in the classroom. Though Participant 4 handled the stressful situation very well, it was obvious there was a higher level of stress in the classroom, and that students were anxious and not fully able to

concentrate on academic tasks. Administrators need to gather teacher input when dividing students for classroom assignments, and consider the cases of each student, to try to mitigate stressful situations before they occur.

Participants 2, 3, 4, and 5 stated that they use a great deal of planning as a way to reduce stress. This tactic to reduce classroom stress is supported by previous research. Prior research suggests that teachers must be prepared with training using multiple methods of classroom management in order to succeed in inclusion settings (Loh, 2016). Without feeling prepared, and coupled with lack of resources, anxiety levels can be increased (Dwyer, 2007). Other studies show that the move toward more inclusive classrooms for special needs students can alleviate the burden of teachers, but that proper grouping can be a key to helping reduce teacher anxiety (Toprakci, 2012). Newer models of management dealing with inclusion have indicated stress can be reduced by helping teachers understand how to prepare for diversification, which will help them deliver instruction in ways useful to the diverse classroom population, which reduces stress and anxiety (Shimoni, et al., 2013).

### **Research Question 3**

The third research question asked: What do teachers perceive as successful classroom management? While all participants stated virtually the same definition their use and understanding of that definition varied to a degree. All participants perceived that a well-managed classroom was one where all students were engaged, all students were on task and learning, and that everyone within the setting, whether student, teacher, or paraprofessional, was courteous and respectful to each other. Participant 1 was fine with

the classroom being a little noisy, and this was a sign of engagement. But for Participant 5, students that were not fairly quiet and engaged in individualized work represented a classroom that was not successful. Each participant possessed a different mental image of the successful classroom. This may be a stressor for teachers who do not feel they achieve this goal.

On the other hand, a successfully managed classroom presents some degree of academic success as well. Supporting this assertion, research shows that academic success is to a large extent based upon management that keeps behavior positive, so that one is contingent upon the other (Toprakci, 2012). As stated by one researcher, the best classroom management plan is a good lesson plan that keeps students engaged (Toprakci, 2012).

Some teachers may believe that a quiet classroom demonstrates good management, while others see the organized chaos of a loud classroom as one where actual learning and interaction are at play. Either of these definitions can be true. It depends upon the experience and personality of the teacher, and their adaptability skills, as well as the individuality of the students. In the case of teachers that have planned well, such as Participants 2 and 5 for example, there are allotted times for group discussions and being loud, and there are times specified for individual work to be completed quietly. So, I found that the answer to research question number 3 is that it depends on the teacher, students, and the activity as to how that looks, and that may well be a customized definition per teacher. The keys are that the classroom can function and students are learning.

Planning is a key to impactful learning. Because learning is dependent upon focus and on task behavior, then the planning must include variations that allow instructional delivery to meet the needs of the learner, including teacher use of differentiation and creating a variety of classroom arrangements (Wannarka, & Ruhl, 2008). In the case of seating arrangements that work, there are many models that are useful for various objectives. For instance, for the prevention of off-task behavior desks lined up in rows seem to be the most effective. This arrangement is adequate for a quiet classroom (Wannarka, & Ruhl, 2008). But for students that need movement, centers, and small groupings may work best (Wannarka & Ruhl, 2008). The participants in this study used centers and small group, the small group setting being the most popular among participants, and the one that teachers felt was most effective for instruction in five out of six participants. Participant 6 utilized more whole group instruction than small group, but recognized the important of small group work with struggling students.

### **Limitations of Study**

This study had limitations because much of the observation data and definitions described by the participants were subjective, according to what they believe and perceive. Also, the participants were from a small school district in a rural area. Since the school was small, three of the participants may not have been as forthcoming in their answers due to the idea that their colleagues may be able to figure out who they were, or that they would be seen as overly critical about the current situation in the school as it applied to inclusion classrooms. All participants were assured that their responses were in

no particular order, and that they were assured of confidentiality, but it was probable that some apprehension still existed.

Another limitation was the small size of the school in the rural setting. The demographics involved were a combination that may not apply in many other locations. This means that the data obtained was useful, but teachers in other locations might experience the classroom management and stress differently. Additionally, the small size of the school meant that the number of special needs students identified was disproportionate to typically developing students as compared to larger schools and settings.

A third limitation was that all of the participants were non-Hispanic White, and the students at the school are 94% minority. The school's demographics for teachers were approximately 45% minority and 55% non-Hispanic White. This could have influenced the teacher's definition of appropriate or disruptive behavior.

