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Assessing Classroom Management Training for Basic Course Instructors

Kevin R. Meyer
Ohio University

Stephen K. Hunt
Illinois State University

Mark E. Comadena
Illinois State University

Cheri J. Simonds
Illinois State University

Brent K. Simonds
Illinois State University

See next page for additional authors

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Authors
Kevin R. Meyer, Stephen K. Hunt, Mark E. Comadena, Cheri J. Simonds, Brent K. Simonds, and John R. Baldwin

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Graduate teaching assistants (GTAs) face a variety of student misbehaviors in the basic communication course (Meyer et al., 2007). Student misbehaviors refer to those actions that GTAs perceive as interfering with student learning (Richmond & Andriate, 1982) or disrupting the classroom climate (Meyer et al., 2007). Unfortunately, GTAs are not typically given classroom management information during basic course training programs prior to what is often their first teaching experience (Meyer et al., 2007; Roach, 1991). Classroom management refers to actions taken by instructors to establish order, engage students, or elicit the cooperation of students (Emmer & Strough, 2001). As a result of current approaches to GTA training, many GTAs learn to handle misbehaviors through a trail-by-fire approach (Roach, 1991). Thus, classroom management training (CMT) for GTAs is crucial (Bruschke & Gartner, 1991; Hunt, Novak, Semlak, & Meyer, 2005).

Meyer et al. (2007) found that GTAs report a variety of student misbehaviors in the basic course. Further-

more, GTAs recommended that information should be provided during basic course training to prepare GTAs for student misbehaviors and equip them with strategies for classroom management. Following the recommendations for CMT outlined by Meyer et al. (2007), the present study developed and implemented CMT for a group of incoming GTAs. Therefore, the purpose of the present study is to assess the results of CMT by comparing reports of student misbehaviors and perceptions of basic course training from the incoming GTAs to the baseline data collected earlier. Importantly, the present study adds to the existing body of literature by addressing the effects of CMT on misbehaviors. Since implementation and assessment of CMT is absent in previous literature, the results of the present study should be of interest to basic course directors.

STUDENT MISBEHAVIORS

The nature of the basic course presents several classroom management concerns. GTAs report confronting variety of student misbehaviors including: incidents of inappropriate behavior, inappropriate speech topics, sexist language, ethnocentric language, poor and inattentive audience behaviors, disruptions of classroom climate, plagiarism, backtalk, refusal to participate, loud talking, tardies on speech day, and side conversations (Meyer et al., 2007). The findings from this initial study added to existing knowledge of general student misbehaviors in college classrooms (Burroughs, Kearney, & Plax, 1989; Downs, 1992; Golish, 1999; Holm, 2002; Kearney, Plax, Hays, & Ivey, 1991; Kearney, Plax,

Sorenson, & Smith, 1988). Specifically, previous literature has indicated that students may be reluctant or defiant (Burroughs et al., 1989; Kearney et al., 1991), angry and frustrated (Downs, 1992), inattentive or hyperactive (Kearney et al., 1988), or academically dishonest (Holm, 2002). In addition, student misbehaviors are more evident in GTA classrooms as compared to faculty member classrooms (Golish, 1999; Luo, Bellows, & Grady, 2000; Plax, Kearney, & Tucker, 1986; Roach, 1991; Sprague & Nyquist, 1989). In sum, then, a variety of student misbehaviors await GTAs who enter basic course classrooms.

CLASSROOM MANAGEMENT TRAINING

The very existence of student misbehaviors in the basic course gives rise to classroom management concerns. Both novice and experienced instructors fear classroom management problems (Plax et al., 1986). In response, novices are often prone to use legalistic approaches to classroom policies (Emmer & Strough, 2001). Roach (2002) notes that "a big classroom issue, especially for new TA instructors is that of classroom management" (p. 211). Importantly, GTAs are concerned with managing student misbehavior (Meyer et al., 2007). Roach (1995) finds that "classroom management, specifically in terms of instructor power/ authority, is often uncomfortable and difficult" (p. 94).

It is critical that educators understand the relationship between classroom management and student learning. To facilitate student learning, GTAs should be armed with information during training to establish

effective classroom management practices. Richmond, McCroskey, Kearney, and Plax (1987) posit that "successful classroom managers are more likely to produce positive student achievement" (p. 2). Classroom management skills are important for college instructors to develop, since the objective is not to force student learning but to generate affective learning, which is a student's attitude toward learning (Bruschke & Gartner, 1991). Thus, CMT may assist GTAs as well as students.

Teaching experience alone may not be sufficient to develop classroom management skills. Luo et al. (2000) claim that helping GTAs become effective classroom managers is critical and that no GTA "can be left on his or her own to sink or swim in the complex and changing demands of college teaching" (p. 374). Emmer and Stough (2001) reviewed several studies of beginning-of-the-year training workshops, and concluded that those programs led to increased utilization of managerial behaviors and "higher levels of student engagement and cooperation" (p. 105). Thus, CMT may lead to increased enactment of classroom management strategies by GTAs, resulting in increased student learning.

