

Fall 2016

Reducing Disproportional Discipline Referrals for African American Male Students at The Elementary Level

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<http://doi.org/10.21220/W44H2H>

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Reducing Disproportional Discipline Referrals for African American Male
Students at the Elementary Level

A Dissertation

Presented to

The Faculty of the School of Education

The College of William and Mary in Virginia

In Partial Fulfillment

Of the Requirements for the Degree

Doctor of Education

by

Kelly-Robin S. MacPherson

August 2016

Reducing Disproportional Discipline Referrals for African American Male
Students at the Elementary Level

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Dedication

I had no idea what I was getting into when I started this journey, but I am very glad I did. I have learned much from my professors that I have used in my professional and personal life.

I could not have done this without the love and support of my family and friends.

To my parents who have loved me, supported me, and believed in me even when I did not believe in myself. I love you both and am very proud to be your daughter.

To my husband who has been there from the beginning of this journey and encouraged me to pursue this highest level of learning. Thank you for hanging in there with me and always encouraging me.

To Dr. Stronge who stuck with me throughout this endeavor. You could have given up on me at any point and you did not and for that I thank you.

This is for my son who is one of the smartest person I know with the biggest heart. Life will be full of exciting adventures and will challenge you at times, but I want you to remember, you can achieve anything you put your mind to. I believe in you.

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Reducing Disproportional Discipline Referrals for African American Male
Students at the Elementary Level

Abstract

The National Center for Education Statistics [NCES] (2010) documents that most teachers in urban/city schools are White, female teachers. Differences in communication styles, culture, and involvement can have a negative impact on the educational experiences of minority and male students. However, there are White, female teachers who can demonstrate the ability to engage their students that have helped to reduce the disciplinary disparity in their schools. This study focuses on answering the overarching question, what dispositional characteristics/qualities, instructional methods, environmental parameters and classroom management techniques do White, female teachers perceive contribute to lower classroom disciplinary referrals for African American males in the elementary classroom? To answer this question, three separate interviews were conducted with each participant utilizing an established protocol, two classroom observations were conducted of each participant utilizing an observation protocol and reviewing three years of discipline data for each participant. Findings revealed students need to be actively involved in the educational process. Settings need to be structured and procedures established that allow students to demonstrate independence. Teachers need to engage parents by providing opportunities for communication through various means. There needs to be a common vocabulary that transcends cultural differences and personal bias and experiences. Lastly, teacher preparation programs need to

provide students with courses that speak to the cultural and socioeconomic differences within society that are reflected in the urban/city school environment and opportunities to engage in hands-on learning opportunities within urban/city school settings with cooperative teachers.

Kelly-Robin St. John MacPherson

SCHOOL OF EDUCATION

THE COLLEGE OF WILLIAM AND MARY IN VIRGINIA

**Reducing Disproportional Discipline Referrals for African American Male
Students at the Elementary Level**

Chapter 1: The Problem

For over 35 years, researchers and educational leaders have attempted to make sense of the discipline disparity between African American males and their peers within both school and classroom contexts (Edelman, Beck, & Smith, 1975; Skiba, Michael, Nardo, & Peterson, 2000). African American males have been the recipients of a disproportionate number of discipline referrals and subsequent disciplinary sanctions, which have removed them from the educational environment and denied them access to foundational academic skills (Advancement Project/Civil Rights Project [AP/CRP], 2000; Monroe, 2009; Monroe & Obidah, 2004; NCES, 2008; Skiba et al., 2000). The primary focus of research on disproportionate disciplinary practices and subsequent consequences for African American males and other minorities have been at the middle and/or high school levels (Ashford, Queen, Algozzine, & Mitchell, 2008; T. M. Brown, 2007; Skiba et al., 2011) with scant research focusing on this issue at the elementary level (Algozzine, Christian, Marr, McClanahan, & White, 2008; Skiba et al., 2011).

Accomplishing the task of determining the reasons behind this issue has been a challenge because as society becomes more ethnically, racially and culturally diverse, so too do the students in public schools (National Center for Education Statistics, 2010; Hodgkinson, 2002). The increase in other minority groups facing specific discipline issues may draw

attention away from the African American males who have historically been at the forefront of disciplinary actions. Unfortunately, the faculty in large, urban districts is not always as diverse as its student body. Although, the faculty in these districts is more diverse than suburban and rural school districts, White teachers still represent most the teaching force (Frankenberg, 2009; Hodgkinson, 2002; NCES, 2010; NCES, 2016) and, overall, females dominate this field (NCES, 2016). In large urban areas, minority populations combined have increased substantially in the last 20 years (NCES, 2010; Ornstein, 1989). Overall, researchers have projected a decrease in the White population and an increase in the minority population over the next 15 years (NCES, 2010). Disparities between the ethnicity, race and life experiences of teachers and African American male students could contribute to the disproportionality of disciplinary infractions towards this section of the school population.

Hodgkinson (2002) observed that,

as student enrollments become increasingly racially diverse (about 40%, although the state range is from 7% to 68%), the teaching force is actually becoming increasingly White, due mainly to the striking decline in Black, Hispanic, and Asian enrollments in teacher education programs since 1990. (Hodgkinson, 2002, p. 104)

This lack of diversity in the teaching ranks continues based on the results reported by the 2016 report from the NCES from the Schools and Staffing Survey of 2011-2012. This report revealed that 76% of the nation's public school teachers were female, with approximately 75% female representation in

urban/city schools (NCES, 2009). Table 1 illustrates the race/ethnicity of teaching staff and student enrollment across the nation and a further breakdown of teaching staff and student enrollment in urban/city areas.

Table 1

Race/Ethnicity Breakdown of Teachers and Students in National Public Schools and Urban/City Public Schools Fall 2012 and Race/Ethnicity Breakdown of Teachers and Students in National Public Schools and Urban/City Public Schools Fall 2013

	Race/ Ethnicity Breakdown of Teachers in National Public Schools	Race/ Ethnicity Breakdown of Students in National Public Schools	Race/Ethnicity Breakdown of Teachers in Urban/City Public Schools	Race/Ethnicity Breakdown of Students in Urban/City Public Schools
White	2,772,479 (81.9%)	25,002,213 (50.3%)	681,138 (71.1%)	4,594,936,288 (30.4%)
African American	230,194 (6.8%)	7,743,485 (15.6%)	202,138 (21.1%)	3,627,581.28 (24.0%)
American Indian/Alaskan	16,926 (0.5%)	516,705 (1.0%)	±	105,804.454 (0.7%)
Asian	60,934 (1.8%)	2,401,305 (4.8%)	30656 (3.2%)	1,012,699.774 (6.7%)
Native Hawaiian/ Pacific Islander	3,385 (0.1%)	175,236 (0.4%)	1,916! (0.2!%)	60,459.688 (0.4%)
Hispanic	264,046 (7.8%)	12,363,677 (24.9%)	114,960 (12.0%)	5,229,763.012 (34.6%)
Two or more races	33,852 (1.0%)	1,497,772 (3.0%)	10,538 (1.1%)	453,447.66 (3.0%)
Totals	3,109,101	49,700,391	958,000	15,114,922

Note. ^{a±} Reporting standards not met. ^{b!} Interpret data with caution. Adapted from “National Center for Education Statistics, Digest of Education Statistics 2014 50th Edition” by Snyder, de Brey, & Dillow, (April 2016) p. 103

In a field dominated by White females, experiences for minorities and male students have not always been positive and the quality of instruction and the administration of disciplinary practices have not always been fair and equal, especially for African-American male students (Skiba et al., 2000). The landmark decision of *Brown vs. the Board of Education* changed forever African-American students’ educational experiences (NCES, 2010; Eamon & Altshuler, 2004; Skiba et al., 2000). One of the key points the justices made in this Supreme Court ruling in 1954 was, “To separate them from others of similar age and qualifications solely because of their race generates a feeling of inferiority as to their status in the community that may affect their hearts and minds in a way unlikely ever to be undone” (*Brown v. Board of Education*, para. 11). Yet, despite desegregation, there continues to be African American male students whose level of motivation and engagement in the educational process is negatively impacted by disproportionate disciplinary practices.

Some researchers have tried to ascertain the possible reasons behind what has become known as the discipline disparity. The disciplinary disparity, as used throughout this document, relates to the disproportionate percentage African American males as compared to males of other races/ethnicities and females of all races/ethnicities (Skiba et al., 2000). Some qualitative research and position papers have focused on the dynamics of White teachers’ interactions with African-American male students and a lack, perhaps, of cultural competency of White teachers and their strategies for addressing what they

perceive as misbehavior from students of diverse cultures (Cooper, 2003; Ladson-Billings, 2009; Monroe & Obidah, 2004; Sheets, 1996; Wu, Pink, Crain, & Moles, 1982). In their qualitative study focusing on African American males' perception of their educational experiences, West-Olatunji, Baker, and Brooks (2006) used a Readers Theatre format along with discussion to collect data on the educational experiences of African American males; looking at their perceptions of teacher preparation, interactions between students and teachers and teacher expectations for these students. With Readers Theatre, students or the teacher select stories that are adapted to a reading script. Students then read as characters from that reading script (Garrett & O'Connor, 2010; Latrobe, 1996; Chase & Rasinski, 2009). Their use of Readers Theatre allowed West-Olatunji et al. (2006) to identify African American males' need to feel respected by their peers and their teachers. The researchers believed these feelings to be a result of the life experiences and home influences of African American males (West-Olatunji et al., 2006). Minorities appear to experience competing values between what is viewed as appropriate behavior for home verses the school expectations. "African American students, especially males, engage in a 'delicate balancing act between the street ways of interacting needed for survival and the behavioral norms expected at school'" (Seiler, 2001, p. 1010). Students also expressed boredom with how the teachers conveyed information, a belief that students from more affluent settings received "better resources, teachers, and classroom experiences" (West-Olatunji et al., 2006, p. 7).

Researchers have studied various school settings to discover the strategies used by teachers and administrators in their attempt to address behavioral issues. In a few of these studies, the researchers juxtaposed the teaching and classroom management styles of African American teachers and White teachers and the impact on African American males (Abe, 2004; Bacon, Banks, Young, & Jackson, 2007). Other studies have looked at classroom management, teacher expectations, and parameters (Baines & Jacobs, 1990; Christle, Jolivette, & Nelson, 2005; Fenwick, 1998).

Some researchers have found that effective teachers were aware of and addressed the emotional well-being and cognitive needs of their students (Bacon et al., 2007; Baines & Jacobs, 1990; Ladson-Billings, 2009; Pianta & Hamre, 2009; Veney, 2008). Strategies to address the different needs of each student were included in the lessons that students were responsible for completing and in discussions. Teachers addressed the emotional needs of their students by providing them with an environment where they felt safe to take educational risks. Researchers have also determined that when students were involved in determining the rules and rewards and consequences of the classroom, students were more apt to follow those rules to obtain the desired rewards and accept the consequences for their misbehavior (Boynton & Boynton, 2005; Karsenti & Thibert, 1998). In classrooms where teachers established routines and communicated behavioral expectations, researchers observed that there were fewer behavioral incidents and the students were more productive learners (Abe, 2004; Boyton & Boyton, 2005; Christle et al., 2005; Koutsoulis, 2003).

Researchers observed a need, by students, for teachers to cultivate personal relationships with them and to demonstrate to the students that the teachers were interested in them as individuals as well as members of the classroom (Bacon et al., 2007; Boynton & Boynton, 2005; D. F. Brown, 2005; Freiberg & Lamb, 2009; Ladson-Billings, 2009; McDermott & Rothenberg, 2000; Veney, 2008).

In the last approximately 20 years, researchers have been looking at the dynamics of various classroom environments attempting to discover what elements are at work that create a setting where students are actively engaged in the learning process and working harmoniously with the teacher, sharing and acquiring knowledge (Abe, 2004; D. F. Brown, 2005; Koutsoulis, 2003; Ladson-Billings, 2009; McDermott & Rothenberg, 2000; Pianta & Hamre, 2009). These studies have focused on ways of reducing the achievement disparity. Some instructional methods researchers have identified include engaging students using a variety of activities, differentiation, choice, and making students personally responsible for their learning (Abe, 2004; Bear, 1998; Brophy, 1983; Fenwick, 1998).

Researchers have also found that the effectiveness of teachers is also a key factor in engagement of students. A few of the common characteristics of teachers' effectiveness in addressing the learning and discipline needs of minority students gleaned from this research suggest that effective teachers organized their classroom environment in order to facilitate smooth transitions (Berendt & Koski, 1999; Brophy & McCasil, 1992; Rancifer, 1993; Stronge, 2010)

and demonstrate an understanding of classroom procedures and organizing the classroom space for quick and easy retrieval of materials (Baines & Jacobs, 1990; Boynton & Boynton, 2005; Pedota, 2007; Stronge, 2010; Veney, 2008). Effective teachers are competent teachers who demonstrate their competence by identifying and addressing the behavioral and learning needs of their students through both the arrangement of the learning environment and the planning and implementation of lessons that incorporate student differences.

Research suggests three central factors influence student classroom behaviors and student engagement, especially those of African American males: 1) student involvement in the learning environment through participation in behavioral expectations that have clear and concise rewards and consequences; 2) teachers establishing relationships with their students and addressing the behavioral and academic needs of their students; and 3) the layout and organizational aspects of the classroom. Each of these factors contributes to student success, but it is also the impact of the racial differences between the teacher and the students that influences how the classroom factors are perceived and enacted. Thus, it is critical that individuals in the educational setting understand the dynamics of the relationship between African American males and their White, female teachers especially within the urban school setting and their impact on the discipline disparity.

There is a need for professionals in the field of education to identify instructional and behavioral techniques teachers have implemented which have had a positive impact on reducing the disciplinary disparity for the African

American males in their classrooms. What would be the impact on the disciplinary disparity if educators in urban school divisions were to identify and then implement effective instructional and behavioral techniques? Researchers have focused on either teacher effectiveness or behavior management when addressing the issue of low achievement or discipline practices targeting minority students, but there is a limited amount of research that focuses on applying both dimensions of educational practices to better understand the occurrence of disproportionality of African American males receiving higher rates of disciplinary actions.

Statement of Purpose

From kindergarten to Grade 12, discipline is one area that educators collect data in an attempt to address the frequency of disciplinary actions throughout the school year. The purpose of this study was to identify and describe the dispositional characteristics, instructional methods, and classroom management techniques of White, female teachers in urban elementary schools, who have been identified as effective with African American males, which contribute to lower classroom disciplinary referrals for this subset of students. Through teacher interviews, classroom observations, and the review of student records, I employed a qualitative approach that identified the participating teachers' dispositional characteristics, instructional methods, and classroom management techniques that had a positive impact on African American males in relation to lower disciplinary referral rates.

Definition of Key Terms

Behavior intervention – Strategies and techniques utilized by the teacher with the purpose of identifying inappropriate student behaviors, teaching appropriate replacement behaviors, and reinforcing the use of the appropriate behaviors by students using external and/or internal reinforcers. Intervention can be through teaching a social curriculum, individual behavior plans, or teacher/student developed classroom rules with identified rewards and consequences (Abe, 2004; Mendez, Knoff, & Ferron, 2002; Pedota, 2007; Stronge, 2010).

Disciplinary referrals – Formal documentation by an educational staff member of a misconduct exhibited by a student which an administrator or disciplinarian uses to investigate the action and level a punishment which can range from an administrative conference to expulsion.

Discipline – An agreed upon set of clearly stated expectations related to rules, responsibilities, rewards for positive behavior, and consequences for misbehavior established with the purpose of maintaining order, safety, and the promotion of learning (Anderson, 2009; Gaustad, 1992). It is also used to hold individuals accountable for their behavior while providing an opportunity for growth and developing one's character (Abe, 2004). For the purposes of this study, discipline refers to a means of addressing negative behaviors exhibited by students.

Discipline disparity – The overrepresentation of African American males in receipt of a disproportionate number of disciplinary referrals, suspensions, and/or

expulsions than their peers of other races, ethnicities, and gender (Skiba et al., 2000).

Disruptive behaviors – Those behaviors that temporarily halt instruction and inhibit students from learning and the teacher from teaching. This can include verbal disruptions (talking during instruction or yelling) and non-verbal disruptions (sleeping, drawing, or reading non-instructional material).

Engagement in the learning process – Students are observed by the teacher to contribute to group discussions through collaboration and making relevant connections between instruction and life experiences, participate in whole and small group activities, demonstrate qualities of active listening, making connections to past experiences (Abe, 2004; Ladson-Billings, 2009).

Environmental parameters – Established classroom rules and expectations communicated to students by the teacher in regards to: classroom behavior, classroom material usage and storage, transitioning during class, and group interaction (Boynton & Boynton, 2005; Monroe, 2009; Stronge, 2010).

Instructional methods – Providing students with clear instructions and feedback, focusing on student effort and providing student with challenges, ensuring the instruction and content are relevant to students' lives and interests, are person-centered and scaffolded to meet the needs of all students (Abe, 2004; Bacon et al., 2007; Ladson-Billings, 2009).

Objective behaviors – Those behaviors exhibited by a student which are measurable and observable and which are clearly defined (Fenning & Rose, 2007; Monroe & Obidah, 2004.; Skiba et al., 2000).

Punishment – Sanctions meted out to students who have violated school rules which include reprimand, change in assigned seating, verbal reprimands in front of the class, time out, suspension, and expulsion (Abe, 2004; Skiba et al., 2002). The use of punishment is viewed as punitive and a means of humiliating or degrading the student (Abe, 2004).

Subjective behaviors – Behaviors that are not observable or measurable, have no clearly stated definition, and differ based on the tolerance level and perception of each educational staff member (Skiba et al., 2000).

Teacher effectiveness – Effective teachers motivate students to be academically engaged, provide clear and immediate feedback to their students on their performance, develop positive relationships with their students, maximize time on task, communicate high expectations for all students, establish a supportive learning environment, and there is a documented growth in student achievement (Stronge, 2010; Veney, 2008).

Research Questions

The overarching research question guiding this investigation was What dispositional characteristics/qualities, instructional methods, environmental parameters, and classroom management techniques do White, female teachers perceive contribute to lower classroom disciplinary referrals for African American males in the elementary classroom and growth in academic achievement? To answer this question, I created four individual questions to address each aspect of the overarching question. The following questions allowed me to answer the overarching question:

- 1) What instructional methods are employed throughout the learning process within the classroom setting that maintain the engagement of African American males to enable them to demonstrate behavioral and academic success at the elementary school level?
- 2) What classroom management and behavior intervention techniques do White, female teachers incorporate within the elementary classroom setting that have resulted in lower disciplinary referrals and growth in academic achievement for African American males?
- 3) What dispositional characteristics/qualities do White, female teachers demonstrate which contribute to lower classroom disciplinary referrals for African American males in elementary classrooms?
- 4) What environmental parameters are established and maintained within the classroom setting that are perceived by White, female teachers to contribute to African American males' ability to navigate their environment to demonstrate their knowledge and socially acceptable behaviors in the elementary classroom?

Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework for this study was derived from the extensive literature review findings (Figure 1). The concepts that comprise this framework focus on the actions of White, female teachers toward African American male students within the urban classroom. Teachers' dispositional and/or characteristics (Abe, 2004; Bacon et al., 2007; Koutsoulis, 2003; Stronge, 2010) are a central part of the classroom environment. Their interest in establishing

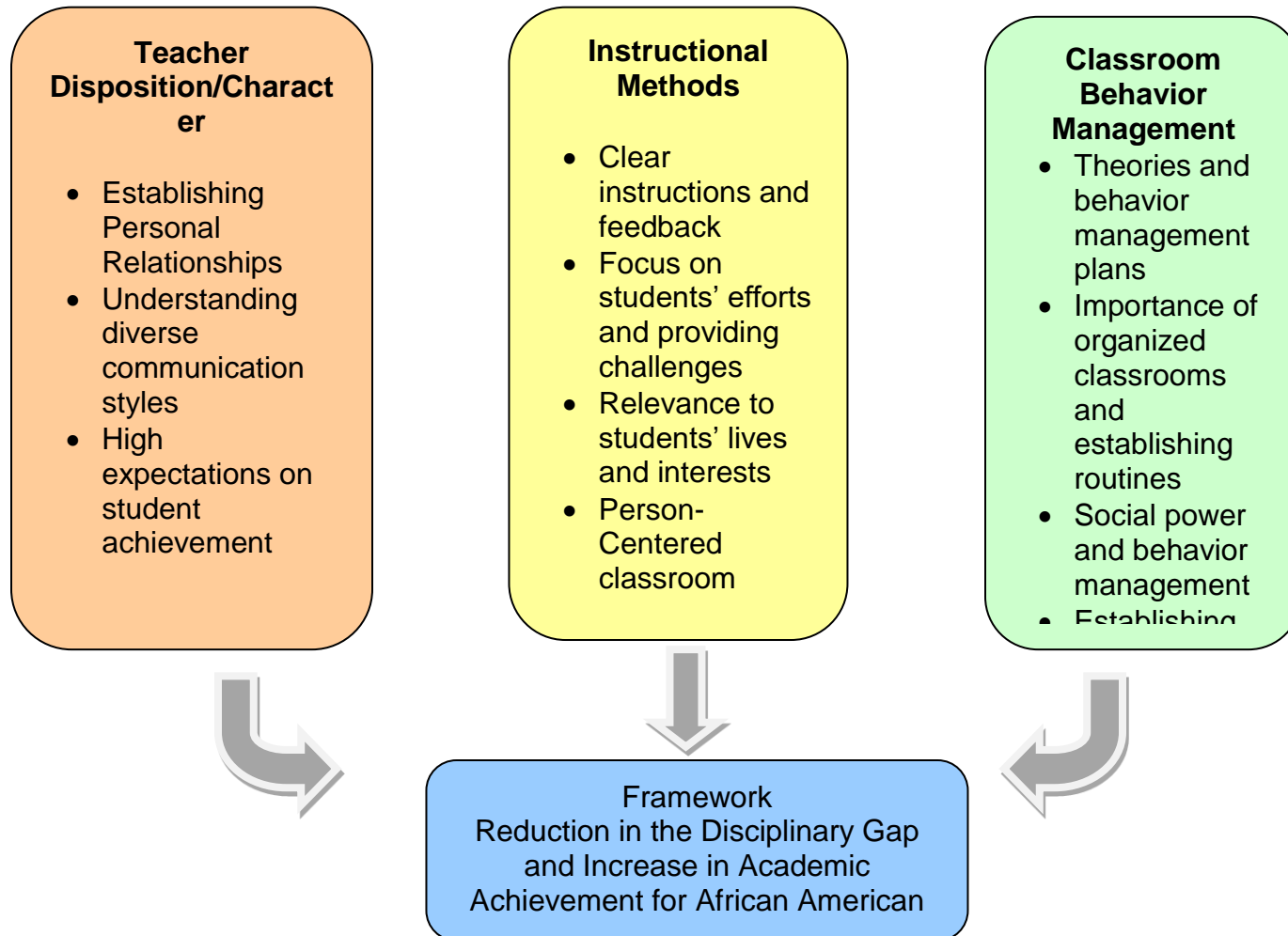
personal relationships with their students, understanding of differences in how students express themselves, and the level of expectation for student behavior and achievement are the center of every teacher's classroom. Teachers' dispositional and/or characteristics are unique and the attitudes and beliefs that they enter the classroom with can have an impact on the students within the class – whether the attitudes and beliefs are overt. Teachers' dispositional and/or characteristics also influence their mode of instructional methods and how they approach classroom management. If these three aspects of teaching are in alignment (dispositional and/or characteristics, instructional method, classroom management), then the result should be a reduction in the disciplinary disparity.

The first aspect of the conceptual framework focused on teachers' disposition/character. This encompassed teachers' ability to establish personal relationships with their students and their families (Abe, 2004; Boynton & Boynton, 2005; Gay, 2002; Ladson-Billings, 2009; Stronge, 2010), understanding communication differences (Abe, 2004; Bireda, 2002; Gay, 2010; Ladson-Billings, 2009; Milner, 2006), and setting high expectations (Abe, 2004; Brophy, 1983). The conceptual framework also focuses on how teachers convey instruction. One way is to provide students with clear instructions and feedback (Bacon et al., 2007; Baines & Jacobs, 1990; Bloom, 1984). Another way is to provide relevance to the lives and interests of students (Abe, 2004; Ladson-Billings, 2009). Establishing a person-centered classroom (Freiberg & Lamb, 2009) may provide more individualization and potentially support students' efforts and prove them with challenges (Bacon et al., 2007; Bloom, 1984; Brophy &

McCasil, 1992; Karsenti & Thibert, 1998). The last aspect focused on how classroom behavior management impacts student performance in the elementary classroom. It included the theories behind behavior management plans (Abe, 2004; Boynton & Boynton, 2005; Curwin, Mendler, & Mendler, 2008; Mendez et al., 2002; Stronge, 2007), the importance of having an organized classroom and establishing routines (Abe, 2004; Bacon et al., 2007; Boynton & Boynton, 2005; Ladson-Billings, 2009; Milner, 2007; Pedota, 2007), how social powers impact behavior management (Abe, 2004; Boynton & Boynton, 2005; D F, Brown, 2005; Monroe, 2009; Souto-Manning & Mitchell, 2012), and establishing clear, concise rules (Abe, 2004; Boynton & Boynton, 2005; Freiberg & Lamb, 2009; Stronge, 2007).

Elementary school learning experiences serve as the foundation for student learning and how they view school and their teachers. The concepts identified through the literature review are behaviors identified as being exhibited by effective teachers in general and the impact of these behaviors on all students. The conceptual framework was a lens for this study in that it helped focus on two subsets of the urban elementary classroom environment: White, female teachers and African American males. It served to identify if these specific behaviors were exhibited by White, female teachers and to observe the impact these teacher behaviors had on the African American male students in classes.

Figure 1. Conceptual Framework



Overview of Methods

This study employed a qualitative approach, which relied heavily on individual teacher interviews, classroom observations, and the review of student records. I conducted all the interviews and classroom observations. A qualitative approach was most appropriate because the data collected allowed me to develop an understanding of individual participants' perception of their lived experiences in context (Crotty, 1998; Moustakas, 1994; Rossman & Rallis, 2003; Schwandt, 2000; Smith, Flowers, & Larkin, 2011). The selection of the participants interviewed was based on principal nomination and school level data. A total of four participants willingly agreed to participate in the study. The review of discipline information focused on African American male students. The review entailed looking at the last three years of discipline reports. Information from each of the interview transcripts, observations, and review of discipline and state assessment results for African American males was broken down into manageable segments and these segments led to the establishment of themes revealed by the data. Similarities and differences that emerged allow for data to be disaggregated and associated with these themes. The themes helped explain the teachers' perceptions in regards to commonalities and differences. The details of the research design and data collection are further explained in the methodology chapter.

Significance of the Research

Although the purpose of our educational system has been to socialize and graduate productive citizens, educators are also responsible for establishing and

maintaining a safe and secure environment in which learning can take place. Teachers and administrators are given the task of making discipline decisions every day. For teachers, it is the decision to refer a student for what they view as behavioral transgressions. For the administrator that receives the disciplinary referral, it is the decision to either provide a warning or administer a more punitive measure. Since disciplinary referrals for behavioral infractions often begin with the teachers, it is important that this investigation focused on why the identified teachers have lower referral rates and what is transpiring within the classroom environment of these teachers. It was also important to ascertain the level of tolerance that each teacher has for disciplinary issues. It is assumed by those outside of the classroom that a teacher with low disciplinary referral rates has a classroom that is conducive to learning and that the culture of the school and classroom is one of tolerance and acceptance of differences or, perhaps, the teacher has a higher tolerance for misbehavior. When comparing classroom disciplinary referrals to administrative action, Skiba et al. (2000) found that “disproportionality in school suspensions for African American students can be accounted for in large measure by disproportionate referral of African American students to the office” (p. 330). They found that the rate of classroom disciplinary referrals was statistically significant in relation to race and gender, but no significant differences in administrative consequences in relation to race and gender. My study is critical to fill the gap of research with a focus on the interpersonal relationships of White, female teachers with their African American male students.

As early as 1975, the Children's Defense Fund (CDF) was reporting the disproportionate number of minorities being suspended compared to their peers of other ethnicities. "No one is immune from suspension, but black children were suspended at twice the rate of any other ethnic group" (Edelman et al., 1975, p. 12). At that point in time, Edelman et al. (1975) reported that African American students were suspended three times more often than their White peers in elementary school and twice as often in high school. In 2007, African American students experienced higher suspension rates than their peers from any other race and/or ethnicity with suspensions and expulsions, in general, being higher for males than females (Frankenberg, 2009; NCES, 2010). This high level of suspensions is especially true in urban schools, where the increasing minority population has introduced a plethora of diverse cultures in an environment that is currently dominated by White, female teachers. It is important to study the interpersonal relationships of White, female teachers and their African American male students to identify if the teachers lack an understanding of the interpersonal relationships of cultures different than their own (Bireda, 2002; Skiba, et al., 2011; Townsend, 2000).

The intended audiences for this study were individuals working in the field of education. Research has focused on reducing the achievement disparity between the White students and African American students using various instructional strategies. Several dissertations have focused on the academic achievement of minority students who have both White and African American teachers (Bacon et al., 2007; Garibaldi, 1992; Ladson-Billings, 2009; McDermott

& Rothenberg, 2000; Milner, 2007; Milner, 2010). Researchers have also focused on addressing misbehaviors in the school environment across ethnicities and race through various classroom management strategies (Abe, 2004; Brophy & McCasil, 1992). There has also been research that has focused on disproportionate disciplinary referrals and subsequent punitive measures employed by administrators to address misconduct (AP/CRP, 2000; Bowditch, 1993; Christle et al., 2004; Townsend, 2000; Skiba et al., 2002). Yet, a gap in current research exists. It is unknown how White teachers are effective in reducing the disciplinary disparity.

Through the implementation of this study, the focus is on attempting to identify dispositional characteristics/qualities, instructional practices, and classroom management techniques that White teachers, within the urban school setting, are utilizing to reduce the discipline disparity for African American males within their classrooms. The findings from this study may be useful to further research that focuses on reducing the discipline disparity for African American male students. Perhaps it can serve as a means of bringing all stakeholders (e.g., parents, students, community members, teachers, administrators, policy makers) together to discuss the importance of identifying the dispositional characteristics/qualities of teachers, the instructional practices they implement, and the classroom management practices they employ that have had a positive impact on reducing the disciplinary disparity and increasing African American male students' achievement.

The consequences of inaction are far reaching for African American males. Continued use of exclusionary discipline practices levied against this subset will only serve to increase the likelihood of their receiving future disciplinary actions. These actions create an endless cycle of removal, which will eventually have a negative impact on their academic achievement. African American males who have been removed from the educational setting because they have received multiple suspensions are at risk for academic failure and, subsequently, have a higher probability of dropping out of school. Even Monroe (2009), in her qualitative study on reducing the discipline disparity at the middle school level, stated, “empirical studies tightly focused on teachers’ approaches to student discipline are both timely and fundamental to closing the discipline disparity. Studies inclusive of racially diverse participants are especially needed to add balance and dimension to social science research” (p. 324). My study is a step in that direction by looking at the dynamic between White, female teachers and their African American male students in urban school districts.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

In urban school divisions, there is a need for educators to have many different methods of addressing the needs of students from different races, ethnicities, and socioeconomic situations. The acquisition of these skills begins at the collegiate level with coursework designed to train pre-service teachers on various instructional, organizational, and behavior management strategies in conjunction with instruction on content (Stronge, 2010). Teachers graduate from college and enter the field of education with definitive ideas about classroom management systems, behavior management systems, and with a sense of readiness to change the world. They have many preconceptions about their first year of teaching.

Unfortunately, classroom realities do not always match their preconception (Moore, 2003; Page, 1983). Teachers and students bring with them different levels of background knowledge, experiences, beliefs, values and family structures to the educational setting. Students come with a variety of learning differences, varying home circumstances, and diverse cultural backgrounds. When they enter urban public schools, they are met with a teaching force that is predominantly White. Bireda (2002) observed that the result is a negative disciplinary cycle for African American students.