Another limitation of the study was my level of expertise in conducting research. As a newer researcher, interpretation of data, and recognition of nuance is not as honed as a seasoned researcher. In order to mitigate this limitation, I acknowledged that the importance of specific points of data is subject to my interpretation of the data gathered, and so I attempted to validate my interpretations with previous studies and literature in the field.

## **Recommendations**

One of the recommendations based upon the study findings would be to develop a program of vertical and horizontal alignment within the school district specifically focusing on classroom management and have teachers share what works for them and what does not. The idea is to develop a list or system of techniques that could then be used to help new or struggling teachers in inclusion settings. New teachers often have satisfied academic accomplishments, but are not prepared for the challenges associated with teaching in an inclusion setting (Dwyer, 2007). This often leads to high attrition rates, which has proven detrimental to student success (Aloe, Amo, & Shanahan, 2014).

A second recommendation and consideration for future studies is to consider a quantitative study comparing student grades, office referrals, and discipline issues between inclusion and non-inclusion settings. This may give some insight into the stress factors and differentiation challenges that affect inclusion classrooms, and how that relates to student success (Acuna, 2011). Some circumstances that exist in inclusion settings may not be present in the general education classroom without special needs students, or perhaps it may not make a difference. These data could also serve to contribute to the understanding of the challenges that inclusion teachers face, and perhaps contribute to better support for inclusion classrooms (Jones, Monsen, & Franey, 2013). In the current study, I found that teachers often misconceived the definition of an inclusion classroom, believing that this meant that a special education teacher was supposed to come into their classroom and help with the special needs students. The definition of an inclusion classroom is simply that there are special needs students in the same classroom

as typically developing students. How each school addresses the support of these classrooms is a local decision. This type of misconception is more common than previously thought (McDonald & Hudder, 2014).

A third recommendation is for administrators and curriculum staff to help develop programs that incorporate movement into daily routines. This study provided information that some teachers are very good at this, using centers, small groups, etc., to keep students engaged, while others do not utilize movement very much, which results in boredom and undesirable behavior, disruptions, and referrals which take time away from instruction (Moore, 2008). Since this study revealed that for the participants of this study, small groups and differentiation are the most effective management tools, and that these strategies frequently involve movement of some kind, it would make sense to provide guidance to teachers as professional development in how to use these techniques (Parsonson, 2012).

### **Significance and Implications of the Study for Social Change**

The original contribution of this study is to help identify strategies and techniques for successful classroom management within inclusion classrooms. There are an increasing number of students receiving special education services that are placed in inclusion settings in the general education classroom (Acuna, 2011). The typical training for general education teachers only briefly touches on this important topic, many times leaving the teacher unsupported, trying a series of trial and error methods to develop useful practices (Aloe, Amo, & Shanahan, 2014; Brackenreed & Barnett, 2006). This



may prove successful in some cases, but students within these settings may not receive the benefit of an education that allows them to be successful due to interruptions caused by behavioral issues (Chafouleas, et al., 2012). Additionally, teachers placed in inclusion classrooms without proper tools for managing the diverse population represented within it may opt out of the teaching profession due to feelings of failure or high stress levels (Dwyer, 2007). The aim of this study was to help develop some framework for teachers to use that will help them and the students to be successful academically.

By providing this framework, professional educators may be able to more effectively provide equal access to quality education for all students. Observing and reporting useful techniques for use in this type of setting allows teachers and administrators to together develop a style that feels comfortable to them, and allows all students to learn to their highest potential. Practical application of the methods that appear to be working for other professional educators should help the teacher in an inclusion setting develop a personal model for managing the classroom.

The positive social change attached to this study is that students with disabilities may be more readily accepted in the general education classroom and will also learn effectively, achieving the highest possible level of education for each student. Creating an atmosphere that is safe, well managed, and orderly will give all students the chance to succeed, and to become productive citizens. Not all students will achieve at the same levels, but it is crucial that the opportunity for each one to reach their full potential is provided. Giving educators the tools they need to provide this atmosphere for students will help to realize this goal.

## **Conclusion**

Teachers that are trained primarily as general education teachers are many times not equipped to support students in classrooms that are a mixture of both special needs and typically developing children (Idol, 2006). Educators need the support of each other as team members and of administration in order to develop programs of classroom management that work well in these environments (Harvey & Allard, 2009). Additionally, it is important for teachers to be able to share their successes and failures with other teachers so that the process of classroom management can be refined.