In order for CMT to help GTAs deal with student misbehaviors, Luo et al. (2000) urge that such programs provide information about classroom management issues that a beginning teacher is likely to face, so they "can anticipate potential problems and identify successful strategies for averting such problems" (p. 377-378). Thus, training GTAs to anticipate misbehaviors is essential. For example, brainstorming solutions can help to resolve classroom management problems (Downs, 1992). These techniques can be incorporated into CMT,

and tailored specifically to concerns inherent in the basic course. Cooper and Simonds (2003) note that "most scholars believe that classroom management actions should be proactive rather than reactive and that decisions regarding these actions should be done in advance of entering the classroom" (p. 228). If undesirable misbehaviors continue or spread, they should not be ignored (Cooper & Simonds, 2003). Thus, a proactive approach to classroom management should be fostered during initial training.

The tone and climate established early in the semester determine the eventual success or failure of the instructor's classroom management system. Cooper and Simonds (2003) advise teachers to "consider how they will implement that system at the beginning of the school year" (p. 230). The first day is important in creating a precedent for effective classroom management, since it sets the tone for the rest of the semester (Davis, 1993). GTAs often learn from experience that if they do not start strong, it is difficult to alter the classroom climate later. Thus, CMT should encourage GTAs to continuously reflect upon classroom events to isolate areas in need of adjustment. Cooper and Simonds (2003) further contend that "because the first day is so significant, it is important to provide students with information that will form positive first impressions and have a lasting impact" (p. 231). GTA training programs, therefore, should focus more attention on adequately preparing instructors for their first classroom experience.

Clearly, a variety of information concerning classroom management could be provided to GTAs during training. Meyer et al. (2007) recommended that CMT include, in part, information concerning student misbe-

haviors, classroom management strategies, and instructional communication literature. Specifically, CMT may facilitate the development of individual classroom management styles. Richardson and Fallona (2001) observe that "effective classroom management can look very different in different classrooms" (p. 724). Not all instructors share similar definitions of order or discipline (Veenman, 1984). Gomberg and Gray (1999) argue that providing instructors with insight into their management style is the key to helping new instructors move through critical incidents with students. In addition to information specific to classroom management strategies, knowledge of important areas in communication education research (see Staton-Spicer & Wulff, 1984) could provide incoming GTAs with the ingredients to create their own unique mixture of teaching strategies. Thus, CMT may provide GTAs with critical information prior to instructing the basic course.

HYPOTHESES

Given that research recommends the implementation of CMT (Hunt et al., 2005) and reports GTA suggestions for including CMT in basic course training programs (Meyer et al., 2007), it is reasonable to expect that GTAs will perceive a training program that includes CMT more favorably than one that does not. Based on this literature, we advanced the following hypothesis:

H1: GTA's who receive CMT will perceive the effectiveness of the basic course training program

more favorably than GTAs who do not receive CMT.

Since literature indicates that it is reasonable to expect that GTAs armed with knowledge of classroom management will be able to proactively manage their classrooms (Cooper & Simonds, 2003; Downs, 1992; Luo et al., 2000), we posited the following hypothesis:

H2: GTAs who receive CMT will experience less severe student misbehaviors in the basic course than GTAs who do not receive CMT.

In sum, the purpose of the present study is to assess GTA perceptions of CMT and the resulting effects on GTA reports of student misbehavior.

METHODS

Participants

Participants consisted of GTAs who teach the basic course for the communication department of a large Midwestern university.

Control group. The control group consisted of 14 female and four male GTAs who participated in a basic course training program without a CMT session. The control group had a mean age 23.78 years (SD = 1.90). Fourteen GTAs reported having no prior teaching experience, two reported one semester of experience, one reported three semesters of experience, and one reported 11 semesters of experience.

Experimental group. During the Summer 2004 basic course training program, 17 new GTAs received CMT.

Of these 17 GTAs, 13 (9 males and 4 females with an average age of 25.85, *SD* = 8.63) completed a pretest measure for the present study (76.47% response rate). Twelve GTAs reported having no prior teaching experience and one reported six semesters of experience.

Posttest measurements were obtained from 14 of the 17 GTAs who participated in the Summer 2004 basic course training program (82.35% response rate). These 10 female and four male GTAs reported a mean age of 25.57 years (*SD* = 8.29). Twelve GTAs reported no prior teaching experience, one reported one semester of experience, and one reported six semesters of experience.

Procedures

The university's Institutional Review Board approved all procedures, and participants signed an informed consent form prior to anonymously completing the survey. The control group (no CMT) was surveyed for baseline data in Spring 2004, during weeks 11 and 12 of the semester (Meyer et al., 2007). Both a pretest and posttest were administered to the experimental group following their participation in CMT. GTAs assigned to the experimental group were surveyed (pretest) early in Fall 2004, during weeks three and four, and then during weeks 15 and 16 (posttest) to track the effect of CMT over time. The lead author and a trained research assistant then unitized and coded the qualitative data obtained in the project.

A multi-faceted CMT session was developed, taking into account an evaluation of baseline survey data (Meyer et al., 2007) and relevant literature on student misbehavior, classroom management, and instructional

communication. The 90-minute CMT session was implemented within the naturalistic setting of the summer basic course training program; participation in CMT was required of all GTAs. The first facet of CMT involved the viewing of a video, created specifically for CMT, demonstrating example student misbehaviors in the basic course, which served as a tool for guided discussion of effective and ineffective reactions to misbehaviors. Specifically, six student misbehaviors were used in the video: sexist language, ethnocentric statements, inattentive or poor audience members, backtalk, refusal to participate in activities, and side conversations. The second facet of CMT involved the use of a guest speaker, who was a campus official in the area of student misconduct. The third facet of CMT involved the distribution and discussion of a handout on misbehaviors and classroom management practices.

