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# The Impact of Capturing Kids' Hearts on New Teachers' Perceptions of Classroom Management

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# The Impact of Capturing Kids' Hearts on New Teachers' Perceptions of Classroom Management

by

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## ABSTRACT

The present action research study explored how incorporating the classroom management model of Capturing Kids' Hearts (CKH) impacted first year teachers' perceptions of classroom management. The problem of practice indicated first year teachers historically had large numbers of discipline referrals. The guiding questions were 1) What is the impact of Capturing Kids' Hearts on first-year teachers' perceptions of classroom management? And 2) How can participant feedback after CKH preparation be used to improve current classroom management policy at BHS? The primary purpose of this action research was to determine the impact of CKH professional development on four first-year teachers' perceptions of classroom management. The secondary purpose was to enable the new teacher participants to implement innovative ways to manage their classrooms within the policy guidelines at BHS. The tertiary purpose was to enable administrators to improve existing classroom management policies so that they are more conducive to the needs of new teachers. Quantitative data was collected via pre- and post-surveys. New teachers responded to the 21-item survey prior to attending CKH and again after completion of the workshop. Participants included four first-year teachers at a large, suburban high school in central South Carolina. Research findings for this study included:

1. New teachers may not feel confident with classroom management learned solely in pre-service training. Practical strategies and techniques taught by CKH may

- help improve this finding. Data suggests that CKH improved new teacher's perception regarding useful strategies and helped to decrease the level of worry regarding classroom management. This can correlate to increased self-efficacy.
2. Although most new teachers understand the importance of relationships, CKH can help teachers see the importance and relevance of building better relationships through the sharing of experiences, and allowing students the opportunity to collaborate with the teacher in the development of social contracts. By improving relationships in this manner, classroom management should improve.

An action plan was developed based on the findings of this study.

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## LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

BHS.....	Brooke High School
CKH.....	Capturing Kids' Hearts
DiP.....	Dissertation in Practice
EXCEL.....	Engage, X-plore, Communicate, Empower, Launch
ILT.....	Independent Learning Time
NFIE.....	The National Foundation for the Improvement of Education
PET.....	Program for Effective Teaching
SCT.....	Social Cognitive Theory

## CHAPTER 1

### INTRODUCTION

Why do students act out? Factors may be both internal and external. Internal factors are those things that can be controlled by the teacher such as the type of lesson, the seating arrangement, the rules established for the classroom, or the type of learning activity. External factors, ones that cannot be controlled by the teacher may include divorce or family financial hardships. In one qualitative study, it was found that of the internal factors, the most prevalent causing behavior disruptions were lack of motivation, inconsistent rules, lack of infrastructure, ineffective time management, classroom environment and lack of classroom interaction. The types of behaviors observed were listening to music, noisy talking, walking aimlessly and inappropriate use of classroom materials (Erdogan et al., 2010).

Diversity in the classroom may also be of concern for a first year teacher. Rothstein-Fisch and Trumbull examine diversity in regards to cultural values and beliefs. Their claim is that these "...values and beliefs are at the center of students' responses to teachers' strategies and of students' own attempts to engage in and influence interactions in the classroom."(Rothstein-Fisch & Trumbull, 2008, p. xiii). Understanding the influence of students' cultures and backgrounds over their behavior is a task that all teachers should embrace. Home teachings, religious beliefs, etc. all play a role in the behavior of a child. When a student feels that the strategies used in a classroom conflict

with their own beliefs, management issues could very well result. Therefore, diversity is another facet of the very complex concept of classroom management.

There are various reasons why many new teachers have not yet developed the necessary skills needed to be an effective classroom manager. Most teachers entering the profession have gone through a pre-service training. While undergraduate students gain a wealth of knowledge and theoretical training through these programs, valuable experience in implementing their own classroom management practices is often lacking. While students in most programs do have student teaching experiences, they are mainly implementing lessons and behavior management techniques that have already been established by the facilitating teacher. Very seldom do the pre-service teachers develop and implement their own plans from the beginning of the course. Doctors, business people, engineers and other professionals get training in hospitals, businesses, and organizations where they become skilled at full implementation of a craft before they are completely released into their profession. However, teachers get a lot of theory and assisting in a student teaching scenario, but little experience in developing their own identity as a teacher (Naz, Abida, Munir, & Saddiqi, 2010).

Armed with the knowledge that beginning teachers may or may not have established skills in behavior management, schools must implement programs to meet the needs of the new teachers. In fact, state legislation requires the implementation of a mentoring program. The methods employed to carry out this task can vary from school to school based on interpretation of the legislation. Depending on the program established in a school, new teachers may have feelings of isolation. There could be a great disconnect between theoretical expectations and classroom reality. If there is a lack of support and

guidance, classroom management problems could be the likely result. Bickmore and Bickmore (2010) state that there is evidence that “even when mentoring is mandated by government policy, the quality of mandated mentoring varies dramatically within and across schools and alone may not provide the support that meets new teachers’ needs” (p. 1007).

In light of the research, there are many different aspects of classroom management models that could be studied. The present action research study will focus on professional development in and implementation of the Capturing Kid’s Hearts classroom management model. The ultimate goal of the study will be to determine the impact of the CKH training on teacher perceptions of classroom management and to then improve current classroom management policies at a large suburban high school.

### **Statement of Purpose**

The primary purpose of the present action research study is to determine how implementation of the classroom management model Capturing Kid’s Hearts, will impact four first-year teachers’ perception of classroom management strategies after experiencing the CKH’s professional development at Brooke High School [pseudonym] (BHS). The ultimate goal of any educator is to help students be successful. Unfortunately, limited experience in the classroom can create chaos for the new teacher who has not yet gained mastery of managing behavior. As Harry Wong states, “The fact that you know how to cook a steak does not make you a successful restaurateur....The first thing you need to know is how to manage the restaurant” (Wong & Wong, 1998, p. 83). The same can be said for teaching. You can have enormous amounts of content knowledge, but it will do no good unless you know how to manage the classroom. The secondary purpose

is to enable the new-teacher participants to implement innovative ways to manage their classrooms within the policy guidelines of BHS. The tertiary purpose is to enable administrators at BHS to improve existing classroom management policies so that they are more conducive to the needs of the new teachers.

### **Problem Statement**

Classroom management theory taught in pre-service programs is important, but not always applicable. Student teachers often are thrown into their first teaching position without ever experiencing the implementation of their own behavior management philosophy and plan. They quite possibly lack an extensive knowledge of subtle classroom strategies to keep students engaged and may be unable to maintain a classroom environment that is safe and conducive to learning. Providing new teachers with professional development that teaches and models a classroom management plan can improve the teachers' self-efficacy in regards to classroom management. New strategies can also be taught that will assist the new teacher with maintaining on-task behavior. It seems natural that action research be employed for this study since the most important outcome is to implement the proposed strategy to help solve this problem of classroom management for beginning teachers at BHS.

### **Rationale/Significance of the Study**

In this district, induction teachers typically do not have concerns about curriculum. Teams of teachers have already developed lessons for most courses with pacing guides included. An array of formative and summative assessments is included in the lessons as well as various instructional strategies and activities that can be used. However, classroom management has been a common challenge for a number of first

year teachers throughout my tenure as an assistant principal. In one instance, a serious fight broke out in a teacher's classroom that ultimately resulted in one student being transported to the local medical facility and being treated for a broken nose and broken eye orbital while the other student involved was expelled from school. Administrators had been called into this same teacher's room several times to intervene in classroom behavior incidents. By the end of the semester, the teacher was routinely sending students to the office resulting in the students missing valuable instructional time. Needless to say, these same students were not successful in this particular class and were re-enrolled (with a different teacher) in that course.

For another first year teacher, veteran teachers on the same hallway had to intervene for classroom management purposes. On several occasions, the class was loud enough to disturb the surrounding classes. The veteran teachers reported these incidents to the administration resulting in administrators making routine stops in that classroom. Again, student achievement in this class was not as high as the school expectation. Based on these observations, there appears to be a definite correlation between teaching experience and the number of referrals written.

In addition these obvious issues, there were more subtle problems that arose. On several occasions, when discussing course requests, going over grades, and other informal conversations with students, common perceptions were recognized among them. Comments such as "I don't want to be in Ms. J's class [a first year teacher], she doesn't have any control", "...it would not have happened if the teacher [a first year teacher] knew what she was doing", or "nobody is doing well in his [a first year teacher] class because you can't pay attention with all the noise" were common.

Administrators, in weekly team meetings, made reference to the fact that we all needed to frequent the first year teacher's classrooms to monitor the behavior/classroom management. Both teachers referenced had extensive background knowledge in their subject areas but lacked the classroom management skills needed to help students be successful. As an administrative team, we did not feel that ending their employment with the school was the correct decision; however, there should be some definite support for brand new teachers (those with no years of teaching experience) in the area of classroom management.

As mentioned by one student, it was difficult to learn in a classroom with poor behavior management. Distractions play a huge role in minimizing student achievement. Utilizing a classroom management model such as CKH would not only benefit the novice teacher, but also the administration and most importantly, the student. Graduates of teacher training programs will have a smoother transition from campus to the real classroom. The positive outcome for administrators is teacher retention. Student achievement is the most important outcome and it is well documented that effective classroom management positively affects student achievement (The National Foundation for the Improvement of Education (NFIE), 1999).

It is well documented that classroom management is one of the most referenced areas when pre-service teachers describe their lack of experience. "Classroom management difficulties can prompt new teachers to jettison many of the research-based instructional practices they learned in college (such as cooperative learning and project-based learning) in favor of a steady diet of lectures and textbooks" (Goodwin, 2012, p. 84). In addition, the frustration can cause teachers to steer away from their original

behavior management plan into a “ship them out” mode where students are sent to the office with referrals on a weekly or even daily basis.

### **Theoretical Base**

The construct of classroom management is ultimately being addressed through this research study. How do educators define classroom management? A simple and direct definition would be classroom discipline, but the concept involves more than that. It involves beliefs of the teacher and the vision of the school. Classroom management involves not only establishing rules within the four walls of the classroom, but also building a relationship with the students. Rules identify the expectations for student behavior but relationships build a basis for mutual respect. Mutual respect includes understanding the diversity and culture of all students within the school environment. Another facet of classroom management involves implementing engaging lessons that motivate and keep the attention of the students. Rules may state that students must complete their work; however, if they complete busy tasks without gaining knowledge, then the classroom management is not beneficial. For the purposes of this study, classroom management takes into account more than rules. It includes the establishment of relationships, and the creation of a “learning environment” within the classroom.

Capturing Kids’ Hearts (CKH) is a program developed by the Flippen Group to assist schools in promoting pro-social interactions and character development while reducing student’s negative behaviors. The program is based on the social-cognitive learning approach. Based on the social cognitive theory, learning is acquired through a process of observing model behavior and by social experiences. Bandura (2005) states



that people create social systems to assist in organization, guiding, and regulating their activities. The social systems achieve the following:

Impose constraints and provide resources and opportunity structures for personal development and functioning. Given this dynamic bidirectionality of influence, social cognitive theory rejects a dualism between personal agency and a social structure disembodied from human activity (Bandura, 2005, p. 10).

With this explanation, CKH is based on three regulatory systems that function to control student behavior. First, a student's behavioral response is greatly influenced by the person modeling (the teacher). Secondly, the desired behavior is more likely to be reproduced if a response feedback such as an affirmation or positive experience results. Third, consistency is the key. There is a direct link between repeated behavior and consistency of the teacher ("Flippen Research," 2016)

### **Methodology**

The following sections give specifics regarding the methodology of the research.

#### **Participant Selection and Research Site**

The participants for this study were a convenience sampling of all first year teachers at BHS. All names and personal identifiers were removed from the participant records to ensure privacy. First year teachers hired must have passed all required exams for credentialing or have completed all necessary components of an alternative certification program. I served as the administrator participant in the research.