Administrators need to provide support for educators that also result in less pressure and stress reduction in order to limit attrition. Students also feel stress when they experience the result of high teacher turn over, requiring relationships to be built (Oral, 2012). This in turn presents stress to the new teacher who must develop effective management with the students. Encouraging teachers to participate in activities concerning mental health and physical relaxation will ultimately benefit the students as well by preventing stress from transferring from teacher to student (Oral, 2012). A comprehensive set of strategies and techniques should be formulated for inclusion teachers for each campus (Kantavong & Sivabaedya, 2010).

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### Appendix A: Instrument of Data Collection: Semi-Structured Interview

RQ1- What are strategies and techniques teachers use in successful inclusion settings based upon classroom performance?

Interview Question: 1. Tell me what classroom techniques you use to manage your classroom to improve performance?

Interview Question: 2. Can you think of an example in which your management strategy was helpful within your class? Please describe the example.

Interview Question: 3. Does teaching in an inclusion setting/classroom alter your perception or definition of a successfully managed classroom? If so, please explain this further.

Interview Question: 4. What challenges do you experience in managing your inclusion classroom? How do you address those challenges?

RQ2- How do teachers in inclusion environments perceive their stress levels as being affected by handling inclusion classrooms?

Interview Question: 1. What is your perception of how your stress levels are impacted by managing an inclusion classroom, with both special needs and typically developing students?

Interview Question: 2. How do you avoid transmitting the feelings of stress, if they exist, to your students?

Interview Question: 3. What do you do at the end of the day to relieve stress? (For example, hobbies, exercise, etc?)



Interview Question: 4. Do you feel that the inclusion model of classroom adds undue stress to your job? If so, what would you recommend to your school district?

Interview Question: 5. Is there a beginning of day routine you use to prepare yourself for classroom stress?

RQ3- What do teachers perceive as successful classroom management?

Interview Question: 1. What is your definition of successful classroom management?  
How is this attainable?

### Appendix B: Pre-Survey Interview Questions

Pre-Survey Interview Question: 1. In regard to the inclusion classroom model, what techniques do you use to control behavior within the classroom to allow for instruction to take place?

Pre-Survey Interview Question: 2. How long have you taught in an inclusion environment?

Pre-Survey Interview Question: 3. What do you do to reduce stress within the classroom?

Pre-Survey Interview Question: 4. What do you do to reduce stress outside of classroom time?

### Appendix C: Post-Survey Interview Questions

Post-Survey Interview Question: 1. After finishing the data review with you, do you feel that the information collected in the inclusion setting is properly representative?

Post-Survey Interview Question: 2. How did you experience my observations in your classroom?

Post-Survey Interview Question: 3. Do you think that information collected from this study could be useful to you and your colleagues?

## Appendix D: General Observational Protocol of Participant 1

1. Teacher starts with a warm up activity:  Yes  No
2. Behavioral expectations are clearly posted:  Yes  No
3. Lesson objectives are clearly posted:  Yes  No
4. Teacher explains assignment clearly:  Yes  No
5. Students understand assignment/activity:  Yes  No
6. Classroom is orderly, neat and clean:  Yes  No
7. Students have sufficient materials:  Yes  No
8. Noise level is acceptable:  Yes  No
9. Students seem engaged and on task:  Yes  No
10. Teacher uses what type (s) of management style? (All that apply)  
 Authoritarian  Democratic  Social Contract  Laisse Faire  
 None  Other:  Champs on wall
11. Stress is observable in the classroom in the teacher's actions or in the actions of the students:  Yes  No
12. Teacher uses what method to reduce stress, if any?  Not Observed
13. Discipline referral occurred while observation underway:  Yes  No

14. If yes, what was effect on classroom performance?

\_\_\_\_N/A\_\_\_\_\_

15. Class overall grade average is: \_\_\_\_77\_\_\_\_\_

Date of Observation: \_5-5-17\_\_ Grade: \_\_5\_\_ Time of Observation: \_10:10am\_\_\_\_\_

Comments: \_\_\_\_\_Teacher had small group of students. Good control of  
classroom\_\_\_\_\_

## Appendix E: Observational Protocol of Participant 1 based on Interview

1. Teacher reports incorporating praise and rewards  Yes  No  Not Observed

How is this observed (provide examples and observations): During independent work teacher was moving around room, praising students for good work.

2. Teacher reports using ignoring behavior  Yes  No  Not Observed

How is this observed (provide examples and observations): Student was off-task, trying to distract another student. Teacher walked to target students, and provided assistance, then worked with the students that were affected independently, getting them back on track while ignoring the off-task behavior.