Measurement

All GTAs completed a survey instrument (see Meyer et al., 2007) consisting of demographic items, six closed-ended measures, and nine open-ended questions.

Quantitative survey questions. The *Training Measure* consisted of items asking if: training preparation was effective, sufficient, and comprehensive. In addition, items measured whether enough time was spent addressing misbehaviors as well as if enough information was given to avoid and handle misbehaviors. The *Frequency of Misbehavior Measure* consisted of items asking about the frequency of the following misbehaviors: Inappropriate Behavior, Inappropriate Speech Topics, Sexist Language, Ethnocentric Language, Poor

Audience Members, and Poor Classroom Environment. The *Learning Loss Measure* sought to determine how the basic course training program compared to an ideal one. The first question asked how much GTAs had learned during the basic course training program, while the other asked how much GTAs could have learned had they had the ideal training program. The *Attention Measure* consisted of two questions, asking if: the current level of attention given to classroom management and student misbehaviors in the basic course training program was good (Level of Attention Good), and if it was valuable (Level of Attention Valuable). The *Extent of Misbehavior Measure* asked GTAs to rate the extent to which certain misbehaviors were a problem in their classroom, while the *Management of Misbehavior Measure* asked GTAs to rate their ability to manage these misbehaviors. The specific misbehaviors included: engaging in acts of plagiarism (Plagiarism), backtalking the instructor (Backtalk), refusing to participate (Refusal to Participate), talking loudly enough that the instructor must talk over the students (Loud Talk), being inattentive audience members (Inattentive Audience), being tardy on speech day (Tardy on Speech Day), and engaging in side conversations (Side Conversation).

Qualitative survey questions. The nine open-ended survey questions provided an opportunity for GTAs to explain their perceptions of the training program and their experiences with student misbehaviors in the basic course. Six questions addressing hypothesis one inquired about: information and materials that could be provided during training; what could be done differently during training to prepare GTAs for student misbehaviors; what GTAs would do differently, in general and

during the first few weeks of the semester, the next time they taught the course; what GTAs had learned through their teaching experience about responding to student misbehaviors; and what advice they would give incoming GTAs. Three questions addressing hypothesis two inquired about frequently observed misbehaviors of basic course students, misbehaviors GTAs find most difficult to manage, and severe cases of student misbehavior that were documented and reported.

Data Analysis

Quantitative analysis and tests. Reliability estimates were not calculated for the six closed-ended survey measures, since each item in these measures assessed different variables. The data gathered from the control and experimental groups were compared in order to assess the progress made with the new training materials included in CMT. Additionally, both sets of surveys collected after CMT were compared to assess the impact that classroom experience had on the experiment group's perceptions of misbehavior and the ability to manage these events over time. Three MANOVA procedures were employed for each measure to explore these differences, since multiple dependent variables were measured at three different points in time with two different cohort groups. The closed-ended items served as dependent variables, while the three sets of surveys served as independent variables. Alpha was set to the .05 level of significance for all statistical tests.

Qualitative analysis and coding. Initially, the lead author analyzed the qualitative data to identify emergent themes. A research assistant was employed to vali-

date the coding. Researchers coded the data independently to avoid consensus building (Neuendorf, 2002), and then met to compare units and categories that revealed patterns, frequencies, and themes in the data. Differences were then resolved by clarifying themes. Initial descriptive coding followed survey topics as well as unexpected comments. The coders unitized GTA responses by separating new thoughts or ideas into 284 units. Analysis of unitizing reliability using Guetzkow's *U* produced a coefficient of .99. Analysis of categorizing reliability using Cohen's kappa produced a coefficient of .89. Coding reliability, measured with Cohen's kappa of .75 or greater is considered excellent (Neuendorf, 2002).

RESULTS

GTA Perceptions of Their Training Preparation

The first hypothesis predicted that GTAs who receive CMT would have more favorable perceptions of the effectiveness of the basic course training program than GTAs who do not receive CMT.

Training measure. A MANOVA comparing the control and experimental groups (pretest) yielded a significant difference for the Training Measure, Wilks $\lambda = .45$, $F(6, 23) = 4.72$, $p < .05$, $\eta^2 = .55$. Univariate follow-up tests indicated significant differences for Effective Preparation, $F(1, 28) = 11.55$, $p < .05$, $\eta^2 = .29$, Sufficient Instruction, $F(1, 28) = 24.45$, $p < .05$, $\eta^2 = .47$, Comprehensive Training, $F(1, 28) = 20.99$, $p < .05$, $\eta^2 = .43$, Sufficient Time, $F(1, 28) = 21.34$, $p < .05$, $\eta^2 = .43$, Avoided Misbehaviors, $F(1, 28) = 15.62$, $p < .05$, $\eta^2 = .36$, and Handled Misbehaviors, $F(1, 28) = 11.99$, $p < .05$, $\eta^2 =$

.30. Mean scores indicated that those who received CMT reported the training program to be more effective than those who did not receive CMT, for all six items on the measure (see Table 1).