African American students, in epidemic proportions, are being trapped in a cycle that leads to disciplinary referrals, detention, in-school suspension,

expulsion, or placement in an alternative setting. This cycle ultimately ends with academic failure and dropping out. For many, the future beckons even more bleak: incarceration is the last stop in the cycle. (p. 55)

Through the research associated with this study, the hope is to identify how the recommended teachers for this study have been successful in breaking this cycle within their own classrooms.

Teachers not only have differing perceptions of what constitutes misbehavior, disruption, or disrespect, but also have different levels of tolerance in relation to classroom movement and noise levels. Typical human behavior can be categorized two ways: as subjective or as objective (Ashford et al., 2008; Skiba et al., 2002). Many classroom-generated disciplinary referrals may be viewed as more subjective in that the disciplinary issue may not be universally defined and quantified (e.g., disruptive, disrespect). Few disciplinary referrals are for more observable, quantifiable behaviors (e.g., physical assault, destruction of property). Thus, there is a great deal of variability in teacher reactions to the same behavior.

Teachers need to examine their belief systems, life experiences, and personal bias to succeed in navigating more culturally and ethnically diverse classrooms (Milner, 2006). Teachers who are in touch with their own beliefs, bias, and experiences have a better chance of knowing how they impact their interactions with students. Factors that influence this success in increasingly diverse classrooms are: different types of behaviors and means of addressing

misbehavior (Abe, 2004; Algozzine et al., 2008; Ashford et al., 2008; Bacon et al., 2007; Boynton & Boynton, 2005; D F, Brown, 2005; M. R. McCarthy & Soodak, 2007); the impact of the disciplinary disparity on minority students (Eamon & Altshuler, 2004; Mendez et al., 2002; Morris, 2005; Nicholson-Crotty, Birchmeier, & Valentine, 2009; Skiba et al., 2002); and the role of organization, routines, relationships, and instruction (Abe, 2004; Bacon et al., 2007; Boynton & Boynton, 2005; Freiberg & Lamb, 2009; Ladson-Billings, 2009; Milner, 2007; Pedota, 2007; Pianta & Hamre, 2009; Skiba & Peterson, 2003; Souto-Manning & Mitchell, 2012; Stronge, 2010; Veney, 2008). Each of these factors will be explored in relation to: origins of behavior, behavior management, and the impact of effective teachers on minority students.

Dispositional Characteristics/Qualities of Effective Teachers

As noted earlier, the relationship between teachers and their students is an important one. Next to their parents, students spend a significant amount of their formative school years with individuals who are not a part of their family—specifically, teachers. As such, there is a need for teachers and their students to establish a relationship that is built on mutual trust, respect, and caring (Gay, 2002). This presents the opportunity for students to view their school, and their classroom, as a place they feel a part of. Students need to feel as if there is someone in their daily lives, outside of family, to whom they can go when they need assistance and who care about them (Bacon et al., 2007). Furthermore, teachers need to ensure that instructional methods are novel and engaging (Baines & Jacobs, 1990; Bacon et al., 2007; Bloom, 1984; Cooper, 2003;

Stronge, 2010). There is a need to determine if these strategies have a positive impact on reducing the disciplinary disparity. Table A2 (Appendix A) shows the alignment of the key references used to identify the dispositional characteristics/qualities of effective teachers on minority students.

Establishing Personal Relationships

One way to achieve a positive classroom environment is through establishing personal relationships with students (Boynton & Boynton, 2005; D, F Brown, 2005; Freiberg & Lamb, 2009; Mendez et al., 2002), parents (Boynton & Boynton, 2005; Christle et al., 2005; Mendez et al., 2002; Soodak, 2003), and the community (Dwyer, Osher, & Warger, 1998). “In positive relationships, there is less friction and more enjoyable interactions than in relationships that are negative” (Veney, 2008, p. 95). While establishing these positive relationships, it is important that teachers also gain an understanding of the communication styles of the students in relation to their families and community. Teachers need to incorporate their understanding of the communication styles to establish boundaries of acceptable behavior and set parameters that define their relationships with the students, parents, and community members in order to develop an effective classroom management plan.

In his qualitative study, Hubbard (2005) studied three White teachers in urban middle schools who were identified as implementing effective disciplinary practices, which included establishing genuine relationships with their students and possessing high teacher efficacy and confidence. The establishment of teacher-student relationships was based on teachers learning about their

students' interests (Hubbard, 2005; McAllister & Irvine, 2002), knowledge (Bacon et al., 2007; Bloom, 1984; Ladson-Billings, 2009; Souto-Manning & Mitchell, 2012) and experiences (Baines & Jacobs, 1990; Howard, 2008; Ladson-Billings, 2009; Souto-Manning & Mitchell, 2012) to create a meaningful classroom management system. Teachers developed relationships with their students that were built upon mutual trust, respect, and valuing the students' contributions to the classroom. Teachers tried to learn more about the African American culture via questions and discussions with their peers and administrators. They were not afraid to make mistakes in front of their students (Hubbard, 2005). Student opinions, thoughts, and concerns were valued with academic achievement being the focus.

In their qualitative study, Bacon et al. (2007) found that African American and White teachers took different approaches when establishing personal relationships with their students. African American teachers became actively involved with students, providing them with additional assistance, and stressing the importance of receiving an education. "African American teachers emphasized the importance of their relationships with students and acknowledged the lack of a caring relationship can create misbehavior" (Bacon et al., 2007, p. 166). Students who perceived their teachers cared about them were less likely to misbehave. These teachers interacted with individuals in the students' community and neighborhood as well as provided guidance to students. In contrast, White teachers believed it was important to establish positive relationships with their students and set high expectations while

attempting to diminish behavior problems (Bacon et al., 2007). They felt it was important to know about their students' personal lives and extra-curricular activities. These teachers were more involved and took an interest in the students' school-based activities.

Reinforcing the concept of self-respect and respect for others is another way that teachers can establish personal relationships with their students (Fenwick, 1998). In her qualitative study, Fenwick (1998) shared that teachers should communicate high expectations for all students along with the promotion of student ownership of their behavior. It is important that teachers be a sounding board and listen to students. Teachers should appreciate the cultural context in which students live while keeping an eye on what the future could hold for them (Bacon et al., 2007; Milner, 2007). Classroom leaders should see themselves as involved in the process of students becoming responsible adults.

Teachers in Cooper's (2003) qualitative case study took an authoritative approach to discipline as they implemented a variety of strategies to increase student success. These included: clear directions and relevant feedback, organization, routine-oriented work environment, varied strategies presented in an animated way, monitoring through observation and student verbal responses, and academic intervention. Although the teachers took an authoritative approach to discipline, teachers were also observed to establish relationships within the African American community in which they worked: learning about the community, demonstrating empathy, and increasing their own racial awareness.

“Teachers saw themselves as second mothers to the children” (Cooper, 2003, p. 422).

Students look to their teachers for affirmation and acceptance and parents want teachers to respect and value their children (McDermott & Rothenberg, 2000). Establishing quality relationships and incorporating effective communication that considers the diversity of cultures of students is important to effective classroom management.

Understanding Diverse Communication Styles

Communication is a means of interacting with others either verbally or through nonverbal actions and provides the foundation of establishing and developing personal relationships and providing for the social construction of reality (Bireda, 2002; Brown, 2007; Day-Vines & Day-Hairston, 2005; D. F. Brown; Gay, 2010; Milner, 2006; Monroe, 2005; Weinstein, Tomlinson-Clarke, & Curran, 2003). In public schools across the United States, there are significantly more White teachers holding teacher positions than minorities (NCES, 2010). This is especially true in urban areas where White teachers represent the majority and the student body is predominately composed of minority students (NCES, 2009; NCES, 2010). The need for establishing personal relationships would appear to be essential the foundation of any classroom management program. Teachers need to establish fluid and equitable relationships that extend beyond the classroom (Ladson-Billings, 2009). Since communication is the foundation for building relationships through fostering trust and respect, it is important that teachers are aware of the differing communication styles of

minority students (Bacon et al., 2007; Day-Vines & Day-Hairston, 2005), especially African American males, and establish two-way communication (Johnson, 1997). Teachers also need to be tough, sensitive, and tolerant of the interpersonal communication styles of various cultures (Abe, 2004; Bacon et al., 2007; Jackson, 2007; Monroe & Obidah, 2004; Soodak, 2003).

Differences in communication styles between ethnic groups has been something that public-school officials have grappled with since the desegregation of schools in the early 1960s and has been documented in various empirical research and position-based papers (Bireda, 2002; Brown, 2007; Day-Vines & Day-Hairston, 2005; Monroe, 2005; Weinstein, Tomlinson-Clarke, & Curran, 2003). In the early years of desegregation, many teachers were White, middle-class females with a teaching style and value system that were rooted in the dominant Western European culture (Wren, 1999). There was little preparation for addressing the educational needs of students from other cultures or understanding significantly different verbal and nonverbal communication skills (Bireda, 2002; Gay, 2010; Milner, 2006). These differences create misunderstandings, which can result in African American males being suspended from school (Birrell, 1995).

D. F. Brown (2005) introduced the concept of congruent communication. Teachers who practice congruent communication have learned to listen instead of judge, to synchronize their verbal and nonverbal language, to demonstrate empathy towards their students, and use an assertive method and authoritative manner. Students are more inclined to cooperate with teachers and develop the

belief that they are responsible for their own behavior and developing an internal locus of control (D. F. Brown, 2005) when they feel they have been heard. Differences in communication styles, life styles, and child rearing are topics that researchers have been focusing on for the last few decades. Even though schools are over 50 years out from desegregation, researchers are still finding that disproportionate disciplinary practices in some urban school settings (Bireda, 2002; Bowditch, 1993; Edelman et al., 1975; Gregory, 1997; Mendez et al., 2002; Sheets, 1996; Skiba et al., 2002; Wu et al., 1982).

Effective communication with students of different ethnicities and races requires teachers to develop a knowledge base of their students' cultures. This knowledge can be integrated into their pedagogical practices and in their interactions with their students (Monroe & Obidah, 2004). In their qualitative study, Monroe and Obidah (2004) focused on how cultural synchronization between teachers and their students impacted teachers' approaches to classroom discipline. They studied the impact that one teacher, in a southern, urban school setting, had on her 22 students; 12 of which were African American male, nine African American females, and one White female. They found the teacher employed humor that was considered typical for a southern urban area. The teacher's employment of communication synchronization allowed her to consider the cultural influences on students' behavior that would traditionally be viewed as disruptive such as communication style, emotional displays, or language patterns (Bireda, 2002; Monroe & Obidah, 2004).

In Monroe and Obidah's (2004) study, the teacher presented a tough, authoritative style, which communicated to the students her disapproval over any transgressions committed. Her choice of words and displeasure with students when they did misbehave mirrored that of the disciplinary style of her African American students from low-income backgrounds (Monroe & Obidah, 2004). "The teacher drew on referents such as speech patterns, voice tones, facial expressions, and word choices that conveyed her behavioral expectations to students in familiar and meaningful ways" (Monroe & Obidah, 2004, p. 266). If teachers can demonstrate understanding of different communication styles, it could create a reduction in disciplinary problems.

Teachers, who have the aptitude to effectively communicate, can realistically influence the actions of students and other individuals on behalf of students (D. F. Brown, 2005; Spaulding & O'Hair, 2004). Students feel respected when teachers take a personal interest in their lives and are kind to them (McDermott & Rothenberg, 2000; Milner, 2007), which translates into fewer disciplinary problems (Milner, 2007; Pedota, 2007).

Effects of High Expectations on Students' Achievement

Brophy (1983), McDermott and Rothenberg (2000), and Pedota (2007) also found that high expectations were important to student achievement. According to Brophy (1983), teachers need to "believe that the students are capable of learning and that they are capable of teaching them successfully" (p. 527). Pedota (2007) expressed a need for teachers to make use of a variety of instructional strategies and model expected behavior while holding high

expectations. In their qualitative research, McDermott and Rothenberg (2000) triangulated data gathered from talking with a parent focus group, teacher focus group, and children focus group from an urban neighborhood with high poverty rates. As they spoke with each group, they found that “exemplary urban teachers are those who construct respectful and trusting relationships with children and their families” (p. 2). These individuals networked with other effective teachers to develop learning experiences that made students feel good about themselves and what they could accomplish within the classroom environment. They expected their students to be successful. Exemplary teachers engaged in regular communication with student families and had made a connection within the community. They were willing to face bureaucracy head-on, had a willingness to learn about their students’ cultures and take an interest in them that went beyond the classroom.

Instructional Methods of Effective Teachers

On average, teachers spend approximately 40 hours a week interacting with, disciplining, teaching, and caring for the students in their classrooms. There are six sources that influence student achievement: the student, home, schools, principals, peer effects, and teachers (Hattie, 2003). Of these, students (about 50% variance) and teachers (about 30% variance) have the most influence. To develop novel and engaging instruction for students, teachers must first know the subject matter they are teaching, the pace that their instruction should follow (Berendt & Koski, 1999) and create lessons that meet student learning styles (Howard, 2008). Effective teachers have been found to skillfully

integrate a variety of instructional strategies for students to master the curriculum. These strategies include: providing clear instructions (Cooper, 2003) and constructive feedback (Baines & Jacobs, 1990; Berendt & Koski, 1999; Brophy & McCaslin, 1992; Cooper, 2003), focusing on student effort (Karsenti & Thibert, 1998), using a variety of instructional strategies (Abe, 2004; Howard, 2008; Stronge, 2010), providing relevance to students' lives (Bacon et al., 2007; Ladson-Billings, 2009; Milner, 2007; Souto-Manning & Mitchell, 2012) while incorporating their interests (McAllister & Irvine, 2002), challenging students (Christle et al., 2004; Veney, 2008), and having high expectations for all student's achievement (Bacon et al., 2007; Christle et al., 2004; Pedota, 2007). Table A3 (Appendix A) shows the alignment of key references used to identify instructional methods of effective teachers.

Clear Instructions and Feedback

The best way for individuals to learn something new is for an instructor to provide them with clear instructions.

Teacher behaviors that were related most strongly to learner achievement and satisfaction were the following: using relevant examples during explanation; reviewing material; asking questions to find out if students understood; answering student questions appropriately; repeating things when students did not understand; teaching in a step-by-step manner; providing students with sufficient examples of how to do the work; providing time for practice; teaching the lesson at a pace appropriate for students; explaining things and then stopping so that students could think

about it; informing students of lesson objectives or what they were expected to be able to do on completion of instruction; and presenting the lesson in a logical manner. (Hines, Cruickshank, & Kennedy, 1985, p. 95)

Students need teachers to provide them with relevant feedback on their educational performance (Baines & Jacobs, 1990; Berendt & Koski, 1999; Bloom, 1984; Brophy & McCaslin, 1992; Cooper, 2003; Karsenti & Thibert, 1998). To achieve this, teachers need to monitor the learning environment to ensure that students are acquiring necessary knowledge (Baines & Jacobs, 1990; Karsenti & Thibert, 1998).

Focus on Students' Efforts and Providing Challenges

When planning lessons, teachers need to ensure that they are not only challenging their students, but also acknowledging their efforts. The African American teachers in Bacon et al.'s (2007) study conveyed the importance of encouraging students to take risks by providing them with a learning environment that was supportive and incorporating a variety of instructional techniques and activities to assist them in acquiring new information. Like Cooper (2003), these teachers also believed they needed to have a forward vision concerning their students' futures and make the curriculum relevant to their lives.

The focus of the European teachers in their study was in providing interesting work to motivate their students. They utilized collaborative projects with their students to allow them the opportunity to work together. Additionally, through their knowledge of the curriculum, they worked to ensure that their

students developed and expanded on basic skills. Lastly, they provided clear expectations and consequences.

The essential part of any good teaching requires teachers to enter the curriculum-instruction-assessment cycle: having knowledge of the curriculum, providing students with instruction that conveys that curriculum, and assessing students understanding of what they have learned from the curriculum.

Knowledge of the curriculum to develop lessons to convey that information to the students is an essential part of any teacher's job. How that curriculum is conveyed, through various activities that engage students, is what constitutes good teaching. Such activities as cooperative learning, hands on activities, and making the work interesting are all aspects of good teaching.

Through his research focusing on qualities of effective teachers, Stronge (2007) identified effective teaching techniques in relation to at-risk and high achieving students. In relation to at-risk students, Stronge (2007) identified traits of effective teachers possessed. They care deeply for their students (Stronge, 2007). They attempt to learn as much as they can about their students and maintain contact with family through various modes of communication as well as identifying ways to assist their students in finding academic success. Caring also includes teachers holding their students accountable for their learning through encouragement, support, and having high expectations.

Effective teachers recognize that teaching is a complex task (Stronge, 2007). Teachers need to have a deep understanding of their curriculum and various techniques and strategies in which to convey that curriculum to a diverse

set of learners. They demonstrate the ability to communicate clearly to their expectations of students while encouraging them as they learn new material (Stronge, 2007). Clear and concise communication also includes the teacher's ability to convey content. Lastly, these teachers possess a "willingness to dedicate time and energy to the profession," (Stronge, 2007, p. 102). They are lifelong learners through self-reflection and additional education. They take time to further their own education to build their content knowledge and skills to contribute to their educational setting (Stronge, 2007).

Karsenti and Thibert (1998) found, in their qualitative multiple-case study, teachers emphasized the effort that students exuded instead of their ability. The purpose behind the study was to glean information from the interaction between the teaching practices of the six teachers involved and changes in the motivation of elementary-aged students. The lessons were planned with the purpose of optimizing student motivation. Activities were assigned by the teachers with the intent that students would be able to complete them. Karsenti and Thibert (1998) observed that it was not teacher actions that made a difference with the students, but the perceptions of students about their teachers that had an impact on their level of motivation. Although this is a promising find, Karsenti and Thibert (1998) did not take the additional step to determine if this strategy would reduce the disciplinary disparity.

Providing an Organized and Supportive Environment with Varying Instructional Strategies

In their research results of a Classroom Strategy study, Brophy and McCaslin (1992) found effective teachers were generally organized and prepared and provided their students with relevant feedback on their performance on assignments. Their comparison of teachers from large urban cities to teachers from small cities revealed that these two teacher groups differed significantly in their approach to instruction and learning activities. The small cities were reported to possess “a good cross-section of students, in terms of both socioeconomic status and ethnicity, but mostly due to minorities being bused to the areas” (Brophy & McCaslin, 1992, p. 6). In contrast, the big cities were made up of predominantly African American students from low socioeconomic status with the sample schools confined to the inner-city schools. While collecting data, the researcher also considered teacher training, present school placement, resources available to them, school size, instances of violence, and class size.

They found that teachers from small cities implemented a variety of learning activities which included, but was not limited to, cooperative learning while urban teachers provided their students with seat work and minimal peer interactions. It was also found that class size did make a difference when teachers considered different instructional activities. Classes in the urban schools were larger than in the small cities and teachers did not have the access to classroom assistants. It was also found that the student population in the urban classes was more homogeneous than those in small cities and ability

grouping was utilized. Small city classrooms were more heterogeneous, but had access to more assistance and smaller class sizes. Large urban cities have been the focus of much of the research on the disciplinary disparity, but no empirical evidence has been found that links variety of learning activities to a reduction in the disciplinary disparity.

Bloom (1984) attempted to find situations where teachers, teaching in a group setting, could assist their students in attaining achievement levels resembling those of students who had received tutoring. What he found was mastery learning (i.e., having students learn information, demonstrate what they have learned via formative assessments, be given corrective and purposeful feedback and a parallel formative assessment to determine mastery of the subject matter) was the most effective means of instruction because it improved students' ability to process what they had been taught. Teachers used a variety of advanced organizers prior to the introduction of new material as well as during instruction. Levels of questioning appropriate to what was being taught as well as the use of summarizing in conjunction with additional organizers at the end of a lesson tended to increase student learning of new material.

Teachers who varied their instructional strategies also used peer grouping, especially in urban settings, tutoring, positive statements towards students, and encouragement. These teachers also tended to randomly call on their students to induce student participation in discussions and instruction. This allowed all students the opportunity to share what they had gleaned from the

lesson or discussion while allowing the teacher to provide any follow-up clarification or feedback (Bloom, 1984).

Relevance to Students' Lives and Interests

In terms of relevancy to students' lives and interests, Ladson-Billings (2009) found, during her three-year study, that there was a greater impact on student achievement and involvement when students could see a connection between their educational experiences and their lives outside of the classroom. "Students' real-life experiences are legitimized as they become part of the 'official' curriculum" (Ladson-Billings, 2009, p. 127). To accomplish this task, teachers approached literature using an oratory manner, like what minority students might experience in their church. They scaffold instruction to meet the needs of all their students and attempted to extend their students thinking and abilities beyond their current level of ability. The teachers strived to obtain an in-depth understanding and knowledge of their students as well as the curriculum and encouraged students to work collaboratively during the learning process.

In his dissertation, the primary focus for Abe (2004) was on the implementation of non-traditional instructional strategies and its impact on fourth through eighth grade African American students within the context of discipline. The use of non-traditional instruction has a positive impact on the academic performance as well as discipline for African American students in these grade levels because "these effects are interactive" (Abe, 2004, p. 7). He found that there were several aspects to this type of instruction that appear relate to high expectations of teachers, the belief all students' abilities to be successful, and the

teachers' being able to maintain an environment of mutual respect. Use of instruction that students viewed as relevant to their own life experiences promoted higher academic efficacy among students; culturally affirmed them; and allowed them to make a connection between their learning and everyday lives (Abe, 2004).

Teachers' use of traditional instruction was viewed as a focus on students' weaknesses instead of their strengths. Traditional instruction was defined as teacher controlled movement, task duration, and instructional schedule. Many tasks in this type of instructional atmosphere showed the students as passive learners: sitting, listening, or writing. The pacing needs of students are not considered.

A low number of disciplinary referrals were a result of non-traditional instruction. According to Abe (2004), "non-traditional instruction leads to a decrease in disciplinary referrals for African American students" (p. 7). He refers to an assumed relationship between "high interest and relevant teaching, and a high level of engagement for African American students" (p. 7). African American students need to see a connection to their learning environment for there to be a decrease in disciplinary referrals.

Incorporating strategies in relation to organization and classroom management allowed teachers to make better use of their time and increase learning. In relation to diversity in the classroom, teachers needed to create an environment of caring which included high expectations, a feeling of belonging, and a haven where students feel they can take risks. Teachers needed to focus

on student talents, curiosity, and passions to create significant learning experiences. Much of the research on discipline has focused on behavior interventions, classroom management strategies, and behavior modification and the impact on discipline problems. Additionally, there is a plethora of research on teacher effectiveness and the impact on student achievement. Researchers have focused their attention on the discipline disparity and to what extent it exists, especially in urban school divisions. Recently, there has been a focus on cultural understandings of communication and learning styles in relation to improved student behavior and academic achievement. There is little information that pulls these elements together to determine if these strategies, collectively, might have a positive impact on reducing the disciplinary disparity.

Person-Centered Classroom

A positive and proactive approach to discipline may be through the establishment of a person-centered classroom (Freiberg & Lamb, 2009), which “creates a balance between the wants of the teacher (the *W*) and the efforts and needs of the student (the *E*), forming a collective classroom *WE*, including all persons in a classroom” (p. 100). According to Freiberg and Lamb (2009), the impact of an established person-centered classroom on gradually developing a classroom management approach that focuses on four pro-social facets: a) teachers exhibiting care and concern for the individual needs of the students; b) feelings of connectedness by students with their school, classroom, and peers; c) students feelings as if they are safe and can trust their peers and teachers; and 4) students learn to take responsibility for their own behaviors.

There is a shared responsibility between teachers and students that allows students to learn from their own mistakes (Frieberg & Lamb, 2009). Person-centered classrooms provide students with freedom of choice by incorporating learning centers and independent projects. “Students learn how to be responsible, cooperate, resolve conflicts, manage their own time, complete relevant social and/or academic contracts, and set goals for learning” (Freiberg & Lamb, 2009, p. 103). The assumption appears to be that person-centered classrooms lead to fewer discipline problems.

Classroom Behavior Management

Behavior management is the first line of defense for teachers attempting to provide students with a structured, safe learning environment. In urban school settings with high percentages of minority student populations living in poverty with the added risk of coming from single family homes, possible gang activity, a high pregnancy rate among females, a lack of available educational resources, and/or a lack of parental involvement in and support of the educational establishment (Bowditch, 1993). Schools then become a sanctuary where teachers inadvertently become the surrogate parents and disciplinarians.

Teachers need to assess the effect of their behavior management styles on their students to maintain an orderly environment that is sensitive to the need of students to feel safe and to allow students to focus on learning. Researchers have found that some African American students, in urban school settings, respond positively to teachers who employ an authoritarian (Abe, 2004; Bear, 1998; D. F. Brown, 2005; Fenwick, 1998; Monroe, 2009), firm teaching style

(Monroe & Obidah, 2004), and communicate that authority through both verbal and nonverbal exchanges (D. F. Brown, 2005). Incorporating elements from the students' home and community life communicates acceptance by the teachers (Monroe & Obidah, 2004). Incorporating these strategies could assist teachers in facilitating and maintaining relationships with African American male students (D. F. Brown, 2005; Stronge, 2007). Table A4 (Appendix A) shows the alignment of the key references used to identify behavior management strategies revealed in the literature.

Theories and Behavior Management Plans

Daily for 180 days, teachers are held responsible for the educational achievement of the students left in their charge as well as their safety (Brophy & McCaslin, 1992). When developing their behavior management plan, teachers need to possess a basic understand of the difference between punishment and discipline (Abe, 2004). Teachers need to have not only a working knowledge of classroom behavior principles, but understand the theories behind them (Saeed, 2009). Understanding not only the behaviors that students' exhibit, but also the meaning behind those behaviors is important for teachers to know. It is also important to have a strong knowledge of maturity levels, habits, influences within the students' community, and student needs. Motivation, readiness, and student expectations of school and teachers also impact the relationships and behaviors of students. Relevant methods and strategies need to be identified that will have a positive impact on exhibited behaviors in specific situations (Saeed, 2009).

Within that first week of school, teachers need to set the tone for how the remainder of the school year will proceed. It is important for teachers to establish and enforce classroom rules that provide students with clear examples of what is considered acceptable school behavior (Abe, 2004; Bacon et al., 2007; Boynton & Boynton, 2005; D. F. Brown, 2005; Monroe, 2009; Monroe & Obidah, 2004; Pedota, 2007; Skiba & Peterson, 2003; Stronge, 2010). Researchers and practitioners agree, too, that disciplinary practices should focus more on positive and proactive approaches (Christle et al., 2005; Fenning, Theodos, Benner, & Bohanon-Edmonson, 2004; Little & Akin-Little, 2008; Mendez et al., 2002; Soodak, 2003). Students' academic engagement and behavioral success rest on the expectations that teachers have for them (Noguera, 2003). Students will respond to the expectations of teachers and the level of instruction that they provide.

The Importance of Organized Classrooms and Establishing Routines

One function of public schools is to ensure the socialization of younger generations to function effectively and appropriately within our democratic society (Curwin et al., 2008). Structured educational environments (Cooper, 2003; Pedota, 2007), relevant instructional methods (Abe, 2004; Ladson-Billings, 2009; Milner, 2007; Souto-Manning & Mitchell, 2012), and effective behavioral intervention programs (Boynton & Boynton, 2005; Skiba & Peterson, 2003; Soodak, 2003; Yamaguchi & Strawser, 1997) are important for that to occur. There is a need for teachers to be more proactive (Bear, 1998; Christle et al., 2005) in their approach to discipline and have what some researchers describe

as “withitness” (Bear, 1998, p. 21), intuitiveness (Boynton & Boynton, 2005; Stronge, 2010), or the ability to multi-task (Bear, 1998). Additionally, there is a need for teachers to establish personal relationships with their students (Bacon et al., 2007; Baines & Jacobs, 1990; D. F. Brown, 2005; Howard, 2008; Koutsoulis, 2003; McDermott & Rothenberg, 2000) for it is assumed that teachers who take an interest in their students’ lives outside of school have students who improve academically.

For students to truly demonstrate their abilities, there is a need for the teacher to provide students with an organized environment (Berliner, 1986; Brophy, 1983; Cooper, 2003; Rancifer, 1993; Stronge, 2010), with established boundaries (Bacon et al., 2007), routines (Baines & Jacobs, 1990; Stronge, 2010), and procedures (Stronge, 2010). Many students feel more secure in an environment that is structured and predictable (Berendt & Koski, 1999; Pedota, 2007). A classroom that encompasses many of these qualities can be one that is more conducive to student learning.

Organization. An organized classroom that has established routines and procedures not only creates a positive impact on student learning, but also on the act of teaching. Borrowing from relevant literature, Rancifer (1993) identified three key periods during the year that teachers need to assess their classroom management plan: a) time prior to school opening and the first day, b) the first three weeks of school, and c) the rest of the year. Prior to the opening of school, teachers need to construct a plan that establishes routines for transitioning and how students will obtain needed materials (Rancifer, 1993). This plan should

include procedures that will ensure the smooth operation of the classroom. Establishing traffic patterns that flow from various points in the classroom is important to the safety and security of students and teachers. Seating arrangements, classroom procedures, class schedule, rules, and administrative responsibilities should all be solidified during this time. Urban school divisions provide a setting for possible conflict due to differences in ethnicity, race, cultural background, and belief systems. It is important that teachers establish and communicate a common expectation for their diverse student population through classroom organization and routines.

In those first weeks of school, teachers need to establish routines with the students and provide them with opportunities to practice transitioning between activities. Seating arrangements should be conducive to teaching and student learning in that the teacher should be able to reach students easily (Boynton & Boynton, 2005; Rancifer, 1993). Teachers need to discuss rules with students as well as explain how time needs to be used during the day. Student responsibilities need to be established to ensure that the classroom continues to function smoothly while maintaining organization and management of the classroom. To achieve this, teachers need to help students develop strong cooperative skills.

Throughout the year, to maintain what was established at the start of the year, teachers need to adjust their management strategies. When students and teacher start to deviate from the established procedures, teachers need to continue to revisit and reinforce classroom rules and the procedures that were

established at the start of the year. Other strategies that were identified through the literature review by Rancifer (1993) include: a) utilizing positive reinforcement, b) giving relevant and logical consequences, c) establishing and maintaining a feeling of unity within the classroom, d) establishing and maintaining productive group norms, e) providing students with unconditional positive regard, f) using time out and extinction to address misbehavior, g) holding class meetings in order to problem-solve issues, and h) having clear expectations for students while enforcing classroom rules. Technology used in instruction is a plus, but the core of classroom rules and reinforcers is as important now as it was prior to the implementation of technology. This is especially true in urban schools where many parents were children when they had their children. Each year as a teacher, one must teach rules and define with the students what behaviors are considered appropriate and inappropriate in the school and the rewards and consequences for the different behaviors.

Berliner (1986) and Cooper (2003) also support the idea of incorporating organization and routines in classrooms to provide structure to students. Berliner (1986) advocates for teachers to provide all students with an organized environment with established routines. Teachers need to distinguish the start and end of a lesson and class by using clear signals. Teachers also need to understand how to best organize and manage their classrooms. "It is knowledge that influences classroom organization and management is the basis for transforming subject matter" (Berliner, 1986, p. 10).

In her qualitative case study, Cooper (2003) emphasized that structure and routine are important for students. She studied three White elementary teachers in an urban school district who were nominated as effective teachers by members within their community based on an established set of criteria. The elementary schools had a high population of African American students, of which 83% were eligible for free or reduced price lunch. Three interviews were conducted with each teacher: one prior to observing the teacher in the classroom, one halfway through the observation time, and one after the researcher had concluded classroom observations. Observations were conducted once a week for 10 weeks.