3. Teacher reports using proximity for behavior control  Yes  No  Not Observed

How is this observed (provide examples and observations):

Teacher remained close to three students exhibiting off-task behaviors, which reduced that off-task issue.

4. Teacher uses redirection for behavior control  Yes  No  Not Observed

How is this observed (provide examples and observations):

Simply walked over and placed a finger on student's paper to remind them of what they should be doing.

5. Use of Behavior Log- student must sign  Yes  No  Not Observed

How is this observed (provide examples and observations): N/A

6. Phone call home  Yes  No  Not Observed How is this observed: N/A

7. Office referral  Yes  No  Not Observed How is this observed: N/A

## Appendix F: General Observational Protocol of Participant 2

1. Teacher starts with a warm up activity:  Yes  No
2. Behavioral expectations are clearly posted:  Yes  No
3. Lesson objectives are clearly posted:  Yes  No
4. Teacher explains assignment clearly:  Yes  No
5. Students understand assignment/activity:  Yes  No
6. Classroom is orderly, neat and clean:  Yes  No
7. Students have sufficient materials:  Yes  No
8. Noise level is acceptable: \*  Yes  No  
 \*(Noise a little high but returning from break)
9. Students seem engaged and on task:  Yes  No
10. Teacher uses what type (s) of management style? (All that apply)  
 Authoritarian  Democratic  Social Contract  Laisse Faire  
 None  Other: \_\_\_\_\_ Champs on wall \_\_\_\_\_
11. Stress is observable in the classroom in the teacher's actions or in the actions of the students: (State Testing Close)  Yes  No
12. Teacher uses what method to reduce stress, if any?  Good Planning \_\_\_\_\_
13. Discipline referral occurred while observation underway:  Yes  No
14. If yes, what was effect on classroom performance?  
 N/A \_\_\_\_\_

15. Class overall grade average is: 76

Date of Observation: 5-2-17 Grade: 4 Time of Observation: 1:06pm

Comments: Teacher working with 2 students on floor, 4 students on computer, 3 working on sheets, teacher re-directed students after giggling, 3 boys doing matching vocabulary



## Appendix G: Observational Protocol of Participant 2 based on Interview

1. Teacher reports using small groups  Yes  No  Not Observed

Students grouped at separate tables working on different projects.

2. Teacher reports using hands-on activities  Yes  No  Not Observed

How is this observed (provide examples and observations): Students were working on Gallery Walk tasks, creating a city scene, cutting out pictures, writing notes, pasting on cardboard, etc.

3. Teacher reports using differentiation  Yes  No  Not Observed

How is this observed (provide examples and observations):

Some students on computers, some working on posters, some writing, and some students receiving oral support.

4. Teacher plays music at the beginning of the day  Yes  No  Not Observed

How is this observed (provide examples and observations): N/A

5. Use of Planning  Yes  No  Not Observed

How is this observed (provide examples and observations): Students move very fluidly from activity to activity, they are not confused about what to do next.

## Appendix H: General Observational Protocol of Participant 3

1. Teacher starts with a warm up activity:  Yes  No
2. Behavioral expectations are clearly posted:  Yes  No
3. Lesson objectives are clearly posted:  Yes  No
4. Teacher explains assignment clearly:  Yes  No
5. Students understand assignment/activity:  Yes  No
6. Classroom is orderly, neat and clean:  Yes  No
7. Students have sufficient materials:  Yes  No
8. Noise level is acceptable:  Yes  No
9. Students seem engaged and on task:  Yes  No
10. Teacher uses what type (s) of management style? (All that apply)  
 Authoritarian  Democratic  Social Contract  Laisse Faire  
 None  Other: \_\_\_\_\_
11. Stress is observable in the classroom in the teacher's actions or in the actions of the students:  Yes  No
12. Teacher uses what method to reduce stress, if any?  Refocus students \_\_\_\_\_
13. Discipline referral occurred while observation underway:  Yes  No

14. If yes, what was effect on classroom performance?

\_\_N/A\_\_\_\_\_

15. Class overall grade average is: \_\_\_\_79\_\_\_\_\_

Date of Observation: \_\_5/2/17\_\_\_\_\_ Grade: \_\_3\_\_\_\_\_ Time of Observation:

\_\_12:30\_\_\_\_\_

Comments: \_\_\_\_Teacher says she works with small groups of students, but still addresses others with questions or needs.\_\_\_\_\_