Table 1
Descriptive Statistics for Training Measure

Measure Items	Group	*M*	*SD*
Effective Preparation	Control	2.71_{ab}	1.05
	Exp. Pretest	3.85_{a}	.69
	Exp. Posttest	3.86_{b}	.54
Sufficient Instruction	Control	2.76_{cd}	1.03
	Exp. Pretest	4.38_{c}	.65
	Exp. Posttest	4.21_{d}	.70
Comprehensive Training	Control	2.06_{ef}	1.35
	Exp. Pretest	4.31_{e}	1.32
	Exp. Posttest	3.36_{f}	1.45
Sufficient Time	Control	2.59_{gh}	1.18
	Exp. Pretest	4.38_{g}	.87
	Exp. Posttest	4.14_{h}	.77
Avoided Misbehaviors	Control	3.47_{ij}	.87
	Exp. Pretest	4.62_{i}	.65
	Exp. Posttest	4.21_{j}	.89
Handled Misbehaviors	Control	2.47_{kl}	1.28
	Exp. Pretest	4.00_{k}	1.08
	Exp. Posttest	4.14_{l}	1.10

Note. Higher means indicate more favorable impressions of training. Scores are based on a 5-point Likert-type scale (from 1 to 5). Means with the same subscripts are significantly different.

A MANOVA comparing the control group and the experimental group at the posttest also yielded a significant difference for the Training Measure, Wilks $\lambda = .53$, $F(6, 24) = 3.60$, $p < .05$, $\eta^2 = .47$. Univariate follow-up tests indicated significant differences for Effective Preparation, $F(1, 29) = 13.89$, $p < .05$, $\eta^2 = .32$, Sufficient Instruction, $F(1, 29) = 19.98$, $p < .05$, $\eta^2 = .41$, Comprehensive Training, $F(1, 29) = 6.68$, $p < .05$, $\eta^2 = .19$, Sufficient Time, $F(1, 29) = 18.04$, $p < .05$, $\eta^2 = .38$, Avoided Misbehaviors, $F(1, 29) = 5.45$, $p < .05$, $\eta^2 = .16$, and Handled Misbehaviors, $F(1, 29) = 14.84$, $p < .05$, $\eta^2 = .34$. Mean scores indicated that GTAs who completed the posttest following CMT reported the training program was more effective than did members of the control group, for all six items (see Table 1).

A MANOVA comparing the pre- and posttest scores for the experimental group did not yield a significant difference between the groups for the Training Measure, Wilks $\lambda = .61$, $F(6, 20) = 2.17$, $p > .05$, $\eta^2 = .39$. See Table 1 for descriptive statistics.

Attention and learning loss measures. A MANOVA comparing the control and experimental groups (pretest) yielded a significant difference for the Attention Measure and Learning Loss Measure, Wilks $\lambda = .59$, $F(3, 27) = 6.16$, $p < .05$, $\eta^2 = .41$. Univariate follow-up tests indicated significant differences for Level of Attention Good, $F(1, 29) = 12.34$, $p < .05$, $\eta^2 = .30$, Level of Attention Valuable, $F(1, 29) = 7.98$, $p < .05$, $\eta^2 = .22$, and for Learning Loss, $F(1, 29) = 5.68$, $p < .05$, $\eta^2 = .16$. Mean scores indicated that experimental group participants reported greater levels of Attention Good and Attention Valuable, as well as greater learning on the Learning

Table 2
Descriptive Statistics for Attention Measure and Learning Loss Measure

Measure	Group	*M*	*SD*
Level of Attention Good	Control	3.94_{ab}	1.70
	Exp. Pretest	6.00_{a}	1.47
	Exp. Posttest	5.93_{b}	1.00
Level of Attention Valuable	Control	4.89_{c}	1.28
	Exp. Pretest	6.08_{c}	.95
	Exp. Posttest	5.43	1.56
Learning Loss	Control	$-.17_{d}$	3.90
	Exp. Pretest	-3.15_{de}	2.67
	Exp. Posttest	$-.71_{e}$	3.07

Note. Attention Measure scores are based on a 7-point Likert-type scale (from 1 to 7), where higher means indicate greater levels of attention. Learning Loss Measure scores are based on a 10-point Likert-type scale (from 0 to 9), where higher means indicate greater learning loss. Means with the same subscripts are significantly different.

Loss Measure, than did control group participants (see Table 2).

A MANOVA comparing the control group and the experimental group at the posttest also yielded a significant difference for the Attention Measure and Learning Loss Measure, Wilks $\lambda = .66$, $F(3, 28) = 4.86$, $p < .05$, $\eta^2 = .34$. Univariate follow-up tests indicated significant differences for Level of Attention Good, $F(1, 30) = 15.03$, $p < .05$, $\eta^2 = .33$. However, univariate follow-up tests did not find significant differences for Level of Attention Valuable, $F(1, 30) = 1.16$, $p > .05$, $\eta^2 = .04$, and Learning Loss $F(1, 30) = .19$, $p > .05$, $\eta^2 = .01$. Mean scores indi-

cated that GTAs who completed the posttest following CMT reported greater levels of Attention Good and Attention Valuable, as well as greater learning from training on the Learning Loss Measure, than did the control group GTAs (see Table 2).

A MANOVA comparing the pre- and posttest scores for the experimental group did not yield a significant difference between the groups for the Attention Measure and Learning Loss Measure, Wilks $\lambda = .75$, $F(3, 23) = 2.54$, $p > .05$, $\eta^2 = .25$. The descriptive statistics are reported in Table 2.