Operational and conceptual beliefs. After compiling and analyzing the data, Cooper (2003) identified two overall categories: a) operational beliefs and practices and b) conceptual beliefs and practices. In regards to operational beliefs and practices, teachers delivered the required curriculum of the district focusing on mastering subskills to allow for mastery of reading and writing and requiring students to convey their knowledge using Standard English. Teachers emphasized structure and routine by providing them with an organized and orderly environment. Their discipline style was characterized as authoritative; using a firm voice to convey directives. Clear instructions and relevant feedback was practiced and an overview of what would be taught throughout the day was provided to students. Teaching styles were described as animated in that they helped to engage students. Teachers monitored their students' behavior as well as learning and differentiated instruction when needed.

Conceptual beliefs and practices included teaching styles and personal beliefs. Teachers held high expectations for their students' educational success and acceptable behaviors. Individual contributions of students were acknowledged and acceptance of all was stressed. Students were not allowed to exclude each other or treat each other unkindly. Focus was also placed on students' futures.

Brophy (1983) reinforced what the prior authors have found in organization. To be an effective teacher of "the inner-city child," teachers need to provide students with a supportive learning environment (Brophy, 1983). It is important that they organize the space and manage the classrooms to focus efforts on student engagement in construction. Brophy (1983) affirmed Berliner's idea about time frames on organization, "Organization of the classroom environment begins before school starts in the fall with the arrangement of the physical space and seating patterns to complement the teacher's instructional objectives and methods" (p. 527). Teachers need to provide detailed instructions on how transitions will be handled as well as procedures for obtaining necessary materials. Effective teachers are specific with students on how activities and work should be completed, what is required from students, and holding students accountable for meeting teacher expectations (Brophy, 1983).

Moreover, in their report on the findings from Project STAR, Baines and Jacobs (1990) shared the same ideas concerning routines and organization. Project STAR was a longitudinal, statewide study conducted in Tennessee in May 1985. STAR, or Student Teacher Achievement Ratio, included 6,500

students in 76 schools within 42 school systems. School settings included urban, suburban, rural, and inner-city. Student achievement was measured using the Stanford Achievement Tests for primary and early education as well as the Basic Skills First mastery test and curriculum-based, criterion-referenced tests from Tennessee's Basic Skills First. Teachers who were identified as effective were ones who established classroom routines while also possessing strong organizational skills especially in the areas of planning and identifying relevant materials for their plans, and employing different teaching strategies.

Teachers need to establish and maintain an organized room (Boynton & Boynton, 2005; Christle et al., 2005; Fenwick, 1998) that facilitates independence using routines and shared responsibilities (Fenwick, 1998; Freiberg & Lamb, 2009; Yamaguchi & Strawser, 1997), which provides students with structure and feeling vested in the educational environment. For consistent teacher-student interactions, classroom management and organization need to allow teachers to monitor student behavior and ensure proximity to the teacher when and if assistance is needed (Bear, 1998; Boynton & Boynton, 2005; Christle et al., 2005; Fenwick, 1998). When arranging classrooms, teachers need to consider the following aspects: a) a plan for how students will transition between activities (Boynton & Boynton, 2005; Fenwick, 1998), b) ease of student access to needed materials (Boynton & Boynton, 2005), c) allowing students adequate time to complete tasks (Fenwick, 1998), and d) the ability of the teacher to see all the students (Boynton & Boynton, 2005). Elementary classroom arrangements that are organized and allow for smooth transitions and ease of locating needed

materials tends to reduce the occurrence of behavior problems exhibited by elementary school children.

Students thrive on routine and being involved in creating those routines. An organized classroom facilitates smooth transitions throughout the day (Christle et al., 2005; Fenwick, 1998). To promote those feelings of involvement and routine, teachers and students should collaborate when establishing rules (Chase, 2001) that are clearly stated and communicate the expectations and responsibilities (Dwyer et al., 1998). It is important for students to establish a connection with the individuals within the school environment (Freiberg & Lamb, 2002) which can be achieved by incorporating aspects of the students' home and community within the classroom (Monroe & Obidah, 2004) and being cognizant of basic needs that students may not have access to (Yamaguchi & Strawser, 1997).

Teachers plan their classrooms to assist and engage students in the learning process (Fenwick, 1998). Management and organization (Boynton & Boynton, 2005) of a classroom occurs before the start of school and includes establishing routines and determining the time required for the completion of various activities. Coordinating transitions and organizing materials helps students to navigate their environment with minimal disruptions.

Saeed's (2009) quantitative study found that there is a need for teachers to know their students and be a role model. The teachers should be punctual and prepared to set an example for student behavior (Saeed, 2009). "The best classroom environment is one that results in effective learning. If teachers come

to the class well prepared it encourages students to become self-directive, thus creating an atmosphere conducive for learning” (Saeed, 2009, p. 83). To achieve this, teachers need to understand the curriculum and be skilled in planning instruction that addresses the needs and experiences of students. Knowing the objectives to be covered and the procedures that need to be employed to implement the lessons is important. Teachers have the greatest influence, not only on academic achievement, but on the behavioral incidents that occur within the classroom especially in urban school divisions where minority students are the majority and their teaching staff are majority White females.

Social Power and Behavior Management

Where there is human interaction, there exists a need by the individuals to be in control of the situation; a power struggle. This power struggle is especially true where individuals are placed in charge of other individuals. When applied to the classroom setting, the teachers are placed in charge of the students. For teachers to establish a safe learning environment, they need to create and implement a behavior management plan. The plan is a tool teachers can use to establish control. It also has the potential to provide teachers with the power to control the classroom environment.

Power is contingent on the level of influence an individual or group has on an individual to enact change (French & Raven, 1960). In their research on power and influence in groups, French and Raven (1960) identified five social powers: a) reward; b) coercive; c) legitimate; d) referent; and e) expert. Reward

power, the first social power discussed, is based on the perception of a person that another individual or group can impart rewards through either positive reinforcement and remove or decrease negative reinforcement (French & Raven, 1960). In the school setting, teachers can dispense rewards for various academic and non-academic behaviors. Most of the reward power is through the implementation of positive reinforcement. Positive reinforcement is something that most teachers practice in attempts to increase appropriate behavior and improve academic progress through reinforcement (Boynton & Boynton, 2005).

With coercive power, the second social power, a person perceives that an individual or group has the power to punish (French & Raven, 1960). The individual or group threatens to use or uses punishment as a means of getting a person to conform to ideals, beliefs, and/or rules and regulations. In the classroom, coercion takes the form of consequences for behavior, negative statements related to academic performance, and loss of privileges. Teachers should beware the overuse of coercive power for it could result in students being highly resistant to change.

The third social power, legitimate power, is a perception by a person that the individual or group “has a legitimate right to prescribe behavior for him,” (French & Raven, 1960, p. 263) and is obliged to abide by that power. Legitimate power can occur due to cultural values of a group, an acceptance of a group or organization’s social structure, and if an individual has been designated as a person of influence. Teachers hold legitimate power in the classroom through all three of these aspects.

When a person identifies with an individual or group, either through feeling an attraction towards the individual or group or a desire to be a part of the group or with an individual, the fourth social power, referent power is in place. "If O is a person toward whom P is highly attracted, P will have a desire to become closely associated with O. If O is an attractive group, P will have a feeling of membership or a desire to join," (French & Raven, 1960, p. 266). With referent power, the individuals involved can influence each other's behavior and beliefs. In the classroom, most students have a desire to please their teachers. As such, they will follow directions and attempt to do well academically. At this point, referent power is something that is shared between the teachers and their students because they have established a caring and reciprocal environment (Boynton & Boynton, 2005).

The last social power, expert power, occurs when a person perceives that the individual or group possesses knowledge or has expertise in a specific area. This may be based on their evaluation of their own knowledge of the subject and what would be considered the ultimate standard (French & Raven, 1960). Teachers are viewed, by parents and students, as being experts on content, how to teach the content, and their ability to address behavior in the classroom (Boynton & Boynton, 2005).

Although each has its own level of influence, these five social powers share some common aspects. First, the stronger the base from which the power emanates, the greater the power (French & Raven, 1960). Second, any attempts by the individual or group to wield their specific power outside the power's zone

of influence, the less effective that power will be. Last, the boundaries within which each power operates will vary, but the researchers reported that referent power had the “broadest range” (French & Raven, 1960, p. 268).

Based on their collective experiences within the public-school setting, first as teachers and later as administrators, Boynton and Boynton (2005) created a conceptual model for which French and Raven’s (1956) five social powers serve as the basis. Their conceptual model includes four classroom discipline components: a) establishing positive teacher-student relationships; b) clearly defining those behaviors that are acceptable in the classroom; c) the teachers’ ability to monitor the classroom; and d) the establishment of consequences. The powers relate to each of the classroom discipline components. The relationship of each power to the four crucial components of discipline is represented in Table 5.

Table 5

Integration of the Five Powers with the Four Crucial Components of Discipline

Percentage Represented in Classrooms	Power Type	Discipline Component
40%	Legitimate	Clear parameters of acceptable behavior
25%	Referent	Positive teacher-student relationships
25%	Expert	Monitoring Skills
10%	Reward and Coercive	Consequences

Note. Adapted from: Boynton and Boynton, 2005

The ideal classroom atmosphere relies heavily on legitimate power by defining for students what are acceptable behaviors within the classroom

environment (Boynton & Boynton, 2005). Teachers should develop rules that are clearly understood and observable (Chase, 2001). These rules should then be explicitly taught (Little & Akin-Little, 2008; Rancifer, 1993; Stronge, 2010) to alleviate any confusion, “if you don’t teach the rules, your students won’t know what the rules are and they will test you” (Boynton & Boynton, 2005, p. 31).

Researchers agree that the behavior management plans must communicate high academic and behavioral expectations (Abe, 2004; Bear, 1998; Boynton & Boynton, 2005; D. F. Brown, 2005; Monroe, 2009; Monroe & Obidah, 2004). Students will experience academic frustrations and teachers will be required to provide support, such as creating wait time for a response, providing all students with an opportunity to participate in discussions and activities, and presenting cues and rephrasing questions. Demonstrating a belief that the students are capable of success exemplifies the positive expectations that a teacher has towards her students. Teachers need to exude equal parts of referent power (25%) and expert power (25%) when they are working with their students in the classroom (Boynton & Boynton, 2005). Teachers need to incorporate certain strategies that will counteract student misbehavior: allowing for moments of silence after providing students with a directive (Boynton & Boynton, 2005), eye contact (Baines & Jacobs, 1990; Bear, 1998; D. F. Brown, 2005), and proximity (Bear, 1998; Boynton & Boynton, 2005; Brophy & McCaslin, 1992; Little & Akin-Little, 2008; Rancifer, 1993; Stronge, 2010). These tactics can be employed simultaneously or in isolation. Teachers utilize referent power by how they communicate, to the students, their belief in each students’ ability to

succeed by providing them with constructive criticism in regards to their behavior, developing classroom pride, and showing they care about their students (Boynton & Boynton, 2005).

Part of cultivating relationships (referent power) with students, is teachers developing students' pride in their classroom. This can entail creating situations where students are proud of their accomplishments and those of their classmates. This can be achieved by displaying student work (Pedota, 2007) and providing positive verbal praise (Little & Akin-Little, 2008). Teachers can express that they care about their students by taking the initiative to learn about their students' lives outside of the classroom (Baines & Jacob, 2007; Ladson-Billings, 2009; Monroe & Obidah, 2004). Teachers should learn about their students' interests and activities within their community, greet students as they enter the classroom, show empathy (Milner, 2006), and inquire after their well-being when they demonstrate any strong emotions (Boynton & Boynton, 2005).

Ten percent of a discipline plan should involve the implementation of rewards and consequences (coercive power). The employment of consequences is usually used after other means of addressing the misbehavior have been exhausted. "The best discipline plans strive to limit the need for punishments and negative consequences by having a preventive emphasis" (Boynton & Boynton, 2005, p. 40). Consequences must be logical (Rancifer, 1993; Soodak, 2003), clearly stated (Bacon et al., 2007), and tough, but culturally sensitive (Abe, 2004). Sixty-five percent of teaching involves addressing student

behaviors in the classroom (Boynton & Boynton, 2005). This is most teacher responsibilities even before the art of teaching and learning begins.

There will be times when a student will need to be redirected (Monroe & Obidah, 2004; Soodak, 2003), but in a constructive, and private, way allows the student to maintain a certain level of dignity (Bear, 1998; D F. Brown, 2005). These tactics allow the student to understand the reasons behind the behavior and provide the student and teacher an opportunity to discuss other options. Review of policy, relevant consequences, and future expectations of behavior can be communicated promptly by the teacher to the student. “The goal is to provide a quick, fair, and meaningful consequence while at the same time communicating that you care for and respect the student” (Boynton & Boynton, 2005, p. 13).

It is important to establish, early on, that the teacher has the role of leader and disciplinarian so that students understood who was in charge (Hubbard, 2005). Respect for all individuals within the classroom was expected and “authority was earned” (Hubbard, 2005, p. 183). Establishing palpable discipline procedures that provided students with clear boundaries (Bacon et al., 2007; Hubbard, 2005) and expectations (Bacon et al., 2007; Brophy & McCaslin, 1992; Hubbard, 2005; Pedota, 2007) was important when attempting to establish authority (Cooper, 2003; Hubbard, 2005).

In their attempt to alleviate what they referred to as “cultural discontinuity between home and school,” (Souto-Manning & Mitchell, 2012, p. 270) Souto-Manning and Mitchell (2012) used action research to gain an understanding of

Mitchell's preschool aged students (3- and 4-year-olds) inside and outside of the school environment. Data were collected on the students and analyzed to make decisions concerning instruction (Souto-Manning & Mitchell, 2012). Additionally, observations were conducted within the community and recorded, by Mitchell, through reflective journaling, which allowed her to document thoughts and acquired knowledge. After the narrative data was gathered and discussed, Souto-Manning and Mitchell (2012) identified six teacher behaviors that appeared to have a positive impact on the classroom environment: a) respect of students' cultures and backgrounds; b) taking on a dual role of both teacher and learner; c) taking an active role in learning about the different historical contexts and values of the students' cultures; d) cultivating dialogue; e) using the dialogue to challenge assumptions; and f) via dialogue, attaining social awareness. In conclusion, Souto-Manning and Mitchell (2012) found that educators could provide a bridge that can join the students' home culture with the school culture through open dialogue, acceptance, and self-awareness. It was important for Mitchell to learn more about students' home values and parental expectations. A welcoming classroom environment was created for parents and family members that placed their diverse experiences at the central aspect of the classroom.

Souto-Manning and Mitchell's (2012) approach appears to take into consideration the cultural differences between the students' home environments and the school environment. The study also addresses the aspect of assumptions that individuals from different cultural backgrounds bring to the educational setting. Although the students in this study were a pre-primary

population, one could infer that the same result could occur if the same approach was implemented with an older elementary student population

Instead of using an authoritative teaching style (Cooper, 2003; Hubbard, 2005), Mitchell incorporated pedagogy that complemented students' cultures. In this instance, students then become experts in the classroom and view themselves as valued participants (Souto-Manning & Mitchell, 2012). In contrast, the authoritative teaching style places students in the position of being the passive learners of their teachers' instruction. Perhaps incorporating a responsive teaching cycle instead of an authoritarian approach was more appropriate with this age of learners because of the cultural differences between the homes and school settings. By allowing students to become the experts in the classroom, perhaps it allowed the transition from home to school to be somewhat less difficult.

Establishing Clear, Concise Rules

Students spend a large part of their days in the care of adults who may have little in common with their immediate family, in an environment that may have little in common with their home environment. This mismatch is especially true if the school is in an urban area where there are most minority students being educated by most White teachers (Bowditch, 1993; Gregory, 1997; Hodgkinson, 2002; Sheets, 1996; NCES, 2009; NCES, 2010; Wu et al., 1982). The teachers are held responsible for the educational achievement of the students left in their charge as well as their safety (Brophy & McCaslin, 1992). As such, it is important that teachers create a positive classroom environment

(Freiberg & Lamb, 2009) and that all personnel provide students with a positive school environment (Bear, 1998; Boynton & Boynton, 2005; Christle et al., 2005) for this allows students to feel more comfortable taking educational chances.

Teachers need to have a working knowledge of classroom behavior principles and the theories behind them (Saeed, 2009). Within that first week of school, they will have established the routines and expectations that will serve as the tone for how the remainder of the school year will proceed. By providing clear directives on behaviors and consequences and rewards (Abe, 2004; Bacon et al., 2007; Boynton & Boynton, 2005; Monroe & Obidah, 2004; Skiba & Peterson, 2003; Stronge, 2010), teachers can have a positive impact on student achievement (Christle et al., 2005). Teachers' disciplinary practices should focus on more positive and proactive approaches (Christle et al., 2005; Fenning et al., 2004; Little & Akin-Little, 2008; Mendez et al., 2002; Soodak, 2003). Although it is important to establish rules and use those as one means of handling classroom discipline, there are other strategies that need to be in place to provide students with support both academically and behaviorally as established thus far.

Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS)

In 2004, the federal government reauthorized the Individual with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) to be more in alignment with the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 (NCLB). Both laws require school districts to identify and implement research-based practices to proactively address student behavior (IDEA, 20 U.S.C. § 1400 [2004]; NCLB, 20 U.S.C. § 6319 [2008]). Under IDEA (2004), an additional purpose to the implementation of positive approaches and

interventions was to “reduce the need to identify students as having disabilities” (IDEA, 20 U.S.C. § 1400, Title I(D) 682(c)(5)(F), 2004). Under NCLB, states that receive grant monies must provide training to relevant staff members on the identification and implementation of positive behavioral supports to address student misbehavior (NCLB, 20 U.S.C. § 6319 [2008]).

One result of these statutory changes was the evolution of Positive Behavioral Supports (PBS), also known as School-wide Positive Behavioral Supports (SWPBS) and Positive Behavioral and Interventions Supports (PBIS). “PBS emerged from three major sources: a) applied behavior analysis, b) the normalization/inclusion movement, and c) person-centered values” (Carr et al., 2002, p. 5). The focus of applied behavioral analysis was to identify the function of a student’s problem behavior and identify socially appropriate, replacement behaviors through positive reinforcement, negative reinforcement, extinction, or punishment (Carr et al., 2002). The normalization/inclusion movement was based on the observation that all students must eventually enter society and be productive citizens. The inclusion movement required all students to have access to the general education curriculum and be included in the general education setting as much as possible (Carr et al., 2002; Utley, Kozleski, Smith, & Draper, 2002). The person-centered values approach incorporates a multi-faceted approach to addressing student behavior. As the title indicates, the team focuses on the needs and supports for an individual. The strategies to address these are unique to the individual student and include identifying, coordinating,

and implementing supports and services outside the educational setting (Carr et al., 2002).

The Office of Special Education Program (OSEP) Center has a website devoted to the identification, implementation, and self-monitoring of PBIS. Districts across the country can access the blue-print and self-assessment developed by OSEP. PBIS integrates “operationally defined and valued outcomes, behavioral and biomedical science, research-validated practices, and systems change to both enhance the broad quality with which all students are living/learning and reduce problem behaviors” (p. 10). School-wide PBIS allows educators to utilize data to identify problem behaviors and the locations where they most often occur within the school building. They are then able to create a common definition and goals and interventions to address those behaviors within the school improvement plan (OSEP, 2004).

Continuum of support. The systems approach of school-wide PBIS provides students with a continuum of support. It starts out broadly with the state creating guidelines for school divisions to follow when developing their PBIS programs. At the community level, outside agencies team up with local school divisions to provide a continuum of services to families and students (OSEP, 2004). The district then develops a foundational plan for implementing PBIS along with the resources needed.

At the school level, there is a three-tiered system of support: a) primary, b) secondary, and c) tertiary. The individual schools review their data and set behavioral expectations for student behavior in different settings of the school

building. Individual classroom teachers within the school environment identify acceptable behavior, routines, and lesson planning that provide for another level of behavioral support. The primary level of support is reported to be effective in addressing occasional exhibited by approximately 80% of the students. The secondary level of support is reported to address groups of students who are non-responsive to the primary level of support. This tier two level of support is in place to support those students who demonstrate at-risk behaviors and are approximately 15% of the school population. The last foundation of support, the tertiary or tier three, is for those students who do not respond to the other levels of support. A building level team then conducts a functional behavioral assessment to determine the function of the student's' behavior and develop an individual behavior plan (OSEP, 2004).

As part of the process of a School-wide PBIS program, schools evaluate their current implementation of PBIS by using the School-wide Evaluation Tool (SET). The SET was developed by OSEP Center on Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports. The SET evaluation tool was “designed to assess and evaluate critical features of school-wide positive behavior interventions and support across an academic school year” (Todd et al., 2012, p. 1). The SET has a total of 28 questions that correspond with seven overall areas: expectations defined, behavioral expectations taught, on-going system for rewarding behavioral expectations, system for responding to behavioral violations, monitoring and decision-making, management, and district-level support. Data sources include lesson plans, instructional materials, discipline handbook,

interviews, referral forms, school improvement plan, annual plan, and calendar. The SET was used by schools to assess their programs. Those schools that were trained in School-wide PBIS received what the authors identified as the maximum score than those not trained. It also demonstrated that most of the schools involved in the implementation of School-wide PBIS could implement the program with fidelity within a year or two. The findings indicated, “a primary objective of PBIS training should be to encourage shift in educational approaches from punishment-based strategies to teaching and reinforcing prosocial behaviors” (Todd et al., 2012, p. 19). The following section reports on schools and districts that have used the SET as a means of identifying growth and continued needs as they implemented PBIS.

Research findings from PBIS implementation. A set of researchers conducted a 3-year study of the implementation of PBIS in 37 elementary schools across five suburban and rural districts in Maryland in 2008. All the elementary school involved were part of a state initiative to have schools implement PBIS. Of the 37 schools involved in the study 21 were trained on how to implement School-wide PBIS. The purpose was three-fold: a) to identify the impact of training on the fidelity of implementation, b) to document components of School-wide PBIS that were implemented by trained and non-trained schools, and c) provide schools and coaches recommendations on continued implementation of School-wide PBIS (Bradshaw, Reinke, Brown, Beans, & Leaf, 2008, p. 4). They found that trained school increased their level of implementation during the first year, but it leveled off after that. The trained

schools also had a higher level of fidelity with their implementation of School-wide PBIS.

One similarity was found between the trained and non-trained schools involved in the study. Both trained and non-trained schools had a significant increase in Systems for Responding to Behavior Violations (Bradshaw et al., 2008). The researchers attempted to explain this similarity:

Specifically, the large support and training network may have contributed to the speed with which trained schools reached high implementation fidelity; however, the extensive statewide network may have increased awareness and familiarity with school-wide PBIS procedures among the non-trained schools. (Bradshaw et al., 2008, p. 22)

The research team also hypothesized there could have been staff members in those non-trained schools who possessed knowledge of the School-wide PBIS and may have used that knowledge to assist school members in implementing a School-wide PBIS program (Bradshaw et al., 2008).

The recommendations from Bradshaw et al. (2008) included administering the SET at the start of implementing School-wide PBIS to establish and to administer the SET on a regular basis. Frequent administration of the SET would allow the school personnel to monitor their progress and identify needs and to adjust their program.

Another three-year long study was conducted in an urban middle school using a case study method to determine if there was a relationship between the implementation of a school-wide behavior program and students' academic

achievement. The findings of the study showed an initial increase in discipline referrals during the first year of monitoring. However, the remaining two years showed a significant decline in discipline referrals and an increase in students' reading and math standardized assessment data. This was attributed to the increased time that students are engaged in the learning process instead of being removed for disciplinary reasons. The research team attributed the increase in reading and math data to the decrease in discipline referrals. Due to this decrease, teachers could increase their instructional time on task and student participation in the learning environment. The decrease in discipline referrals also increased the time administrators could spend providing training and support to the classroom teachers.

In 2006, a study was conducted to evaluate the implementation of school-wide PBIS in an urban high school (Bohanon et al., 2006). Over a three-year period, the research team reviewed data that included discipline referrals, climate surveys, the School-Wide Evaluation Tool (SET), and Effective Behavior Support (EBS) Surveys. Initial use of the SET form was rejected by the team because they did not want the participants to feel as if they were being punished (Bohanon et al., 2006). The first year involved identifying the school, the foundational supports, identification of data the school would collect, the data organizational system and establishing the PBS team and member roles on the team (Bohanon et al., 2006). The second year had the research team administering the EBS Survey and identifying an established data system to record referrals and dispositions (Bohanon et al., 2006). The researchers also

recorded concerns of participants that would be addressed later. During the final year, a summary of the data from years one and two were presented to the school staff in small groups. The purpose was to work with the staff to identify and select researched best practices and conduct the initial training of all staff and develop a plan of action (Bohanon et al., 2006).

The findings of the study were that the implementation of PBIS in the urban high school had been beneficial in reducing the number of discipline referrals. This reduction was found to increase the amount of time devoted to instruction (Bohanon et al., 2006). The research team also found that “there are issues unique to urban high schools that must be attended to in the design and implementation of school-wide behavioral supports” (Bohanon et al., 2006, p. 141). Although the teaching staff reported difficulty in finding time to explicitly teach socially appropriate behaviors within the constraints of the school day and the responsibility of teaching the curriculum, they did reinforce socially appropriate behaviors when they were observed. However, this was found to only be effective with students who possessed an appropriate behavior skill set. For those students who were found to have appropriate behavior deficits “a system must be in place in which teaching occurs on a regular basis and is integrated into the curriculum through the activities of precorrection and prompting” (Bohanon et al., 2006, p. 142).

In their study, Bradshaw, Waasdorf, and Leaf (2014) wanted to determine if “children with elevated risk would be most responsive to SWPBIS,” (p. 547). The study utilized a “randomized controlled effectiveness” (Bradshaw et al., 2014

p. 546) approach with 21 schools participated in training and implementation of SWPBIS and 16 abstained from employing SWPBIS for 4 years. Bradshaw et al. (2014) found students who exhibited at-risk or high-risk behaviors responded positively to the use of SWPBIS interventions: “Specifically, both at-risk and high-risk children in the SWPBIS schools were significantly less likely to receive an ODR than their peers in the comparison schools” (p. 552).

In their study, Marin and Filce’s (2013) sought to determine to what extent SWPBIS impacted schools their Quality of Distribution Index (QDI) rating. QDI rating used the state curriculum test for math and language arts, the subject area tests for identified math, language arts, and history tests and the results from the alternate assessment in math and language arts to measure growth and rank schools and school districts (Marin & Filce, 2013).

They found, “schools that received training and coaching (‘intensive’) had higher QDI than the schools that received training only (‘non-intensive’)” which was consistent with literature regarding the implementation of PBIS” (Marin & Filce, 2013, p. 8). Schools with high SET scores were identified as “model sites” (Marin & Filce, 2013, p. 8). In addition, the schools Benchmark of Quality, which denotes the level of fidelity a school implements SWPBIS, showed a positive correlation with the school’s QDI and Growth status.

For students and staff to observe any changes in student behavior within the confines of the school building, practitioners must implement SWPBIS with fidelity according to Mathews, McIntosh, Frank, and May (2014). These elements of SWPBIS included: administration support, knowledge base of

individuals implementing PBIS, school-based team compilation, use of data, and level of support and assistance to ensure the SW-PBIS was implemented with fidelity. Sustainability of SWPBIS was reliant on individual teachers' daily implementation of PBIS practices in their classrooms (Mathews et al., 2014). "As core PBIS implementers, classroom teachers have regular and ongoing opportunities to implement PBIS practices in their classrooms by creating environments that increase the likelihood of students learning academic and behavioral skills," (Mathews et al., 2014, p. 174). Students needed to receive positive reinforcement when desired behaviors were exhibited either by tangible rewards or behavior specific verbal praise. Additionally, "Matching academic instruction and curriculum materials to the needs of the students was also a significant unique predictor of sustained implementation," (Mathews et al., 2014, p. 174). Lastly, teachers' access to supports, which enhances the continued implementation of PBIS, was identified as more beneficial than simply providing teachers with access that provided more of the same.

Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports (PBIS) evolved from NCLB (2001) and IDEA (2004) requiring schools to: a) utilize positive strategies to address the behavioral needs of students with disabilities, b) include students with disabilities in the general education setting, and c) conduct assessments to determine the function of students' misbehaviors and develop behavior plans to address the individual needs of the students. To assist states to support their districts with the implementation of School-wide PBIS, the OSEP (2004) created a website devoted to PBIS. A continuum of support begins with the state and

trickling down to the needs of those individuals who require more intensive support through the implementation of a behavior intervention plan.

PBIS was developed as a three-tiered support system. The primary, or tier one, provides support to most the students who already possess a repertoire of behavioral skills. The secondary, or tier two, provides an additional level of support to groups of students who have not responded to the supports in tier one. Students in this tier may have chronic behavior problems, but not to the extent that tier three interventions are needed. These interventions may include a “social skills club” or “check in/check out” strategy (www.pbis.org/school/tier2supports/tier2faqs, ¶3) and in some instances, behavior plans for a small number of students. The tertiary, or tier three, is for those individual students who have not responded to the prior tiers of support. This level of support requires a team of individuals determine the function of the behaviors and develop individual behavior plans for these students.

OSEP developed a school-wide evaluation tool (SET) to allow schools to monitor their progress in implementing School-wide PBIS. It is comprised of a set of 28 questions within seven overall areas and draws on data easily retrieved at the building level. By conducting the SET at the start of implementation, schools establish a baseline from which to monitor their progress and grown in addressing the behavioral needs of their students. Although SET does provide useful information for teams, data collection is an intricate component of PBIS that allows teams to make data-based decisions related to the needs of their school and their students.

Origins of Classroom Misbehavior

Since desegregation, researchers have been disaggregating discipline data to identify the most common forms of student misbehavior, to understand students' behavior patterns, and the causal factors associated with school officials' use of punitive measures when addressing misbehavior. Researchers indicate many of the identified misbehaviors were categorized as minor disciplinary problems (Algozzine et al., 2008; Ashford et al., 2008; Morris, 2005; Skiba, Peterson, & Williams, 1997) such as truancy, disruption, rule breaking, and disrespect. These could also be considered subjective behaviors (Skiba et al., 2002) in that they can be interpreted differently depending on the experiences and perceptions of the individual observing the behavior (Ashford et al., 2008). Table A6 (Appendix A) shows the alignment of the key references used to identify the origins of misbehavior.

Patterns of Behavior

To address the disciplinary disparity, it is important to identify those behaviors categorized as problems, determine if there are common perspectives of stakeholders in relation to problem behaviors, and identify how teachers and administrators address these problem behaviors.

One might assume that parents, teachers, and students would share the same ideas of what problem behaviors look like in the classroom and school setting. The assumption that they would share the same perspective is partly true, but these stakeholders' perceptions of the seriousness of common behaviors can be quite different (Algozzine et al., 2008; Skiba et al., 2000). In a

two-part study, Algozzine et al. (2008) found that male students were more apt to receive disciplinary referrals for fighting and aggression as well as disruption. In contrast, female students received more disciplinary referrals for disrespect. They also found that a large percentage of disciplinary referrals were written for fifth grade students that stemmed from problem behaviors exhibited in the classroom. The first study was conducted in a single elementary school and the second study included data from four additional elementary schools. The type and frequency of high-risk behaviors that elementary students exhibited were determined in this study. All the schools involved between both studies had similar student demographics: impoverished backgrounds as indicated by the high percentages of students receiving free/reduced price lunch, resided in neighborhoods with high crime rates, single parent family with an income below \$25,000, high number of absences, and high rates of teen pregnancy and dropout rates as students entered middle and high school. Referred students were identified as habitual rule breakers based on their school records. The teachers in this study were mostly female and had been working in their schools for five years or less. Disciplinary referrals were tracked using a computerized tracking system and a standardized disciplinary referral form (Algozzine et al., 2008). The disciplinary referral used in the second study differed from that used in the first study in that it included a section for teachers to indicate the location, motivation, involvement, and action taken for the behavior, the “code of conduct” was used as the basis for the list of behaviors teachers could select from, and it allowed teachers to document if the student had chronic offenses. Compared to

the Ashford et al. (2008) study, many of these behaviors would be considered more severe.