The setting for this study was a large rural high school located in central South Carolina containing grades 9-12. The setting included approximately 1800 students, 112

certified teachers, and six administrators. According to the South Carolina report card for 2014, the school had a teacher retention rate of 81.6% and a student retention rate of 3.1%. The student population consisted of 80.9% white, 7.4% black, 4.9% Hispanic, 2% Asian, 0.4% American Indian/Alaskan native, 0.06% Pacific Islander, and 4.3% other with 18.3% of all students receiving free or reduced lunch. The schedule for this high school was very unique. The day was scheduled on a 5-period block schedule. Each block was 80 minutes in length. Students used four of the blocks to take academic or elective courses. The fifth block of time (independent learning time or ILT) was used for lunch and to get extra help, complete make-up work, study, read, etc. A “learning” lab was available in each department and was staffed with a teacher during all ILT blocks. ILT was scheduled into each student’s day just as any other course and the student was assigned to a specific classroom where they were required to check in with the teacher before going on to other areas of the school. Each teacher (new or veteran) taught three 80 minute blocks and had one 80 minute planning block. For the fifth block teachers were either assigned to a learning lab or to an ILT classroom. Students typically did not remain in the ILT classroom after roll was taken, therefore this provided the new teacher time for completion of questionnaires.

### **Research Questions**

The following questions were used to drive the present action research study:

- 1) What is the impact of Capturing Kids’ Hearts on first-year teachers’ perceptions of classroom management strategies?
- 2) How can participant feedback after CKH training be used to improve current classroom management policy at BHS?

## **Sources of Data Collection**

The participants of this research were all first year teachers in the school. Each went through the district's induction program. They also completed a three-day staff development in Capturing Kid's Hearts. The training, conducted by the Flippen Group, an outside organization, had been approved and paid for by the school district. Prior to training, participants completed a 21-question survey regarding their perceptions of classroom management. Questions were developed based on the "EXCEL" plan described in the CKH's training. The five proponents of the model are "Engage", "X-Plore", "Communicate", "Empower", and "Launch" ("Flippen Research", 2016). Questions were also developed that pertain to the participant's personal self-efficacy in regards to classroom management. The survey was also administered after training and implementation of strategies into the classroom. The pre- and post-survey results were compared and analyzed to determine any changes in the teachers' perceptions of classroom management.

## **Dissertation Overview**

Chapter two will give a history of the literature related to this action research. In Chapter three, the methodology of the research is described in detail. A thorough description of the research design, data collection tool, and analysis methods is included. Chapter four describes the finding and analysis of the surveys to include the major themes that emerged from the data. In chapter five, the action plan is discussed and was developed based on the findings of the study.

## Glossary of Key Words

*Behavior* – The manner in which a person acts which may be influenced by both internal and external stimuli.

*Classroom management* – The strategies and/or techniques used to maintain an effective learning environment.

*Discipline* – The practice of using punishment to deter students from inappropriate behavior as set forth by the classroom rules.

*Mental Set* – also referred to as “withitness” – An awareness of one’s surroundings specifically the actions of students within a teacher’s classroom.

*Mentor* – also referred to a master teacher or veteran teacher – A teacher that has undergone formal training to assist in the growth and development of a beginning teacher with the ultimate goal of higher student achievement.

*Pre-service programs/training* – Any program designed to train teachers for their career in the classroom.

*Procedures* – Expectations regarding behavior that are designed to instruct students in specific situations. For example how to submit work.

*Rules* – Expectations regarding behavior that are generalized. For example: respect others.

*Self-Efficacy* – An individual’s belief in their ability to accomplish a task or achieve an outcome.

*Social Cognitive Theory* - Bandura's theory that bridges historical behaviorist views and cognitive theories of learning. It posits that people learn from one another, via observation, imitation, and modeling (Bandura, 1971).

*Student achievement* – Student success with learning and understanding a set of learning goals or objectives as measured by formal and informal assessments

*Student engagement* – The degree of attention, interest, and/or participation that students exhibit when they are learning or being taught.

## CHAPTER 2

### A BRIEF HISTORY OF CLASSROOM MANAGEMENT

#### **Introduction**

“Few people are drawn to teaching because it offers the opportunity to manage a classroom, but a great many people leave teaching because they can’t or don’t manage classrooms well” (Boreen, Johnson, Niday & Potts, 2000, p. 59). It is well known that beginning teachers, whether coming from traditional educational programs or being certified through alternative programs, have areas of great difficulty; one specifically discussed in a number of research articles is classroom management. Poor classroom management often leads to subsequent issues in regards to student achievement. It is also well documented that classroom management is one of the most referenced areas when pre-service teachers describe their lack of experience. “Classroom management difficulties can prompt new teachers to jettison many of the research-based instructional practices they learned in college (such as cooperative learning and project-based learning) in favor of a steady diet of lectures and textbooks” (Goodwin, 2012, p. 84). In addition, the frustration can cause teachers to steer away from their original behavior management plan into a “ship them out” mode where students are sent to the office with referrals on a weekly or even daily basis. Additionally, first year teachers may not have been well prepared for dealing with issues of social justice. In one study, student teaching was identified as one of the most valuable parts of teacher training; however, it was also identified as part of the reason

why new teachers struggled to meet the needs of diverse populations. “Their student teaching assignments in predominantly white suburban neighborhoods ...had left them unprepared for the population of students they faced in their first jobs” (Desimone et al., 2013, p. 63).

Chapter two will briefly explain the problem of practice and purpose of the current action research. A review of the literature will follow that begins with a historical explanation of classroom management theory. Theoretical aspects of classroom management and teacher characteristics follow. The chapter concludes reviewing some ways in which schools can assist new teachers with their classroom management.

### **Purpose Statement**

As Goodwin explains, first-year teachers often have lower student achievement, feelings of being overwhelmed and ineffective. These issues ultimately are a significant factor in teachers leaving the profession. According to Goodwin, fifteen percent of first year teachers leave the profession and another fourteen percent change schools after their first year as a result of these negative outcomes (Goodwin, 2012).

There is a direct correlation between classroom management and student achievement. Research has shown this many times over. Robert Marzano, one of the leading researchers in management and curriculum stated that in his collection of data, that a “teachers’ actions within the classroom have twice the impact on student achievement as do school policies regarding curriculum, assessment, staff collegiality, and community involvement” (Marzano & Marzano, 2003, p. 6). Therefore, it is

imperative to understand the definition of classroom management and the theories supporting strategies used.

The primary purpose of the present action research study is to determine how implementation of the classroom management model Capturing Kid's Hearts, will impact four first-year teachers' perception of classroom management strategies after experiencing the CKH's training at Brooke High School (BHS). The secondary purpose is to enable the new-teacher participants to implement innovative ways to manage their classrooms within the policy guidelines of BHS. The tertiary purpose is to enable administrators at BHS to improve existing classroom management policies so that they are more conducive to the needs of the new teachers.

### **Problem Statement**

The identified problem of practice for the Dissertation in Practice (DiP) involves first-year classroom teachers and classroom management. Classroom management strategies taught in pre-service programs are important, but not always applicable. Student teachers are often thrown into their first teaching position without ever experiencing the implementation of their own behavior management philosophy and plan. They quite possibly lack an extensive knowledge of subtle classroom strategies to keep students engaged and may be unable to maintain a classroom environment that is safe and conducive to learning. CKH's provides teachers with practical application strategies to maintain management through engagement, communication, empowerment, and relationships. It seems natural that action research be employed for this study since the most important outcome is to implement the proposed strategy to help solve this



problem of classroom management for beginning teachers at a large suburban high school.

### **Importance of a Literature Review**

To understand the history of classroom management and develop possible research methodologies, a review of books and articles related to classroom management was performed. As Webster and Watson have stated, “an effective review creates a firm foundation for advancing knowledge. It facilitates theory development, closes areas where a plethora of research exists, and uncovers areas where research is needed” (Webster & Watson, 2002, p. xiii).

Classroom management is an area of education that has been contemplated since the inception of public education. Understanding the historical contexts as well as the related research already performed provides the background information needed to conduct this action research project. Undertaking studies on classroom management is a daunting task. There is no simple answer to the questions of how to improve one’s management skills since the topic is not a single faceted process but a complex, intertwined set of skills and behaviors that ultimately affect discipline and student achievement. It is not possible to design an experiment that is all encompassing of every aspect of classroom management. Therefore, it is necessary to focus on one or two of the variables involved to develop an appropriate methodology. The review of literature allows a researcher to narrow the scope of the research.

### **Historical Context**

Historically, there are multiple aspects of classroom management that can be researched. Public schools in America were originally established to stabilize a newly

established government (after the Revolution), to teach citizens about the process of government and to teach allegiance to the country. Classroom management and discipline practices followed suit with the culture of the time. These procedures typically included paddling, loud voices, and intimidation. Teacher training in the area centered on discipline and how to react to a disruption (Jones, n.d). As more and more changes occurred in government and with the economy, the purpose of the the public school evolved. By the early 1900's, schools were used to prepare students for a life of work in a factory. Behavior management focused on strict routines such as walking in lines and following explicit directions (Jones, n.d).

In the 1960's, and early 70's, theorists developed different views of classroom management based more on principles of democracy. Educational psychologists helped to shift philosophies of management toward a student's personal growth and toward the teacher attempting to understand the student's problems. There was essentially a shift from discipline to more of a counseling or behaviorist approach; teachers were taught in pre-service programs techniques geared toward behavior modification. Positive reinforcement was the "buzz" and teachers ignored a good deal of the negative behavior. When inappropriate behavior was addressed, it was with a "time-out". According to Jones, the most recent strategies in the area of classroom management and discipline are described as teacher effectiveness. This theory focuses attention, not on the student, but on the teacher. Specifically, what can the teacher do to proactively prevent classroom disruption rather than react to it when it occurs. It involves looking at the teacher-student relationships, the teacher's competence in organizing and managing activities in the classroom, and the teacher's instructional skills (Jones, n.d).

Albert Bandura, a renowned researcher in the area of psychology and education, began work on what is now known as the Social Cognitive Theory (SCT). Historical explanations for behavior relied on a person's internal factors such as their drives, needs and subconscious impulses and rarely took into account external determinants. These theories could not explain differences noticed in an individual's behavior when exposed to varied environments. Therefore, a shift in focus from internal forces to an examination of external environment and influences on responsiveness ensued. "Human behavior was extensively analyzed in terms of the stimulus events that evoke it and the reinforcing consequences that alter it" (Bandura, 1971, p. 2). Thus, extreme behaviorism theories were developed. The SCT resides somewhere between these historical extremes and also accounts for an individual's cognitive capacity which allows one to not only be affected by experiences but to also decide on the responses and the actions that he takes. Another tenet of SCT is that the majority of behavior is learned through observation of modeling than through the process of rewards and punishments. Observational learning provides for an individual's ability to learn by observing the outcome of another. This is not to say that everything observed will be learned, but the observations that are noticed or attention-focusing, will be retained by the observer. When an observer also focuses on the reinforcement of an observed or modeled behavior, then they will be more likely to demonstrate the same behavior (if the reinforcement was positive) in the future (Bandura, 1971). Bandura (2005) further explains that people are agents of their own lives; they self-organize, are proactive, self-regulate, and self-reflect so that they are contributors to their life circumstances, not merely products of their life circumstance. He contends that SCT "rejects a dualism between personal agency and a social structure disembodied from

human activity” (p. 10). Therefore SCT suggests that an individual’s agency results in future behavior and is a “function of three interrelated forces: environmental influences, our behavior, and internal personal factors such as cognitive, affective, and biological processes” (Henson, 2001, p. 5).

## **Theoretical Base**

### **Teacher characteristics and behaviors**

In a paper published by Jere Brophy (1982) and in a meta-analysis by Robert Marzano et al (2003), several overarching themes relating to classroom management emerged. Prior to much of the information presented by these researchers, teachers depended on psychological theories that were developed outside of the classroom or on suggestions from colleagues retrieved from their proverbial “bag of tricks”. As Brophy reports, these tactics were often inappropriate, impractical and/or unsystematic and left teachers with the impression that effective classroom management was an art rather than a skill that could be learned and developed.