Qualitative results. The results for all six open-ended questions addressing H1 are presented in a combined thematic fashion. The first theme was that GTAs in the control group indicated greater dissatisfaction with training than those who received CMT, and made four comments indicating that training failed to cover student misbehaviors and classroom management effectively; none of those in the experimental group made such remarks. Specifically, members of the experimental group (pretest) expressed comfort with the training program that included CMT, and made 12 comments indicating that CMT was effective in addressing their concerns regarding student misbehaviors and classroom management; however, none of those in the control group made such remarks.

A second theme was the satisfaction reported by experimental group members, at the time of the posttest, with the CMT program. For example, one such GTA stated that "I was well prepared for student misbehaviors." Other GTAs observed that misbehavior was not a problem in their classrooms. Several GTAs also reported feeling confident following CMT. For instance, a GTA

noted that "it made me feel more at ease that even if things happen, I have a support system behind me." In sum, GTAs in the experimental group made 14 comments on the posttest indicating that CMT was effective at addressing classroom management concerns and helping them to handle misbehaviors; none of the GTAs in the control group made such remarks.

A third theme of responses from the experimental group (posttest) was that they were able to employ classroom management tactics to successfully handle student misbehaviors, including establishing credibility early on, relaxing and showing confidence, and addressing misbehaviors immediately. For example, a GTA in the experimental group stated "I know how and when to address student misbehavior." Another GTA explained "I have learned how to confront students; how to sit down with them and tell them things they don't want to hear." Other GTAs indicated that misbehaviors were managed following CMT. For example, a GTA reflected that "because of the rapport I have with my students, student misbehavior was only a short problem in the beginning but is no longer a problem." A different GTA advised "don't wait to address issues- they will escalate. Choose which battles to fight as long as you know you'll win the war." As one female GTA explained:

> Inappropriate behavior occurs one time as the fault of the student. If it happens again, it is the instructors' fault; if you address problems from the time they occur, it is easier to get them to stop than if you let them go on for a while and then try to stop them. You have already given them permission to act inappropriately.

Effects of CMT on Student Misbehaviors

The second hypothesis predicted that GTAs who receive CMT would experience less severe student misbehaviors in the basic course sections than GTAs who do not receive CMT.

Table 3
Descriptive Statistics for Frequency of Misbehavior Measure

Student Misbehavior	Group	*M*	*SD*
Inappropriate Behavior	Control	1.94	.64
	Exp. Pretest	1.58	.52
	Exp. Posttest	1.93	.62
Inappropriate Speech Topics	Control	3.06_{a}	1.43
	Exp. Pretest	1.83_{a}	1.27
	Exp. Posttest	2.07	1.33
Sexist Language	Control	2.61_{bc}	1.15
	Exp. Pretest	1.58_{b}	1.08
	Exp. Posttest	1.79_{c}	1.05
Ethnocentric Language	Control	2.56	1.20
	Exp. Pretest	2.25	1.29
	Exp. Posttest	2.36	1.39
Poor Audience Members	Control	1.89_{d}	.76
	Exp. Pretest	2.42	1.17
	Exp. Posttest	2.71_{d}	1.49
Poor Classroom Environment	Control	2.83	1.38
	Exp. Pretest	2.42	1.17
	Exp. Posttest	2.14	1.23

Note. Higher means indicate more frequent student misbehaviors. Scores are based on a 5-point Likert-type scale (from 1 to 5). Means with the same subscripts are significantly different.

Frequency of misbehavior measure. A MANOVA comparing the control and experimental groups (pretest) yielded a significant difference for the Frequency of Misbehavior Measure, Wilks $\lambda = .60$, $F(6, 23) = 2.53$, $p < .05$, $\eta^2 = .40$. Univariate follow-up tests indicated significant differences for Inappropriate Speech Topics, $F(1, 28) = 5.72$, $p < .05$, $\eta^2 = .17$, and Sexist Language, $F(1, 28) = 6.05$, $p < .05$, $\eta^2 = .18$. However, univariate follow-up tests for the groups did not find significant differences for the remaining items. Mean scores indicated that GTAs who received CMT reported less frequent misbehaviors for five of the six items, than did those in the control group (see Table 3).

A MANOVA comparing the control and experimental groups (posttest) did not yield a significant difference between the groups for the Frequency of Misbehavior Measure, Wilks $\lambda = .71$, $F(6, 25) = 1.74$, $p > .05$, $\eta^2 = .30$. Descriptive statistics are reported in Table 3.

A MANOVA comparing the pre- and posttest scores for the experimental group did not yield a significant difference for the Frequency of Misbehavior Measure, Wilks $\lambda = .86$, $F(6, 19) = .51$, $p < .05$, $\eta^2 = .14$. See Table 3 for descriptive statistics.

Extent of misbehavior and management of misbehavior measures. A MANOVA comparing the control and experimental groups (pretest) did not yield a significant difference for the Extent of Misbehavior Measure and the Management of Misbehavior Measure, Wilks $\lambda = .57$, $F(14, 11) = .59$, $p > .05$, $\eta^2 = .43$. See Tables 4 and 5 for descriptive statistics.