Further results from this study revealed many submitted disciplinary referrals originated from a small percentage of the teaching staff; while a small percentage of the student body were responsible for a large portion of the disciplinary referrals. The causes were attributed to teacher training programs that do not “provide effective methods and experience in classroom behavior management” (Algozzine et al., 2008, p. 102).

With the passing of NCLB and the reauthorization of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act, teacher preparation programs have had to revisit their own trainings to provide in-service teachers with the skill set necessary to meet the needs of diverse learners. So, why the disparity in teacher originated disciplinary referrals? It may come down to what individual teachers perceive as misbehavior. Personal philosophies can determine the disciplinary outcomes for students. The AP/CRP (2000) released a report on what they called the consequences of zero tolerance policies and their impact on all students especially students with disabilities and minority students. The findings from their case study on the leadership in four middle schools in the Southeastern United States, was that principals have the power to set the disciplinary tone for their schools. In those schools where policy set by principals was students should not be suspended unless it was an extreme circumstance, teachers were less likely to refer students for minor behavioral issues. In these schools, the learning environment for students was positive. The principals

conveyed that teachers needed more training on classroom management and conflict resolution since they were typically the initiators of disciplinary referrals and that students needed to be academically challenged. The report provides, what are described as “essential characteristics” of schools that have achieved the goal of lower disciplinary referrals such as employing strategies that allow for the development of personal relationships between teachers and their students and between the school and surrounding community, providing training for teachers that focus on positive classroom management and the implementation of school-wide programs to promote mutual respect and collaboration, and having a physical environment that communicates safety, respect, and a feeling of being welcomed.

Actual versus perceived misbehavior. In an epidemiological study, Ashford et al., (2008) focused on perceptions of violence in middle and high schools by teachers, students, and parents and what the administrators reported were actual misbehaviors. Behavior problems were identified as violent “if they posed some direct or indirect harm to another student or staff member” (p. 224-225). Their purpose for conducting the study was to determine if the common problems in the school district were violent in nature or nonviolent. Their findings identified actual discipline problems as reported by administrators and identified what parents, teachers, and students perceived were discipline problems in a school district located in the southern part of a southeastern state near a large urban center. The division had six middle schools and six high schools, a developmental school, an alternative school, and a career center. The student

body consisted of 75% White, 18% African American, 5% Hispanic, 1% Asian, and 1% identified as other. A survey was administered to middle and high school level teachers, students, and parents using a 4-point Likert-type scale. The survey included 26 behavioral categories created from participating schools' discipline databases. Using the average of participants' responses for each behavior problem, the researchers sorted the perceptions of participants from least to most common with the mean score being 2.50. Those behaviors that received a mean score of 2.50 or higher were viewed as occurring more often than behaviors falling below the mean (Ashford et al., 2008)

The researchers found that the top actual recurrent behaviors identified by administrators did not include violent behaviors. The behaviors they identified included rule violations, disruption, tardiness, noncompliance, skipping, disrespect, profanity, and failure to report to detention (Ashford et al., 2008, p. 225). These actual behaviors were commensurate with what parents, teachers, and students perceived as misbehavior. Participant responses indicated they did not perceived skipping and failing to attend detention as problem behaviors. Teachers' perceived breaking classroom rules as the problem behavior they deal with the most while parents perceived breaking bus rules as their top most problem behavior. In contrast, the chief problem behavior identified by students was inappropriate language towards peers. Most behaviors identified by most participants were considered nonviolent; however, the behavior aggression toward peers was identified by both parents and students as violent. Violent behaviors were not found to be regular occurrences and comprised

approximately 8% of the total number of misbehaviors reported to administrators. In summary, most of the behaviors that teachers, parents, and students perceived as misbehavior in the classroom were commensurate with actual discipline problems in school.

Subjective or objective behaviors. Behaviors can be categorized as either subjective or objective (Fenning & Rose, 2007; Monroe & Obidah, 2004; Skiba et al., 2002). Subjective behaviors are behaviors that can be subject to interpretation based on a person's experiences or knowledge. Such behaviors include disrespect and defiance (Algozzine et al., 2008; Fenning & Rose, 2007; Skiba et al., 1997), classroom disruption (Algozzine et al., 2008; Fenning & Rose, 2007), excessive noise (Fenning & Rose, 2007; Skiba et al., 2002; Skiba et al., 1997), threats to teacher authority (Fenning & Rose, 2007; Skiba et al., 2002), and loitering (Skiba et al., 2002).

In contrast, objective behaviors are observable and clearly defined. They are based on fact and not the personal feelings, prejudices, or interpretations of an individual's experiences or knowledge. Objective behaviors include smoking (Skiba et al., 2002), leaving without permission (Skiba et al., 2002), fighting (Algozzine et al., 2008; Mendez et al., 2002; Skiba et al., 1997), tardiness (Ashford et al., 2008; Skiba et al., 1997), vandalism (Skiba et al., 2002), and obscene/inappropriate language (Algozzine et al., 2008; Skiba et al., 2002; Skiba et al., 1997). The fact is teachers and students enter the educational environment from different backgrounds with their own prejudices. In many instances, they may have had different experiences and have different

perceptions of behavior. The question is: Are these differences contributing factors to the disproportionate discipline issue that targets African-American boys? Are there teachers, specifically White teachers, who have could overcome their own perceptions and prejudices to create an environment that is conducive to the needs of African American males?

The Impact of the Disciplinary Disparity on Minority Students

Although zero tolerance policies intend to address the behaviors of all students equally, their effects appear to have disproportionately affected African American males more than other demographic groups (Bowditch, 1993; Edelman et al., 1975; Eamon & Altshuler, 2004; Fenning & Rose, 2007; Garibaldi, 1992; Gregory, 1997; Mendez et al., 2002; Morris, 2005; Nicholson-Crotty et al., 2009; Sheets, 1996; Skiba et al., 1997; Skiba et al., 2002; Wu et al., 1982). The Edelman et al. (1975) found that African American children were suspended twice as often as any other ethnic group. Many of the suspensions were for non-violent offenses such as truancy, insubordination, acting out, smoking, and disrespect (Edelman et al., 1975). Although this report is over 40 years old, the information contained on the pages continues to happen in the classroom today. Regardless of the laws, which were enacted to protect individuals from harsh punishment and discrimination, recent school discipline policies have resulted in the opposite effect. Today's school policies are now used by some to remove individuals for non-violent behaviors (AP/CRP, 2000).

Discipline polices. Many of today's school discipline policies rely on a system of rewards and punishments to reduce school violence (Breunlin,

Cimmarusti, Bryant-Edwards, & Hetherington, 2004; Ward, 1998). However, they appear to have been biased against minority students, especially African American students. This has resulted in disciplinary disproportionality in the schools. The Edelman et al. (1975) exposed disproportionality, finding that African American children were suspended twice as often as any other ethnic group. The data indicated students who received more punitive sanctions for misbehavior shared some common characteristics: high school student, African American, male, and poor. Although, socioeconomic status has been viewed as a contributing factor in suspensions, Skiba et al. (2002) found it was not a factor in their study. Many suspensions were found to be for subjective and non-violent behavioral offenses such as truancy, insubordination, acting out, smoking, and disrespect (Algozzine et al., 2008; Ashford et al., 1993; Edelman et al., 1975; Mendez et al., 2002; Skiba et al., 1997; Skiba et al., 2002).

A historical look at race, academic performance, and socioeconomic status. The Coleman Report (Coleman, Campbell, Hobson, McPartland, Mood, Weinfeld, & York, 1966) and the Edelman et al. (1975) revealed the disparity in educational opportunities that existed after desegregation. Wu et al. (1982), using data collected from Phase II of the 1978 Safe School Study, revealed the disproportionate disciplinary practices leveled against minorities. They studied suspensions from 641 schools by surveying principals, teachers, and students. Even when they controlled for such things as attitude and/or behavioral differences, academic performances, poverty levels, school governance, free and reduced price lunch, and parental involvement, minority students were more

likely to be suspended than their White peers. Although it was perceived as racial bias, further investigation found that minority students were disproportionately suspended whether they attended schools in urban or rural communities. In addition, they found instances in suburban schools with a high percentage of minority teachers that African American students still had higher suspension rates than African American students attending schools where White teachers were in the majority “This suggests that the race of the teachers had no impact on referrals given to black students” (Wu et al., 1980, p. 43). Wu et al. (1982) suggested the existence of institutional racial bias as a contributing factor.

The research has not ended here. In the years following Wu et al.’s (1982) findings, other researchers have conducted studies in urban school districts which have focused on teacher and student perceptions of discipline (Sheets, 1996), ratings of behavior problems by teachers (Sbarra & Pianta, 2001), assumptions of students based on social status (Bowditch, 1993) and appearance (Morris, 2005) contributing to disproportionate disciplinary practices, and updated data on disproportionality based on gender and race (Skiba et al., 2002). A common factor among these studies is their settings: urban, inner-city school divisions where the population of minority students serves as the majority and teachers are mostly White. Another common factor is the differing perceptions of teachers and students of what constituted misbehavior. Male students, especially African American students, were suspended for: a) disruption (Bowditch, 1993; Skiba et al., 2002); b) offensive language (Bowditch, 1993); c) disrespect (Skiba et al., 2002); d) loitering (Skiba et al., 2002); e)

threatening (Skiba et al., 2002); and f) repeated school violations (Bowditch, 1993).

At an annual meeting of the American Educational Research Association in Chicago, Morgan (1991) presented his findings related to the use of in-school suspension as an alternative to out-of-school suspensions. Although Morgan's (1991) focus was on in-school suspensions, his findings were consistent in relation to a disproportionate number of African American male students serving in-school suspension. The student body was comprised of White students (82%), African American students (18%), and American Indian/Hispanic students (fewer than 1%). Most the student body was comprised of females, with African American males in the minority (8%).

Morgan (1991) found that African American students were placed in in-school suspension more often than their White peers. Males were more likely to serve in-school suspension than females. African American males, although the minority of students in the school, constituted 18% of in-school suspensions. African American females, who represented 10% of the school population, represented 9% of in school suspensions. Morgan (1991) presented three possible reasons for the results: inequality, culture gap, and self-fulfilling prophecy. Morgan (1991) viewed inequality as the disproportionate distribution of resources and experienced teachers working in predominantly African American schools. He regarded the culture gap as a discrepancy between the values and status of teachers and their minority students. Self-fulfilling prophecy "suggests that student behaviors are usually in line with what is expected of

them. The implication is that teachers (both black and white) have lower expectations for black pupil's behavior than for their white peers" (Morgan, 1991, p. 14). Even in urban schools where African American students have access to resources and highly-qualified, experienced teachers who have high expectations, there are still a disproportionate percentage of African American male students receiving more punitive punishments for non-violent behaviors.

Overall, the student body perceived they were not treated equally when rules were violated. Sheets (1996) found minority students felt alienated and disrespected by their teachers. These students felt that teachers held all the power and that their misconduct was never forgotten; once a student was identified as a behavior problem, teachers and peers expected, and even encouraged, the student to misbehave. Low-achieving students were perceived by teachers as being discipline problems. Students perceived that minority students were disciplined for behaviors that their White peers engaged in and did not receive a punishment. Students who were perceived as loud, rude, argumentative, obnoxious, hostile, immature, and unreasonable were targets for disciplinary action by their teachers (Sheets, 1996). However, Sheets (1996) reported, "European American students and teachers maintained that there were definite set of rules and guidelines, however, at times, these were inconsistently and unfairly applied, especially by teachers with poor management skills" (p. 15).

African American students appeared to be more likely to be disciplined than their peers (Bowditch, 1993; Edelman et al., 1975; J. D. McCarthy & Hoge, 1987; Sbarra & Pianta, 2001; Skiba et al., 2002; Wu et al., 1982). Lastly, a

student's educational and behavioral history increased their likelihood of disciplinary action (Bowditch, 1993; Sheets, 1996).

Twenty years after Wu and associates (1982) studied student suspensions, Skiba et al. (2002) conducted a study that focused on those aspects of students that have "demonstrated evidence of disproportionate representation in previous investigations" (p. 8), such as race, gender, and socioeconomic status. Only out-of-school suspensions and expulsions were analyzed. Findings confirmed previous research findings with males and African Americans overrepresented regarding disciplinary referrals, suspensions, and expulsions (Bowditch, 1993; AP/CRP, 2000; Edelman et al., 1975; Gregory, 1997; Sheets, 1996; Wu et al., 1982). As the researchers moved from looking at suspensions to expulsions, the disproportionality of males and African Americans increased. The administrator's decision to suspend or expel these students stemmed from disciplinary referrals made by classroom teachers for more subjective, fewer serious transgressions: disrespect, threat, and excessive noise (Skiba et al., 2002).

Level of students' understanding of school responsibilities. Some teachers perceive African American students exhibit less ability to master school-related skills and self-regulating behaviors (Sbarra & Pianta, 2001). Sbarra and Pianta's (2001) quantitative study found that teachers did not observe significant differences between behaviors exhibited by students of any race or ethnicity. The teachers involved in the study did, however, perceive differences in the competency levels of students as they moved from kindergarten into first grade.

The perception of the teachers was that African American students had a harder time navigating the transition into and through kindergarten in relation to their “self-regulation around school-related tasks” (p. 234). The ability of students to self-regulate (e.g. the ability for students to identify when they are not following rules and norms and adjust their behavior so they are compliant) was an important behavior for the teachers. The assumed need for teachers to provide a safe learning environment would lead one to assume the teachers’ approach to managing his or her class was through power and control.

Over a 2-year period from kindergarten to first grade, African American students were perceived by their teachers to exhibit more behavior problems and be less competent than their White peers. Although African American students were perceived to have difficulty with their transition into and through kindergarten into the first grade, this lack of competence was not perceived to exist in these students’ peer relationships or their social skills.

Summary of Literature Review

Teachers need to establish clear, consistent, and enforceable rules to provide for an environment conducive to learning. Students should not have to guess at what is and what is not acceptable behavior. “Teachers are ultimately responsible for their classrooms and therefore have some ownership in all problems that occur there” (Brophy & McCaslin, 1992, p. 45). So, when establishing parameters of behavior in the elementary classroom, it is important that teachers be explicit in their descriptions for acceptable behavior (Baines & Jacobs, 1990; Brophy & McCaslin, 1992; Rancifer, 1993; Stronge, 2010),

incorporate a behavior modification plan (Brophy & McCaslin, 1992; Rancifer, 1993), establish a positive classroom environment (Berendt & Koski, 1999), demonstrate a caring attitude towards the students and promote caring of students towards each other (Boynton & Boynton, 2005), engage students in the learning process (Abe, 2004; Bacon et al., 2007; Ladson-Billings, 2009), acknowledgment of cultural differences (Abe, 2004; Bireda, 2002; Ladson-Billings, 2009; Milner, 2006), and establishing relationships with both students (Bacon et al., 2007; ; Ladson-Billings, 2009; McAllister & Irvine, 2002;), parents (Cooper, 2003), and the community (Cooper, 2003) all while promoting respect (Cooper, 2003;; Koutsoulis, 2003; McAllister & Irvine, 2002;; Milner, 2007; Veney, 2008) and trust (Howard, 2008). Table A7 (Appendix A) provides a summary of key references and findings from the literature review.

All teachers have a preconceived idea of what they feel is acceptable behavior within the classroom environment, which may be biased against minority students. Most minority students hail from home environments where individuals speak passionately about their thoughts/feelings about issues, which does not always include waiting for other people to become quiet before voicing those thoughts/feelings (Abe, 2004; Bacon et al., 2007; Bireda, 2002; Birrell, 1995; D. E. Brown, 2005; Ladson-Billings, 2009). In the classroom setting, this can be viewed as a problem behavior because students are expected to raise their hands and wait to be called upon. At home, most minority students observe individuals in their communities working together to problem solve. In the classroom setting, teachers require most graded work to be completed

independently without students having the opportunity to discuss their thoughts/feelings (Abe, 2004; Bacon et al., 2007; Bireda, 2002; Birrell, 1995; D. E. Brown, 2005; Ladson-Billings, 2009). Also, in the classroom setting, when students defend their actions or provide explanations for why they engaged in a specific behavior, teachers may view this as being disrespectful or argumentative.

Due to these conflicting behavioral expectations, teachers need to communicate behavioral expectations to their students starting the first day of school. Communicating expectations can be achieved through naming the behavior, defining it, and having students' model examples and non-examples of the behavior. Regardless of whether they share the same cultural and/or racial background as their students, it is important for teachers to set clear expectations and hold their students accountable by explicitly teaching them, consistently enforcing them, and providing constructive, necessary feedback to students (Rancifer, 1993). By using commands and directives, nonthreatening reprimands, proximity, and establishing morale teachers can develop responsible learners (Rancifer, 1993). Consequences for misbehavior must be logical and related to that misbehavior.

Sometimes race does play a factor in how individual teachers address misbehavior from their students. In the instance of the teachers in Bacon et al.'s research (2007), the African American teachers perceived that European American teachers had lowered behavioral expectations for their students and as such, allowed them to get away with misbehaviors. They reported that it

appeared the teachers were afraid of their students. In direct contrast, European American teachers perceived that African American teachers' discipline styles reflecting those of the African American culture to which they believed students were more receptive.

Once students and teachers have a common understanding of behavioral expectations, teachers can then employ differing behavior modification techniques to address more challenging behaviors which do not respond to conventional behavior management techniques (Brophy & McCaslin, 1992; Christle et al., 2005; Mendez et al., 2002; Rancifer, 1993; Saeed, 2009; Skiba & Peterson, 2003; Soodak, 2003). Establishing relationships with students is something that most teachers focus on, but relationship building should include other key individuals in the students' lives such as their caregivers as well as establishing a relationship within the community. While establishing these relationships, it is also important to foster and develop mutual respect and trust with parents, students, and the community. High expectations have been a constant statement that can be found throughout the literature in regards to learning, but there is also a need for developing and maintaining individual, supportive student-teacher's interactions (Bacon et al., 2007; Baines & Jacobs, 1990; Pedota, 2007; Rancifer, 1993) and treating students as one would want to be treated (Brophy & McCaslin, 1992; Pedota, 2007). Teachers need to convey a caring attitude towards students and show interest in them, not just within the school setting, but also within their community (Bacon et al., 2007; McDermott & Rothenberg, 2000; Veney, 2008). This can be achieved by attending extra-

curricular activities they are involved in (Berendt & Koski, 1999), inviting them to spend time with you and your family, visiting their neighborhood (Bacon et al., 2007; Cooper, 2003; McDermott & Rothenberg, 2000), and showing them that relationships can extend outside of the community because the relationships appear to be fluid (Ladson-Billings, 2009).

Along with personal relationships with students, there is also a need to involve parents or guardians and foster open dialogue. Teachers should see their relationships with their students' parents as one way to collaborate on their students' behavioral and learning needs (Berendt & Koski, 1999; Milner, 2007). They should develop a better understanding that students do have different home experiences (Souto-Manning & Mitchell, 2012) by inviting parents into the school setting or conducting home visits, phone calls, notes, and face-to-face meetings (Baines & Jacobs, 1990). These types of behaviors exhibited by the teachers could help to foster feelings of collaboration (Pedota, 2007). To foster those relationships within the community, teachers need to make their presence known in and around the community (Bacon et al., 2007). Teachers need to interact with student families within their own community (McAllister & Irvine, 2002) and be present in those communities (Bacon et al., 2007).

With all these relationships, teachers should be willing to foster mutual respect while demonstrating a genuine interest in the students and their families and communities (Milner, 2007). Teachers should invite parents to volunteer in the classroom (Souto-Manning & Mitchell, 2012) and community members should be enlisted as volunteers.

PBIS has been identified as a means of addressing student behavior within the educational setting and utilizes a three-tiered approach. The primary, or Tier 1 support, provides interventions for those students who already possess the behavioral skills and are easily redirected. This tier accounts for approximately 80% of the student population. The secondary support, or Tier 2, focuses on those smaller groups of students who have not responded to the supports and interventions provided in tier one. This tier encompasses approximately 15% of the student population. The last approximate 5% of the student population requires the tertiary level of support, or Tier 3. At this level, teams must determine the function behind the individual student's misbehavior and develop an individual behavioral plan to address the misbehavior.

Chapter 3: Methodology

The purpose of this study was to identify and describe what dispositional characteristics, instructional methods, and classroom management techniques that White, female teachers in urban elementary schools, who were identified as effective with African American males, possess which contribute to lower classroom disciplinary referrals and growth in academic achievement of this subset of students. Through the review of literature, the conceptual framework was created which reflects the concepts and theories that assisted in supporting and informing my research (Maxwell, 2005) with respect to effective teaching and classroom management strategies that made a positive difference for African American males in urban settings.

This chapter describes the research design and methods employed to identify and describe the teaching strategies, classroom management techniques, and teacher dispositions that had a positive impact on African American male students' behavioral and academic success in an elementary school setting. This research employed a qualitative approach, specifically using case study. Case studies "seek to understand a larger phenomenon through intensive study of one specific instance" (Rossman & Rallis, 2003, p. 94).

Research Questions

As stated in Chapter 1, the overarching research question guiding this investigation was: What dispositional characteristics/qualities, instructional

methods, environmental parameters, and classroom management techniques do White, female teachers perceive contribute to lower classroom disciplinary referrals for African American males in the elementary classroom and growth in academic achievement? To answer this question, I created four individual questions to address each aspect of the overarching question. The following questions allowed me to answer the overarching question:

1. What instructional methods are employed throughout the learning process within the classroom setting that maintain the engagement of African American males to enable them to demonstrate success at the elementary school level and academic success at the elementary school level?
2. What classroom management and behavior intervention techniques do White, female teachers incorporate within the elementary classroom setting that have resulted in lower disciplinary referrals and growth in academic achievement for African American males?
3. What dispositional characteristics/qualities do White, female teachers demonstrate which contribute to lower classroom disciplinary referrals for African American males in elementary classrooms?
4. What environmental parameters are established and maintained within the classroom setting that are perceived by White, female teachers to contribute to African American males' ability to navigate their environment to demonstrate their knowledge and socially acceptable behaviors in the elementary classroom?

Strategy

When embarking on a research endeavor, a researcher must identify four primary elements. These four elements used during a research investigation process include the epistemology, conceptual framework, the type of methodology, and the methods that are supported by the methodology (Crotty, 1998). These elements are chosen to assist me in gathering and analyzing data to support the hypothesis or research question. Epistemology derives from the Greek word *epistêmê*, meaning knowledge (Trochim, 2000). It is a means of “understanding and explaining how we know what we know” (Crotty, 1998, p. 3). The conceptual framework conveys the way that I look at the world and make sense of what I see. The methodology is the chosen strategy that supports the methods used and assists in making connections between the method and the results (Crotty, 1998). The actual methods are techniques used to gather and analyze compiled data.

The epistemology of this study was grounded in a relativist, also referred to as interpretivist (Yin, 2014), epistemological focus because human beings interpret their understanding of experiences of others as they interact with each other and is dependent on everyone’s interpretation of that interaction (Crotty, 1998; Yin, 2014). In other words, knowledge and understanding are interpreted through a pure and unbiased exploration of individual’s experiences within the settings that those experiences occur (Crotty, 1998). According to Schwandt (2007),

the term denotes those approaches to studying social life that accord to a central place to *Verstehen* [emphasis in original] as a method of the human sciences, that assume that the meaning of human action is inherent in that action, and that the task of the inquirer is to unearth the meaning. (p. 160)

As researchers and human beings, our meaning of the world around us is an ongoing process. We bring to each new situation our own cultural understandings and knowledge only to have it altered in some way because of our interaction with those from other cultures. “Case study research also can excel in accommodating a relativist perspective—acknowledging multiple realities having multiple meanings, with findings that are observer dependent” (Yin, 2014, p. 17). Case studies allow for a more in-depth and focused approach to identifying the dispositional characteristics/qualities, instructional methods, environmental parameters, and classroom management techniques of the teachers who were identified for this study. Meaning has been interpreted by humans through their shared experiences, language, understandings, and practices (Crotty, 1998; Rossman & Rallis, 2003; Schwandt, 2000) which made a relativist case study approach appropriate for this study.

I interpreted the decision-making process of participants that created a classroom environment that allowed their students to experience behavioral and academic success within their classrooms. This phenomenon was investigated by collecting data through interviews, observations, and behavioral and academic data for each participant and “nesting” (Patton, 2002, p. 447) the information

through “cross-case pattern analysis” (Patton, 2002, p. 447) to identify possible common attributes and approaches of the participants. Within the classroom environment, teachers and students from different cultural backgrounds and experiences must find common ground in which to communicate. Teachers must make decisions as to the best pedagogy to address student needs and understanding of the curriculum.

The conceptual framework for this study was derived from the extensive literature review findings and was used to assist me in interpreting the dispositional characteristics/qualities, instructional methods, and classroom behavior management techniques of the participants for this study. A conceptual framework is identified as “the system of concepts, assumptions, expectations, beliefs, and theories that supports and informs your research” (Maxwell, 2005, p. 33). It is a theory that was developed from the literature review allowing me to incorporate a relativist perspective as I collected and reviewed data for this case study. Using relativist perspective for my case study assisted in developing an understanding of “the social world as it is (the status quo) from the perspectives of the individual experiences” (Rossman & Rallis, 2003, p. 46). Teachers engage in specific behaviors and employ various teaching techniques and behavior management strategies for a reason. It was important to identify the behaviors and actions of each of the participants and compare them to better understand their effect on student behavior.

Assumptions of the Study

One assumption was that the data would reveal that effective, White, female elementary teachers, who provided specific educational parameters, differentiated instructional methods, fair and consistent behavior interventions, and engage all students in the learning process, resulted in fewer African American male students having disciplinary referrals and subsequent negative sanctions. The second assumption was that the interview questions had enough depth and breadth to elaborate further on findings within the field of research. The third assumption was that the findings from this research would contribute to the understanding of how some teachers can establish positive classroom environments where students can engage in instruction and be academically and behaviorally successful. During the interview process, I assumed that the teachers would answer the questions honestly. The last assumption was would the observation phase be typical of the regular classroom day and the classroom activities did not change due to my presence in the classroom.

Data Generation/Collection

Each person takes something different away from a single shared experience based on his or her perceptions, senses, and awareness. A case study approach allowed me to gather data from each of the participants through in-depth interviews, classroom observations, and review of discipline and state assessment data and cross-reference the data in the attempt to identify why there were identified as effective teachers of African American males. A case study approach “investigates a contemporary phenomenon (the ‘case’) in depth

and within its real-world context, especially when the boundaries between the phenomenon and context may not be clearly evident” (Yin, 2014, p. 16). Case study also “copes with the technically distinctive situation” and “relies on multiple sources of evidence, with data needing to converge in a triangulating fashion” (Yin, 2014, p. 16-17). As the researcher, I must set aside my own beliefs and presumptions related to the educating of African American males and, instead, focus on the participants’ experiences as they reflect on their role as teachers (Moerer-Urdahl & Creswell, 2004; Moustakas, 1994).

The experiences of the participants were described using what Moustakas (1994) describes as “textural language” (p. 90) in which the researcher embarks on a cycle of focusing on the experiences and use “textural qualities” (p. 90), or rich descriptive text, to describe those experiences. These rich descriptive texts lead me to reflect on my own experiences as a teacher to derive meaning from the participants’ perspectives. Moustakas (1994) refers to this process as “imaginative variation” (p. 97). Through cross-referencing all the information collected, I attempted to identify common elements/aspects of the participants in order to identify the phenomenon taking place in their classrooms (Moustakas, 1994).

The research questions used for this study were selected based on how they mirrored my own interest in identifying what characteristics and/or qualities of educators impact the disciplinary differences. Data were triangulated from three sources: 1) disciplinary referrals and state assessment data; 2) classroom observations; and 3) individual teacher interviews. Using three different data

sources allowed for increased validation of findings. Utilizing a case study approach provided the opportunity to gather evidence from a multitude of sources in order to identify the how and why of decisions educators made and the impact on the educational and behavioral performance of their African American males (Yin, 2014). The in-depth interviews were guided by the interview protocol and to incorporate “actual (conversational) questions in an unbiased manner that also serves the needs” of my study (Yin, 2014, p. 110). Classroom observations were conducted using Stronge’s (2010) Teacher Effectiveness Scale (Appendix B), which documents teaching activities that have been deemed as effective.

Through in-depth interviews and observations of participants, I was concerned with interpreting the social interactions of the teachers and their students, the instructional techniques the teachers implemented, and their classroom management and discipline techniques by comparing them to those identified through the literature review. This process allowed me to make meaning of the instructional choices teachers made and their classroom and behavior management choices and how these decisions affected student behavior and academic success. “Interviewing provides access to the context of people’s behavior and thereby provides a way for researchers to understand the meaning of the behavior” (Seidman, 1998, p. 4). Seidman’s (1998) series of three interviews was utilized for this study. The first interview focused on gathering as much relevant historical information and lived experiences about the participants that related to the topic of study. The second interview focused on

specific and concrete details about their experiences as teachers in urban school settings working with African American males. The last interview allowed participants to reflect on their experiences and consider the meanings behind their own dispositions (Seidman, 1998). Throughout the multiple-interview process, “the participant reconstructs his or her experience within the topic under student” along with the researcher (Seidman, 1998, p. 9). Each of the three interviews with each participant was conducted separately with the first interview having the participants recalling past experiences involving family, friends, school, their neighborhood, and work (Seidman, 1998). For this study, I conducted three separate interviews for each teacher for a total of 12 interviews.

Procedures for Data Collection

The data collection procedures focused on obtaining answers to the research questions for this study. Data collection procedures included selection of participants, review of student behavioral and assessment data for selected participants, a three-step interview process, and classroom observations. Initially, a letter asking for permission for access to a total of six teachers was provided to the building principals. Once the teachers were identified, permission was obtained, verbally and in written form, from the identified teachers to participate in the interview process. To ensure ethical standards and to protect the rights of the teachers who were interviewed, I submitted a copy of my proposal to the College of William and Mary Protection of Human Subjects Committee and the districts Office of Strategic Evaluation, Assessment, and Support for approval. The Institutional Review Board reviewed my proposal to

ensure that the individuals participating in the study were not harmed in any way (Appendix C). Participants were provided with a letter explaining the purpose of the study, the extent of their involvement in the study, and conveyed that their participation was strictly voluntary (Appendix D). They were also informed that they could decline to continue participation and/or could refuse to answer certain questions during the interviews once the study had started without repercussion. In addition, participants received a consent form, which they were required to read, sign, and return to the researcher within one week of receipt of consent form (Appendix E).

The four teachers who agreed to participate in the study were engaged in three in-depth interviews using a protocol of questions developed and used by Abe (2000) in a prior research study. The sessions were held in the participants' classrooms or a place that was convenient for them. I recorded the interviews and transcribed the recordings later. Responses were then coded and conclusions drawn from that coding. Preliminary codes were those identified through the literature review and contained in the conceptual framework explained in the first chapter. A summary of each interview was provided to each participant for member checking to ensure her responses were accurately documented.

Participants were instructed to provide pseudonyms to protect their privacy. All recordings were destroyed once the interviews were transcribed. All references made to the participants during the interviewing, transcription,

summary statements, and results recording were made using the supplied pseudonyms.

Member checking was used during the interview to determine accuracy of recorded information shared by the participants. “What I hear you saying is” and “Just to make sure I heard you correctly” were two approaches to ensure a member check. In addition, member checking after the interview was provided through a summary of the participants’ statements and assertions for their review and comment. Participants were instructed to indicate any discrepancies between what was stated in the summary and what they were trying to communicate. Responses from the participants were used to revise any inaccuracies presented in the summaries.

In addition to the three-interview process, I also conduct two observations in their classrooms as they interact with their students. Anecdotal notes were recorded on the observation scale. Member checking was also utilized through a written summary of the interview and the observation scale for the teachers to provide feedback.

Behavioral data of the selected participants were reviewed to compare frequency of disciplinary referrals and subsequent disposition from administration. These data were disaggregated with the purpose of comparing frequency of disciplinary referrals (or lack of disciplinary referrals) for African American males. Analysis of this data was an additional form of member checking to compare it to the information gained through the observations and interviews of the teachers.