The themes revealed by Brophy (1982) describe certain attributes held by effective classroom managers, the first being that much time was spent planning before the arrival of the students. This was corroborated by Sanford, Emmer and Clements (1983) who stated that “at the beginning of the school year, effective teachers showed evidence of careful planning and detailed thinking about procedures and student behavior in their classrooms” (p. 56). Marzano, Marzano and Pickering (2003) stated that “virtually all research points to the beginning of the school year as the linchpin for effective classroom management” (p. 94). Effective classroom managers also displayed “withitness”; a term that refers to a teacher’s ability to continuously monitor the class and

be aware of what is going on at all times (Sanford et al., 1983). This attribute allowed the teacher to stop small problems before they escalated into much larger ones. Being proactive in this respect allows teachers to spend very little instructional time on reacting to behavior problems and more time on engaging lessons. Marzano et al (2003) refers to this attribute as the “mental set”. His meta-analysis revealed that withitness or mental set had the largest effect size of any of the variables when analyzing effective classroom managers. Teachers should approach the classroom with a specific frame of mind that includes being aware of the surroundings and reacting to them immediately as well as forecasting possible problems and heading them off. Along with withitness, teachers must have emotional objectivity; separating oneself emotionally from events that are taking place. This is accomplished by not personalizing a student’s misbehavior, monitoring one’s own personal attitudes toward specific students, avoiding displays of anger and frustration, and taking care of one’s own emotional health. He further maintains that this quality can be enhanced by observing master teachers (Marzano et al., 2003).

Withitness can be likened to self-efficacy. According to Tschannen-Moran, Hoy and Hoy (1998) early studies of teacher self-efficacy came from Rotter’s social learning theory and studies conducted by the RAND organization. This research focused on whether or not a teacher believed that they could influence a student’s learning outcome regardless of their home environment. The research characterized into two groups: those who felt that the environment had a greater influence resulting in the teacher having no control of student performance and those who had confidence in their ability to teach any student even those who were difficult or unmotivated. The RAND research piqued much interest in the study of teacher self-efficacy. Another branch of research grew from

Bandura's SCT who defined self-efficacy as "beliefs in one's capabilities to organize and execute the courses of action required to produce given attainments" (Tschannen-Moran, et al., 1998, p. 207). Self-efficacy is a complex construct that is difficult to measure and can be influenced by a number of variables that may include leadership of the school, sense of school community, the subject matter, the particular group of students, and the teacher's ability to participate in decision making. Taking all of this into consideration, a teacher's sense of self-efficacy makes a resounding difference in student outcomes and achievement (Tschannen-Moran et al., 1998).

Disciplinary interventions were found to be of significance in Marzano's et al (2003). research as well. One documented estimate stated that one half of classroom time was used for instruction while the majority of the other half was occupied by disciplinary problems. The researchers described five types of disciplinary interventions that proved useful: teacher reaction interventions, tangible recognition, direct cost, group contingency, and home contingency. Teacher reaction interventions include eye contact, physical signals such as a head nod or finger point, stating desired appropriate behavior, or cueing. Tangible recognition uses some concrete symbol of appropriate behavior. Negative consequences such as isolation or overcorrection were the third intervention described. Group contingency involves rewarding a small group or the whole class for appropriate behavior. Lastly, home contingency implies that the teacher have open communication with parents, notifying them of both positive and negative behaviors (Marzano et al., 2003).

Further research maintained that continuity in the classroom was another characteristic of good classroom managers. Transitions between activities were short and

efficient. These teachers had minimal interruptions because they controlled behavior through the use of proximity, eye contact, deliberate and direct questioning of students who appear inattentive or by cueing with brief comments. Brophy (1982) also described a teacher's intuitiveness when it came to grouping and lesson planning. Lessons were briskly paced and focused attention by diversifying independent work and deliberate group placement (Brophy, 1982). High levels of student involvement, otherwise referred to as engagement, played a major role in behavior management. According to Brophy (1982), based on these findings, it was apparent that "good classroom management implies good instruction, and vice versa" (p. 2). These two areas of education (management and instruction) are typically viewed as distinct concepts, but in real practice, classroom management and instruction are interdependent. Student achievement is increased when a teacher is skilled in both.

Developing appropriate rules and procedures emerged as an important aspect of effective classroom management. Marzano et al (2003) found that the number of disruptions in classes where rules and procedures were effectively established were 28 percentile points lower than the number of disruptions in classes where this was not the case. These results held true across all grade levels. Rules and procedures should not however be simply imposed but should be created with input from students and explained.

Teacher-student relationships also had a very high effect size in the aforementioned research. Eighty-four percent of high school students responding to a survey stated that disciplinary problems could have been avoided by better relationships with their teachers. When developing relationships with students, teachers should

establish dominance and cooperation. Dominance does not imply that the teacher is overwhelmingly the dictator of the classroom, but rather demonstrates constructive assertiveness. The teacher is clear about expectations and learning goals. Cooperation refers to a teacher taking personal interest in his/her students and allowing them to have input in creating rules, expectations, and learning goals. Teachers can demonstrate cooperation by being aware of important events such as sporting events, awards/recognitions, or other major life happenings and having informal conversations with students about them. Greeting students at the door and speaking to them in the hallways were also identified as helpful strategies when developing relationships with students (Marzano et al., 2003).

Carolyn M. Evertson (1985) conducted a descriptive experiment involving 102 teachers from six Arkansas school districts spanning grades 1-12. Teachers in that state had already undergone state-wide training through the state's Program for Effective Teaching (PET). The teachers were blocked into matched pairs according to experience and grade level, then randomly assigned to either the experimental or control group. The experimental group received additional training in the area of classroom management during the summer before implementation. The control group did not receive the additional training. The purpose of this experiment was to determine if training in classroom management strategies/techniques would provide teachers with additional skills in managing the classroom. The workshops during the summer provided training in three key activities: planning before school begins, presenting information about rules, procedures and expectations, and maintaining the learning environment after the first weeks of school have gone by. To collect data, administrators were trained in specific



observation techniques and at the end of the training had reached 80-90% agreement in the use of the observation/data collection instruments. The items included narrative records collecting qualitative data about classroom activities and behaviors of both teachers and students, student engagement ratings, classroom management ratings and summary ratings of each teacher observed. After analyzing the data, Evertson found that eight of the eleven ratings were significant in favor of the experimental group demonstrating that teacher training in the area of classroom management could affect the skills of the teacher (Evertson, 1985). The focus of the workshops in this experiment corroborates information presented by Brophy.

Another important aspect of effective classroom management involves the physical environment of the classroom. Teachers need to plan the layout of the room to meet the needs of the course. Traditional classrooms typically have student desks aligned in rows. This arrangement does not allow for easy collaboration between students nor does it provide the best seating for engaging activities. Brophy found that teachers highlighted in his research had rooms arranged into distinct areas designated for specific activities. Furniture and other classroom accessories in the various areas were also specific to the activities taking place. Any items needing to be stored were easily accessed and routines were established not only to retrieve the items but also to replace them when done (Brophy, 1982). Classroom arrangement was also reflected in the work of Marzano. He suggested to arrange/decorate the room with the following ideas in mind: 1) make sure that all students can be easily seen, 2) make sure that all students can easily see all presentations/demonstrations, 3) frequently used material should be easily accessible, 4) pathways through the room should allow for smooth traffic flow, 5) the

arrangement should facilitate collaboration, and 6) avoid unnecessary distractions (Marzano, Marzano, & Pickering, 2003).

Ultimately, it was found that there was not a great difference between good classroom managers and poor classroom managers when analyzing how they reacted to inappropriate behavior. The differences were found in the amount of planning and organization done prior to the lessons. Effective classroom managers systematically minimized disruptive behavior by using their skills and “withitness” to stop them before they started.

### **Pre-service training**

The National Council on Teacher Quality published research by Greenberg, Putman and Walsh (2014). The purpose was to look at traditional teacher preparation programs and determine the extent to which teacher candidates had the opportunity to practice the classroom management skills which were taught. The team identified the five most important strategies on which to train new teachers: rules, routines, praise, misbehavior (consistently imposing consequences), and engagement. What was found was that most teacher education programs taught classroom management but it was disconnected from practice and often scattered throughout the curriculum. The management strategies that were taught were not usually research based. “Half of all programs ask candidates to develop their own ‘personal philosophy of classroom management,’ as if this were a matter of personal preference” (Greenberg, et al., 2014, p. ii). This practice has been defended by leaders in the teacher education field who argue that the teacher candidate should learn to “manage many kinds of learning and teaching,

through effective means of organizing and presenting information, managing discussions, organizing cooperative learning strategies, and supporting individual and group inquiry” (Greenbert, et. al., 2014, p. iii). However, the authors of the study maintain that there are research based strategies that if taught and practiced could help decrease the learning curve that new teachers typically experience.

Because the purpose of education and thus classroom management has become much more complex over the decades, implementation and training in this area for teachers has also become much more complex. Teacher training institutions struggle to develop instructional programs that give pre-service teachers the skills required to handle real-world behavior problems. Mentor programs established by school districts must be implemented with focus on mentor-mentee relationships. Attention must also be given to novice teacher placement during scheduling as well as where they are placed physically in the building.

### **Assistance from schools**

A prime source of information is the text *Mentoring Beginning Teachers: Guiding, Reflecting, Coaching* by Boreen, et al (2000). The authors discuss the benefits of a mentoring program. In a survey of first year teachers, it was found that of the factors that were helpful in their development, support in instructional strategies, obtaining resources and support in classroom management were among the most relevant.

*What New Teachers Need to Learn* is an article written by Feiman-Nemser (2003) that presents information regarding effective mentoring programs. The author reminds us that new teachers have never experienced teaching on their own and come to the career with a learning agenda of their own. They will have questions about management,

curriculum and instruction, assessment, school culture and the general community. New teachers are not “finished products”, but rather novices to the practice of teaching requiring a period of learning. The author gives examples of effective mentoring programs that include not just one mentor, but teams of teachers who all take responsibility for assisting the new teacher and creating an environment of collaboration. New teacher learning should be the goal of an effective mentoring program and should become an educational intervention that addresses the new teacher’s learning needs while helping them develop a sound repertoire of teaching strategies (Feiman-Nemser, 2003).

Capturing Kids’ Hearts is one model developed by the Flippen Group which is based on Bandura’s SCT. The program is delivered through a multi-day teacher workshop. The model is designed to strengthen each students’ “connectedness” to school by building strong bonds with teachers, developing social contracts for student behavior expectations, and targeting inappropriate behaviors with a consistent modeling plan. According to the National Longitudinal Study on Adolescent Health, student connectedness assists in reducing negative behaviors (“Flippen Research”, 2016).

In light of the research, there are many different aspects of new teacher classroom management that could be studied. This action research study will focus on implementing the CKH model that will help improve the classroom management skills of new teachers, with the ultimate goal being higher student achievement by students in those classes.

## CHAPTER 3

### METHODOLOGY

#### **Introduction**

Classroom management can be defined as the” level of organization and order necessary for both students and teachers to accomplish their learning and instructional goals” (Boreen et al., 2000, p. 55). There are a number of factors that compound classroom management problems. Typically, schools do not have the necessary budget to facilitate small class sizes. Teachers in general, not to mention, novice teachers, can have anywhere between twenty-five and forty students in a classroom. The lack of adequate space and the difficulty of managing the sheer number of students creates issues for the teacher when developing lessons that motivate and engage all students. The inclusion of students with special needs inflates the management problem. Although many special needs students are no more problematic than their peers, there are occasions when these students are unprepared to be mainstreamed into a general education classroom. The teacher may have little support from resource teachers or administration (Boreen et al., 2000). In addition to having large numbers and students with disabilities, new teachers, although ill-advised, are often assigned classes that veteran teachers do not wish to have. These classes are filled with students having known discipline issues (Dyal & Sewell, 2002).

Students come into classrooms with their own personal baggage. Teachers are therefore faced with unmotivated or angry students who are “impervious to their [teachers] planning and good intentions” (Boreen et al., 2000, p. 57). Personal problems, negative experiences with other teachers or subjects, or feelings that public school does not have a real purpose pervade their lives and decisions when related to school. Students are also at a point in their lives where their emotions are volatile, and any small disruption can cause chaos in their narrow perspective. Although such behavior is a normal part of growth, it can be a great distraction and cause as much disruption in the classroom as other problems (Boreen et al., 2000).

Teachers can create classroom management problems of their own. Poor or little preparation is one issue that can develop into problems for the teacher. Developing lessons that engage all students is a time consuming task but an essential one to maintain appropriate behavior. Less experienced teachers may also develop lessons are teacher centered and focus on lecture. Plans of this nature neglect the role of the student as an active participant in learning (Boreen et al., 2000).