Table 4
Descriptive Statistics for Extent of Misbehavior Measure

Student Misbehavior	Group	*M*	*SD*
Plagiarism Problem	Control	1.00	.94
	Exp. Pretest	.56	.88
	Exp. Posttest	1.07	.92
Backtalk Problem	Control	1.24_a	.75
	Exp. Pretest	.78	.97
	Exp. Posttest	$.43_a$	.76
Refusal to Participate Problem	Control	1.35	1.46
	Exp. Pretest	.56	.88
	Exp. Posttest	.79	1.05
Loud Talk Problem	Control	1.94	1.09
	Exp. Pretest	1.67	1.23
	Exp. Posttest	1.86	1.17
Inattentive Audience Problem	Control	1.47	.94
	Exp. Pretest	1.11	.93
	Exp. Posttest	1.71	1.27
Tardy on Speech Day Problem	Control	.29	.47
	Exp. Pretest	.11	.33
	Exp. Posttest	.50	.94
Side Conversation Problem	Control	2.18	.73
	Exp. Pretest	2.00	1.50
	Exp. Posttest	2.50	1.09

Note. Higher means indicate a greater extent of student misbehavior. Scores are based on a 5-point Likert-type scale (from 0 to 4). Means with the same subscripts are significantly different.

A MANOVA comparing the control and experimental groups (posttest) yielded a significant difference for the Extent of Misbehavior Measure and the Management of Misbehavior Measure, Wilks $\lambda = .31$, $F(14, 16) = 2.53$, $p < .05$, $\eta^2 = .69$. Univariate follow-up tests indicated significant differences for Backtalk Problem, $F(1, 29) = 8.79$, $p < .05$, $\eta^2 = .23$. However, univariate follow-up tests did not indicate significant differences for the remaining items. See Tables 4 and 5 for descriptive statistics.

A MANOVA comparing the pre- and posttest scores for the experimental group did not yield a significant difference for the Extent of Misbehavior Measure and the Management of Misbehavior Measure, Wilks $\lambda = .25$, $F(14, 8) = 1.75$, $p > .05$, $\eta^2 = .75$. See Tables 4 and 5 for descriptive statistics.

Qualitative results. Responses to three open-ended questions addressed H2. The question about instances of severe student misbehaviors that had to be documented or reported is recorded by the number of GTAs surveyed who indicated or did not indicate severe misbehaviors, as opposed to counting the number of comments made in response to the survey item. Responses to the two remaining questions are presented as a content analysis of categories to show a numerical progression of responses from control and experimental group GTAs.

Several severe instances of misbehavior were reported by those in the control group (see Meyer et al., 2007). Overall, 11 control group GTAs (61.11%) responded that they had not experienced misbehaviors that were severe enough to be documented or reported, while seven (38.89%) reported eight incidents involving

Table 5
Descriptive Statistics for Management of Misbehavior Measure

Student Misbehavior	Group	*M*	*SD*
Plagiarism Management	Control	2.88	1.05
	Exp. Pretest	3.00	1.00
	Exp. Posttest	3.29	.73
Backtalk Management	Control	3.29	.77
	Exp. Pretest	3.22	.97
	Exp. Posttest	3.36	1.08
Refusal to Participate Management	Control	3.12	.99
	Exp. Pretest	3.44	.73
	Exp. Posttest	3.07	1.27
Loud Talk Management	Control	3.24	.90
	Exp. Pretest	3.22	.83
	Exp. Posttest	3.43	.85
Inattentive Audience Management	Control	3.41	.80
	Exp. Pretest	3.33	1.00
	Exp. Posttest	3.21	1.19
Tardy on Speech Day Management	Control	3.71	.59
	Exp. Pretest	3.78	.67
	Exp. Posttest	3.86	.36
Side Conversation Management	Control	3.12	.78
	Exp. Pretest	3.44	.88
	Exp. Posttest	3.36	1.01

Note. Higher means indicate a greater ability to manage student misbehavior. Scores are based on a 5-point Likert-type scale (from 0 to 4).

problems of plagiarism, student conflict, and repeated misbehavior problems with a particular student. Those in the experimental group (pretest), however, did not experience severe misbehaviors. Overall, 12 of the GTAs (92.31%) in the experimental group (pretest) responded that they had not experienced misbehaviors that were severe enough to be documented or reported, while one (7.69%) responded that she did catch cheating problems on homework assignments, but also stated that she was able to handle the situation without reporting or documenting the incident. Those in the experimental group also experienced fewer instances of severe student misbehaviors at the time the posttest was administered than did those in the control group. Overall, 12 experimental group GTAs (85.71%) responded, at the time of the posttest, that they had not experienced student misbehaviors that were severe enough to be documented or reported, while two GTAs (14.29%) reported three incidents of plagiarism.

The content analysis for the remaining two questions addressing H2 generated six categories: *Assignments* (which included subcategories of plagiarism, refusal to participate, handing in work late or requesting extensions, avoiding work, and not turning in assignments), *Attendance* (which included subcategories of tardiness on speech or regular class days, and sleeping during class), *Attitude* (which included subcategories of having a bad attitude, expressing hostility toward GTAs or other students, use of sarcasm, use of informal language when addressing GTAs, and lack of respect), *No Problem* (which included comments expressing that misbehaviors have not been a problem) *Speeches* (which included subcategories of group work problems, poor

audience skills, and inappropriate speech topics), and *Talk* (which included subcategories of side conversations, talking while GTAs or other students have the floor, over-talkers who dominate discussion, inappropriate topics of conversation, talking at inappropriate times, and sexist or ethnocentric language).

Table 6
Frequency of Student Misbehaviors by Condition

	Control	Exp. Pretest	Exp. Posttest	Total Comments
Assignments	64.7%	5.88%	29.4%	17
Attendance	40%	10%	50%	10
Attitude	66.6%	6.7%	26.7%	15
No Problem	16.7%	50%	33.3%	6
Speeches	41.7%	33.3%	25%	12
Talk	48%	24%	28%	50

Note. Percentages total across in rows.