Lastly, a three-year span of state-wide end-of-year scores of the four participants were reviewed to identify if the instructional techniques utilized by the participants resulted in positive improvements in achievement for African American male students. These data were disaggregated to identify the frequency of pass rates of African American males and their peers on end-of-year statewide assessments.

Procedures for Data Analysis

Information in each individual transcript from interviews and observations was broken down into manageable segments and these segments were then identified using open codes and a priori codes that lead to the establishment of themes revealed by the data. The a priori codes identified for this study were developed through the literature review process for they represented a common thread throughout the literature review. Open codes are words or short phrases that emerge as one analyzes, line by line, the data gathered from the interviews (Rossman & Rallis, 2003). Each interview was segmented into short phrases or complete sentences, and codes were assigned by the researcher to these as they were read. The first segment of data was read and a code assigned. Then the second segment of data was read and a decision was made as to the similarity to the first unit of data. If the segments were similar, the same code was used. If the segments were different, a different code was assigned to the second segment. This process continued throughout the analysis of the segments.

Similarities and differences that emerge allowed the data to be disaggregated and associated with the identified a priori codes or categories. “Categories provide direction for data gathering” (Rossman & Rallis, 2003, p. 282). Close analysis of the categories was used to determine any relationships from the data to generate themes. Generated themes explained the teachers’ perceptions regarding commonalities and differences. Findings were presented as a narrative in which the stories of the teachers were compared.

Setting

The study took place at Oak School (pseudonym) located in New City Public School district, located in the mid-Atlantic. New City Public School district is home to 34 elementary schools, one Pre-K-8 school, one K-8 school, one third through eighth school, eight middle and five high schools in addition to alternative and specialty program schools. Over 3,000 teachers are employed with the district, educating approximately 34,000 to 36,000 students ranging from preschool age through 12th grade. Student ethnicity for the district for the last three years is reported in Table 8.

Table 8

Student Ethnicity for the District

Ethnicity	2011-2012	2012-2013	2013-2014
Hispanic of any race	2,063 (6.2%)	170 (0.6%)	2,141 (6.6%)
American Indian/Alaska Native	174 (0.5%)	170 (0.6%)	166 (0.5%)
Asian	691 (2.1%)	709 (2.2%)	662 (2%)
African American	20,840 (62.3%)	20,345 (65.6%)	19,988 (61.5%)
Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander	122 (0.4%)	130 (0.4%)	110 (0.3%)
Unknown	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
White	7,475 (22.3%)	7,419 (23.9%)	7,395 (22.8%)
Two or more races	2,096 (6.3%)	2,064 (6.7%)	2,030 (6.2%)
Total	33,461	31,007	32,492

Note. Source: Division fall membership by grade, ethnicity, and gender

Oak School was selected due to the advantage of having access to the school. The grades in the school ranged from pre-kindergarten to eighth grade. Students ranged in age from as young as 4-years-old to as old as 15-years-old. It was a designated Title I school with students who reside in the surrounding neighborhood, which was predominantly low-income. As of the 2013-2014

school year, 870 students were enrolled. According to the Virginia Department of Education [VDOE] website (2013), the school had met the qualifications to be identified as fully accredited. Of the students enrolled at this school, 61.77% were eligible for free or reduced price lunch based on the family income levels (VDOE, 2013). Data on the National School Lunch Program for the school are reported in Table 9.

Table 9

National School Lunch Program (NSLP) Free and Reduced Price Eligibility Report Oak School

Categories	2011-2012	2012-2013	2013-2014
Low Grade	PK	PK	PK
High Grade	5	6	7
SNP Membership	626	783	871
Free Eligible	353 (56.39%)	428 (54.66%)	479 (54.99%)
Reduced Eligible	68 (10.86%)	61 (7.79%)	59 (6.77%)
Total F/R Eligible	421 (67.25%)	489 (63.45%)	538 (61.77%)

Oak School student demographic data for the last three years are reflected in Table 10 by ethnicity and gender.

Table 10

Fall Enrollment for Oak School

Ethnicity	Gender	2011-2012	2012-2013	2013-2014
Hispanic of any race	Male	29 (4.5%)	31 (4%)	41 (5%)
	Female	35 (5.5%)	30 (3.9%)	41 (5%)
American Indian/Alaska Native	Male	1 (0.2%)	4 (0.5%)	5 (0.6%)
	Female	2 (0.3%)	2 (0.3%)	2 (0.2%)
Asian	Male	9 (1.4%)	11 (1.4%)	10 (1.1%)
	Female	6 (0.9%)	6 (0.8%)	7 (0.8%)
African American	Male	161 (25.4%)	186 (24%)	208 (24%)
	Female	132 (20.8%)	183 (23.6%)	176 (20.2%)
Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander	Male	1 (0.2%)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)
	Female	1 (0.2%)	2 (0.3%)	1 (0.1%)
White	Male	112 (17.7%)	133 (17.2%)	161 (18.5%)
	Female	96 (15.1%)	131 (16.9%)	161 (18.5%)
Two or more races	Male	20 (3.2%)	29 (3.7%)	30 (3.4%)
	Female	29 (4.6%)	26 (3.4%)	27 (3.1%)
Total		634	774	870

Note. Source: Division fall membership by grade, ethnicity, and gender

There are 56 full-time teachers, 18 paraprofessionals, three resource staff, and five long-term substitute teachers. The original school was erected in 1945 and was plagued with structural problems such as rotting wood, mold and mildew, ceilings that are not structurally sound, and an infestation of termites. In 2012, the old structure was demolished and the current facility was opened to include pre-k through eighth grade. The new facility is LEEDS certified and technology is evident in every room via laptops on carts and several computer labs. Table 11 the percentage of the teachers, paraprofessionals, resource staff, and administration by ethnicity and gender for three years (Oak School Principal, 2013). The staff for Oak School included administration, teachers, paraprofessionals, interventionists, and resource staff. The teachers included general and special education teachers. Resource staff were those who taught students electives that included music, art, and media.

Table 11

Oak School Staff Over Three Years

School Year	Staff Position	% of White/ Total Number	% of African American/Total Number	% of Asian/ Total Number	%of Females/ Total Number	% of Males/ Total Number
2011-2012	Principal	100% (1)			100% (1)	
	Assistant Principal	100% (1)				100% (1)
	Teachers	81% (31)	17% (11)	2% (1)	100% (36)	
	Paraprofessionals	6% (1)	94% (15)		100% (21)	
	Interventionists	88% (7)	12% (1)		100% (8)	
	Resource Staff	50% (3)	50% (3)		100% (6)	
2012-2013	Principal	100% (1)			100% (1)	
	Assistant Principal		100% (1)		100% (1)	
	Teachers	72% (31)	26% (11)	2% (1)	100% (43)	
	Paraprofessionals	10% (2)	90% (19)		100% (21)	
	Interventionists	100% (6)			100% (6)	
	Resource Staff	63% (5)	37% (3)		100% (8)	
2013-2014	Principal	10% (1)			100% (1)	
	Assistant Principal		100% (1)		100% (1)	

School Year	Staff Position	% of White/ Total Number	% of African American/Total Number	% of Asian/ Total Number	%of Females/ Total Number	% of Males/ Total Number
	Teachers	73% (40)	25% (14)	2% (1)	98% (54)	2% (1)
	Paraprofessionals	14% (3)	86% (19)		100% (22)	
	Interventionists	20% (1)	80% (4)		100% (5)	
	Resource Staff	50% (5)	50% (5)		60% (6)	40% (4)

The data for fall enrollment of students for the three years of data review reveal African American students account for almost half of the student body for each year and approximately 24% of the students were African American males. The data for the school staff for the three years of data reviewed shows that over half of the staff was comprised of White, female teachers.

The timeline for this study is depicted in Figure 2. Once initial consent was obtained from the office of Strategic Evaluation, Assessment, and Support, I contacted building principals to provide me with the names of teachers identified as successful educators of African American males whose Summative Teacher Evaluation indicating Meets or Exceeds Standards in the identified domains (Appendix F). Three principals responded with lists of identified teachers and I followed up with all the teachers provided. Of the teachers who were contacted, five responded they would be willing to participate: four from Oak School and one from Driftwood Elementary School. Upon receiving the consent form detailing the process I would be following, the teacher from Driftwood Elementary School decided to withdraw from the study. This left the four participants from Oak School to complete my study. Once the participants agreed to participate, there was a two-week lag between the first set of interviews and the first round of observations. I was unable to interview all four participants within a week due to conflicts with our schedules. The second observation did not occur until after the third interview.

Figure 2. Timeline of Study

October 30, 2013	•Contacted the Department of Assessment, Research and Accountability department (ARA) for the school division through emails
November 6, 2013	•Received email response from E. G. F. a representative of ARA department indicating they were reviewing my proposal
November 25, 2013	•Received email response for E.G.F. of ARA indicating adjustments that needed to be made to make the research study feasible
December 2013	•Adjustments sent to E. G. G.
January 10, 2014	•Received permission from the director of ARA to proceed with my study
February 22, 2014	•Contacted principal of Oak School
March 31, 2014	•Contact from the principal indicating there were individuals who had agreed to participate
Week of April 14, 2014	•First interview of two participants
Week of April 21, 2014	•First interview of two participants
Week of April 28, 2014	•First observations of all four participants
Week of May 5, 2014	•Second interview of two participants
Week of May 12, 2014	•Second interview of two participants
Week of May 26, 2014	•Third interview of two participants
Week of June 2, 2014	•Third interview of two participants
Week of June 9, 2014	•Second observation of all four participants

As a part of member checking, participants were provided with a summary following each interview and observation.

Participants

The four participants in this study were drawn from Oak School. I initially sent the letter to the building principal, via email, requesting her assistance in identifying at least four White teachers in her building whom she believed had been successful educators of African American males. The teachers identified needed to have been identified as successful educators of African American males and whose Summative Teacher Appraisal Instrument indicates Meets or Exceeds Standards in each of the seven domains: knowledge of content and curriculum, human relations and communication, professionalism, planning for instruction, management of student behavior, delivery of instruction, and monitoring and evaluating student and program outcomes. Although the letter did not specify the need for the teachers to be White, my email and follow up visit with the principal did convey the need for the teachers to be White females (Appendix G). However, one of the teachers identified as White/Asian (Bi-racial).

Pseudonyms were used in lieu of the teachers' real names to sustain their confidentiality while reporting their thoughts and perceptions. The four teachers were referred to by the pseudonyms they chose: Nora, Viola, Lilly, and, Sylvia. Three of the teachers had students with disabilities in their classrooms as well as students identified as gifted. The fourth teacher taught a gifted cluster class. During the 2013-2014 school year that the study took place, Sylvia and Nora were sharing the responsibilities of teaching the core subjects (Reading, Writing,

Math, Science, and History/Social Studies) to the combined 36 students in their classes. This required them to maintain open communication and daily contact about their students. Prior to this, they each taught their own classroom of students. They are also a part of the fifth-grade team that collaborates during weekly meetings; discussing curriculum, instructional strategies, and behavior of students.

Lilly and Viola taught all core subjects to only the students in their class; Lilly averaged about 19 students each year and Viola fluctuated between 18 and 20 students. Like Nora and Sylvia, Lilly and Viola are also a part of the third-grade team that collaborates weekly to discuss curriculum, instructional strategies, and behavior of students.

This study summarizes their thoughts and perceptions on how they viewed their disposition/character, their instructional methods, and their classroom behavior management. To be included in the study, teachers had to have at least five years of teaching experience at the elementary school level and at least three years' experience at their current school. At least 40% of the class population in each teacher's class were students who were identified as African American with at least two of those students being male.

Classroom Demographics

Participant classrooms did reflect a diverse population of students in regards to ethnicity (Appendix H) and students with disabilities (Tables H12-H15). Student enrollment data were identified through review of the assessment data that were obtained by the district testing department. Table 16 shows none

of the four participants had students with disabilities enrolled in their classes in the first year of data review. Sylvia and Nora shared teaching responsibilities of teaching their individual class of students. Sylvia taught both her and Nora’s class Reading, Writing, and History/Social Studies during the 2013-2014 school year. Nora taught both classes of students Math and Science. The participants also had teachers of students with disabilities who worked with these students in their classrooms. Sylvia and Nora shared one teacher during the 2012-2013 and 2013-2014 school years. Viola shared the teacher of students with disabilities with another third-grade teacher. Lilly had the lowest number of students during the 2013-2014 school year, but did not report to have had a teacher of students with disabilities being a part of her classroom instruction.

Table 16

Number of Students with Disabilities Enrolled in Participants’ Classes by School Year

Participant	2011-2012	2012-2013	2013-2014
Viola	(-)	7	6
Sylvia	(-)	4	13 (shared with Nora)
Nora	(-)	6	13 (shared with Sylvia)
Lilly	(-)	(-)	2

Note. (-) No students with disabilities enrolled in participant classes

Enrollment within each classroom did not exceed 25 students (Table 17). Of the four participants, Lilly’s class enrollment remained consistent over the three-year period of data reviewed and Nora had the highest number of students for two of the three years. Viola’s class enrollment for two of the three years was

20 students and during the remaining year, she had 18 students. For the school year 2011-2012, there was no data provided for Sylvia's state assessments so no enrollment data was obtained. During the 2012-2013 year, she had 22 students and the last year of review (2013-2014) she shared the responsibility of teaching 36 students with Nora.

Table 17

Number of Students Enrolled in Participants' Classes by School Year

Participant	2011-2012	2012-2013	2013-2014
Viola	20	18	20
Sylvia	--	22	36 (shared with Nora)
Nora	23	24	36 (shared with Sylvia)
Lilly	19	19	19

Note. -- indicates no data received

The ethnic groups remained constant in regards to the enrollment of African American and White students (Table 18). There was more variability in regards to the enrollment of other ethnic groups. During the 2012-2013 school year, Sylvia had a lower enrollment of African American students than her peers which. The percentage of enrolled African American students increased during the second year of data review. Lilly also had a lower enrollment of African American students during the 2011-2012 school year than her peers. For the other two school years, her there was a higher percentage of African American students enrolled in her class. All other participants consistently had more African American students enrolled in their classrooms than any other ethnic group.

Table 18

Percentage of Ethnicity Enrollment by School Year and Participant

School Years	Participants	African American	White	Asian	Hispanic	Multi
2011-2012	Viola	50%	35%	5%	(-)	10%
	Nora	60.9%	26%	(-)	13%	(-)
	Lilly	31.6%	52.6%	(-)	(-)	15.7%
2012-2013	Viola	44.4%	38.9%	(-)	11.1%	5.6%
	Sylvia	18.2%	36.3%	(-)	22.7%	22.7%
	Nora	58.2%	33.3%	(-)	4.2%	4.2%
	Lilly	42%	36.8%	5.3%	5.3%	10.6%
2013-2014	Viola	40%	30%	(-)	15%	15%
	Sylvia	52.8%	41.6%	2.8%	(-)	2.8%
	Nora	52.8%	41.6%	2.8%	(-)	2.8%
	Lilly	36.9%	26.3%	5.3%	21%	10.5%

Note. (-) No students of this ethnicity enrolled

Throughout the 3-year data period, each participant had at least one African American male enrolled.

Discipline Data

As the results of school based violence plays itself out on our television screens, school divisions across the nation are responsible for reporting school safety data to their states' department of education. For my study, I compared the New City Public School's reported safety data (Table I19) with the safety data

reported by Oak School (Table I20). Both tables are in Appendix I. The offense categories the district was required to submit data were: a) weapons offenses, b) offenses against students, c) offenses against staff, d) against person, e) alcohol, tobacco, and other drug offenses, f) property offenses, g) related to behavior, h) technology offenses, and i) all other offenses. Data were organized by offense category and disaggregated by ethnicity. Three years of safety data (2011-2012, 2012-2013, and 2013-2014) for both the district and Oak School were compared to allow for later comparison of the three years of discipline data reviewed submitted by the four participants. The data for many of the offenses for the district and the school were identified as “a group below state definition for personally identifiable results” as indicated by the symbol “<.” For purpose of this study, I indicated the student ethnicity group where this was indicated.

Weapon offenses. Weapons offenses occur when a student brings a device to school or to a school function that is either a real or fake item. Weapons, as defined by the state, included: a) bomb threat, b) fireworks/explosives, c) a knife, d) razor blades and/or box, e) handgun, rifle and/or shotgun, and f) toy gun. Additional weapon offenses include possession of ammunition, a bomb device, chemical weapons, BB guns, Taser, stun gun, and bomb device. The district data and Oak School data were below what the state defined as relevant for personally identifiable results. For the district this included Hispanic of any race, African American, White, and two or more races for all three school years, Asian for two school years, and Native Hawaiian/Pacific

Islander for one school year. For Oak School, this included African American in one school year.

Offenses against students. The offenses against students relate include physical altercations and threatening. These offenses were identified as: assault and battery with and without injury, sexual battery against a student, student-aggravated sexual battery, student-assault with and without a weapon, student-attempted rape, student-forcible rape, student-homicide with a firearm or other weapon, student-sexual touch, and student-threatening.

At Oak School the data were below what the state defined as relevant for personally identifiable results with only White students for one school year. For the district the data were below what the state defined as relevant for personally identifiable results for Hispanic of any race, American Indian/Alaska Native, White and Two or more races for school years during all three school years and for Asian students for two school years. For the district, all three years showed approximate data for African American students in this category: ~77 (2011-2012), ~56 (2012-2013), and ~58 (2013-2014).

Offenses against staff. As with offenses against students, offenses against staff include physical altercations and threatening. These offenses included: sexual battery against staff, staff-assault with and without a weapon, staff-attempted rape, staff-forcible rape, staff-homicide with and without a weapon, staff-sexual touch, and staff-threatening.

For Oak School, there were no data indicating an offense against staff had occurred during the three years of reviewed data. However, this was not so for

the district. Hispanic of any race, White, and Two or more races were identified as occurring, but below what the state defined as relevant for personally identifiable results for all three school years and only for one school year for American Indian/Alaska Native. Also for the district, all three school years showed approximate data for African American: ~95 (2011-2012), ~50 (2012-2013), and ~34 (2013-2014). This data showed a decrease of ~64% in the rate of offenses against staff for African American over the three-year data periods.

Other offenses against person. Of all the offense categories, against person category had the most incidents of all and included all ethnicities for the district safety data. Other offenses included: bullying to include cyber bullying, extortion, fighting-requiring either medical or no medical attention, gambling, hazing, kidnapping and/or abduction, malicious wounding, minor physical altercation, non-sexual harassment, robbery, sexual harassment, sexual offenses without force, and stalking. For American Indian/Alaska Native and Asian, the data were below the state definition for personally identifiable results for all three years reviewed and only two years for Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander. African American ethnicity had the most for all three years with White ethnicity coming in a close second. Two or more races and Hispanic of any race had smaller number of incidents. Even though this reporting category had the highest number of incidents, the data showed a reduction in the number of incidents for these ethnicities.

For Oak School, two or more races had below what the state defined as relevant for personally identifiable results for all three reviewed years, two of the

three years for Hispanic of any race, and one year for American Indian/Alaska Native. For African American, one year had below what the state defined as relevant for personally identifiable results, but there was an increase of incidents for the following two years. White students had no reported incidents for two years and then 12 incidents in 2013-2014.

Alcohol, tobacco, and other drug offenses. For Oak School, there were no incidents within this category. For the district, there were incidents for all three years for African American where there was an increase from the first year of data reviewed to the second, and drop-in incidents for the third year. Incidents for White also showed a similar trend over the three-year period. For Hispanic of any race and Two or more races incidents were below what the state defined as relevant for personally identifiable results. American Indian/Alaska Native and Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander also showed the same trend as African American and White, but the data were at zero for the first and third year and below what the state defined as relevant for personally identifiable results for the second year. Offenses in this category included: alcohol, electronic cigarette, over the counter medication use, possession, and/or sale/distribution, possession of inhalants, possession and/or use-look a-like drugs, possession and/or use scheduled I/II drugs, sale and/or distribution schedule I/II drugs, sale, distribution, and/or paraphernalia schedule III/VI drugs, theft-prescription medications, tobacco and tobacco paraphernalia, and use of inhalants.

Property offenses. Property offenses included school property and personal property. The types of offenses identified included: arson, breaking and

entering and/or burglary, theft of a motor vehicle, theft except a motor vehicle, and vandalism. For the district, there were more reports across ethnicities than at the school level. African American had more incidents reported than their peers. At the school level, White had the only incidents reported.

Related to behavior. Related behavior included behaviors identified as disorderly or disruptive behavioral offenses. These included: classroom or campus disruption, defiance of authority and/or insubordination, disorderly conduct, disrespect (e.g., walking away, talking back, etc.) disruptive demonstrations, gang activity, inciting a riot, minor insubordination, possession of obscene and/or disruptive literature and/or illustrations, trespassing, and using obscene and/or inappropriate language and/or gestures. There were more incidents for the district than at the school level for this category. Hispanic of any race, African American, White, and Two or more races had the more incidents than American Indian/Alaska Native, Asian, and Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander. Of all the ethnicities, African American had the most incidents reported. However, the number of incidents did decrease over the 3-year period of data reviewed: ~80% decrease for Hispanic of any race, ~63% decrease for African American, ~76% decrease for White, and ~86% for Two or more races.

Technology offenses. Technology in schools ranged from possession of personal technology to use and abuse of school technology. Offenses included: beepers, causing and/or attempting to damage computer hardware, software, or files, cellular telephones, electronic devices (e.g., radios, tape players, etc.), unauthorized use of technology and/or information, violations of acceptable

usage policy, and violations of internet policy. There were no incidents reported at the school district. In contrast, the district reported more incidents in 2011-2012 than the other two years combined. Hispanic of any race, White, and Two or more races had the most incidents during that school year.

All other offenses. The offenses for this category were ones that were not covered by the other categories. Offenses included: attendance, inappropriate personal property, misrepresentations, and other school code of conduct violations not covered in these codes. There were minimal instances of these offenses at the school level. However, at the district level, there were more reported instances for African American and White and minimal instances for all other ethnicities over the three years of data reviewed. As with the other categories, there was a reduction in incidents over the three-year period for both ethnicities: ~48% reduction of incidents for African American and 60% reduction of incidents for White.

Of the offenses noted in both tables, four were predominantly addressed by teachers in the elementary classroom were: 1) offenses against students and staff; 2) property offenses; 3) related to behavior; and 4) technology offenses.

State Assessment Data

With the inception of NCLB entered the requirement for states to establish an assessment reporting instrument to measure the academic achievement of all students following a year of instruction. The state that Oak School was located implemented state assessments for reading and math for third grade through eighth grade. Select grades participated in state assessments for science and

social studies/history. At the high school level, students were required to pass six state assessments: reading, writing, math, science, and social studies/history and an additional assessment of their choice in math, science, or social studies/history. The state established scores that were considered passing and those scores identified as failing. For my study, I compared Oak School's third grade and fifth grade state assessment scores to those of my participants (Appendix J). I obtain permission from three of the four participants to review three years of standardized assessment data for the school years identified. I obtained three years of assessment data for the students enrolled in Viola, Nora, and Lilly's classes. I obtained three years of assessment data for the school from the state website. However, the state-website only reported on the results for the students identified as African American and White. Scores were disaggregated by ethnicity/race, gender, academic assessment, and pass percentages.

Instruments

To gather rich, descriptive details about the inner workings of the selected teachers' classrooms, two instruments were utilized: an interview and an observation. Both instruments used for this study were developed by other researchers. The interview protocol (Appendix K) was developed by Abe (2000) for his doctoral dissertation. Permission to use or modify the protocol was obtained via email correspondence (Appendix L). The results from the interviews were compared to the results from the classroom observations to determine congruency between statements from the teachers and their actions in the

classroom setting.

In addition to the interview protocol, the Teacher Effectiveness Observation Protocol (Stronge, 2010) was used to document those behaviors observed during the observation period. Since this study was focusing on the effects of teachers' practices in the classroom in relation to the discipline situations of minority students, especially African American males, questions that refer to cultural relevancy were modified to reflect appropriate practices for these students. Since the categories identified from the literature review did not include aspects of the curriculum, questions referring to the curriculum were not included in the interview protocol. The following paragraphs will detail both instruments that were utilized during this study.

Teacher interviews. Teacher interviews were a significant aspect of this study. Interviews allowed an in-depth look at the past and present experiences of the participants while providing an opportunity for reflection and meaning making. Researchers who delve into the everyday "life world" of people for their knowledge obtain perspective from the point-of-view and personal experiences of the participants (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009). To do this effectively, I had to interpret both verbal and non-verbal communication (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009). A three-step interview process was implemented for this study with a protocol developed by Abe (2000). According to Abe (2000), Siedman's (1998) three-step interview process was the foundation for the protocol he developed for his study. The protocol allowed for the first interview to act as a foundation for the succeeding two interviews to build upon. "People's behavior becomes

meaningful and understandable when placed in the context of their lives and the lives of those around them” (Seidman, 1998, p. 11). Based on his experience, Seidman (1998) found the interval between interviews should fall between three days to a week. This provides the interviewee time to consider the former interview without losing the correlation between each interview. To allow this time and still maintain a connection between each interview, the plan was to space each interview to allow a week between each interview. The three-interview series allows for participants to understand their own experiences within the context where they occurred (Seidman, 1998). The initial interview focused on past events of the participant’s life, providing a chance to discuss her knowledge and experience. This included early life experiences which contributed to who she had become and her approach to teaching. The focus of the second interview was to give prospective for the participant to reconstruct those experiences contextually. It allowed for participants to place themselves within that time and place to perhaps gain greater understanding and interpretation of the occurrence. The last interview allowed for reflection on the possible meaning of the experiences for the participant. The last interview is thought to facilitate a connection, for the participant, both intellectually and emotionally in regards to their present lives and career (Seidman, 1998).

In Abe’s (2004) study, he used the protocol in interviews of three teachers from a large metropolitan district. The purpose of the first set of interview questions was to provide context to the experiences of the teachers. The second set of interview questions focused on the teachers’ perceptions and experiences

in relation to instruction and disciplinary referrals for African American students. The last interview allowed teachers to summarize their thoughts and reflect on their experience and perceptions. Most of these questions were used in this study to validate the instructional strategies and behavioral strategies used to address the discipline differences. Table 19 is a comparison of how Abe (2004) and I utilized the interview protocol.

Table 19

Comparison of the Utilization of the Interview Protocol

	Abe (2004)	MacPherson (2014)
Timeline of Interviews	Conducted once a week during data collection time-frame	Conducted once a week during data collection time-frame
Location of Interviews	In the teacher's classroom at a mutually agreed upon time	In the teacher's classroom for two interviews and over the phone for the last at a mutually agreed upon time
Materials to Record Responses	Pen and pad for field notes (e.g. thoughts, reactions, and further questions/prompts) Audiotape	Pen and pad for field notes (e.g., thoughts, reactions, and further questions/prompts) Digital tape recorder
First interview	Occurred during first week of data collection	Occurred during the first two weeks of data collection
Second Interview	Began with a summary of the first interview Occurred mid-point of data collection process	Began with a summary of the first interview and the first observation Occurred mid-point of data collection process
Third Interview	Began with a summary of the first and second interviews	Began with a summary of the first and second interviews and the first and second classroom observations

	Abe (2004)	MacPherson (2014)
		Occurred at the end of the data collection process
Length of Interviews	Between 45 minutes to one hour	Between 45 minutes to one hour

Observation scale. Two classroom observations of teachers involved in the study were conducted. These observations were separated from the days that the interviews took place and were scheduled after the first interview was conducted with each teacher. All observations occurred during the spring semester. The purpose of the observations was to serve as a reference for what had been identified in the literature as effective behaviors and to document behaviors that were not on the observation list that they declared in their interviews were exhibited in the classroom. Observations allowed the researcher “to note body language and other gestural cues that lend meaning to the words of the persons being interviewed” (Angrosino, 2000, p. 673). The *Teacher Effectiveness Scale* (Stronge, Ward, Tucker, & Hindman, 2008a; Stronge, Ward, Tucker & Hindman, (2008b) was utilized for this study as many of the qualities identified on the instrument corresponded with findings from the literature review for this study. There were two advantages to using this scale: 1) reliability and validity had been established (Gall, Gall, & Borg, 2007; Stronge et al., 2008a; Stronge et al., 2008b, Stronge, 2010) and 2) the scale had also been field-tested (Gall et al., 2007).

The scale was developed based on effective teaching behaviors and the degree in which those behaviors were manifested in the classroom. To achieve

content validity, Stronge (2010) compared the subscales with existing teacher effectiveness research. Concurrent validity was achieved through “comparing actual teaching practices with the instrument’s intended content design in a field test” (Stronge, 2010, ¶ 2). Observers participated in 8-hour training on the use of the scale prior to the field test. They were given three chances to observe videotapes of teachers engaged in instruction that were viewed and normed by five members of the research team using the scoring rubric. Only observers who scored 80% or above were chosen to participate in the field-testing of the instrument. Those scoring between 70% and 79% were retrained and reassessed to attain 80%. Those scoring below 70% were not chosen.

A purposeful sampling of 53 fifth-grade teachers participated in the field-testing of the *Scale*. They were selected from four school districts in a southeastern state and residual gain scores for end-of-course state reading and writing tests were used to select an approximately equal number of top and bottom quartile teachers. Two trained observers were placed in each classroom and used the scoring rubric of the *Teacher Effectiveness Scale* to guide their decisions about the effectiveness of each teacher based on the dimensions within the *Scale*. Once the observations and ratings were completed, the observers compared and discussed their individual ratings and reached consensus on those areas in which their ratings were different (Stronge, 2010).

The table of specifications for the research questions and the corresponding data sources is found in Table 21. Each domain is scored using a rubric with a score of Level 4 indicating *most effective* and a score of Level 1

indicating *least effective*. Instead of averaging the scores across all categories, the scorer is instructed to score each category based on the level that best describes the behaviors exhibited during the observation (Stronge et al., 2008a, 2008b, 2010).

To prepare for the observations, I participated in an observation of videotaped lessons with someone familiar with the protocol. Each of us had a copy of the observation protocol and used the scoring rubric to assess the interactions of each teacher with her classroom of students as it related to instruction, assessment, classroom management and personal interactions. We then discussed each area of each section of the observation protocol; providing each other with our level score and the justification for the score. We observed approximately four recorded lessons to obtain a confidence score of 80%.