In 2004, a Public Agenda survey found that eighty-five percent of teachers believed “new teachers are particularly unprepared for dealing with behavior problems in their classrooms” (Goodwin, 2012, p. 84). Why are new teachers unprepared for the obstacles encountered in the classroom? Researchers cite various reasons. Pre-service programs seem to be a recurring factor. There often seems to be some discrepancy between what university professors teach and the actual experiences in the classroom. A survey with open-ended questions revealed a student-teacher response stating that “strategies learned in classes consisted primarily of theories that fail to work in the real

classroom” (Monroe, Blackwell, & Pepper, 2010, para. 6). Classroom management is often taught as part of a unit of a class, rather than a stand-alone unit or class of its own. With this being said, not enough time is devoted to the topic. When future teachers reach the point of student-teaching, they often do not get the opportunity to employ their own plans of classroom management. Cooperating teachers have typically structured the classroom based on their own plans and do not wish to change strategies mid-year. These factors limit classroom management experience, learning, and growth (Monroe, Blackwell, & Pepper, 2010). One pre-service teacher stated that a “bigger bag of classroom management tricks” (Goodwin, 2012, p. 84) would be beneficial. Another, involved in a case study, stated that having a “disruptive student in my classroom is having a significant impact on my interaction with the remainder of the class...As a first-year teacher, I don’t have the professional skills to deal with this extreme behavior” (Goodwin, 2012, p. 84).

### **Purpose Statement**

As stated in chapter one, the primary purpose of the present action research study is to determine how implementation of the classroom management model Capturing Kid’s Hearts, will impact four first-year teachers perception of classroom management strategies after experiencing the CKH’s training at Brooke High School (BHS). The secondary purpose is to enable the new-teacher participants to implement innovative ways to manage their classrooms within the policy guidelines of BHS. The tertiary purpose is to enable administrators at BHS to improve existing classroom management policies so that they are more conducive to the needs of the new teachers.

## **Problem Statement**

There is typically a learning curve for first year teachers in regards to classroom management. In our school, this has been evident and has created issues for not only the teacher, but the students and the administration as well. The teacher becomes frustrated and is unable to teach the content for which he/she is going to be held accountable due to the many distractions within the classroom. The administrators question whether or not this teacher is actually a good fit for their school. But the students are the main victims in this scenario. Students may not be as successful as their peers in a seasoned teacher's classroom. Given this information, how do we get to the root of the problem? The answer relates to classroom management skills that will allow the teacher to maintain student engagement and address problems in an efficient manner. CKH provides a platform for new teachers to implement practical classroom management strategies.

As mentioned in chapter 1, there are observable problems with classroom management issues for new teachers at Brooke High School. The last two first year teachers employed required administrative assistance in their classrooms because of student behavior. The teachers were unable to control the chaos and more authoritative personnel had to be called. Although such an incidence could happen in any teacher's classroom, the occurrence of the issues in these two teachers was above and beyond what would be considered acceptable. Such disruptions require the administrator to break away from scheduled meetings or activities to take care of a problem that probably could have been diffused if managed in a more efficient way. Not only is there a loss of time for administration, but also for student learning. As major disruptions occur, instructional time is lost. This has a negative effect not only on the student creating the disruption, but



the rest of the class as well. In one study, it was reported that secondary school teachers felt that this problem had at least a medium if not a high impact on learning. Parents in the survey agreed and reported that their children were being adversely affected by the behavior of others. Inconsistent application of school rules was cited as one of the main sources of the problem. Administrators found that "...disruption in class was preventing too many teachers from doing their jobs and depriving too many young people of the education they deserved." ("Poor behaviour," 2014, p. 25)

In addition to the problems observed at Brooke High School specifically mentioned in Chapter 1, behavior management problems generally are growing for all teachers. According to research, between 12 and 22% of students are diagnosed with a mental, mental and emotional, or behavioral disorder. Others have issues that are either social or family related that cause a challenge of authority of the school and teachers as well as other students. Experienced teachers feel challenged with these students, much less a teacher with very little experience. Teachers may find it easier to address such issues with stronger and harsher discipline practices rather than finding positive, engaging strategies. This phenomenon has made classroom management a greater problem (Fisher, 2012).

Guiding questions in the present study included 1) What is the impact of Capturing Kids Hearts on first-year teachers' perceptions of classroom management strategies? And 2) How can participant feedback after CKH training be used to improve current classroom management policy at BHS?

## Population

The population of this study was the new teachers to BHS who attended the CKH staff development prior to the beginning of the 2016-17 school year. BHS is one of five high schools in a central South Carolina school district with a faculty consisting of 115 teachers. Four of the teachers were first-year teachers and each was asked to participate in the study. Participation was voluntary and all four agreed.

Table 3.1

### *Demographic Characteristics of Teachers Participating in the Study*

	Hispanic	White
Male	0	3
Female	1	0

*Note:* N=4

Table 4.1 illustrates the demographic data for the teacher participants in the study. Due to the limited number of new teachers at BHS, the sample was a convenience sample. There is little teacher turn over from year to year, therefore, all new teachers were included to maximize the number for the study. The participants each completed an accredited four year teacher preparation program and passed all necessary exams for teacher licensing. The age range for participants was 22-25 years of age. In regards to ethical considerations for the participants, names were omitted and the teachers were coded as Teacher A, Teacher B, Teacher C, and Teacher D. Each completed the pre-survey during the summer prior to CKH training. The post-survey was completed after the three day workshop.

Table 3.2

*Subject Areas Taught by Study Participants*

	Subject Taught	Gender
Teacher A	World Language	Male
Teacher B	Math	Female
Teacher C	Social Studies	Male
Teacher D	Physical Education	Male

Table 3.2 illustrates the subjects taught by each participant.

### **Research Design**

The treatment utilized in the study to address the problem of practice for BHS was Capturing Kids' Hearts (CKH). CKH is a classroom management model developed by the Flippen group and is grounded in the research of Albert Bandura's Social Cognitive Theory. Teachers participate in a three-day workshop that models implementation of CKH strategies. After completing the workshop, teachers should be able to improve classroom management through proper engagement and conduct, positive thinking and affirmation, and relational conflict resolution skills ("Research", 2016). The workshop was conducted on campus at BHS.

The present action research study utilized a quantitative approach one-group pretest-posttest design. Survey research methodology was used for collecting data. Since perception data is the focus of the study, surveys are an appropriate measure for this unobservable information. Identical surveys were administered to each participant. The

survey (Appendix A) contained Likert scale items. Twenty-one statements were presented and participants were asked to indicate their level of agreement from strongly agree to strongly disagree. No neutral choice was given to force participants to respond either positively or negatively. There was also an open-ended comment section to allow participants to communicate any other information deemed relevant to the study. The survey was compiled based on the five tenets of the CKH staff development program and was designed to gather data regarding the research variable, teachers' perceptions of classroom management as it pertains to the study's problem of practice. Surveys were completed on campus at BHS and submitted directly to the researcher.

### **Action Research**

Action research was an appropriate choice for this study. One definition of action research states that it is an attempt to “study a real school situation with a view to improve the quality of actions and results within it” (Mertler, 2014, p. 13). Since the research was conducted at my school, it fits the mold for true action research. Action research involves a cyclical research process of planning, acting, developing and reflecting. One author states that “Of all the research designs, action research is the most applied, practical design. Action researchers explore a practical problem with an aim toward developing a solution to a problem.” (Creswell, 2008, p. 596). The process of action research gives educators the opportunity to reflect on their own practices within the scope of the school environment. Since the research is conducted based on an issue observed in the school, the findings are applicable and improvements can be made immediately. The process utilized is not static but dynamic giving the researcher the flexibility to move back and forth between reflection, data collection and implementation.

In the school setting, action research is practical because it allows the researcher to report findings to peers and other educators immediately (Creswell, 2008).

The final phase of action research requires the researcher to develop an action plan. The action plan describes how the findings of the research will be implemented and monitored. Sharing results and reflecting on the process allows participants to get feedback from peers and help determine what improvements could be made for following cycles to make the strategy more effective (Mertler, 2014). For the purposes of this study, data was used by administrators in conjunction with participants to improve current classroom management policy and to plan for future CKH workshops at BHS.

### **Limitations**

A limitation of the research is the number of new teacher participants in the research. Since there were a limited number of new teachers, the data is also limited. Additionally, the survey instrument was developed to address BHS's problem of practice and may need modifications to be used in other research.

Since the survey was developed for BHS's specific problem of practice, it had not been formally evaluated for validity or reliability, but merely served to provide feedback to the school administration and participants. Therefore, some of the items on the measurement tool may have been confusing or used terminology that was not understood clearly by the respondent.

## CHAPTER 4

### FINDINGS AND INTERPRETATION OF RESULTS

#### **Introduction**

Capturing Kids' Hearts, a classroom management model, is based on the premise that to capture the mind of a student, a teacher must first capture their heart. To implement the program, faculty must attend a three day staff development. This study was conducted to determine how the aforementioned could change the teachers' perceptions of classroom management. Data for the present action research was collected to answer several research questions: 1) What is the impact of Capturing Kids' Hearts on first-year teachers' perceptions of classroom management? And 2) How can participant feedback after CKH preparation be used to improve current classroom management policy at BHS? The primary purpose of the present action research study is to determine the impact of Capturing Kids' Hearts (CKH) professional development on four first-year teachers' perceptions of classroom management. The secondary purpose is to enable the new-teacher participants to implement innovative ways to manage their classrooms within the policy guidelines of BHS. The tertiary purpose is to enable administrators at BHS to improve existing classroom management policies so that they are more conducive to the needs of new teachers.

To answer the research questions, data from surveys (included in Appendix A) was analyzed on an individual teacher basis. Given that there were a limited number of participants in the study and that there was no comparison group, typical descriptive statistical analyses such as means, standard deviation, and percentages were not appropriate. Therefore, the results focused more on individual changes in the teacher's perceptions based on assigned categories addressed by each statement.

### **Participants**

The participants for this study included four first-year teachers. Each of the participants completed a traditional, four-year, pre-service program and had completed all requirements to hold a South Carolina teaching credential. Teacher A was a white, male, World Language teacher. Teacher B was a Hispanic, female, math teacher. Teacher C was a white, male, social studies teacher. Teacher D was a white, male, physical education teacher. The age range of the teachers was from 22 to 25 years of age. None of the participants have held full-time employment in any other profession.

The survey was administered to each participant on campus at BHS. The pre-survey was given the week prior to CKH training. Participants were already planning to voluntarily report to the school to prepare their classrooms and begin working on plans for the start of school. Each agreed to complete the survey at their convenience during this time. It was submitted to the researcher once complete. After each collection of a survey it was coded with the teacher's label (Teacher A, etc.)

The post-survey was administered during a teacher workday after CKH training but prior to students returning to school. The paper survey was given to each participant

to complete at their convenience and return to the researcher. Again, the survey was coded with the teacher's label.

### **Findings of the Study**

Statements on the survey were categorized. The categories established were determined after analyzing data and noticing themes that seemed to arise. Initially while looking at the patterns of data, four categories were proposed. However, after careful analysis, two general themes seemed to develop within the questions. These themes related to

1. Pre-service training and strategies learned during that experience, and
2. Relationships and communication within the classroom, especially between the teacher and the student.

Items 1, 2, 3, 4, 8, 13, 16, 18, 19, and 20 dealt with the teacher's perceptions of their training experiences and strategies. Statements 5, 6, 7, 9, 10, 11, 12, 14, 15, 17 and 21 addressed beliefs about communication and relationships in the classroom.

**Teacher's perceptions of pre-service training/strategies.** Often, student teachers who become first year teachers may have learned some best practices in their coursework, but were denied the opportunity to master them during their student teaching experience. Hildenbrand and Arndt (2016) found the following:

Although successfully managing a classroom based on positive strategies is essential for pupil engagement and achievement, novice teachers,



including student teachers, declare it as one of their most common concerns (p. 148).

In Fisher's (2012) research, a study was conducted to determine five student teacher's classroom styles at a regional high school. Data demonstrated that the student teachers "showed a lack of knowledge ... which developed into an unhealthy learning environment causing stress for teachers and students" (p. 13).

Based on research such as this, the inclusion of survey items and categorization into a theme based on pre-service training perceptions is validated.