The content analysis for the questions addressing the frequency of misbehaviors and those misbehaviors that GTAs report a concern with managing are reported by the number of comments. As demonstrated in Table 6, control group GTAs made more comments concerning the frequency of misbehaviors for the categories of talk, assignments, attitude, and speeches, than did experimental group GTAs at either time. Meanwhile, experimental group GTAs made more comments indicating that misbehaviors were not a problem. As demonstrated in Table 7, those in the control group made more com-

ments concerning the misbehaviors that were difficult to manage for the categories of talk, assignments, attitude, and speeches, than did experimental group GTAs at either time. Again, those in the experimental group made more comments indicating that misbehaviors were not a problem.

Table 7
Frequency of Misbehaviors GTAs Report Having Difficulty Managing by Condition

	Control	Exp. Pretest	Exp. Posttest	Total Comments
Assignments	60%	20%	20%	10
Attendance	40%	20%	40%	5
Attitude	60%	30%	10%	10
No Problem	20%	33.3%	46.7%	15
Speeches	100%	0%	0%	2
Talk	38.9%	33.3%	27.8%	18

Note. Percentages total across in rows.

DISCUSSION

The qualitative data served to inform the quantitative data by allowing the GTAs to explain the types and severity of misbehaviors they encountered, their perceptions of the training program, and their thoughts concerning their own classroom management style.

GTA Perceptions of Their Training Preparation

The findings support hypothesis one, in that the basic course training program was perceived to be more effective by GTAs who received CMT than those who did not. Specifically, the results from the quantitative data addressing hypothesis one indicate significant differences between those in the control and experimental groups, but do not indicate significant differences between pre- and posttest scores for experimental group GTAs, which is promising since it appears that perceptions of CMT held up over the course of the semester. Thus, it is reasonable to conclude that CMT resulted in more favorable impressions of training preparation for experimental group GTAs than for those in the control group. Qualitative data indicate that GTAs who received CMT had more favorable perceptions of the effectiveness of training than did GTAs who did not receive CMT.

The results for hypothesis one suggest that CMT assuages GTA concerns regarding classroom management. Consequently, it appears that basic course training programs have the choice of either allowing GTAs to continue to learn classroom management through teaching experience, in what might be described as a trial-by-fire approach, or through CMT. The issue, then, is which approach is better. Certainly, the results of the present study do not indicate any harm in preparing GTAs through CMT. Moreover, the results tend to suggest that CMT may speed the development of effective classroom management skills for GTAs.

Effects of CMT on Student Misbehaviors

The findings provide partial support for hypothesis two, in that GTAs who received CMT perceived that they experienced fewer instances of severe misbehavior than those who did not. While the quantitative measures used to answer hypothesis two measure GTA perceptions, the qualitative responses offer insights into what misbehaviors were actually documented and reported. Although the quantitative data indicates mixed results regarding GTAs perceptions of student misbehaviors, GTAs who received CMT did experience fewer instances of severe misbehaviors, according to the qualitative data.

The quantitative data provided only partial support for the second hypothesis. The results from the quantitative data addressing hypothesis two indicate significant differences between control and experimental group GTAs (pretest) for Inappropriate Speech Topics, Sexist Language, and Backtalk Problem. However, both the pre- and posttest mean scores for experimental group GTAs were higher for Poor Audience Members compared to those in the control group. In part, those in the experimental group may have simply been more sensitized to poor audience behaviors as a result of CMT. No significant differences were found between pre- and posttest scores for experimental group GTAs, which is promising since it appears that the effects of CMT held up over the course of the semester.

Qualitative data suggest that CMT was effective in preparing those in the experimental group for what to expect in the classroom, thus providing support for hypothesis two. GTAs who received CMT reported fewer student misbehaviors, experienced fewer severe in-

stances of misbehavior that were documented and reported, and less difficulty managing misbehaviors than did control group GTAs. Specifically, those in the experimental group made comments that misbehaviors were not a problem in their classrooms, or that they were able to resolve those problems, more often than did control group GTAs. GTAs who received CMT indicated that misbehaviors were not a big concern, and that they were able to resolve misbehaviors when they occur. Additionally, the responses indicate that those in the experimental group reported fewer instances of severe misbehaviors that were documented and reported than did control group GTAs. While it is possible that CMT is not the only factor accounting for this difference, it is reasonable to conclude that CMT may have played a role in preventing or deterring misbehaviors for those in the experimental group.

In sum, the qualitative data support the second hypothesis, but are tempered by the quantitative data. Perhaps the explanation for any discrepancy between the qualitative and quantitative results lies in the nature of the quantitative survey items. Since the quantitative data from GTAs in both cohort groups indicated that misbehaviors in the college classroom do not occur at an alarming rate, they may not have felt compelled to express much concern in response to the quantitative measure items or make such generalizations about student behavior. However, the qualitative results tell a different story. It appears that CMT may have helped GTAs to prevent misbehaviors before they occurred. Thus, the reduction in specific instances of severe misbehaviors indicates a positive effect on specific instances of misbehavior in GTA classrooms, as revealed through

the qualitative data, which may provide a deeper context for understanding the potentially limited quantitative data.