Table 21

Table of Specifications for Research Questions and Corresponding Data Sources

Category	Research Questions	Disciplinary Referral Data	Related Teacher Interview Questions	Classroom Observation
Instructional Methods	1) What instructional methods are employed throughout the learning process within the classroom setting that maintain the engagement of African American males to enable them to demonstrate behavioral and academic success at the elementary school level?	Number of disciplinary referrals submitted for misbehavior/ misconduct	<p>First Interview</p> <p>Q2) Who or what would you say are the primary influences that have helped make you the teacher you are today?</p> <p>Second Interview</p> <p>Q1) Describe the instructional methods you are using to deliver the curriculum, and explain why they are particularly appropriate for African American males?</p> <p>Q2) How are the students responding to the instructional methods?</p> <p>Q5) What connection have you observed among curriculum, instruction, and discipline in your classroom?</p> <p>Third Interview</p> <p>Q5) What instructional methods were most effective for African American students?</p> <p>Q6) What instruction did not go so well? Why?</p>	<p>Instructional Skills</p> <p>1-1 Instructional Differentiation</p> <p>1-2 Instructional Focus of Learning</p> <p>1-3 Instructional Clarity</p> <p>1-4 Instructional Complexity</p> <p>1-5 Expectations for Student Learning</p> <p>1-6 Use of Technology</p> <p>Assessment Skills</p> <p>A-1 Assessment for Understanding</p> <p>A-2 Quality of Verbal Feedback to Students</p>
Behavior management	2) What classroom management and behavior intervention techniques do White, female teachers	Number of disciplinary referrals submitted for	<p>First Interview</p> <p>Q4) How do you view the issue of school discipline among children?</p>	<p>Classroom Management</p> <p>M-1 Classroom Management</p>

Category	Research Questions	Disciplinary Referral Data	Related Teacher Interview Questions	Classroom Observation
	incorporate within the elementary classroom setting that have resulted in lower disciplinary referrals and growth in academic achievement for African American males?	misbehavior/ misconduct	<p>Q5) How do you view your personal role as a teacher during a time when disciplinary infractions are taking place in your classroom?</p> <p>Second Interview</p> <p>Q4) How would you describe the discipline situation in your classroom?</p> <p>Third Interview</p> <p>Q1) As you look back on your teaching career, what specific instances stand out for you in dealing with African American males in discipline situations?</p> <p>Q2) What kinds of disciplinary infractions are most common among your African American males? When and why do you think these occur?</p> <p>Q3) Are there discipline differences between male and female students?</p> <p>Q4) How does the discipline of African American male students compare to their peers?</p>	<p>M-2 Classroom Organization</p> <p>Personal Qualities</p> <p>P-1 Caring P-2 Fairness & Respect P-3 Positive Relationships P-4 Encouragement of Responsibility P-5 Enthusiasm</p>
Teacher disposition/ character	3) What dispositional characteristics/ qualities do White, female teachers demonstrate which contribute to lower classroom disciplinary referrals for African American males in elementary classrooms?	Number of disciplinary referrals submitted for misbehavior/ misconduct	<p>First Interview</p> <p>Q1) How would you describe your teaching style?</p> <p>Q3) Assuming you are not there yet; describe the kind of teacher you would like to be when you reach your teaching peak.</p> <p>Second Interview</p>	<p>Classroom Management</p> <p>M-1 Classroom Management M-2 Classroom Management Personal Qualities</p> <p>Personal Qualities</p>

Category	Research Questions	Disciplinary Referral Data	Related Teacher Interview Questions	Classroom Observation
			Q3) In your opinion, what appears to be the overall atmosphere of the classroom?	P-1 Caring P-2 Fairness & Respect P-3 Positive Relationships P-4 Encouragement of Responsibility P-5 Enthusiasm Organization
Instructional methods	4) What environmental parameters are established and maintained within the classroom setting that are perceived by White, female teachers to contribute to African American males' ability to navigate their environment to demonstrate their knowledge and socially acceptable behaviors?	Number of disciplinary referrals submitted for misbehavior/misconduct	Second Interview Q1) Describe the instructional methods you are using to deliver the curriculum, and explain why they are particularly appropriate for African American males? Q2) How are the students responding to the instructional methods? Third Interview Q5) What instructional methods were most effective for African American students? Q6) What instruction did not go so well? Why?	Instructional Skills 1-1 Instructional Differentiation 1-2 Instructional Focus of Learning 1-3 Instructional Clarity 1-4 Instructional Complexity 1-5 Expectations for Student Learning 1-6 Use of Technology Classroom Management M-1 Classroom Management M-2 Classroom Organization

This protocol was developed and normed on teacher effectiveness with all students. The purpose of using it in this study was to draw on what had been identified as effective teacher qualities for all students and identify if those same qualities were as effective with a subset of the student body; specifically, with African American males. I observed how teachers interacted with their African American male students, what instructional strategies were implemented, and the style of classroom management established in the participants' classrooms.

Student record review. The review of student documents included discipline referrals and end-of-year statewide assessments from 2011-2012 to the 2013-2014 school years at Oak School. For the discipline referrals, I looked at the number of disciplinary referrals written by the participants, the referring behavior and the final disposition by the administrator. Disciplinary data for the last three years was reviewed to determine the misconducts that led to the disciplinary referrals, the location of the misconducts, and the resulting disposition for the misconducts.

For the end-of-year statewide assessment, I also looked at three years of data for the four participants. The scoring for the end-of-year statewide assessments includes Advanced, Pass, and Fail. Specifically, I disaggregated the data to show the number of Advanced, Pass and Fail scores were earned by African American males when compared to their peers in the content areas of Reading and Math for third and fourth grade and Reading, Writing, Math, Science and History/Social Studies for fifth grade.

The information from this data source was be used conjunction with the results from the participant interviews and classroom observations to triangulate the data to assist with identifying themes.

Validity and Reliability

Trustworthiness and authenticity are used as means of ensuring the ethical soundness of the study. Trustworthiness is defined as “research validity” (Glesne, 2006, p. 37). A trustworthy study meets standards that have been set for acceptable and competent practice and “meets standards for ethical conduct and sensitivity to the politics of the topic and setting” (Rossman & Rallis, 2003, p. 63). It is measured through four dimensions: credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability. Credibility refers to the researcher assuring the participants that what is reported out is representative of what was shared during the process. Transferability refers to the ability of the information to be generalized to other situations and settings. It is the responsibility of the researcher to ensure that the process implemented in the study is logical, traceable, and documented adds to the dependability of the study. Lastly, confirmability requires the researcher to make connections between the information being reported to the actual data that supports the researcher’s findings (Schwandt, 2000). To ensure trustworthiness, triangulation of data, clarification of researcher bias, member checking using verbal and written summary statements, and the inclusion of rich and thick descriptions of what participants shared were implemented (Schwandt, 2000; Glesne, 2006; Schwandt, 2000).

Authenticity refers to the degree that a participant's voice is communicated fairly and accurately. It is measured in five dimensions: fairness, ontological authenticity, educative authenticity, catalytic authenticity, and tactical authenticity. To assure these, I incorporated member checking during the interviews and through summaries of the interviews provided to the interviewees. I also maintained a journal to document thoughts, conversations, and observations.

Credibility refers to the researcher assuring the participants that what is reported out is representative of what was shared during the process. Transferability refers to the ability of the information to be generalized to other situations and settings. It is the responsibility of the researcher to ensure that the process implemented in the study is "logical, traceable, and documented" (Schwandt, 2007, p. 299), which supports the dependability of the study. Lastly, confirmability requires the researcher to make connections between the information being reported to the actual data that supports the researcher's findings (Schwandt, 2007).

Credibility was addressed through member checking during the interview process and providing participants with a summary of the interview to ensure that what they shared was represented appropriately in the summary. Member checking and debriefing through sharing of the summary was used for participants to validate what was recorded in transcriptions of the interviews. Member checking was also considered to address confirmability. To increase the transferability of this study, a description of the study was provided along with the implementation of purposeful sampling.

To ensure fairness, each participant was given an equal voice in expressing their perspective during the process using member checking and debriefing. In those instances, where teacher's disposition/character differed, results from those interviews and observations were reported to show outlier instances to the reader. Ontological authenticity was also addressed through member checking using follow-up questions based on thoughts they share (Lincoln & Guba, 2002). Educative authenticity was ensured through the distribution of copies of the research findings to each participant (Lincoln & Guba, 1986, 2002). Catalytic and tactical authenticities were addressed through member checking and follow-up questions during the interview as well as the sharing of the study results with each participant (Lincoln & Guba, 1986, 2002).

Ethical Safeguards

Permission was obtained, verbally and in written form, from the identified teachers to participate in the interview process. To ensure ethical standards and protect the rights of the teachers who were interviewed and observed, I asked for approval from the College of William and Mary Protection of Human Subjects Committee (Appendix C). I also submitted a proposal for approval to the Department of Strategic Evaluation, Assessment, and Support of the selected school district (Appendix M). Each participant was provided with a letter (Appendix D) explaining the purpose of the study. In addition, each participant received a consent form which they were required to read and sign. Each participant was informed that I would maintain confidentiality of the participants using a pseudonym of her choice. The participants' identities were protected at

all times during the study, with none of the participants' actual names ever being used. Any material submitted to me for the study was kept confidential. All records and tapes of interviews were stored on a computer that was password protected and only accessible by me. Once recordings were transcribed, audio taped interviews were erased. After the study, all pseudonyms and other identifying information were destroyed. At any time during the study, a participant could withdraw consent and discontinue participation without penalization.

Limitations of the Study

As I was the sole researcher for this project, there were no other independent observations from others with which to compare. Due to this limitation, researcher bias could have led to skewed interpretations, which are influenced by that bias. To guard against this, I engaged in member checking with the participants; summarizing by stating, "What I hear you saying is" and providing them with summaries of the interviews to allow them to clarify or correct information presented. The use of principal nomination only, and a lack of parental and community involvement in the nomination process may have resulted in bias by the nominator which may have limited the selection of teachers or result in the overlooking of other possible candidates.

Although student records were reviewed, there was not an inclusion of student voices in this study. Even though the addition of a focus group of students would allow for them to express their own classroom experiences that led to the positive impact on their behavioral achievements. I did not employ this

strategy in my study. Not having a student focus group was another limitation to the study. Although others may draw upon the findings from this study, due to the qualitative nature of the study, findings may not be generalized to other areas. Another limitation of this study was the fact that I am a White, female teacher conducting this study. Thus, I may not have a full appreciation of the issues facing African American males. Member checking allowed me to check my own understanding of what the participants shared during their interviews. This allowed them to communicate any discrepancies between the summary I provided and what they were trying to communicate.

Summary

This research was a qualitative study utilizing a case study approach, a conceptual framework, and relativist approach. Three White, female teachers and one White/Asian teacher from Oak School whose Summative Teacher Appraisal Instrument indicated either Exceeds Standards on their overall single summative rating or Exceeds Standards in the areas which include planning for and delivery of instruction, classroom management, and/or learning environment as recorded by their building principals and who also had low African American male discipline issues School were recommended by their building principal. Discipline data over a three-year period were also obtained for each of the referred teachers to verify the percentages of disciplinary referrals. Statewide assessment results data over a three-year period were also reviewed to verify pass rates for African American male students as compared to their peers. Data were collected in the form of a three-tiered interview, classroom observations,

disciplinary referrals, and state assessment data. Findings from the interviews were presented as narration with quotes incorporated. Findings from the observations were presented in narrative form with specific examples of participant and student behaviors and verbal interactions that were observed. After the narratives for each research question, tables were created to present the data. Discipline data were disaggregated by discipline infraction, ethnicity/gender, and number of events per year for three years. This information was then summarized and presented in tables. The state assessment data were disaggregated by passing status, ethnicity/gender, number passed divided by number assessed, summarized and presented in tables.

Chapter 4: Results

The purpose of this case study was to ascertain the answer to the overarching research question guiding this investigation: *What dispositional characteristics/qualities, instructional methods, environmental parameters, and classroom management techniques do White, female teachers perceive contribute to lower classroom disciplinary referrals for African American males in the elementary classroom and growth in academic achievement?* The following questions allowed me to answer the overarching question:

- 1) What instructional methods are employed throughout the learning process within the classroom setting that maintain the engagement of African American males to enable them to demonstrate behavioral and academic success at the elementary school level?
- 2) What classroom management and behavior intervention techniques do White, female teachers incorporate within the elementary classroom setting that have resulted in lower disciplinary referrals and growth in academic achievement for African American males?
- 3) What dispositional characteristics/qualities do White, female teachers demonstrate which contribute to lower classroom disciplinary referrals for African American males in elementary classrooms?
- 4) What environmental parameters are established and maintained within the classroom setting that are perceived by White, female teachers to

contribute to African American males' ability to navigate their environment to demonstrate their knowledge and socially acceptable behaviors in the elementary classroom?

This chapter presents key findings from the three-part interviews, classroom observations and discipline data of four elementary teachers. Information gathered from interviews and observations was segmented with each segment assigned an open code and a priori code. The a priori codes identified represented a common thread throughout the literature review, which formulated the conceptual framework for the study (Figure 1). The information that emerged was used to produce a priori codes or categories. "Categories provide direction for data gathering" (Rossman & Rallis, 2003, p. 282).

Data Sources

The data for this research study were gathered from four White, female elementary teachers. The method for gaining data included three separate interviews conducted with each participant, followed by two separate observations during their instructional day and I was given access to their discipline data and end-of-year state-assessment data for a three-year period. Information about the four participants is presented first. This is followed by the data relating to the disciplinary referrals they submitted and a description of the student's offense. The codes and a priori codes for the interviews and observations are reported as well. Lastly, the themes that emerged are presented.

The participants. To ensure confidentiality, all participants are referred to by the pseudonyms they provided during the interview process. Viola stated she has been teaching since 2000 for the school division and is also a product of the school division. She has always worked with students at the elementary level. Viola has taught fifth and has worked with her current grade level, third, for the last four years. Between her positions as fifth grade teacher and third grade teacher, Viola was a media specialist for four years. Being a product of the school division, Viola had background knowledge and experience with the differences in behaviors and communication styles of her students.

Sylvia has been teaching for eight years. All eight years' experience has been at her current school. She has taught fourth and fifth grade. She currently teaches fifth grade Reading, Writing, and Math. She is the only participant who has had any formal instruction on various cultural differences. Her education program required that she take a multicultural class. In conjunction with classroom instruction, she was assigned to various teaching experiences in culturally diverse classrooms. Sylvia's unique educational preparation program provided her with a number of experiences within urban school divisions to identify, through comparison, the differences in communication styles of the students and herself.

Nora is currently a fifth grade, general education teacher at Ocean Elementary where she and Sylvia share teaching responsibilities of each other's students. She teaches math and science to her students and Sylvia's students. Sylvia teaches Reading, Writing and Social Studies to both classes. Nora has

been a teacher for the last eight years, seven at her current school. She was a long-term substitute for the first two years of her career. Prior to entering the field of education, Nora was graduated as a bachelor of psychology and worked as a behavior specialist in an institute in their feeding program. This was at an inpatient hospital and children in her care had difficulty eating due to a variety of issues. Her primary responsibilities included creating behavior plans to assist children with eating. Nora has also received no formal instruction on diverse cultures, instead learning about various cultures while working in her current urban setting. Her mentor, who is African American, has been a source of cultural information for her.

Lilly is currently a third-grade general education teacher who teaches all core subject areas to the Gifted Cluster class. She has been teaching for 17 years, with seven of those years at the private school level. The bulk of her teaching experience has been working with third graders, but she did teach pre-school. She has a Bachelor's Degree in Psychology and earned her Master's Degree in Special Education while taking classes for teacher certification. She also has an endorsement to teach gifted learners. Lilly had the most experience in the education field and specifically in the district as an educator. This longevity provided her with in-depth understanding of her communication style and how it differed from many of her students' communication styles.

Table 22 provides a summary of each teacher's experience, race and education. Two teachers have over 10 years of experience in education. Interestingly, two of the teachers earned bachelor's degrees in psychology and of

the two, one received her master's degree in special education. This was an interesting aspect of Nora and Lilly's background experience and education. Psychology is the study of human behavior and the purpose of special education is to address disability based needs and provide equal access for students with disabilities. What the findings mean is this training and skill level may have provided both women with insight into possible purposes for behavior and the means to be proactive when designing their classroom behavior management and their reasonableness with their students.

Table 22

Summary of Teachers' Education, Experience and Ethnicity

Teacher	Race	Education	Grade Taught	Total Years Teaching	Total Years teaching at current school
Viola	White/ Asian (Bi-racial)	Elementary Education, Media/Library	Third grade, Inclusion	15 years	4 years
Sylvia	White	Elementary Education	Fifth grade, Inclusion	8 years	8 years
Nora	White	Psychology, Elementary Education	Fifth Grade, Inclusion	8 years	7 years
Lilly	White	Psychology, Elementary Education, Special Education, Gifted	Third grade, Gifted	17 years	10 years

Discipline data. Discipline data were obtained for each of the four participants. The data covered a three-year period and includes the students' gender, ethnicity, the offense description, and the disposition for each teacher. A generic student number was created to ensure the confidentiality of the students. Table 23 provides an overview of the school district's definition of the offense and the range of possible dispositions. These definitions and dispositions are documented within the school divisions Standards of Student Conduct.

Table 23

Offenses Defined and the Range of Possible Dispositions

Offence Description	Offense as Defined by the School District	Range of Possible Dispositions
Bullying	Defined by the <i>Code of Virginia</i> Section §22.1-276.01 as “any aggressive and unwanted behavior that is intended to harm, intimidate, or humiliate the victim; involves a real or perceived power imbalance between the aggressor or aggressors and victim; and is repeated over time or causes severe emotional trauma.”	<p>Level 4 – Office referral required; parent/guardian notification required; suspension (1-5 days); detention; campus clean-up; in-school suspension; alternative school-based program; suspension of computer privileges</p> <p>Level 5 – Office referral required; parent/guardian notification required; suspension (6-10 days); restricted activity; alternative school-based program; suspension of computer privileges</p> <p>Level 6 – Office referral required; parent/guardian notification required; suspension with administrative hearing before tribunal</p> <p>Level 7 – Office referral required; parent guardian notification required; referral to alternative learning program; long-term suspension (11-90 days)</p> <p>Level 8 – Office referral required; parent guardian notification required; long-term suspension with special conditions (return to be determined by school board)</p> <p>Level 9 – Office referral required; parent/guardian notification required; expulsion</p>
Fighting	“Exchanging mutual physical contact between two or more persons by pushing, shoving, or hitting, with or without injury, is prohibited.”	Level 4 – Office referral required; parent/guardian notification required; suspension (1-5 days); detention; campus clean-up; in-school suspension; alternative school-based program; suspension of computer privileges

Offence Description	Offense as Defined by the School District	Range of Possible Dispositions
		Level 5 – Office referral required; parent/guardian notification required; suspension (6-10 days); restricted activity; alternative school-based program; suspension of computer privileges
Harassment	“Behavior that is not unlawful or does not rise to the level of illegal harassment or retaliation may nevertheless be unacceptable for the educational environment or the workplace. Demeaning or otherwise harmful actions are prohibited, particularly if directed at personal characteristics including, but not limited to, socioeconomic level, sexual orientation, or perceived sexual orientation.”	<p>Level 1 – Classroom level interventions/consequences</p> <p>Level 2 – Parent/Guardian involvement; confiscation of an item; supervised time-out outside of the classroom; behavior contract; conflict resolution; referral to support staff; class or schedule change; suspension of computer privileges</p> <p>Level 3 – After school detention; in school alternative Saturday school; behavior essay; restitution for loss or damage</p> <p>Level 4 – Office referral required; parent/guardian notification required; suspension (1-5 days); detention; campus clean-up; in-school suspension; alternative school-based program; suspension of computer privileges</p>
Disruption	“Students are not to engage in conduct which causes disruption or obstruction of any school activity. This includes, but is not limited to, chronic talking, throwing objects, horse playing, teasing, making rude noises, and running that disrupts any school activity.”	<p>Level 1 – Classroom level interventions/consequences</p> <p>Level 2 – Parent/Guardian involvement; confiscation of an item; supervised time-out outside of the classroom; behavior contract; conflict resolution; referral to support staff; class or schedule change; suspension of computer privileges</p> <p>Level 3 – After school detention; in school alternative</p>

Offence Description	Offense as Defined by the School District	Range of Possible Dispositions
Defiance and disrespect	“Students shall comply with any oral or written instructions make by school personnel, within the scope of their authority, as provided by Board policies and procedures. Students are to show the proper respect to each other and to school staff members at all times.”	Saturday school; behavior essay; restitution for loss or damage
		Level 4 – Office referral required; parent/guardian notification required; suspension (1-5 days); detention; campus clean-up; in-school suspension; alternative school-based program; suspension of computer privileges
		Level 1 – Classroom level interventions/consequences
		Level 2 – Parent/Guardian involvement; confiscation of an item; supervised time-out outside of the classroom; behavior contract; conflict resolution; referral to support staff; class or schedule change; suspension of computer privileges
Assault and battery or threats against staff	“Students are not to attempt or engage in any unlawful force or violence against school staff. Additionally, students are not to threaten (verbally, in writing, or via electronic transmission) strike, attack, or harm a school staff member.”	Level 3 – After school detention; in school alternative Saturday school; behavior essay; restitution for loss or damage
		Level 4 – Office referral required; parent/guardian notification required; suspension (1-5 days); detention; campus clean-up; in-school suspension; alternative school-based program; suspension of computer privileges
		Level 8 – Office referral required; parent guardian notification required; long-term suspension with special conditions (return to be determined by school board)
		Level 9 – Office referral required; parent/guardian notification required; expulsion

This document is presented to students at the start of each school year and requires the student and parents/guardians to sign a “Standards of Student Conduct Card” indicating the parents/guardians and student have read and recognize their responsibility to the school division to enforce the standards of student conduct. The definitions are used to assist building personnel with categorizing behaviors exhibited by students that impede their learning of, the learning of their peers or are a possible threat to the student or to their peers. Table N25 provides three years of discipline data for Oak School during the time reviewed (Appendix N).

Once the behaviors have been categorized, building personnel can then identify what disposition(s) would be appropriate for the student. Before providing notification to the parent/guardian and student of the disposition(s), the building administrator reviewing the infraction is required to review the student’s discipline history to identify if the behavior has occurred before. There is a continuum of dispositions that range from a Level 1 to a Level 9 that provide the administrator with the ability to identify the most appropriate disposition for the behavior exhibited.

What the data revealed was during the three-year period data, the participants submitted disciplinary referrals for behaviors that included hitting another student, threatening to harm others, shoving others and throwing classroom objects (Table 24). The discipline dispositions ranged from a student having to write a behavior essay to being placed on a long-term suspension. Of the four participants, Sylvia wrote only one disciplinary referral during the three-

year period. Viola wrote the most disciplinary referrals, but they were only for two students. Over the three-year period, 14 disciplinary referrals were submitted by the four participants. Ten of the disciplinary referrals were for seven African American males, two were for one White male and two were for one male student with two or more ethnicities.

In contrast, the data showed the adults at Oak School submitted a total of 234 referrals over a 3-year period. The majority of the referrals, approximately 38%, were written for African American males (90 referrals). These referrals included: arson, bullying, damaging property, disrespect, disruption, fighting/mutual combat, harassment, inappropriate personal property, insubordination, profanity, theft, and weapons – dangerous instruments.

Discipline data was coded to identify the dispositional levels and how those relate to the requirements documented in the school divisions Standards of Student Conduct. Of the 14 offenses recorded, 12 disciplinary referrals ended in a Level 4 disposition. One of the offenses resulted in a disposition Level 3 and another in a disposition Level 8.

Level 4 offenses were categorized as Harassment with the sub-categories of “Hitting a student” (five incidents) and “Other” (four incidents) and one incident of Threatening Group of Staff and Students. “Hitting a student” included hits to the face, stomach and head, hitting a student for cutting in line and punching a student in the face. Two of these offenses were committed by a White, male (Student 002) who received a total of four days OSS, two by a male identified as having two or more ethnicities (Student 003) who received a total of three days

OSS, and one by an African American male (Student 005) who received three days OSS.

For the category of Harassment – Other, four incidents were documented which involved three African American males: Student 006, Student 007 and Student 008. Student 006 was involved in only one incident and received two days of OSS for hitting a student in the head and groin. Student 007 also received only one incident and received two days of OSS for slamming a student to the floor. The last student, Student 008 was involved in two incidents: one involving choking and hitting another student and one involving placing a thumb tack on a person's chair and lying about it. He received a total of four days OSS.

Student 004, an African American male, received a disciplinary referral under the Category of Threatening Group of Staff and Students. Specifically, he was reported to threaten to hurt the teacher and shoot up the school. According to the school divisions Standards of Student Conduct, the possible range for dispositions were Level 8 and Level 9. For this incident, Student 004 received a 4-day OSS, which could place the disposition under a Level 4.

Both the Level 3 and Level 8 dispositions were brought against two African American males. Student 001 received the lowest disposition of all the students, Level 3, for Disruption – Horseplay for which he had to write a Behavior Essay. Specifically, he was described as having twisted another student's arm. Student 009 received the highest disposition of all the students, Level 8 that resulted in him receiving a long-term suspension. His offense was threatening a student by holding scissors to the student's throat.

Of the 14 offenses, eight of the students involved were African American males. The offense descriptions were written in observable terms: hitting a student in the face, punching a student in the face, hitting a student in the groin and head, slamming a student to the floor, throwing a chair, hitting and choking a student, hitting a person in the throat and chest, placing a thumb tack on a student's chair and holding scissors to the throat of a student.

Table 24

Teacher Discipline Data by Student, Gender, Ethnicity, Offense Description and Disposition

School Year	Teacher	Student Number	Student Gender	Student Ethnicity	Offense Description	Disposition	Disposition Level
2011 – 2012	Lilly	001	Male	African American	Disruption – Horseplay Student 001 twisted another students arm.	Behavior Essay	Level 3
2012 – 2013	Lilly	002	Male	White	Harassment – Hitting a Student Student 002 hit a student in the stomach, hit the same student a week prior and took the student’s candy, but gave it back. Reported student 002 was bullying the student.	1 day ISS	Level 4
		002	Male	White	Harassment – Hitting a Student Student 002 hit a female student for cutting him in line.	3 day OSS	Level 4
	Viola	003	Male	2 or more	Harassment – Hitting a Student Student 003 hit a student in the face during dismissal and hit another student on the bus	2 day OSS	Level 4
			003	Male	2 or more	Harassment – Hitting a Student Student 003 hit a student several times, once in the face, at lunch over a girl.	1 day OSS
2013 – 2014	Sylvia	004	Male	African American	Threatening Group of Staff and Students Student 004 threatened to hurt the teacher and shoot up the school	4 day OSS	Level 4
	Nora	005	Male	African American	Harassment – Hitting a Student	3 day OSS	Level 4

School Year	Teacher	Student Number	Student Gender	Student Ethnicity	Offense Description	Disposition	Disposition Level
					Student 005 punched a student in the face		
		006	Male	African American	Harassment – Other Student 006 hit another student in the head and groin	2 day OSS	Level 4
		007	Male	African American	Harassment – Other Student 007 slammed a student to the floor	2 days OSS	Level 4
	Viola	008	Male	African American	Disruption – Throwing Objects Student 008 threw a chair and hit another student	2 day OSS	Level 4
		008	Male	African American	Harassment – Other Student 008 hit and choked another student	2 day OSS	Level 4
		008	Male	African American	Bullying Person to Person Student 008 hit a person in the throat and chest	4 day OSS	Level 4
		008	Male	African American	Harassment – Other Student 008 placed a thumb tack in a person’s chair and lied about it	2 day OSS	Level 4
	Lilly	009	Male	African American	Threatening (a) Student(s) Student 009 held scissors to the throat of another student	Long Term Suspension	Level 8

* OSS – Out of School Suspension

**ISS – In School Suspension

Oak School overall discipline data were compared to the incident data of the participants (Table 25) focusing only on African American males.

Table 25

Discipline Data Comparison of Participants and Oak School Staff

School Year	Category	Number of Referrals by Participants	Number of Referrals by Oak School Staff
2011-2012	Disruption	1	3
2012-2013	Harassment	4	18
2013-2014	Bullying	1	0
	Disruption	1	7
	Harassment	5	8
	Threatening	2	0

Table 25 represents those categories that the participants submitted referrals for and for which dispositions were given to students: disruption, harassment, bullying, and threatening. The data reviewed show that staff members of Oak School wrote the most referrals for harassment during the 2012-2013 school year than any other shared category. During the same year, two of the participants submitted four referrals for Harassment that were written for only two students. The highest number of referrals written by the participants was for Harassment during the 2013-2014 school year.

Overall, discipline data reviewed showed the Oak School staff submitted more referrals for African American males over the three-year period reviewed than the participants. The percentage of African American males receiving referrals was significant for the 2011-2012 school year, but decreased over the

next two years. For the 2011-2012 school year, approximately 54% of all referrals were written for African American males. Offenses included damaging property, disrespect, disruption, fighting, harassment, inappropriate personal property, and insubordination. Of these offenses, African American males received 19 referrals. Among the participants, only one referral was written for an African American male for disruption, which accounted for 9% of the African American males enrolled in their classes. In 2012-2013, African American males accounted for approximately 40% of the referrals with the highest number of referrals being written for Harassment (18). None of the participants submitted written referrals for any African American male students. The percentage of African American males receiving referrals for 2013-2014 school year was reduced to approximately 37% with the most referrals being written for harassment and the second highest offense category being fighting/mutual combat. During this school year, the 5 African American male students received referrals for harassment, threatening, bullying and disruption, which equated to 6% of the African American males enrolled in their classes.

Review of the district and school safety data for the three years reviewed showed a high percentage of African American males received discipline referrals. African American males accounted for approximately 79% of the offense categories reported to the state during the 2011-2012 school year. In contrast, the number of offenses were less than that required to report to the state for Oak School. For the remaining two years of reviewed data, the percentage of offense categories increased for African American males. In 2012-

2013, approximately 82% of offenses reported were for African American males and approximately 100% for Oak School. In 2013-2014, as the percentage number for Oak School got lower (approximately 59%), the district had approximately 85% of category offenses for African American males.

Assessment data. Assessment data were obtained for the three participants who provided consent to utilize their data: Viola, Nora, and Lilly. The assessment data covered a 3-year period and included Reading, Writing (for fifth grade only), Math, Science, and History/Social Studies. I arranged the assessment data by grade and subject area and disaggregated the scores by students' gender and ethnicity. I then calculated the percentages of pass rates for each subject area. Appendix J provides the graphs created to represent the pass percentages of each group of students by their ethnicity and gender in Viola, Nora, and Lilly's classes. Assessments were administered at the end of the school year to evaluate students' mastery of grade level curriculum. The same process was followed with the state assessment data obtained for Oak School. However, the only data that were located on the state website were for African American and White students. The graphs allowed me to compare the percentage of pass rates for the school on the different content related state assessments to the percentage of pass rates for the students in the participants' classes.

The state assessment scores are separated into three scoring areas: Advanced Passing, Passing, and Failing. The highest score that students can earn is a 600. For students to earn an Advanced Passing score, their scores

must fall between 500 and 600. A Passing score falls between 400 and 499. Any score below 400 is considered a Failing score. The figures in Appendix J show the number of students by ethnicity and gender over the three-year period for each of the three participants. African American males' performance was compared to their classmates.

Viola. Over the three years of data reviewed, Viola's class enrollment fluctuated between 18 and 20. Across all three years of data, Viola's class consistently had five African American males enrolled. In 2011-2012, all five African American males assessed received passing scores in Math, Science, and History/Social Studies compared to the school which had approximately 60% pass math, approximately 90% pass science and 80% pass History/Social Studies. On the Math assessment, one African American male scored an Advanced Passing and the remaining four received between 450 and 499 (Passing). Two African American males scored Advanced Passing in Science with one receiving a 600 and the other three received Passing; scoring between 471 and 499. On the History/Social Studies assessment, one received an Advanced Passing and the other four received a Passing with scores falling between 453 and 499. On the Reading assessment, Viola had 80% of African American males passed compared to the schools approximately 70%.

During the 2012-2013 school year, none of the five African American males enrolled scored Advanced Passing in any subject area. There was only one African American female who earned an Advanced Passing on the History/Social Studies assessment, which equated to approximately 60% of the

African American students assessed in Viola's class. Of the 18 students participating in assessments in Math and Reading, only seven students received Passing on both; one of these students was an African American male, which equated to 20% pass rate in reading and math. Seventeen students participated in the Science and History/Social Studies assessments and nine received Passing in Science and 10 received Passing in History/Social Studies. On these assessments three of these were African American males, which equated to 60% of the African American males. The school-wide data showed that African American males outperformed Viola's students in Reading (approximately 50% passed), Math (approximately 45% passed), and History/Social Studies (approximately 70% passed), but was commensurate with Viola's student scores in Science.

During the 2013-2014 school year, the only student to earn Advanced Passing was a Hispanic female on the History/Social Studies assessment. Of the five African American males, two had Passing on Math and Reading (40% pass rate), three had Passing on Science (60% pass rate), and four had Passing on History/Social Studies (80% pass rate). The total percentage pass rate for African American males for the grade level was: 60% passing for Reading, approximately 65% passing for Math, approximately 70% pass for Science, and approximately 80% pass for History/Social Studies. Of the 20 students evaluated, nine received Passing on Math, eight received Passing on Reading, nine received Passing on Science, and 11 received Passing on History/Social Studies. A Hispanic female was the only student to pass all four assessments.