Table 4.1

*Items categorized as Teachers' Perceptions of Training Experiences and Strategies*

Item Number	Statement
1	I have high self-efficacy in regards to my ability to deal with classroom management issues.
2	I worry about how to deal with students whose personalities do not match my own.
3	I have received practical training in classroom management strategies.
4	The variety of strategies learned in pre-service environments is sufficient to handle any classroom management issue.
8	Student engagement is essential to maintaining classroom management.
13	Classroom norms should remain the same for every class.
16	It is important to have knowledge about the formation of student groups.
18	Social Contracts are a vital part of classroom management
19	Established classroom rules and consequences are more important than social contracts.
20	The end of the class is just as important as the beginning.

Table 4.1 lists the specific items for this category. Item 1 asked each participant to evaluate their perception of their own self-efficacy regarding their ability to handle classroom management issues. A new teacher's self-efficacy would be based on the confidence they had resulting from their pre-service coursework since none of them had actual teaching experience. Item 2 assessed the new teacher's anxiety over personality differences in the classroom. Again, the result of this question would be based on their pre-service experience. Item 3 asked about the new teacher's perception of their practical experience as it relates to classroom management. Item 4 dealt with the new teacher's perception of the variety of strategies learned. Item 8 was included to determine whether the participants felt that engaging students would influence behavior in the classroom. In item 13, teachers were asked about classroom norms. This statement was posed to determine whether the teacher felt that norms should be consistent or individualized to accommodate diversity within each class. Experience with student grouping techniques was addressed by item 16. Item 18 asked participants to decide whether or not social contracts were an important part of classroom management. Statement 19 questioned whether the teacher felt that classroom rules and consequences were more important than social contracts. Item 20 addressed the participant's views regarding the conclusion of class versus the beginning.

Table 4.2

*Participant Responses To Items Regarding Training and Strategies*

	Teacher A		Teacher B		Teacher C		Teacher D	
	Pre	Post	Pre	Post	Pre	Post	Pre	Post
Q1	3	3	4	3	3	4	3	4
Q2	2	2	4	2	3	2	4	1
Q3	1	3	2	3	2	4	3	4
Q4	1	2	1	3	2	2	2	3
Q8	4	4	4	4	4	2	4	4
Q13	4	2	3	4	3	3	3	2
Q16	4	4	4	4	2	3	2	3
Q18	2	4	3	2	2	4	2	3
Q19	3	4	3	3	3	2	3	3
Q20	4	4	3	3	3	3	3	4

*Note:* 1, 2, 3, and 4 were responses in a Likert-type scale. 1=Strongly Disagree, 2=Disagree, 3= Agree and 4=Strongly Agree.

Table 4.2 summarizes the pre- and post- survey responses for each of the four teachers. One of the four participant's self-efficacy was not changed after participating in the CKH professional development. This teacher's self-efficacy was high prior to the workshop and remained the same after the workshop. Two of the teachers had an increase in their self-efficacy, while one teacher's self-efficacy decreased. In regards to the teacher's anxiety of working with students who may have personality differences, three of the teachers worried less after the workshop. After the workshop, each of the participants responses to item 3 become more positive, indicating a feeling of having

more practical training in the area of classroom management. This indication was mirrored in item 4 by three of the participants who responded more positively in the post-survey when asked about learning a variety of strategies with which to manage a classroom. Student engagement, addressed by item 8, was a very important concept for each of the four participants prior to the CKH workshop, and remained that way for three of them after the workshop. One respondent felt that student engagement was less important after participating in the professional development. Prior to the workshop, each participant felt that there should be consistency with norms across all classes as evidenced by the responses to item 13. However, after CKH, two of the respondents disagreed with the notion that norms should be the same for all classes. Based on item 16, two of the four participants felt strongly that they had adequate knowledge about forming student groups prior to CKH while two felt that their knowledge of grouping was better after CKH. Three teachers, prior to CKH, did not see usefulness in social contracts, but all three changed their perception after the workshop. All of the participants felt that rules and consequences, established by the teacher, were more important than social contracts before attending CKH. After CKH, one teacher's perception of this statement changed. All of the participants felt that the end of the class was as important as the beginning prior to and after CKH professional development.

**Teacher's beliefs about classroom communication and relationships.** This category of items addressed the roles of teachers and students, communication techniques, and the establishment of relationships for classroom management. This is another major premise of CKH - building of community. With this concept comes the ability of the teacher to effectively build modes of communication and establish

relationships with students. The need for good relationships is well documented. Basic educational theory from Maslow teaches that before students can truly learn, they must have certain needs met. Of those on Maslow's Need Hierarchy, safety needs, social needs, and esteem needs comprise a large portion. Safety needs related to this category of the research include protection from danger or threat and avoidance of anxiety. Social needs include affiliation and friendship. Recognition and respect from others are included within the esteem needs (Lunenbug & Ornstein, 2008). Anderson (2016) states that "one of the most critical elements of a positive social learning environment is the establishment of positive relationships" (p. 32). He further discusses the type of environment where students can thrive. It includes being known and connected with teachers and peers, and the ability to trust. Research demonstrates that in this type of learning environment students have increased motivation, physical and psychological health, and achievement. The author recommends that teachers get to know their students and share appropriate personal information with their students.

Rimm-Kaufmann and Sandilos (2016) research supports this concept as well. They surmise that positive student-teacher relationships have long-lasting implications both academically and socially. They found that teachers who have positive relationships with their students reported that the students had fewer absences, appeared more self-directed and tended to be more engaged. With the amount of current research on this topic, exploring relationships as they relate to classroom management is prudent.

Table 4.3

*Items Categorized as Teachers' Perceptions About Classroom Communication and Relationships*

Item Number	Statement
5	It is important to make a good first impression.
6	Good relationships with students include the ability of the teacher to show vulnerability by sharing appropriate information about themselves.
7	Anxiety reduction strategies such as greeting students at the door are beneficial in reducing classroom management issues.
9	It is important for students to be able to share experiences from outside of the classroom.
10	An important part of classroom management is the establishment of relationships.
11	Teachers are resources for their students.
12	Conflict should always be avoided.
14	When dealing with students, body language is a powerful form of communication.
15	There are strengths to be found in student mistakes.
17	Students should play a major role in establishing classroom norms.
21	Students are our customers.

Table 4.3 lists the specific items from the survey instrument that were placed in this category. Each of the items was coded as being related to either communication or relationships, or both.

Table 4.4

*Participants' Responses to Items Regarding Classroom Communication and Relationships*

	Teacher A		Teacher B		Teacher C		Teacher D	
	Pre	Post	Pre	Post	Pre	Post	Pre	Post
Q5	3	4	4	4	3	3	4	4
Q6	1	4	3	4	3	3	4	4
Q7	3	4	3	3	2	3	3	4
Q9	3	4	3	4	3	4	3	4
Q10	3	4	3	4	4	4	3	4
Q11	3	4	4	4	3	3	3	4
Q12	1	2	2	2	3	1	2	1
Q14	4	3	4	4	2	3	3	4
Q15	4	4	4	4	4	4	3	4
Q17	2	4	2	2	2	3	2	4
Q21	3	3	2	1	3	4	3	4

*Note:* 1, 2, 3, and 4 were responses in a Likert-type scale. 1=Strongly Disagree, 2=Disagree, 3= Agree and 4=Strongly Agree.

Table 4.4 illustrates teacher responses to each of the items in this category. Item 5 assessed how teachers felt about making good first impressions on their students. All participants believed in making good first impressions prior to attending CKH. Their perceptions all remained positive after CKH. Statement 6 was “Good relationships with students include the ability of the teacher to show vulnerability by sharing appropriate information about themselves.” Prior to CKH, there was a degree of variability of perceptions. One participant strongly disagreed with this statement. Two agreed while

one strongly agreed. After attending the workshop, three of the four strongly agreed to the statement and one agreed. Statement 7 dealt with using anxiety reduction strategies such as greeting students at the door to reduce tension in the classroom. Three of the participants agreed with this statement while one disagreed before going through the CKH workshop. After the workshop, all participants either agreed or strongly agreed. “It is important for students to be able to share experiences from outside of the classroom” was the statement addressed in item 9 and all new teachers perceived this to be important both before and after attending the CKH workshop. The importance of establishing relationships was the topic of statement 10. Three respondents indicated that they agreed with this concept and one strongly agreed prior to CKH. All participants strongly agreed after experiencing the workshop. All new teachers also felt that they were resources for their students both pre- and post-CKH. This perception was demonstrated by their agree/strongly agree responses to item 11. One of the premises of CKH promotes the utilization of conflict as a learning tool in the classroom and item 12 dealt with this premise. Prior to participating in CKH, one teacher agreed that conflict should always be avoided, two teachers disagreed while one strongly disagreed. After the workshop, two disagreed with the statement, and two strongly disagreed. Statement 14 established body language as a powerful communication tool. Two respondents reported that they strongly agreed with this statement while one agreed and one disagreed for the pre-survey. On the post-survey, two new teachers agreed while two strongly agreed. Statement 15 was “There are strengths to be found in student mistakes.” All new teachers indicated that they either agreed or strongly agreed with this statement. After CKH all participants strongly agreed with the item. Statement 17 provided for the opportunity of students



playing a role in establishing norms within the classroom. This concept requires teachers to relinquish some amount of control but also gives students buy-in to the community of the classroom. Prior to CKH, all of the new teachers disagreed with the statement. However, after CKH, two strongly agreed, one agreed and one demonstrated their continuance of their initial belief by disagreeing with the statement. Finally, statement 21 presented the idea that students are customers. Three of the respondents agreed while one disagreed prior to CKH. After CKH, two strongly agreed, one agreed and one strongly disagreed.

### **Interpretation of Results**

**Teacher A.** For this study, to determine the impact of CKH on new teacher perceptions of classroom management, each teacher was examined individually. Teacher A, a male world language teacher demonstrated confidence in his classroom management skills pertaining to personalities prior to CKH. By the responses to statements 1 and 2, it was illustrated that this new teacher had a fairly high self-efficacy and did not worry about dealing with students who exhibited differences in personality. Teacher A also perceived that student engagement was an important aspect of classroom management prior to and after the workshop. He also had little change in his response to the statement regarding rules being more important than social contracts. This is an interesting finding since one of the major tenets of CKH is the establishment of social contracts. The theory behind this supports the concept of student collaboration during the development of the social contract. SCT would suggest that this would result in more student buy-in and acceptance of consequences. Pre-established rules would not garnish the same amount of buy-in and may create increased behavior issues when the student is presented with

consequences. The measurement tool may have contributed to these unexpected results. Novice teachers may not have had exposure to the terminology (“social contract”) prior to attending CKH. Also, the term “established” may have caused some confusion. Perhaps the teacher felt that this term meant that the rules and consequences were “established” by the student and the teacher collaboratively.

This participant did not seem to perceive that the pre-service training received was adequate. He strongly disagreed with the statements that indicated that the participant had received both practical training and a variety of strategies with which to implement a classroom management plan prior to CKH. A major change in perception occurred with the practical training. After CKH, the participant agreed with item 3, indicating that he felt that CKH provided more practical training. He did feel that he had adequate knowledge of grouping techniques.

There was also change in this teacher’s perceptions of the need for social contracts and whether classroom norms should be individualized to each class. Prior to CKH, this teacher did not perceive social contracts as an important part of classroom management. After CKH, he strongly agreed that social contracts were important. Prior to CKH, he strongly agreed that classroom norms should remain constant between different classes, but after CKH disagreed with this statement. This data also suggests the possibility of misunderstanding item 19.

When looking at the statements regarding this teacher’s perceptions regarding communication and relationships, CKH did not seem to have a great deal of influence on all of the items. There were some items that the teacher agreed with both before and after

the CKH treatment. These statements included believing that first impressions were important, the teacher being a resource for students, that strength could be found in student mistakes, and that students are customers. The teacher also believed that anxiety reduction strategies, students sharing experiences, and establishing relationships within the classroom were important aspects of classroom management. No change in this instance was positive since the teacher already had perceptions that matched the concepts taught in CKH. The statement, “Conflict should always be avoided”, was disputed by teacher A as he responded to the item with strongly disagree prior to CKH and disagree after CKH. This perception also matched premises of CKH.

There were some perception changes in this category by teacher A that were significant. Prior to CKH, teacher A strongly disagreed with the notion of teachers showing vulnerability to their students by sharing appropriate personal information. After CKH however, teacher A strongly agreed with sharing personal information as evidenced by his response to item 6. Also, demonstrated by the responses to item 17, teacher A originally did not believe that students should play a major role in establishing classroom norms. After participating in CKH, the teacher strongly agreed that students should play a major role in this activity.