Implications for Basic Course Directors

CMT cannot resolve all classroom management problems for GTAs. Since previous research points to a learning curve for instructors (Dinham, 1996), it is reasonable to predict that with more experience, a GTA will perceive herself or himself to possess a greater degree of expertise when dealing with misbehaviors that the same GTA might have earlier in his or her teaching career. Certainly, a number of different factors can influence the behavior of students. The personalities of the student and the instructor must also be taken into account. Plus, it seems reasonable to argue that instructors will experience different types of misbehavior the longer they teach; beginning instructors may not face all of the misbehaviors they may eventually encounter during their first semester of teaching. Thus, while CMT provides the springboard for effective classroom management, teaching experience is the key to eventual success. However, the results of the present study are promising; in that experimental group GTAs reported fewer instances of severe misbehavior following participation in CMT, than did those in the control group. Since the quantitative and qualitative data reveal differences between the cohort groups, it is possible that CMT may have accounted for, at least a portion, of these differences.

Ultimately, the incorporation of CMT into basic course training programs needs to be continuously as-

sessed to determine if GTAs are receiving the preparation they desire and should be provided. In the present study, for instance, CMT did not appear to help experimental group GTAs resolve problems with Poor Audience Members. Future CMT sessions could place more emphasis on this form of misbehavior, and the specific classroom management strategies that GTAs might employ to counteract these problems. Additionally, continuous modifications to CMT are warranted, since further tweaking of the session is necessary given the data collected from participants in the experimental group.

Thus, given the importance placed on the basic course in general education and the large number of sections typically covered by GTAs, it is critical that training not only address communication content and curriculum, but also integrate CMT (Hunt et al., 2005). While it is important for training programs to address course content, it is equally important to address teaching methods. It is unlikely that GTAs who must worry about student misbehaviors are able to effectively concentrate on delivering course content. CMT provides a vital means for GTAs to facilitate student learning and accomplish the instructional goals established for the course.

LIMITATIONS AND SUGGESTIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

A limitation of the present study was the timing of the data collection. Administering the survey instrument to experimental group GTAs at a time similar to the period of data collection for control group GTAs

could yield different results. Future research should also employ longitudinal studies that track misbehavior and GTA classroom management over several semesters to more fully implement and refine CMT. Since the development of classroom management skills evolves over time, it is necessary to explore the various stages of management that GTAs may go through over the course of several semesters or years. While the present study demonstrates the effect of CMT on the initial classroom management practices of GTAs, it does not track participants over a span of several semesters. Future research that is longitudinal in nature may help to determine whether experience in the classroom alone is enough for GTAs to learn effective classroom management, or whether a catalyst for their learning, such as CMT, is necessary to jump start their instructional ventures.

Given that the present study was conducted at a university with an extensive two-week training program and continuing professional development already in place, it is likely that a better investigation of the hypotheses posited in this study might occur in a shorter or less-extensive training program. For example, the training program in which the present study took place is accompanied by a variety of methods of follow-up evaluation and instruction, including a peer mentoring program, classroom observations, and a required first semester course in teaching methods. Thus, the results are limited to the particular cohort groups involved in the study and the findings are tempered by the context of the study. Replication of CMT assessment with different populations of GTAs is needed before generalized comparisons can be drawn to other GTA groups. For in-

stance, comparing the results found here with a replication of CMT in a training program that lasts for only a week or a few days may yield larger significant differences, because the CMT might have a greater impact.

The present study was limited by the small sample size and response rate of participants. Although a majority of the GTAs completed the survey, the total population of available GTAs in the communication department was small. Administering CMT and follow-up surveys to a larger population could provide a more complete picture of the experiences of GTAs in the classroom. Furthermore, the failure to track GTAs in the experimental group by an identification number prevented any paired-sample testing of the data from a particular participant at time of the pretest to the posttest. As a result, it is not possible to determine if particular GTAs were able to resolve initial behavioral problems in the classroom over the course of the semester. Further assessment of CMT is therefore warranted.

Finally, while the basic communication course is a unique environment, due to the emphasis on student performance and interaction, there are other courses that could benefit from training GTAs to become more effective classroom managers. Future research should examine the training programs for GTAs in departments across the university, rather than focusing solely on the communication department.

CONCLUSIONS

Training programs that do not give adequate attention to classroom management issues set GTAs up for a

tumultuous first teaching experience. The success of CMT in the present study illustrates how CMT can encourage GTAs to reflect upon their own classroom management practices and more effectively address misbehaviors. To the extent that those in the experimental group made far fewer suggestions for training improvements, expressed more satisfaction with classroom management preparation, and experienced fewer and less severe student misbehaviors, CMT can largely be regarded as a success in this case. Initially, it appears that CMT gave experimental group participants a more positive impression of their teaching experience and the basic course training program compared to those in the control group. Thus, CMT may have served to reduce the uncertainty of experimental group GTAs prior to entering the classroom. Additionally, experimental group GTAs appeared to have a heightened awareness of student misbehaviors in the classroom. This heightened awareness may have accounted for the increase in reported misbehaviors by these GTAs, such as side conversations, but may also have lead to more proactive approaches to classroom management. Furthermore, it appears that CMT helped to mitigate experimental group participants' reactions to misbehaviors. While these results cannot be generalized to other basic course training programs, the findings do suggest that CMT succeeded in reducing initial instances of student misbehavior in GTA classrooms during the first semester.

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