Nora. Over the three years of data reviewed for Nora, her total class enrollment for the first two years of data remained consistent. The third year of data had a higher number of students enrolled due to her responsibility of teaching Math and Science to two classrooms of students. As fifth graders, Nora's students would be responsible for passing five state assessments: Reading, Writing, Math, Science, and History/Social Studies. The first two years of data include all five assessments and the last year of data include only Math and Science, but for two classes. In the 2011-2012 school year, Nora had 23 students enrolled in her class, five of whom were African American males. Of those students, 20 of them received either Advanced Passing or Passing in Math and Reading, four of whom were African American males (80%). On the Science and History/Social Studies assessment, 22 students received Advanced Passing or Passing including all five African American males (100%). On the History/Social Studies assessment, all five African American males passed (100%) with three of the five earned Advanced Passing. The writing assessment showed all but two students passing. Four of the African American males received Passing scores (80%). Overall, the African American male fifth graders during this year scored lower than Nora's students: approximately 70% passed both Reading and Writing; approximately 60% passed Math; and approximately 90% passed both Science and History/Social Studies.

In 2012-2013, Nora had 24 students enrolled in her class, seven of whom were African American males. Most the African American males did well on the Math assessments with one receiving Advanced Passing (525) and four

receiving Passing scores (72%). These young men did not do as well on the Reading and Writing Assessments: only three of the seven received Passing scores of which they were a part of the total 13 students in Reading and the total 15 students in writing who did pass. In Reading, the African American males did perform better. Five of the seven received passing scores with one receiving a score of Advanced Passing (42% passed). In writing, only 42% of the African American males tested passed. African American males in Nora's class did not do as well in Science either. Of the seven students tested, only three passed (42%). They did better on the History/Social Studies assessment with six of the seven passing the assessment and two of those six receiving Advanced Passing (72%). Overall that year, African American male pass rates were varied compared to Nora: approximately 60% passed Reading and approximately 40% pass the Writing; approximately 60% passed Math; approximately 80% passed Science; and approximately 90% passed History/Social Studies.

The last set of Nora's data, 2013-2014 school year, she taught only Math and Science for her class (Class A) and for Sylvia's class (Class B). Altogether, she was responsible for teaching 37 students these two subjects; 10 of whom are identified as African American males. In her Class A Math Class, Nora had 11 students receive either Advanced Passing or Passing (80%). One of the Advanced Passing students was an African American male. Of the remaining four, three received Passing scores. In her Class B Math Class, 15 of the students received Advanced Passing or Passing scores, four of whom were African American males (100%). One African American male from each class

received a score of Failing. For her Class A Science Class, 11 students received Passing scores, four of whom were African American males (80%). In her Class B Science Class, 15 of her students received Passing scores and an African American female earned an Advanced Passing score (100%). Of the 15 Passing scores, four of them were African American males. Compared to the African American males in all fifth-grade classes, Nora's class performed better. Overall, African American males in fifth grade Math and Science had an approximate 70% pass rate.

Lilly. Over the three years of data reviewed, Lilly's class enrollment fluctuated between 19 and 20. Across all three years of data, Lilly's African American male population increased from two for the 2011-2012 school year to six for the following two years. In 2011-2012, many of Lilly's students earned Advanced Passing or Passing on their state assessments. Only a small number of students received Failing. Of the two African American males, only one passed all four subject assessments (50%); scoring Advanced Passing on Reading (552) and Science (564). Most of the students during this year received either Advanced Passing or Passing. Of the 19 students evaluated, 16 received Advanced Passing (one student) or Passing on Math, 14 received Advanced Passing (five students) or Passing on Reading, 17 received Advanced Passing (six students) or Passing on Science, and 16 students received Advanced Passing nine students) or Passing on History/Social Studies.

During the 2012-2013 school year, Lilly had six African American males enrolled in her class. She had many students who scored Advanced Passing

and Passing in all subjects assessed and only a small number of students who received Failing. Three students earned Advanced Passing on their Math assessments, one of which was an African American male. Two of the five remaining African American males received Passing scores. On the Reading assessment, five out of the six African American males received Passing scores ranging from 424 to 486. For Science, two of the six African American males received scores in Advanced Passing, three received scores of Passing and only one scored Failing. Only two other students received Advanced Passing in this subject: a White female and a White male. On the History/Social Studies assessment four of the six African American males scored Advanced Passing, one received a score of Passing, and one scored Failing. On this assessment, a total of 11 students earned Advanced Passing. Of her African American males, 80% passed Reading, History/Social Studies, and Science while only 50% of her African American males passed Math.

During 2013-2014, only nine students were evaluated for Reading in Lilly's class. Of those nine students, two were African American males and only one of them received a Passing score. In Math, of the four African American males assessed, all of them received scores of Passing and a total of 15 students out of 22 received either Advanced Passing (three students) or Passing. In Science, only 19 students were evaluated and 16 received Advanced Passing or Passing scores. Of those 16, five were African American males; one received a score of Advanced Passing (505) and the rest scored Passing. On the History/Social Studies assessment, all the students received either a score of Advanced

Passing or Passing. Of those, four were African American males; two scored Advanced Passing and two scored Passing. During this school year, Lilly had 50% of her African American males pass Reading and 100% of her African American males passing Math, Science, and History/Social Studies.

Overall, Viola's African American males outperformed their peers during the 2011-2012 statewide assessments in all academic areas tested. They did better than their peers in Math, Science and Social studies in 2012-2013 and as well as their peers in 2013-2014 in History/Social Studies. Lilly's students outperformed their peers during the 2012-2013 school year in all statewide assessments in the academic areas tested and during the 2013-2014 statewide tests on Math, Science, and History/Social Studies. Nora's African American male students outperformed their peers on all subject areas tested during the 2011-2012 school year and on the Math and Science statewide assessments during the 2013-2014 school year.

Interviews. The three interviews conducted with each of the participants provided information about their thoughts regarding their instructional style, classroom management skills and view of students. Table 26 provides a summary of the a priori codes and categories in which responses from all participants were identified.

Table 26

Common A Priori Codes and Categories within A Priori Codes from Interviews

A Priori Codes	Categories within A Priori Codes
Behavioral Interventions	Consequences Reinforcers
Establishing Personal Relationships	Influences
Novel and Engaging Instruction	Aspiration Differentiation Time Management
Understanding Diverse Communication Styles	Communication Observation Opinion Race awareness Self-reflection Understanding

Definitions for each of the categories within a priori codes provide clarification as to how the word relates to the data and examples allow for additional support for the categories within a priori codes (Appendix O). From the 12 combined interviews, there were four a priori codes that aligned with participants' answers: behavioral interventions, establishing personal relationships, novel and engaging instruction and understanding diverse communication styles. Within these a priori codes there were categories which aligned with all the participants' answers: consequences, reinforcers, influences, aspirations, differentiation, time management, communication, observation, opinion, race awareness, self-reflection and understanding.

Of the four a priori codes, understanding diverse communication styles had the highest number of categories: communication, observation, opinion, race

awareness, self-reflection and understanding. Communication was defined as the verbal and nonverbal means of expressing needs/wants/understanding. Based on responses that correlated with communication, participants spoke of communication to students in regards to expectations, collaborating with the students and parents, discussions in regards to student behavior and students collaborating with one another. Nora was the only participant to state she had become more aware of how her communication style differed from her students. She has observed “passionate” interactions between students that she may have viewed as fighting in the past. She also shared her experience the first time she watched a movie with her students and how they talked about the characters, laughed out loud and talked to the characters. This experience changed how she addresses behaviors in her class.

Observation was identified as the act of watching over individuals to gain information on academic and behavioral progress within the classroom environment. Participants’ observations allowed them to adjust their instruction to address observed academic need. It also allowed them to gauge the level of student involvement and implement strategies to address behavior. Participants also utilize observation while conferencing with parents for it provided them with insight to the family dynamic.

Having an opinion is important, but it is also important to be aware of your opinions. Opinion, for this research, was defined as a personal view or belief created about an act, situation or person that is not grounded in fact. All participants expressed a range of opinions about student behavior and

administration support. One participant's reaction to a student placing a mouth guard in his mouth was to laugh and state, "That was the stupidest thing I think I've ever seen someone do just in the middle of my class." Another participant voiced her opinion that administrators may feel teachers who submit a lot of disciplinary referrals are unable to manage their classrooms. I would attribute these differences to the perceptions of the participants and the level of tolerance they have for behaviors.

All participants communicated about their level of awareness of their students' ethnicity, race, socioeconomic status, personalities and academic levels. When asked specific questions about African American males and their behavior and academic successes, all participants responded based on their personal awareness with race. Race awareness is defined as identifying that there are different races of students within a classroom, but approaching the teaching and behavior management of different students by their individual needs and communication differences (Bireda, 2002; Gay, 2010; Day-Vines & Day-Hairston, 2005; Milner, 2006; Monroe & Obidah, 2004; Souto-Manning & Mitchell, 2012).

. For Viola and Lilly, they did not see gender or race as defining factors in relation to instruction. Both participants have diverse populations of students. Viola has an inclusion classroom with students with disabilities integrated with three non-disabled peers. Lilly has students identified as gifted, students with disabilities and non-disabled students. Instead of looking at race and gender, these women identify what works instructionally for all of students.

Nora and Sylvia viewed behavior as something they addressed with their African American students, but also indicated sometimes it is not a gender issue or race issue. Sylvia indicated she has experienced times when it was her White males or African American females that she experienced more behavioral challenges.

During each of the interviews, teachers demonstrated self-reflection and communicated times when they engaged in it in the classroom or after a lesson. Self-reflection is defined as the active process of thinking about past experiences and carefully considering the consequences of decisions made or the successes created because of one's decisions. When reflecting on teaching styles, Lilly spoke of her need to be actively involved in the learning process, which allows her to plan activities that allow her students to be actively involved. Sylvia voiced need to continue to "spice up" the reading material students are required to complete. She also reflected on students who exhibited most of her discipline issues who happened to be White males. For Nora, it was her approach to interacting with her students, maintaining calm and learning and accepting their communication styles. For Viola, it was possessing good classroom management skills to deliver effective instruction.

Understanding was the last category and was defined as the background experiences and knowledge a person brings to a situation, decision or interaction. For Nora, addressing discipline issues was not an easy task. She tended to take what she viewed as mitigating circumstances of the student when addressing a misbehavior. As such, she was not always consistent with her

behavior intervention system. Due to their level of experience in their capacity as teachers within an urban school division, they all communicated the need to have knowledge of the students' background, establishing relationships with family and sharing their personal experiences as students and children with their students.

Observations. All four participants were observed twice during instruction, which allowed for the opportunity to compare the participants' instructional practices, behavior management styles, classroom organization and relationships with their students to their responses during the three interview sessions. Overall summaries of the observations were compiled and are reflected in Figures 6 and 11.

Table 27 provides a summary of the a priori codes from the classroom observations conducted during the study. Definitions for each of the a priori codes provide clarification as to how the word relates to the data and examples allow for additional support (Appendix P). Within the a priori codes categories were revealed. The most common categories within a priori codes were those that all four participants were identified as demonstrating. From the eight combined observations, the a priori code with the highest number of categories observed with all participants was Novel and Engaging Instruction. This a priori code included the following categories: consistent feedback, differentiation, encouragement, student engagement and technology. Consistent feedback was defined as providing clear, concise information to an individual or individuals related to performance. Students received constructive relevant feedback related to the task or behavior that was observed. Each of the participants,

during both observations, was observed to communicate high expectations while providing feedback.

Table 27

Common A Priori Codes and Categories within A Priori Codes from Observations

A Priori Codes	Common Categories within A Priori Codes
Behavioral Interventions	Behavior management
Clear and Concise Routine and Rules	Behavior management Consistent feedback Ease of transitions Student engagement
Environmental Organization/Parameters	Clear directions Ease of transitions
Novel and Engaging Instruction	Consistent feedback Differentiation Encouragement Student engagement Technology
Establishing Personal Relationships	Consistent feedback Encouragement Positive interactions
Organized Environment	Ease of transitions Organized setting

The definition for differentiation was the process of providing instruction and/or assessments based on individual student needs that allow the students to demonstrate understanding of new information or show mastery of information learned. All participants had a diverse population of learners. Viola, Sylvia and Nora, taught a class that was identified as inclusion; the students were comprised of students with disabilities and without disabilities. A teacher of special education was assigned to their specific grade levels. During the

observations, the only teacher in the classroom was the participant. Lessons were demonstrated using verbal cues or prompts and presented in several different ways; questions formulated in different ways. Students could demonstrate their understanding verbally, through hands-on materials or by demonstrating. Each student was provided individual attention and guidance with an activity if that is what was needed. Participants were not observed to provide answers to students, but were observed to ask a variety of questions and cues to allow the student to reach the answer for themselves.

Encouragement was defined as providing an individual with words, statements or actions, which reinforces the individual to take risks. In all four environments, participants were observed to encourage students verbally by stating the desired behavior being demonstrated by the student and providing specific praise for that behavior. Lilly and Sylvia were observed to encourage students to use their reading strategies when they were observed to struggle with reading. All participants encouraged students to participate by not calling on the same students each time a question was directed towards the class.

Participants appeared to value a high level of student engagement. Student engagement was defined as students actively listening to instruction, participating in assignments/activities, maintaining topic specific conversation and provides students with the feeling of ownership in their learning. During the observation of the topics discussed from the family life units, Lilly, Sylvia and Nora communicated a high level of expectations for student engagement by establishing ground rules for discussions (Sylvia) and reinforcing student

participation by providing specific feedback to what the students shared during discussion. Activities that allowed students to interact with materials and discuss what they were observing yielded a high level of student engagement in Nora and Viola's classrooms. While in small groups, students were expected to participate through discussion and expressing their thoughts about the subject (Lilly and Sylvia).

Technology, although not consistently used by students throughout both observations, was on display in all four classrooms. All participants were observed to utilize a document camera to display writings, directions for activities, and stations for groups or conduct demonstrations. At times, students could utilize the document camera to demonstrate who they solved a math problem. When students were using technology, they were observed to visit educational sites that included interactive games and activities for enrichment, to further enhance learned skills or to remediate those areas of need for students. The school division does have a block on websites that may contain controversial or inappropriate material. There are sites that are approved by the school division that students could access for educational purposes. Students are required to sign a form indicating the need to students to use technology for educational purposes only.

The second highest number of categories observed with all participants was Clear and Concise Routine and Rules. Common categories in this area were behavior management, consistent feedback, ease of transitions and student engagement. Both a priori codes also shared common categories, which

included consistent feedback and student engagement. Behavior management was defined as a system of rules, rewards and consequences that is implemented within an environment to increase the likelihood of reinforcing socially acceptable behavior or circumventing misbehavior. Each of the participants utilized a behavior management system within their classrooms. Nora admitted that she is not as consistent as she would like to be. However, during the observations, Nora was observed to redirect students to task with either verbal or non-verbal prompts, and at times proximity.

When voice levels increased to a level Sylvia and Nora deemed inappropriate, they were observed to state in a normal tone, "If you can hear me, clap once." This usually took no more than two rounds before student voice levels decreased. If a student was observed to not follow one or all the rules, the class would revisit those rules in Sylvia's class. For Viola, points were assigned or removed based on student behaviors utilizing the computer based behavior program.

Transitions observed in all classrooms appeared to be routine for students. Often there was a verbal cue provided to students to indicate the need to prepare for transition to a new activity. When students did transition, it appeared they were aware of how they were to move from one area of the room to another or from one classroom to another. Sylvia and Nora were both observed during a period of the day when their students transitioned from one class to the other. Both participants were observed to stand at the classroom door and greet each student as he or she entered. Ease of transition was

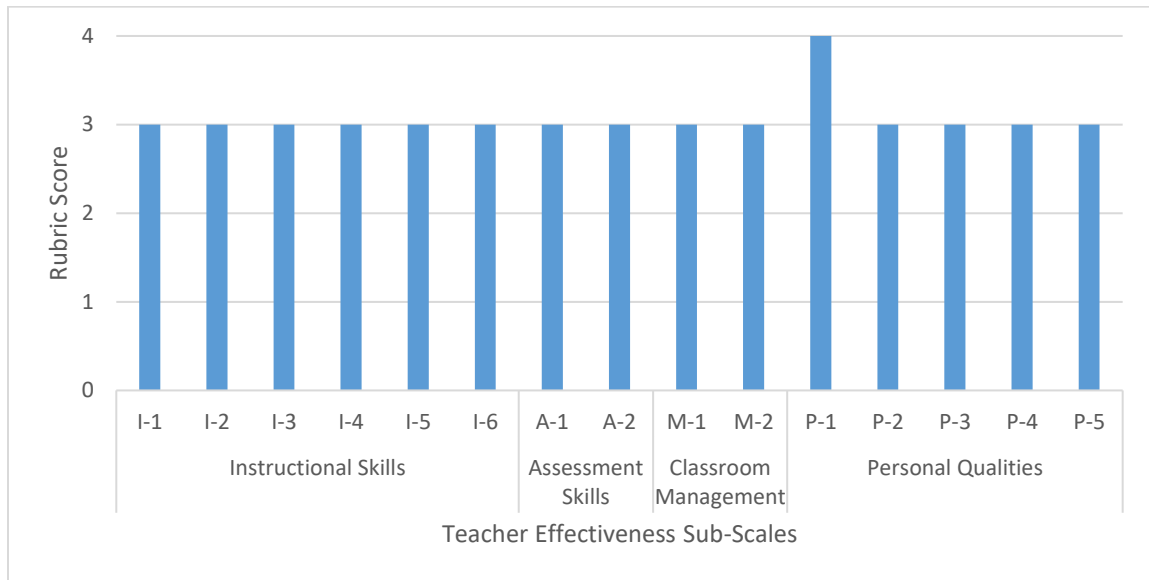
defined as the organization of a setting that allows individuals to move freely from one area of a space to another while possessing the ability to obtain necessary materials.

First observations. During the scoring of the first observation, all four participants received scores of Level 3 for most sub-scores described on the *Teacher Effectiveness Scale* (Stronge et al., 2008a, 2008b, 2010) and some scores of Level 4. On the Teacher Effectiveness Scale, a Level 4 indicates Most Effective and a Level 1 indicates Least Effective. None of the participants received a score below three. Sylvia received the most scores of Level 4, most effective, in the areas of Instruction Skills, Assessment Skills and Classroom Learning Environment. Nora received five scores of Level 4 in the areas of Assessment Skills, Classroom Learning Environment and Personal Qualities. Lilly received two scores of Level 4; one in Instruction Skills and one in Personal Qualities. Viola received a score of Level 4 in Personal Qualities.

Teacher Viola. During the math lesson observed, Viola demonstrated for the students what would be expected of them during the math activity called “Make Me a Grand, baby!” She asked recall level questions related to prior learning and vocabulary. Viola provided detailed support, step-by-step guidance to a student who appeared to be having a difficult time. She provided encouraging words to her students as she navigated around the room and stopped at each pair of students. At one point, a student entered the room and sat in Viola’s lap, curling her head into Viola’s chest and placing her legs next to

Viola on the seat. Viola was observed to encircle the student with her arms and rub her back, which demonstrated her level of Caring (P-1) (Figure 3).

Figure 3. First Observation Data Results for Viola



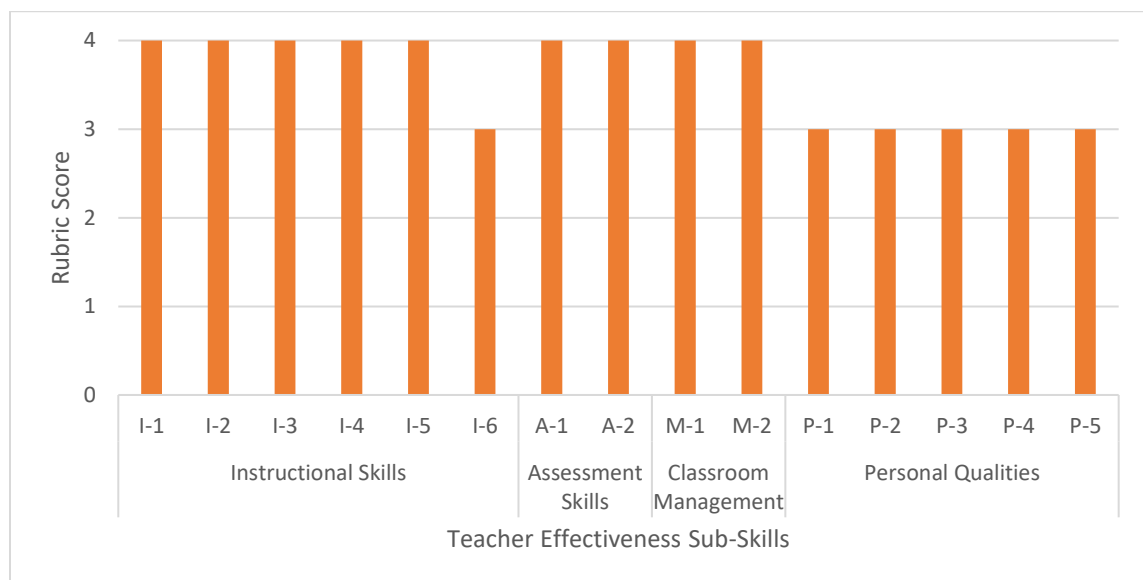
Note. The Teacher Effectiveness Scale has four overall skill levels: Instructional Skills, Assessments Skills, Classroom Management Skills, and Personal Skills. The sub-skills for Instructional Skills are: I-1 Instructional Differentiation, I-2 Instructional Focus on Learning, I-3 Instructional Clarity, I-4 Instructional Complexity, I-5 Expectations for Student Learning and I-6 Use of Technology. The sub-skills for Assessment Skills are A-1 Assessment for Understanding and A-2 Quality of Verbal Feedback to Students. The sub-skills for Classroom Management are M-1 Classroom Management and M-2 Classroom Organization. The last set of sub-skills are for Personal Skills and are P-1 Caring, P-2 Fairness & Respect, P-3 Positive Relationships, P-4 Encouragement of Responsibility and P-5 Enthusiasm.

To prepare students for transition to another activity, Viola would state, “If you can hear me,” followed by a required response from the students. The interaction was followed by a directive for students to put away their materials, but no further directions were given as to what would happen next. Once students were focused on her, she asked students to share what was discussed in science the previous day.

Teacher Sylvia. Sylvia was the only one to receive four out of five scores of Level 4 under Instructional Skills: Instructional Differentiation (I-1), Instructional

Focus of Learning (I-2), Instructional Clarity (I-3), Instructional Complexity (I-4) and Expectations for Students (I-5). The scores for the first observation of Sylvia are noted in Figure 4. Sylvia employed a variety of instructional techniques that appeared to provide each student with the level of support he or she needed to meet with success. She used the prompt, “put your friends first” to help students remember how to use the words I and me in sentences, which allowed them a point of reference. Students were prompted to reflect on personal experiences they may have shared with the main character of the whole group story.

Figure 4. First Observation Data Results for Sylvia



Note. The Teacher Effectiveness Scale has four overall skill levels: Instructional Skills, Assessments Skills, Classroom Management Skills, and Personal Skills. The sub-skills for Instructional Skills are: I-1 Instructional Differentiation, I-2 Instructional Focus on Learning, I-3 Instructional Clarity, I-4 Instructional Complexity, I-5 Expectations for Student Learning and I-6 Use of Technology. The sub-skills for Assessment Skills are A-1 Assessment for Understanding and A-2 Quality of Verbal Feedback to Students. The sub-skills for Classroom Management are M-1 Classroom Management and M-2 Classroom Organization. The last set of sub-skills are for Personal Skills and are P-1 Caring, P-2 Fairness & Respect, P-3 Positive Relationships, P-4 Encouragement of Responsibility and P-5 Enthusiasm.

Throughout the reading in whole group and small group, Sylvia asked higher level questions which allowed students to make inferences, compare their experiences to that of the main character or characters in the stories read in

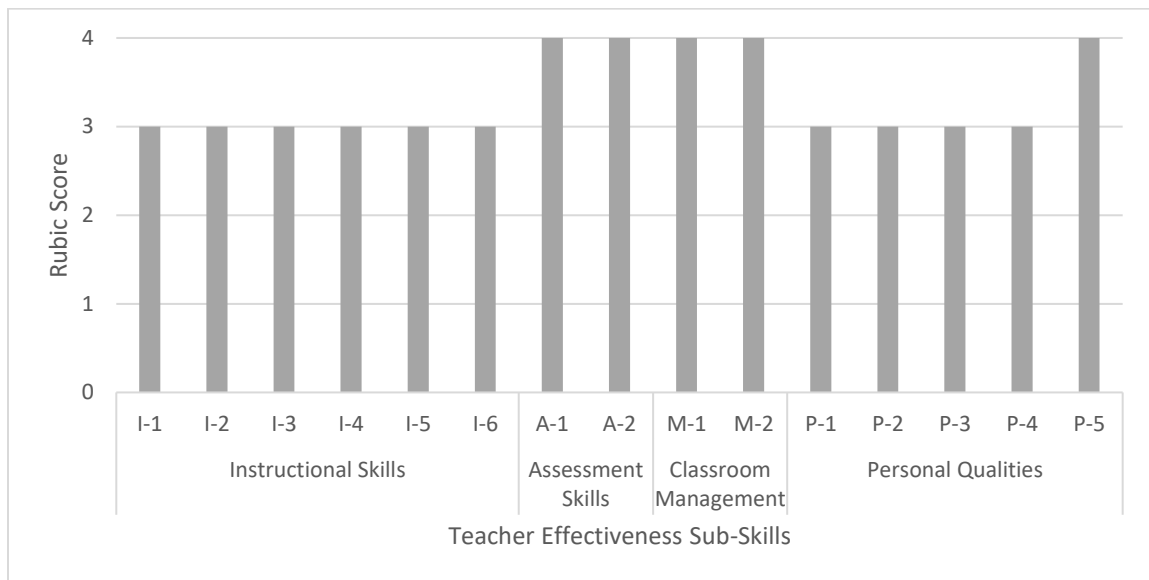
whole and small group. She also required students to justify their answers that allowed her to determine the students' level of understanding. Sylvia was observed to provide multiple examples for students to reference during instruction. For one of her small reading groups, she provided students with visuals teamed with verbal cues and/or prompts. She was also observed to incorporate "teachable moments" when prior skills learned needed to be reinforced.

The structure and organization of Sylvia's room allowed for maximum instructional time. Students entering the room appeared to know the routine, where needed materials could be found and where to reference the agenda for the class period. Prior to transitioning between activities, Sylvia informed students of their responsibilities for the next activity with explicit directions. She utilized verbal prompts and hand clapping when the volume level of the room exceeded her expectations.

Teacher Nora. The two areas in which Nora received most Level 4 scores were Assessment Skills and Classroom Learning Environment (Figure 5). Specifically, Nora was observed to navigate the classroom throughout the science activity; stopping at each team of students to observe their interactions with each other as well as with the materials at each station she had set up for the investigation. She was observed to listen to the students' discussion and ask for clarification of their statements and for them to justify their thoughts. When students appeared to experienced difficulty, she referred them back to prior learning activities and instruction. Her responses to students were specific and

directly related to their strength of knowledge or to clarify any misconceptions related to the concept conveyed with the activity.

Figure 5. First Observation Data Results for Nora

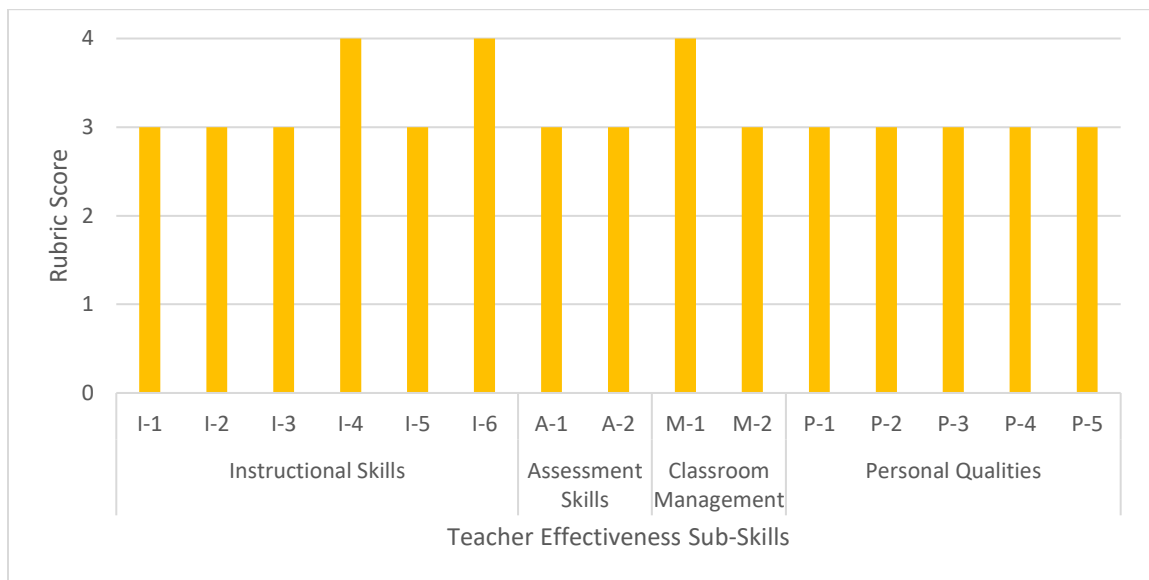


Note. The Teacher Effectiveness Scale has four overall skill levels: Instructional Skills, Assessments Skills, Classroom Management Skills, and Personal Skills. The sub-skills for Instructional Skills are: I-1 Instructional Differentiation, I-2 Instructional Focus on Learning, I-3 Instructional Clarity, I-4 Instructional Complexity, I-5 Expectations for Student Learning and I-6 Use of Technology. The sub-skills for Assessment Skills are A-1 Assessment for Understanding and A-2 Quality of Verbal Feedback to Students. The sub-skills for Classroom Management are M-1 Classroom Management and M-2 Classroom Organization. The last set of sub-skills are for Personal Skills and are P-1 Caring, P-2 Fairness & Respect, P-3 Positive Relationships, P-4 Encouragement of Responsibility and P-5 Enthusiasm.

The level of activity and movement required for the activity did not result in disruption, off-task behavior or misbehavior. This smooth transition was mostly due to Nora’s circulation throughout the activity and her proactive approach when she did observe a potential for a student or students to become disruptive, off-task or misbehave. Her strategy was to move as quickly as possible to that team of students and reengage them in the learning activity through specific questioning related to their learning.

Teacher Lilly. Lilly also received a score of Level 4 in Instructional Complexity (I-4) and Classroom Management (M-1). Results from the first observation in Lilly’s room are shown in Figure 6. During small reading group, students were required to utilize, not only phonetic and phoneme skills, but also parts of a word to decode unknown words and to identify their meanings. When a student was unable to ascertain the meaning of a word, Lilly utilized the word in a sentence. Students appeared to be held accountable for their learning and Lilly provided students with higher level questions which they were expected to answer. If students had trouble, they were provided with questioning at lower levels that helped build them up to answering the higher-level question.

Figure 6. First Observation Data Results for Lilly



Note. The Teacher Effectiveness Scale has four overall skill levels: Instructional Skills, Assessments Skills, Classroom Management Skills, and Personal Skills. The sub-skills for Instructional Skills are: I-1 Instructional Differentiation, I-2 Instructional Focus on Learning, I-3 Instructional Clarity, I-4 Instructional Complexity, I-5 Expectations for Student Learning and I-6 Use of Technology. The sub-skills for Assessment Skills are A-1 Assessment for Understanding and A-2 Quality of Verbal Feedback to Students. The sub-skills for Classroom Management are M-1 Classroom Management and M-2 Classroom Organization. The last set of sub-skills are for Personal Skills and are P-1 Caring, P-2 Fairness & Respect, P-3 Positive Relationships, P-4 Encouragement of Responsibility and P-5 Enthusiasm.