**Teacher B.** Teacher B, a Hispanic, female, math teacher also had a high self-efficacy before attending the CKH workshop, however, she also worried about working with students with differing personalities as demonstrated by her response to item 2. Regarding student engagement and the end of class being as important as the beginning, teacher B had perceptions that corresponded with CKH premises prior to and after the workshop.

She, like teacher A, did not feel as though her pre-service training equipped her with practical experience, nor a variety of strategies with which to manage the classroom. After CKH, teacher B changed her perception and agreed that she had practical training and learned a variety of strategies. She also felt that her knowledge of groups was adequate before and after CKH.

However, teacher B had some perceptions regarding class norms, rules and consequences and social contracts that were unexpected. Prior to CKH, teacher B believed that each class should have the same norms, social contracts were vital and that rules and consequences were more important than social contracts as demonstrated by the responses to items 13, 18, and 19. After CKH, her beliefs remained constant with the exception of a change in response to statement 18. This statement establishes social contracts as vital to the classroom management process. Teacher B disagreed with this statement after the workshop, which demonstrated that she did not see the importance of creating social contracts.

Teacher B's beliefs about the relationships and communication changed little with implementation of CKH. She held the perception that first impressions are important, that the teacher is a resource, that conflict does not need to be avoided, and that there is strength in student mistakes. She also agreed that teachers should show vulnerability when appropriate, that anxiety reduction strategies were helpful, that students should share their outside experiences in the classroom, that it is important to establish relationships, and that body language is an important part of communication.

Teacher B did not agree that students should play a role in establishing classroom norms prior to or after the professional development. CKH impresses upon teachers the usefulness of including students in this process. However, it did not appear as though teacher B had buy-in to this idea.

In the comments section of the survey, teacher B made some statements that explained the unexpected responses. She stated that

“Classroom management is different for every teacher. We try to standardize it, and we end up not being who we are in my opinion. I believe in school rules and consequences, certainly, but how I talk/associate with a student can/should never be standardized. Communication should be personal, not robotic.”

Teacher B’s comments regarding standardization indicate her desire for autonomy versus a prescribed format for managing the classroom. CKH does teach strategies that utilize a script when responding to off-task student behavior. Rather than issuing consequences for misbehavior immediately, CKH employs scripted questions and statements, which help students understand that they are choosing to continue a behavior and receive consequences based on this choice rather than the teacher choosing to punish. The questions presented by CKH include:

- What are you doing?
- What are you supposed to be doing?
- Were you doing that?
- What are you going to do about it?

If the student responds to the questions appropriately, the teacher should affirm that choice. If not, the teacher is to remind the student that if they continue to choose the inappropriate behavior, then they are also choosing to accept the consequences for it.

Another unexpected response occurred with teacher B. Statement 21 made the determination that students are customers. Teacher B disagreed with this statement prior to CKH and strongly disagreed with the statement after CKH. Her perception greatly differed from the ideas of CKH and the other participants.

**Teacher C.** Teacher C was a white, male social studies teacher. He, like the previous two participants demonstrated self-efficacy prior to CKH and maintained that self-perception after the workshop. Teacher C indicated that he did worry about dealing with different student personalities prior to CKH, but afterwards, demonstrated that such differences were not as worrisome. Teacher C, prior to CKH, indicated that student engagement was important to classroom management. However, after CKH, he indicated that he disagreed with the statement regarding the importance of student engagement. This change in perception was an anomaly compared to the rest of teacher C's responses. This could be attributed to misreading. However, as an administrator at the school, I did not want the participant to feel that participation in the study would cause any conflict with his relationship to me as the assistant principal. Therefore, he was not questioned about the response to this item.

His responses remained constant for statements regarding norms remaining the same for all classes and for the end of the class being as important as the beginning, agreeing with both on the pre- and post-survey. In both surveys, teacher C agreed that

first impressions are important, the teacher is a resource for students, that there is strength in student mistakes, and students are customers. Regarding teacher vulnerability, students sharing experiences, and the importance of establishing relationships, teacher C agreed with these concepts on both the pre- and post-surveys.

Responses to the item dealing with practical experience illustrated a similar perception to teachers A and B. Teacher C did not agree that he had received practical experience. However, after CKH, teacher C strongly agreed that practical experience had been gained. He also did not agree that he received a variety of strategies however, CKH did not seem to change this perception.

There was a change in perception for teacher C regarding rules being more important than social contracts. Prior to CKH, it was indicated that rules were more important. However, after CKH, this was not the case.

In the category addressing communication and relationships, teacher C demonstrated changes in perception on several items. Initially, teacher C did not agree that anxiety reduction strategies were beneficial in reducing classroom management issues. After CKH, teacher C agreed that such strategies were beneficial. Prior to CKH, teacher C did not view body language as a powerful form of communication. After CKH, he did view body language as an important communication form. A third change in perception dealt with students playing a role in establishing classroom norms. Before CKH, teacher C did not agree to the idea of incorporating students into the development of classroom norms. After, teacher C did agree with this idea. There was a change in the teacher's perception about avoiding conflict. Before attending CKH, teacher C felt that

conflict should be avoided. After attendance, teacher C disagreed with the statement that conflict should always be avoided.

**Teacher D.** Teacher D was a white, male, PE teacher. Self-efficacy did not seem to be an issue for him. He indicated that he had a high self-efficacy on both the pre- and post-survey. Similar to other participant responses, teacher D did agree to having worried about different student personalities on the pre-survey, but on the post-survey did not have this worry. In fact, this change was the most significant of his responses being strongly agree on the pre-survey and strongly disagree on the post-survey.

Teacher D, unlike any other participant, indicated that he agreed with the statement “I have received practical training in classroom management strategies” before attending the CKH workshop. His level of agreement did increase to strongly agree after the workshop. Teacher D indicated that prior to CKH, he disagreed with learning a variety of classroom management strategies. His response changed after CKH to agree. Again, unlike any other participant, teacher D did not agree to having adequate knowledge about forming groups in the classroom on the pre-survey. On the post-survey however, he did agree with this item.

Little to no change was seen with teacher D’s responses to items 8, 19, and 20. These statements addressed the belief that student engagement was important, that classroom rules are more important than social contracts, and that the end of class is as important as the beginning respectively. Teacher D agreed with each before and after CKH training. The two items that did indicate change were 13 and 18. Item 13 deals with keeping the same norms for all classes. Teacher D agreed with this statement prior to



attending CKH but disagreed after attending. Item 18 stated that social contracts are vital to classroom management with which teacher D disagreed on the pre-survey. On the post-survey, teacher D changed his perception and agreed with the statement.

Regarding relationships and communication, teacher D agreed on both surveys that first impressions are important, that the teacher is a resource for the students, that there are strengths in student mistakes, and that students are customers. For items 6, 7, 9, 10, and 14, the responses were either agree or strongly agree on the pre-survey and if any change was noted it was only to go from agree to strongly agree on the post-survey.

He disagreed to the statement that conflict should always be avoided on the pre-survey and strongly disagreed to this statement on the post-survey. Change in perception was also noted on item 17, which deals with students playing a role in establishing classroom norms. On the pre-survey, teacher D disagreed with this practice while on the post-survey, he strongly agreed with this practice.

### **Identified Themes/Patterns**

In analyzing the participants individually, several patterns were noticed. First, all participants had no issues with their personal self-efficacy in regards to their ability to implement classroom management. According to Carey and Forsyth, (2016), self-efficacy is an individual's belief in his or her capacity to produce specific performance attainments. However, three of the four participants did worry about dealing with personality differences prior to attending the CKH workshop. After the workshop, none of them indicated the same level of worry. All four seemed to gain knowledge on methods to deal with this issue. The positive responses to item one and negative

responses to items two, three and four seem to indicate discrepancy. As stated previously, this may be due to some issues with the wording of item one on the survey. It seems that if a teacher did not feel that they had received enough classroom management training nor learned adequate strategies to utilize during their pre-service training, then their self-efficacy in this area would not be very high. Perhaps the teacher participants did feel very confident in their content knowledge and this confidence projected when responding to the self-efficacy item on the survey.

Another pattern demonstrated by this group of participants was the agreement that there was a lack of both practical experience and a lack of learning a variety of strategies to deal with classroom management in pre-service programs. This finding is of significant importance to administrators and other faculty who have the task of mentoring and assisting new teachers with classroom management.

Each of the participants, with the exception of teacher B, seemed to understand how social contracts could provide beneficial classroom management assistance after attending CKH. Although they probably had little to no experience with social contracts before CKH, the workshop instructors were able to explain and model how to use them effectively.

The participants also all had ideas regarding student engagement that corresponded to CKH theories. The only exception to this was teacher C. Teacher C's response to item 8 on the post-survey is not explainable since he strongly agreed on the pre-survey and CKH explicitly supports student engagement as a strategy to avoid

behavior management problems. Perhaps this response was in error as was explained earlier in the chapter.

Positive findings for administrators were that all four new teachers indicated the relevance and importance of several concepts that coincide with CKH. These included the importance of first impressions, the teachers viewing themselves as a resource for students, the ability of the teachers to find strengths in student mistakes, the value of students sharing their personal experiences in class, and the importance of establishing good relationships.

Other positive outcomes of CKH on new teacher perceptions included the teacher's willingness to show vulnerability when appropriate and the ability of the teachers to use conflict as a learning tool. Equally significant for BHS administrators was the willingness of three of the four new teachers to allow students to play a role in development of classroom norms.

### **Limitations**

This study was designed to research new teacher's perceptions of classroom management and how attending CKH could impact those perceptions. However, as with any study, there were limitations. Since data was collected from only four participants and there was no comparison group to rule out any changes observed from being a function of participating in a study, the study should be viewed as pilot information implicating the need for further research in this area.

Since the survey was developed for BHS's specific problem of practice, it had not been formally evaluated for validity or reliability, but merely served to provide feedback

to the school administration and participants. Therefore, some of the items on the measurement tool may have been confusing or used terminology that was not understood clearly by the respondent.

### **Ethical Considerations**

To ensure that ethical considerations were made, the study was approved through the Institutional Review Board as well as through the district research committee. Permission for each of the first year teachers involved in the study was obtained prior to data collection. The purpose of the study and the data collection methods were explained to the participants in a group meeting prior to the start of the school year. Since no student data was collected, student/parent consent was not collected. To ensure confidentiality, participant names were removed from the surveys and replaced with coding letters. Coding information was kept in a locked office on campus.

### **Conclusions**

The data presented provided pre- and post-survey responses from first-year teachers regarding their perceptions of classroom management before and after the CKH workshop. The data was used to answer the research questions pertaining to the impact of CKH on first-year teacher's perceptions and how the feedback can be used to improve the current classroom management policies at BHS.

After careful analysis of the data, the results were informally presented to both administrators at the school and the participating teachers. Reflection on the process and results provided feedback to improve the current classroom management policies. The following themes were identified:

1. New teachers may not feel confident with classroom management learned solely in pre-service training. Practical strategies and techniques taught by CKH may help improve this finding. Data suggests that CKH improved new teacher's perception regarding useful strategies and helped to decrease the level of worry regarding classroom management. This can correlate to increased self-efficacy.
2. Although most new teachers understand the importance of relationships, CKH can help teachers see the importance and relevance of building better relationships through the sharing of experiences, and allowing students the opportunity to collaborate with the teacher in the development of social contracts. By improving relationships in this manner, classroom management should improve.

## CHAPTER 5

### SUMMARY AND DISCUSSION

#### **Introduction**

Brooke High School (BHS) is a large rural high school located in central South Carolina. This action research documents four new teachers' perceptions of classroom management prior to and after attending Capturing Kids' Hearts professional development. The results of pre- and post-surveys were used to answer the following research questions: 1) What is the impact of Capturing Kids' Hearts on first-year teachers' perceptions of classroom management? And 2) How can participant feedback after CKH preparation be used to improve current classroom management policy at BHS? These research questions were developed to address BHS's problem of practice regarding classroom management and the first year teacher. Many first year teachers have not yet acquired sufficient experience to effectively manage student behavior. Emmer and Stough (2001) reported that learning effective classroom management techniques and theory should not be taught separately from practical experience. They found that "developing understanding about classroom management ...requires experience in classroom contexts to be pragmatic" (p. 109). In a research conducted by Westerman (2016), expert teachers and novice teachers were studied to determine the differences in their reactions to classroom situations. The finding demonstrated that experienced teachers addressed off-task behavior by implementing engagement strategies, utilizing proximity and body language, planning preventative measures and modification of the

lesson. Additionally, when students exhibited off-task behavior, the expert teacher found causal relationships with an underlying reason. The novice teacher tended to ignore inappropriate behavior until it reached a point of a classroom disruption. At this point, the consequence tended to be punitive. Novice teachers did not adapt the lesson to accommodate for student behavior. When questioned about a student's behavior, the novice teacher did not attribute the behavior to any underlying cause.