## Appendix I: Observational Protocol of Participant 3 based on Interview

1. Teacher reports incorporating planning before classes  Yes  No

How is this observed (provide examples and observations):

Plan is visible in kid-friendly language written on white board. Class reviews plan at beginning of class to make sure everyone understands the objective

2. Teacher reports using small group centers  Yes  No

How is this observed (provide examples and observations):

3 students at computers, 1 student with teacher, 3 students reading, and 3 students doing graphs

3. Teacher provides timely grading/feedback  Yes  No

How is this observed (provide examples and observations):

Teacher reviewing grades and test answers with each student individually

4. Student led correction of test materials  Yes  No

How is this observed (provide examples and observations):

Student was at the table with the teacher correcting test while others at centers

5. Use of CHAMPS  Yes  No

How is this observed (Provide examples and observations)

Level of sound and movement visible on CHAMPS Chart

6. Use of seating charts  Yes  No

How is this observed (Provide examples and observations)

N/A- Students in centers, not at desks

## Appendix J: General Observational Protocol of Participant 4

1. Teacher starts with a warm up activity:  Yes  No
2. Behavioral expectations are clearly posted:  Yes  No
3. Lesson objectives are clearly posted:  Yes  No
4. Teacher explains assignment clearly:  Yes  No
5. Students understand assignment/activity:  Yes  No
6. Classroom is orderly, neat and clean:  Yes  No
7. Students have sufficient materials:  Yes  No
8. Noise level is acceptable:  Yes  No
9. Students seem engaged and on task:  Yes  No
10. Teacher uses what type (s) of management style? (All that apply)  
 Authoritarian  Democratic  \* Social Contract  Laisse Faire \* (mostly Social Contract)  
 None  Other: \_\_\_\_\_
11. Stress is observable in the classroom in the teacher's actions or in the actions of the students:  Yes  No (Students no, Teacher yes)

12. Teacher uses what method to reduce stress, if any?  Walking around the room \_\_\_\_\_

13. Discipline referral occurred while observation underway:  Yes  No

14. If yes, what was effect on classroom performance?

N/A \_\_\_\_\_

15. Class overall grade average is:  78 \_\_\_\_\_

Date of Observation:  5/5/17 \_\_\_\_\_ Grade:  5 \_\_\_\_\_ Time of Observation:

10:40am \_\_\_\_\_

Comments:  Teacher working with two groups, one group passed all STAAR tests, one group did not \_\_\_\_\_

Appendix K: Observational Protocol of Participant 4 based on Interview

1. Teacher reports breaking learning into chunks  Yes  No  Not Observed

How is this observed (provide examples and observations):

Working with one student, teacher broke out a compare and contrast exercise and did it with her before moving to next step

2. Teacher reports allowing think time  Yes  No  Not Observed

How is this observed (provide examples and observations):

Asked probing questions, then moved to another student to allow the first student time to think before returning to him for the answer

3. Teacher reports using in-depth questioning  Yes  No  Not Observed

How is this observed (provide examples and observations):

Part of the “think time” strategy; Asked “Why do you think that?”, and “What other solutions might there be?”

4. Teacher prevents idle time  Yes  No  Not Observed

How is this observed (provide examples and observations):

Each group had assignment, and all were monitored for progress as teacher moved around room

5. Use of Hands-on signals, like cards or sticks  Yes  No  Not Observed

How is this observed (provide examples and observations):

Counted down from 5 using a colored countdown card; students counted down and then focused on teacher

6. Allow students to change answers  Yes  No  Not Observed

How is this observed (provide examples and observations):

When student gave an incorrect answer, teacher provided more information, and student changed answer in a compare and contrast activity

7. Shows appreciation and praise  Yes  No  Not Observed

How is this observed (provide examples and observations):

Tells students “Great job!”, “Good work”, and has student praise each other’s work as well

8. Gives out Paw Prints  Yes  No  Not Observed

How is this observed: N/A

9. Use of stickers as rewards  Yes  No  Not Observed

How is this observed: N/A

10. Use of behavior clip  Yes  No  Not Observed

How is this observed:

Student was out of placement; reminded several times, was asked to move clip down to yellow caution slot

11. Teacher uses redirection of undesired behavior  Yes  No  Not Observed

How is this observed:

Student drawing picture instead of working; Asked, “what are you supposed to be doing” to redirect