Teacher preparation programs, according to Oliver and Reschly (2007) should focus more on preparing teachers to be competent and efficient at managing a classroom. This includes not only teaching theory in the classroom, but also providing ample opportunity for both guided practice and feedback. While the authors recognize that survey data suggests that experienced teachers indicate less frustration with classroom management, they attribute this less to learning by experience and more as a result of teachers who failed to learn classroom management during pre-service training leaving the profession.

Capturing Kids' Hearts is a management model that involves building community and relationships within the classroom to help students take responsibility for their actions. After attending the three-day workshop, teachers learned strategies to manage behavior consonant with CKH which could ultimately change their perceptions about classroom management. In a study designed to determine the effect of implementing CKH, it was found that when implemented with fidelity, the management model simultaneously increased student's prosocial behaviors and decreased the number of discipline referrals in the intervention schools (Holtzapple, Griswold, Cirillo, Rosebrock, Nouza & Berry, 2011). In another study, one novice teacher reported that CKH helped

teachers feel that “everybody [was] on the same page” (p. 174) and that the program “helped him become more patient in his interactions with students and develop close relationships with them” (Youngs, Hyun-Seung, & Pogodzinski, 2015, p. 175).

### **Focus of the Study**

The focus of this study was to determine the change in four first year teacher’s perceptions of classroom management after attending CKH professional development. The problem of practice that was addressed was the issues that first year teachers commonly have in regards to managing the classroom.

Theoretical foundations for this study were grounded within the idea that many first year teachers have challenges with classroom management due to a variety of reasons. These may include anxieties about working with students from various backgrounds (Weinstein, Tomlinson-Clarke, & Curran, 2004; Darvin, 2012), a lack of practical application of management models in their pre-service training (Fisher, 2012; Hildenbrand et al., 2016; Westerman, 2016), perceptions that teachers have about their role and the role students should play in regards to establishing classroom norms and expectations (Ludy, 2001), and the development of student-teacher and student-student relationships (Landau, 2001; Marzano, Marzano, & Pickering, 2003) .

In this study, a pre- and post-survey was used to determine four new teacher’s perceptions of classroom management before and after attending professional development provided by The Flippen Group – Capturing Kids’ Hearts. The survey was designed to gather data about classroom management and specific strategies implemented with the CKH model. Likert-type scales were used to determine the teacher’s perceptions.



They were presented with twenty-one statements to which they could respond with “strongly disagree”, “disagree”, “agree”, or “strongly agree”. The statements were categorized into four major topics: teacher’s self-efficacy and perceptions of their training experience, perceptions about specific strategies or procedures that could be implemented to help manage student behavior, beliefs about the teacher’s role in the classroom, and perceptions regarding communication and relationships within the classroom. Each teacher’s responses were analyzed individually to determine whether they experienced any changes in their perceptions. Commonalities between teachers were compared as well as differences.

### **Overview/Summary of the Study**

Each of the teacher participants completing the study shared similar experiences in their pre-service training, receiving their degrees through a traditional four-year program. One point derived from the surveys was although first year teachers may not have issues with their overall self-efficacy, they might not feel as though they received enough practical application of classroom management strategies. Therefore, providing professional development such as CKH may be beneficial for them.

Common themes that appeared to be well-developed during pre-service training include grouping strategies, the necessity of student engagement, providing meaningful instruction from bell to bell, the importance of making good first impressions, that teachers should be resources for their students, that student mistakes should be an opportunity for learning, that students should be able to share their personal experiences, and that relationships are important. These concepts mirror those taught in the CKH

program and are a vital part of any classroom management plan. These are the concepts that may require less focus in future workshops.

General findings of research at BHS were that first year teachers tended to feel that pre-service educational settings did not provide sufficient experience in the area of classroom management. The strategies and tools learned during that time were not perceived to be adequate upon entrance into the teaching field. Literature supports this finding. According to Fisher (2012), “Classroom management has become a large problem with questions and concerns regarding how to develop new teachers into experienced teachers” (p. 13) and further sites studies demonstrating that new teachers are not properly prepared to manage behavior problems. It is further noted that best practices often taught in university teacher preparation coursework are often not utilized during the student teacher’s field experience. Student teachers tend to adopt the classroom management models used by their cooperating teacher and these may not match the newest best practices learned in the pre-service courses (Monroe, Blackwell, & Pepper, 2010). According to the findings of the present research, teacher’s perceived that after CKH staff development, they were more prepared with a larger variety of classroom management techniques.

Secondly, CKH seemed to change new teacher perception in some areas regarding relationship building. Although, prior to CKH, each of the participants demonstrated the need for establishing good relationships with students, and the need for students to be able to share experiences in class, there were other facets to relationship building with which the participants did not originally agree – social contracts, and developing classroom norms with student input. Korpershoek, Harms, de Boer, van Kuijk, and

Doolard (2016) discussed how student teachers are often advised to be very strict at the beginning of school or during the first part of the clinical experience and can lessen their authoritarianism as time progresses. However, “establishing positive student-teacher relationships has been proven far more effective in regulating student behavior” (p.644). This directly corresponds to the CKH expectation of building social contracts (which outline expectations for the class) with student input at the beginning of a class. Prior to CKH, each of the teachers did not feel that students should play a role in determining classroom norms and three of the four did not feel as though social contracts were important. After CKH, three of the four had a change in perception of this concept. This finding indicates the need for a focus on this aspect of building relationships. While the teacher must remain accountable for the students in the classroom, they need not be the “sage on the stage”. Students would have more buy-in and subsequently less behavior issues if they play a role in the establishment of norms and social contracts of the classroom. Since each class is made up of a diverse set of students, one list of rules and consequences may not be the best classroom management plan. CKH emphasizes the need for student involvement so that when the student breaks social contracts, the teacher can have a plan of action to address the behavior.

Additionally in the area of relationships, there may be times when sharing and showing vulnerability may be beneficial. The sharing of personal experiences with students can seem awkward for a new teacher but the practice can help build a community of trust. Positive relationships with teachers can validate students’ emotional experiences and create an environment where students feel safe. The relationship can also “buffer children from trauma...and provide the personalized responsiveness and

scaffolding necessary for adaptive skill-building in the face of disruptive or challenging life events” (Jones, Bailey, Brion-Meisels, & Partee, 2016, p. 64). With this in mind, if a teacher is able to share a traumatic experience that connects with one that the student is enduring, a stronger relationship and trust is built creating a safer community.

### **Implications of the Findings**

Based on the analysis of pre- and post-survey results, schools should consider including classroom management as a focus during new teacher training. In addition to providing staff development through CKH, new teacher induction programs should implement peer observations and subsequent reflection. This would allow novice teachers to observe and reflect on strategies used by experienced teachers. Reflections would allow the new teacher to analyze strategies used by the experienced teacher and process how the strategies could be implemented within their own classrooms. One study found that “the greater the opportunity for collaboration with other adults and the more observations that were made, the greater the teachers’ sense of efficacy” (Tschannen-Moran, et al., 1998, p. 221).

Although there were only four participants in this study, each of them indicated that their pre-service training did not provide them with enough tools for them to feel efficacious in dealing with classroom management. By definition, teacher self-efficacy is a cognitive mechanism by which behavior is controlled that increases as the teacher becomes more proficient with certain competencies needed to achieve a desired outcome (Goddard, Hoy, & Hoy, 2000). Research suggests that a teacher’s self-efficacy directly relates to their instructional practices and behaviors. In fact, Zee and Koomen (2016),

surveyed multiple studies regarding teacher and self-efficacy and found that an in-service teacher's self-efficacy contributes to the teacher's delivery of instruction, the number of goal changes made, the ability to connect to students' lives, and to employ effective teaching strategies. With this in mind, prudence would be shown by dedicating sufficient support in an area where new teachers feel less prepared. Pendergast, Garvis, and Keogh (2011) found the following in their research:

Teacher self-efficacy is an important motivational construct that shapes teacher effectiveness in the classroom. Teachers with a high level of teacher self-efficacy have been shown to be more resilient in their teaching and likely to try harder to help all students to reach their potential (p. 46).

Teacher preparation programs should also address the issue of practical classroom management in their programs. Theoretically, pre-service teachers should get practical experience during their clinical or student teaching coursework. However, studies show that often student teachers only employ management plans utilized by their supervising teacher. Hildebrand and Arndt (2016) completed a study demonstrating that there were significant discrepancies between the student teacher's conceived and implemented classroom management practices. The discrepancies were partially due to concerns of the cooperating teacher and their inability to relinquish control of the classroom to the student teacher. As such, this could contribute to a student teacher's low self-efficacy in this area.

## Action Plan

The results of this study parallel Evertson's (1985) research which suggested that classroom management training for secondary teachers enhances their skill level. Evertson's study included all secondary teachers while this study focused on new teachers. However, based on the findings of the present action research, an action plan was created to improve the current staff development for first year teachers at the school. Elements of the action plan include refining CKH staff development to focus more on the teachers' needs as revealed by the data of the surveys and providing on-going support for new teachers in developing classroom management strategies through the use of peer observations and reflection. Additionally, the action plan discusses ways to include teachers with differing classroom management beliefs. Key contributors to the action plan included participants and administrators.

**Refining CKH workshops to focus on needs.** CKH workshops are led by employees of the Flippen Group. However, to meet the needs of new teachers at BHS, administrators will collaborate with the facilitators of the workshop prior to delivery. CKH is based on what the Flippen Group calls "The EXCEL Model". Core elements of this model include Engage, X-plore, Communicate, Empower, and Launch. Engagement refers to the way that teachers begin the class. Greeting students at the door with a handshake, modeling social and professional skills, and enlisting student experiences to begin a lesson are all core philosophies associated with the engage component of CKH. During the X-plore stage, facilitators emphasize the need for listening to student input and concern, empathizing, and asking open ended questions without ridicule for responses that are not understood. With communication, the imperative is to understand

that dialogue should remain open between the teacher and the students and that flexibility and creativity are key elements to learning content. When teachers empower students, they give the students the ability to practice and apply what was learned. This can only happen in an atmosphere of trust where students feel free to fail. The social contract developed by the class provides the basis of what is acceptable and what is not acceptable. Launching refers to how the class ends and the understanding that ending on a powerful note is critical. Throughout the workshops, the facilitators model strategies and tools promoted in CKH that help teachers implement each of the components of the EXCEL model (CKH, 2011).

As shown by the data, new teachers require less content in areas such as grouping techniques and more emphasis on strategies that prevent behavior management problems. These would include social contract building, trust building, and empowerment techniques. This information will be discussed with facilitators so that the workshops can be structured to emphasize that focus. Specifically, administrators will conference with CKH facilitators to recommend placing more emphasis on the X-plore and communications areas of the workshop. Teachers participating in this study will also be included in this collaboration. Those participants, having most recently completed the CKH training themselves, can give the most relevant input into which areas of the training that were most significant and beneficial.

**Providing ongoing support.** Another facet of the action plan includes providing ongoing support for new teachers through the implementation of peer observations and monthly staff development. Peer observations have been proven to be advantageous and upheld as a useful method of improving teaching and learning. In a study of peer

observation participants, conducted by Carroll and O’Loughlin (2014), it was demonstrated that new teachers in particular found the peer observation process useful in boosting confidence. One participant stated that the process gave her “reassurance and help to develop teaching” (p. 451). Administrators at BHS will be responsible for pairing new teachers with mentors in their department. As a part of the first year teacher process, peer observations will be made at least twice per semester. A reflection of the observation will be written, providing the new teacher the opportunity to process any strategies seen and determine if the strategies could be implemented in their own classroom. The new teacher and mentor will also have the opportunity to discuss the observation during their regularly scheduled meetings. The new teacher will be responsible for scheduling the visits.

**Addressing challenges.** Feedback from the participants indicates that there may be instances in which teachers will not buy-in to the CKH tenets. An example of this was seen with teacher B in this study. Administration should be equipped to work with reluctant teachers by allowing them to observe master teachers that implement CKH with fidelity and a positive outlook. Additionally, it is important to include them in the ongoing process of improving classroom management. Educators such as teacher B, need for their voice to be heard and to feel as though they are an integral part of the learning community. Therefore, as a part of the action plan, a school-level professional learning team will be assembled to continually monitor the effectiveness of CKH as it relates to classroom management. Student discipline data will be analyzed each semester by the team. Data will include the numbers and types of referrals, but will not include any specific student information. This data can easily be compiled by the BHS PowerSchool



operator. Team members will consist of one administrator and at least one teacher from each department, making sure to include teachers with varying ideas on classroom management. Meetings will be held during the district's collaborative planning days that are built into the district calendar. The team will present findings and possible improvements to the BHS staff once per semester during a weekly staff development session. Presenters will be able to deliver the content to staff by modeling effective strategies. As a resource, the team members will be provided the book *Management in the Active Classroom*, 2<sup>nd</sup> edition, by Ron Berger, Dina Strasser, and Libby Woodfin. This book contains numerous protocols for the management of active learning. Members of the team will be able to contribute to the overall classroom management policy of BHS through their contributions on the team.

Classroom management capacity will further be built by the careful selection of new hires at BHS. Currently, each school in the district uses an initial interview form which asks the following questions:

- Why are you in education?
- What do you feel are the top two skills students need to be successful in the 21<sup>st</sup> century?
- Share a favorite lesson and how you assessed your students.
- How do you help struggling and high-achieving students?
- Describe the culture in your classroom that promotes learning.
- Describe a collaborative learning environment that supports teacher growth and student achievement.

Each of these questions address characteristics envisioned as important by the district; collaboration, culture, differentiation, effective lesson planning, and beliefs of the interviewee. As a part of this action plan, BHS will also include the questions “What classroom management strategies do you feel are essential in creating a safe learning environment?” and “What role does communication play in your day to day classroom?” Inclusion of these questions when choosing a candidate for a teaching position demonstrates BHS’s commitment to the value of classroom management and the tenets of CKH.

**Action plan timeline.** The implementation of the action plan will start during the spring and summer of 2017. As soon as full-time employee positions are determined, the administration will begin the hiring process using the updated interview question form. Once the candidates are chosen, administrators will meet with department chairs to determine the best mentors for each new teacher. The administration will also begin to assemble the professional learning team. New teacher participants will be asked to participate as well as veteran teachers. Participation will not be mandatory, but each of the teachers will be encouraged to participate to ensure that their ideas are included in the process.

During the summer, a conference call between the administration at BHS, study participants and facilitators from the Flippen group will be scheduled. During the call, this action plan will be discussed and a modified/personalized workshop will subsequently be scheduled for new teachers prior to the start of the 2017-18 school year. At the beginning of the fall semester, teachers return to school three days before students. During these three days, a meeting between administration and the mentors of the new

teachers will be scheduled. During the meeting, administration will be responsible for explaining the peer observation process and expectations for the new teachers. Once the fall semester begins, the new teachers will be responsible for implementation of CKH strategies. They will also plan with their mentor teachers at least one peer observation during the fall and one during the spring. New teachers will complete reflections for each peer observation using the peer observation form (see Appendix B).

Once each semester, the professional learning team will collect discipline data for the school's PowerSchool operator. During collaborative planning, the team will compare data from previous semesters to determine if any changes in discipline patterns were observable. They will then present their finding and suggestion to faculty by modeling active classroom strategies.

Ongoing improvements to the plan will be based on participant reflections and feedback at the end of each year. The professional learning team findings will also serve as a source of data for continual evaluation of the action plan. The action plan process is shown in Figure 5.1.

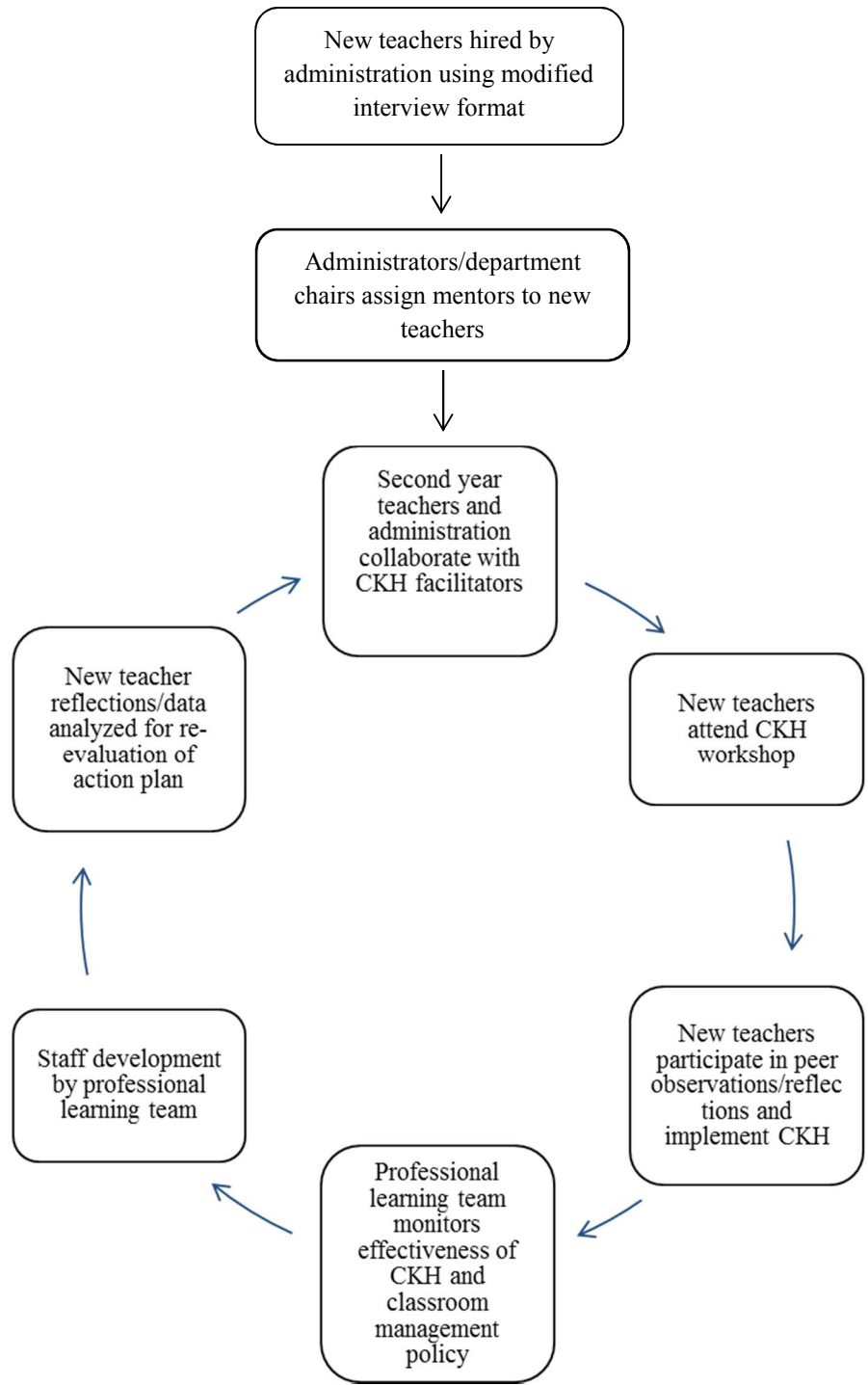


Figure 5.1

*Cyclical Pattern of the Action Plan*

## **Suggestions for Future Research**

This study provides a pilot on which more in depth research could be contrived. Future research should include comparison groups and multiple schools to increase the number of participants and make the data relevant to more school communities. A mixed methods approach, to include student achievement data and teacher observations could be done to determine whether CKH benefits student outcomes. If perception data is collected, the use of instruments that have met reliability and validity tests should be used.

A longitudinal study done to gather student discipline and achievement data would provide evidence of long-term effects of the CKH program. Studies to determine the level of implementation fidelity are also warranted. Such research would be useful for districts in determining whether or not to implement the program.

## **Conclusion**

Capturing Kids' Hearts is a classroom management model that can positively affect the classroom management perceptions of new teachers. This study addressed two questions. First, "What is the impact of CKH on first year teachers' perceptions of classroom management?" Ultimately, the results of the survey indicate that CKH changed teachers' perceptions in the areas of student involvement and relationships in the classroom. After CKH, teachers felt that they could allow more student involvement in the development of social contracts. They also changed their perceptions regarding their relationships with students. The new teachers realized that sharing their personal

experiences and allowing students to resolve conflicts could help establish a community of trust in their classrooms.

Secondly, the question “How can participant feedback after CKH preparation be used to improve current classroom management policy at BHS?” was addressed through discussion with participants and administrators after the data collection process. New teachers discussed the implementation of CKH strategies and how the affective climate of the classroom changed. Administrators and participants were able to collaborate and develop a plan for future professional development in the area of classroom management based on the findings. However, caution should be taken since the autonomy of a teacher deserves to be respected. This is case for one participant in the study. While three of the four participants found CKH mostly beneficial based on the responses to the survey, one teacher did not feel that this plan was effective. Her perceptions of CKH were that it “standardized” classroom management. She did not feel that this was appropriate and that teachers should have the autonomy to develop their own classroom management plans. Although she was not in the majority, other new teachers may hold this perception in the future.

The ultimate goal of all educators is student achievement. If new teachers need support in specific areas, such as classroom management then it seems only rational for administrators to provide support. When teachers are confident in their abilities and manage their classrooms efficiently, students benefit as well.

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## APPENDIX A: NEW TEACHER SURVEY

### Classroom Management Survey

Several statements about classroom management are listed below. Please circle the number, using the scale below that describes how much you agree with each statement. Your responses will be anonymous; please do not place your name anywhere on this form. Please respond to each statement as honestly as possible and circle only one number for each statement.

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
1. I have high self-efficacy in regards to my ability to deal with classroom management issues.	1	2	3	4
2. I worry about how to deal with students whose personalities do not match my own.	1	2	3	4
3. I have received practical training in classroom management strategies.	1	2	3	4
4. The variety of classroom management strategies learned is sufficient to handle any classroom management issue.	1	2	3	4
5. It is important to make a good first impression on students.	1	2	3	4
6. Good relationships with students include the ability of the teacher to show vulnerability by sharing appropriate information about themselves.	1	2	3	4
7. Anxiety reduction strategies such as greeting students at the door are beneficial in reducing classroom management issues.	1	2	3	4
8. Student engagement is essential to maintaining classroom management.	1	2	3	4
9. It is important for students to be able to share experiences from outside of the classroom.	1	2	3	4
10. An important part of classroom management is the establishment of relationships.	1	2	3	4
11. Teachers are resources for their students.	1	2	3	4
12. Conflict should always be avoided.	1	2	3	4
13. Classroom norms should remain the same for every class.	1	2	3	4
14. When dealing with students, body language is a powerful form of communication.	1	2	3	4
15. There are strengths to be found in student mistakes.	1	2	3	4
16. I have adequate knowledge about the formation of student groups.	1	2	3	4
17. Students should play a major role in establishing classroom norms.	1	2	3	4
18. Social contracts are a vital part of classroom management.	1	2	3	4
19. Established classroom rules and consequences are more important than social contracts.	1	2	3	4
20. The end of the class is just as important as the beginning.	1	2	3	4
21. Students are our customers.	1	2	3	4

Comments: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

## APPENDIX B: PEER OBSERVATION FORM

Date _____ Time _____	Observation	Comments/Thoughts
<b>Engagement Strategies</b> (warm-ups, games, other activities that engage students and minimize behavior problems)		
<b>Behavioral Expectations</b> (rules posted, verbal instructions, etc.)		
<b>Redirection Strategies</b> (verbal cueing, proximity, eye contact, etc.)		
<b>Relationships</b> (teacher-student, student-student) How does this minimize behavior problems?		
<b>Other</b> – Any other observations that contributed to successful classroom management		