## Appendix L: General Observational Protocol of Participant 5

1. Teacher starts with a warm up activity:  Yes  No
2. Behavioral expectations are clearly posted:  Yes  No
3. Lesson objectives are clearly posted:  Yes  No
4. Teacher explains assignment clearly:  Yes  No
5. Students understand assignment/activity:  Yes  No
6. Classroom is orderly, neat and clean:  Yes  No
7. Students have sufficient materials:  Yes  No
8. Noise level is acceptable:  Yes  No
9. Students seem engaged and on task:  Yes  No
10. Teacher uses what type (s) of management style? (All that apply)  
 Authoritarian  Democratic  Social Contract  Laissez Faire  
 None  Other: \_\_\_\_\_
11. Stress is observable in the classroom in the teacher's actions or in the actions of the students:  Yes  No \*(Students no, Teacher yes)
12. Teacher uses what method to reduce stress, if any?  Keep Smiling and Remain Positive
13. Discipline referral occurred while observation underway:  Yes  No

14. If yes, what was effect on classroom performance?

N/A\_\_\_\_\_

15. Class overall grade average is: 79\_\_\_\_\_

Date of Observation: 5/11/17\_\_\_\_\_ Grade: 4\_\_\_\_\_ Time of Observation:

10:40am\_\_\_\_\_

Comments: Students engaged and behaving represents a well-managed and

successful classroom according to teacher\_\_\_\_\_

Appendix M: Observational Component of Participant 5 based on Interview

Teacher reports that she uses time outs  Yes  No  Not Observed

How is this observed (Provide examples and observations):

One student was somewhat overactive. She had student sit at table to “chill out”-after 3 minutes, student resumed task.

1. Teacher stated that she uses student/teacher conferences  Yes  No

How is this observed:

Teacher had a short conference with a student while the ESL teacher watched class-they returned to room and student got back on task.

2. Teacher uses behavioral warnings  Yes  No  Not Observed

How is this observed:

Student was out of area, and teacher said “Please move back to your area or there will be a consequence”.

Teacher uses behavior journals  Yes  No  Not Observed

How is this observed:

Students that had been in time out or had attended a conference were required to log in the incident in their behavior journal, along with a solution for next time.

3. Teacher uses smiles and positive attitudes to reduce stress  Yes  No

How is this observed:

Teacher smiling almost constantly, and complimenting work, keeping an even tone.

## Appendix N: Observation Walden Interview Component 1 Protocol

1. Teacher starts with a warm up activity:  Yes  No
2. Behavioral expectations are clearly posted:  Yes  No
3. Lesson objectives are clearly posted:  Yes  No
4. Teacher explains assignment clearly:  Yes  No
5. Students understand assignment/activity:  Yes  No
6. Classroom is orderly, neat and clean:  Yes  No (Overcrowded)
7. Students have sufficient materials:  Yes  No
8. Noise level is acceptable:  Yes  No
9. Students seem engaged and on task:  Yes  No
10. Teacher uses what type (s) of management style? (All that apply)  
 Authoritarian  Democratic  Social Contract  Laisse Faire  
 None  Other: \_\_\_\_\_
11. Stress is observable in the classroom in the teacher's actions or in the actions of the students:  Yes  No
12. Teacher uses what method to reduce stress, if any? Students are productively engaged
13. Discipline referral occurred while observation underway:  Yes  No

14. If yes, what was effect on classroom performance?

\_\_\_\_\_N/A\_\_\_\_\_

15. Class overall grade average is: \_\_\_\_\_77\_\_\_\_\_

Date of Observation: \_\_5/11/17\_ Grade: \_3\_\_\_\_\_ Time of Observation: \_10:10am\_

Comments: \_\_\_\_\_Students working independently\_\_\_\_\_

## Appendix O: Study Information Flyer

## 1. What is being studied?

The researcher will be studying classroom management techniques and stress reduction methods of teachers in inclusion classrooms (Special Needs students and Typically Developing students combined in one learning environment)

## 2. Who is eligible to participate?

Teachers in 3<sup>rd</sup>, 4<sup>th</sup>, or 5<sup>th</sup> grades that teach in inclusion classrooms.

## 3. How will I participate?

By taking a pre-study survey, being observed in your classroom 3 times during the study period, and completing a post survey and interview.

## 4. Is there any compensation for participating in the study?

The only monetary compensation will be in the form of a \$10.00 Starbucks gift certificate. However, participating in the study could help provide valuable insight into managing inclusion classrooms and provide information for your school.

## 5. Will I know the results?

Yes, an informational report will be provided to participants.

## 6. How long will the study last?

Approximately 3 months.