As in Sylvia's class, the structure and routines of the classroom allowed students to transition with minimal behavior issues. While in small group, Lilly positioned herself so she could monitor student behavior and redirect a student who was off-task. When a few students were observed to be off-task, Lilly did comment she would be moving behavior sticks.

Summary of First Observation

Results from the first observation are presented in Figure 7. Both Sylvia and Nora demonstrated commensurate strengths in the categories of Assessment Skills and Classroom Management. Both participants received a rating of Level 4 in the subskills of both categories. Throughout the observation, both participants assessed student understanding through questioning and monitoring of student work products. They were then able to adjust their instruction to guide students to understanding. Visuals, hands-on materials, small group instruction and cooperative learning were instructional techniques observed in each participant's class. While students worked on independent activities, Sylvia was observed to frequently scan the room from her position in small group instruction and provide reinforcement or direction as needed. Nora was observed to move throughout the classroom, stopping to interact with students as they worked in cooperative groups in science lab.

During the first observation, Lilly was the only participant to have her students using technology. Students were observed to review learned skills and developing skills in game based programs accessed using classroom desktops or laptops at their desks. Her classroom management was like that of Sylvia.

During small group instruction, she was observed to scan the classroom providing reinforcement or directions to those students working independently. Due to the ability level of her students, Lilly was observed to adjust the complexity of instruction to match the skills of the students in her small reading groups.

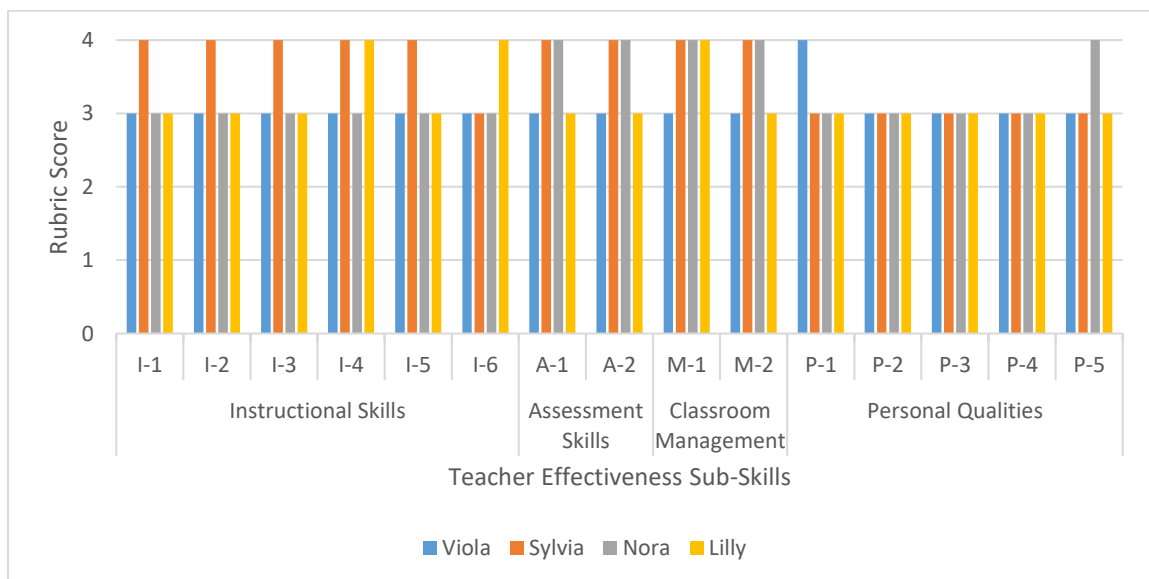
In Personal Skills, Viola and Nora were the only two to receive a rating of Level 4: Viola in the subskill of Caring and Nora in the subskill of Enthusiasm. Viola's interactions with her students can be described as overt; not only did she convey caring verbally, she also did so physically as demonstrate by her taking a student, who appeared to be in need, into her lap and holding her while swaying. Nora's enthusiasm for the science activity was demonstrated through her consistent movement through the room; conversing with students as they made their observations and held their discussions. At no time did Nora sit back and not engage with her students.

On the observation protocol, the only reference to the concept of positive, either within the classroom environment or the teacher/student relationships, was Positive Relationships. However, the evidence supports the idea that the personal characteristics/qualities that the participants exhibited during the observation provided students with a positive environment for learning. The participants demonstrated caring through communicating high expectations for each student in their classrooms. Their understanding of family stressors and how those impacted some students in their classrooms also demonstrated caring.

The evidence also suggests participants created a positive environment through the observation of students' interactions with peers and participants. Positive peer-to-peer interactions were characterized as smiling at each other, looking at the peer who was speaking, and providing assistance with directions or steps in a process as they were working in pairs or teams.

Positive teacher-to-student interactions were characterized as participants providing assistance with directions or steps in a process, initiating conversations related to personal interests, and redirecting students in a respectful manner when observed to be off-task or loud enough to be disruptive to others. Another aspect of positive relationships was observed in the way participants spoke with students. Participants were observed to utilize such endearments as "honey" and utilizing "please" when requesting assistance or cooperation from students, and "thank you" when a student was observed to comply with a request or provided an item to the participant.

Figure 7. Summary of Sub-Skills from First Observation



Note. The Teacher Effectiveness Scale has four overall skill levels: Instructional Skills,

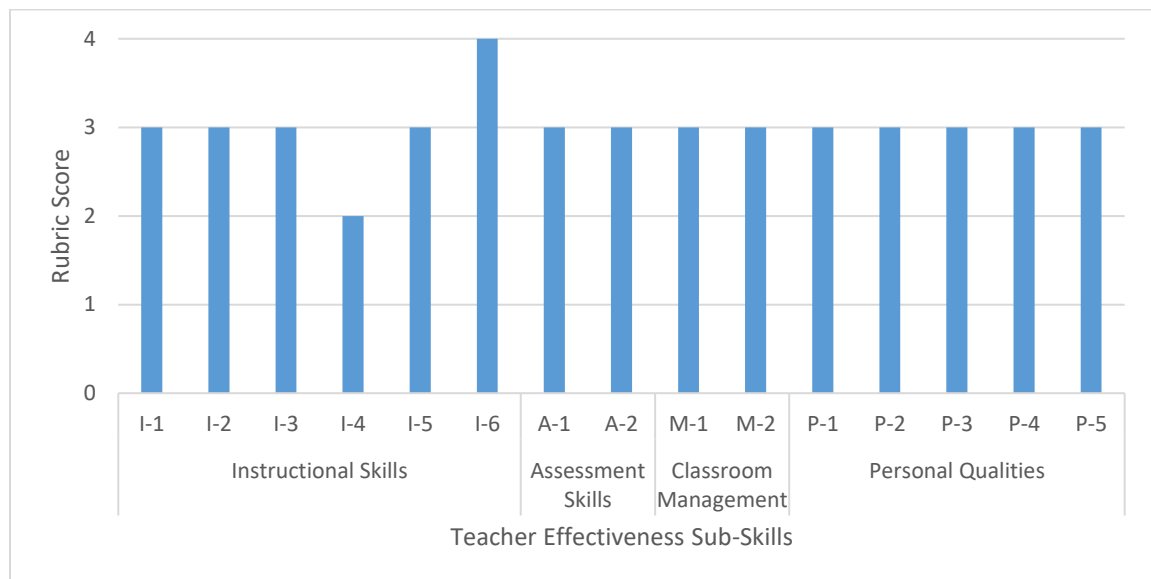
Assessments Skills, Classroom Management Skills, and Personal Skills. The sub-skills for Instructional Skills are: I-1 Instructional Differentiation, I-2 Instructional Focus on Learning, I-3 Instructional Clarity, I-4 Instructional Complexity, I-5 Expectations for Student Learning and I-6 Use of Technology. The sub-skills for Assessment Skills are A-1 Assessment for Understanding and A-2 Quality of Verbal Feedback to Students. The sub-skills for Classroom Management are M-1 Classroom Management and M-2 Classroom Organization. The last set of sub-skills are for Personal Skills and are P-1 Caring, P-2 Fairness & Respect, P-3 Positive Relationships, P-4 Encouragement of Responsibility and P-5 Enthusiasm.

Second Observations. During the scoring of the second observation (Figure 8), all four participants received scores of Level 3 for most areas described on the *Teacher Effectiveness Scale* (Stronge et al., 2008a, 2008b, 2010) and some scores of Level 4. Only one participant received a score of Level 2 in the area of Instructional Complexity (I-4). Nora received the most scores of Level 4, which were in the areas of Instructional Skills, Assessment Skills, Classroom Learning Environment and Personal Qualities. Lilly received the second most Level 4 scores in the areas of Instructional Skills, Assessment Skills and Classroom Learning Environment. Sylvia earned the third most scores in the areas of Instructional Skills, Assessment Skills and Personal Qualities.

Teacher Viola. Most of Viola's scores were a Level 3 except for Instructional Complexity (I-4) and Use of Technology (I-6). She scored a Level 2 for Instructional Complexity due to the level of instruction provided to students. During the second observation, students were involved in a multiplication activity, Around the World, which required students to quickly answer basic multiplication problems to advance in the game. The second part of the instructional activity was a review of the lattice method that had been taught during a previous lesson. Both activities required the students to engage in simple tasks and rely primarily on rote memory.

However, Viola received a score of Level 4 for the area of Use of Technology. During the science activity, students were observed to utilize laptops while working on math skills through various websites that incorporated characters and games to reinforce basic skills. Results from the second observation of Viola are noted in Figure 8.

Figure 8. Second Observation Data Results for Viola

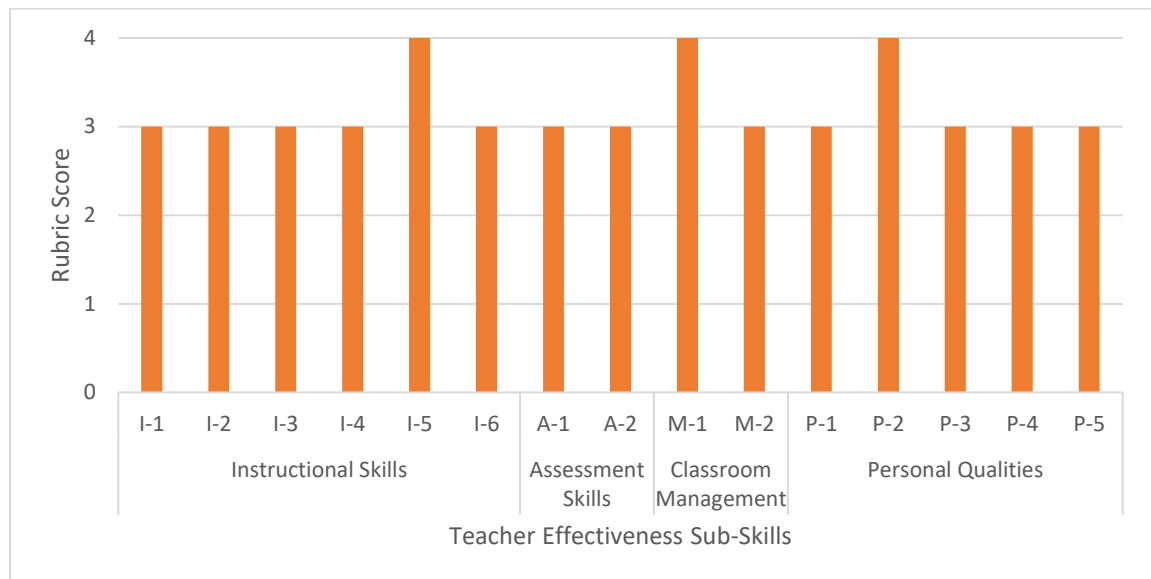


Note. The Teacher Effectiveness Scale has four overall skill levels: Instructional Skills, Assessments Skills, Classroom Management Skills, and Personal Skills. The sub-skills for Instructional Skills are: I-1 Instructional Differentiation, I-2 Instructional Focus on Learning, I-3 Instructional Clarity, I-4 Instructional Complexity, I-5 Expectations for Student Learning and I-6 Use of Technology. The sub-skills for Assessment Skills are A-1 Assessment for Understanding and A-2 Quality of Verbal Feedback to Students. The sub-skills for Classroom Management are M-1 Classroom Management and M-2 Classroom Organization. The last set of sub-skills are for Personal Skills and are P-1 Caring, P-2 Fairness & Respect, P-3 Positive Relationships, P-4 Encouragement of Responsibility and P-5 Enthusiasm.

Teacher Sylvia. Sylvia received scores of mostly Level 3 (Figure 9). She did receive scores of Level 4 in the areas of Expectations for Student Learning (I-5), Classroom Management (M-1) and Fairness and Respect (P-2). The students were starting a unit on family life during the second observation. Prior to the start of the lesson, Sylvia established a set of rules for the topics that would be discussed during the unit. She also had students identify more

complex synonyms to replace odd or silly words. Her review of the established rules communicated to her students her expectations for behavior and academic growth prior to the start of the unit. Students were observed to follow the rules during the lesson and when a student was overheard to softly laugh, Sylvia had the class review the rules established. She explained that the class would review the rules every day and would revisit them should a student or students(s) not follow them.

Figure 9. Second Observation Data Results for Sylvia



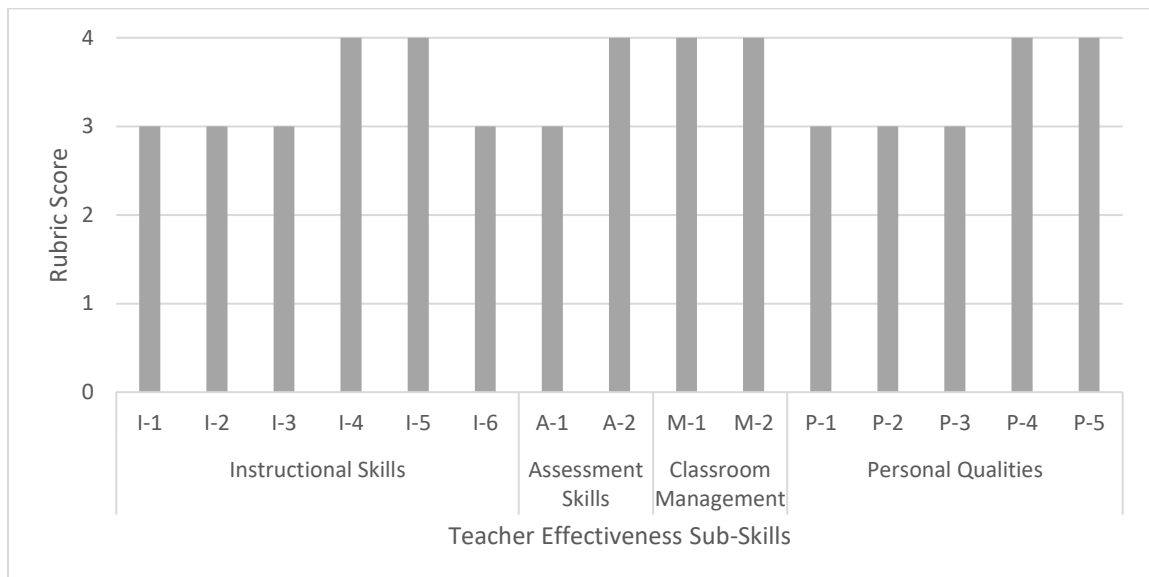
Note. The Teacher Effectiveness Scale has four overall skill levels: Instructional Skills, Assessments Skills, Classroom Management Skills, and Personal Skills. The sub-skills for Instructional Skills are: I-1 Instructional Differentiation, I-2 Instructional Focus on Learning, I-3 Instructional Clarity, I-4 Instructional Complexity, I-5 Expectations for Student Learning and I-6 Use of Technology. The sub-skills for Assessment Skills are A-1 Assessment for Understanding and A-2 Quality of Verbal Feedback to Students. The sub-skills for Classroom Management are M-1 Classroom Management and M-2 Classroom Organization. The last set of sub-skills are for Personal Skills and are P-1 Caring, P-2 Fairness & Respect, P-3 Positive Relationships, P-4 Encouragement of Responsibility and P-5 Enthusiasm.

Sylvia communicated fairness and respect for each student with the establishment and reinforcement of the rules. Her expectation was that each student’s contribution to discussion would be met with respect from the other

students. Student questions were welcomed by Sylvia and she provided answers in a fair and respectful manner.

Teacher Nora. Nora received a score of Level 4 for six of the 15 areas observed (Figure 10). Under the category of Instructional Skills, she received a score of Level 4 for Instructional Complexity (I-4) and Expectations for Student Learning (I-5). She received a score of Level 4 for Quality of Verbal Feedback to Students (A-2) under the category of Assessment Skills. In Classroom Learning Environment, she received scores of Level 4 for both Classroom Management (M-1) and Classroom Organization (M-2). The last category of Personal Quality, Nora received a score of Level 4 for Encouragement of Responsibility (P-4).

Figure 10. Second Observation Data Results for Nora



Note. The Teacher Effectiveness Scale has four overall skill levels: Instructional Skills, Assessments Skills, Classroom Management Skills, and Personal Skills. The sub-skills for Instructional Skills are: I-1 Instructional Differentiation, I-2 Instructional Focus on Learning, I-3 Instructional Clarity, I-4 Instructional Complexity, I-5 Expectations for Student Learning and I-6 Use of Technology. The sub-skills for Assessment Skills are A-1 Assessment for Understanding and A-2 Quality of Verbal Feedback to Students. The sub-skills for Classroom Management are M-1 Classroom Management and M-2 Classroom Organization. The last set of sub-skills are for Personal Skills and are P-1 Caring, P-2 Fairness & Respect, P-3 Positive Relationships, P-4 Encouragement of Responsibility and P-5 Enthusiasm.

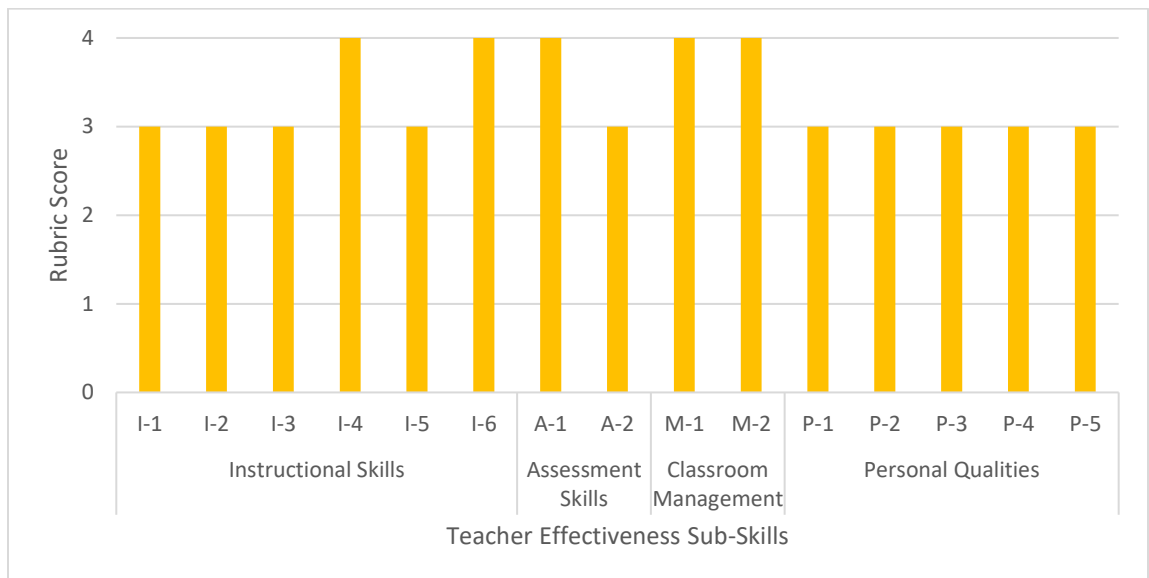
During the observation of a family life unit on Peer Pressure, students were given a scenario and required to identify the issue they were presented and determine what the ramifications could be if they were to submit to peer pressure. They were then required to identify ways to avoid succumbing to the pressure of the situation. As students provided possible solutions, Nora had them provide a reason for and defend the choice taken. Students were encouraged to think through their scenarios and how their decisions could impact their family and other peers. Each student received specific feedback from Nora that showed she had been actively listening to what was being shared. For students who opted to employ force to avoid the pressure to succumb, Nora provided thought-provoking feedback to enable the students to reflect on the consequences force would impose.

As students engaged in discussion with their peers, Nora moved between groups to listen in or provide specific comments to the conversation. Very little off-task behavior was observed due to her proximity and the nature of the topic of the lesson. When it was time to transition to another activity, Nora provided a prompt for students to prepare for transition. She then provided students with directions to follow during transition and information related to the next task.

Teacher Lilly. Lilly received the second highest number of Level 4 scores (Figure 11). In Instructional Skills, Lilly received a score of Level 4 for Instructional Complexity (I-4). For Assessment Skills, she received a score of Level 4 in Assessment for Understanding (A-1). Like Nora, Lilly also received

scores of Level 4 for both areas under Classroom Learning Environment:
Classroom Management (M-1) and Classroom Organization (M-2).

Figure 11. Second Observation Data Results for Lilly



Note. The Teacher Effectiveness Scale has four overall skill levels: Instructional Skills, Assessments Skills, Classroom Management Skills, and Personal Skills. The sub-skills for Instructional Skills are: I-1 Instructional Differentiation, I-2 Instructional Focus on Learning, I-3 Instructional Clarity, I-4 Instructional Complexity, I-5 Expectations for Student Learning and I-6 Use of Technology. The sub-skills for Assessment Skills are A-1 Assessment for Understanding and A-2 Quality of Verbal Feedback to Students. The sub-skills for Classroom Management are M-1 Classroom Management and M-2 Classroom Organization. The last set of sub-skills are for Personal Skills and are P-1 Caring, P-2 Fairness & Respect, P-3 Positive Relationships, P-4 Encouragement of Responsibility and P-5 Enthusiasm.

The topic of discussion during this observation focused on bullying. Lilly had students drawing and providing captions depicting incidents of bullying. The students were required to identify the problem faced by the victim and brainstorm solutions the victim could use to address the bullying incident. Students were observed to share with their partner personal incidents they experienced of being bullied. Upon reflection, the students could identify ways of addressing the bully. When these strategies were shared, Lilly required students to defend their choices.

As Lilly moved around the room and spoke with teams and reviewed their drawings and captions, she could ensure they were following directions and provide any follow up information or instruction on an individualized level. Due to the content of the activity and Lilly's proximity to the teams, very little off-task behavior was observed. Students appeared to be familiar with the procedures for sharing out to the group.

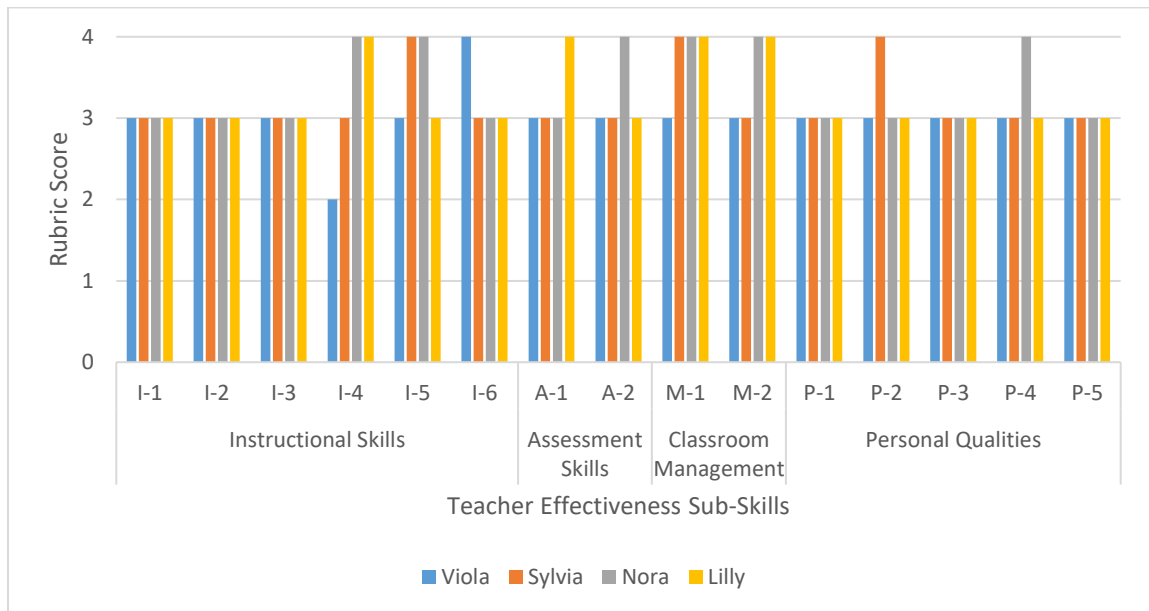
Summary of Second Observation

As with the first observation, Classroom Management received the highest number of Level 4 scores in its sub-skills for observation two. Lilly, Sylvia and Nora were observed to demonstrate effective classroom management skills. All three were observed to clearly communicate expectations for involvement in the lesson. The nature of the topic would be considered intriguing, however, the participants' instructional activities appeared to engage students as they were attentive and on task. Students were monitored during peer-to-peer discussion as evidenced by the participants utilizing proximity and entering in the discussions periodically. Prior to transitioning, each participant obtained student attention, either through a repetitive clap or speaking in a lowered voice tone, which students responded to, until all students were focused on the participant.

All participants received at least one score of Level 3 in Instructional skills as summarized in Figure 12. This included the task or assignment being differentiated based on student need, communicating high expectations for learning either through specific verbal praise or level of difficulty of the task or assignment presented and use of technology. Participants appeared to utilize

student background knowledge and experiences during instruction or to provide opportunities for students to develop these areas. Throughout instruction, the participants appeared to adjust their instructional approach based on student response, which allowed students at all levels the opportunity to meet with success without having answers provided for them.

Figure 12. Summary of Sub-Skills from Second Observation



Note. The Teacher Effectiveness Scale has four overall skill levels: Instructional Skills, Assessments Skills, Classroom Management Skills, and Personal Skills. The sub-skills for Instructional Skills are: I-1 Instructional Differentiation, I-2 Instructional Focus on Learning, I-3 Instructional Clarity, I-4 Instructional Complexity, I-5 Expectations for Student Learning and I-6 Use of Technology. The sub-skills for Assessment Skills are A-1 Assessment for Understanding and A-2 Quality of Verbal Feedback to Students. The sub-skills for Classroom Management are M-1 Classroom Management and M-2 Classroom Organization. The last set of sub-skills are for Personal Skills and are P-1 Caring, P-2 Fairness & Respect, P-3 Positive Relationships, P-4 Encouragement of Responsibility and P-5 Enthusiasm.

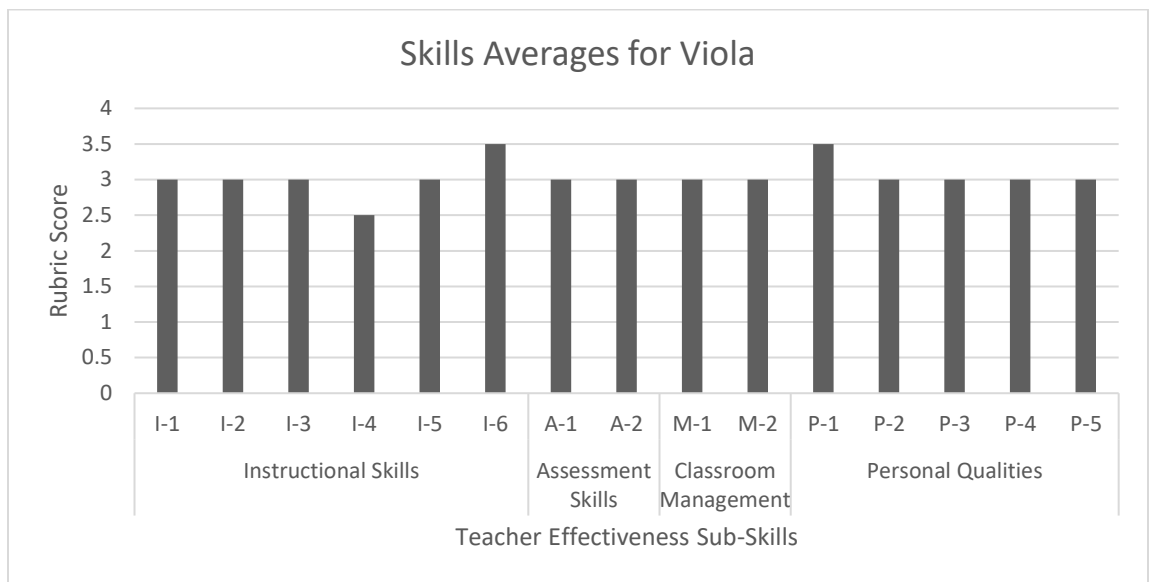
Summary of Overall Observational Data

The observation data were averaged to identify overall areas of strengths for each participant. Three of the four participants received an overall average of Level 4 on Classroom Management (M-1). There were no other similarities between the participants.

Teacher Viola. Overall, Viola received an average score of Level 3.5 in the sub-skills of Use of Technology (I-6) and Caring (P-1) as shown in Figure 13. During both observations, Viola incorporated the use of the document camera during instruction. In the first observation, she used the document camera two different ways: 1) to demonstrate the math activity the students would be engaging in and 2) to project the behavior management program to allow students to view their overall behavioral scores. During the second observations, Viola, again, used the document camera to project problems on the board that both she and the students were solving. This time, she also had students on classroom laptops at specific math websites that incorporated characters and games to reinforce skills.

Throughout both observations, Viola demonstrated a caring attitude towards her students. While students engaged in whole and small group activities, Viola was observed to provide each of her students with encouraging words such as, "I like how you worked out the problem before answering." She made sure to make eye contact and actively listen as students spoke to her individually.

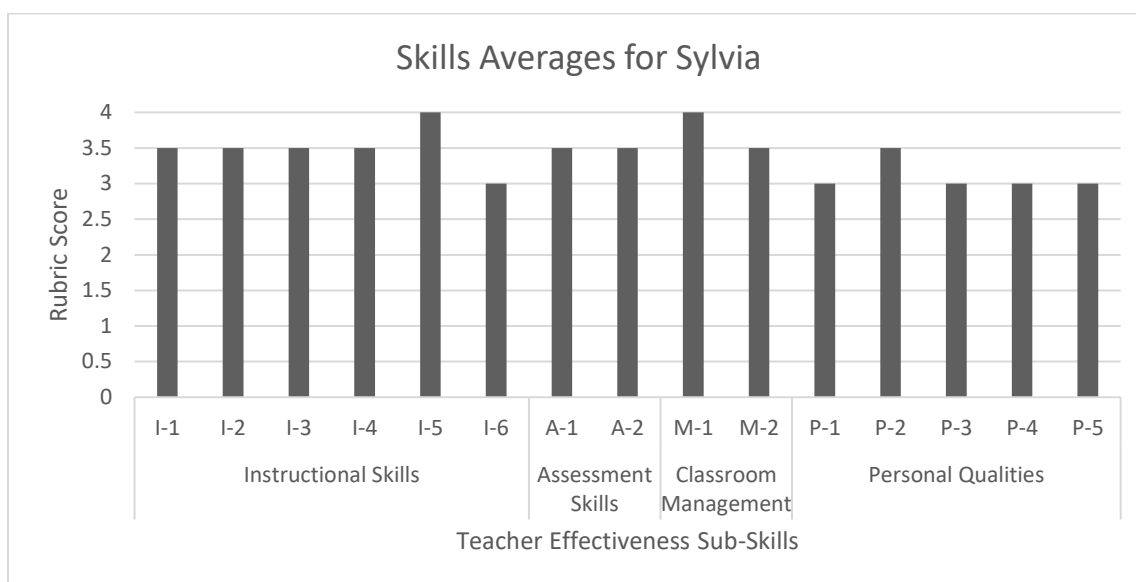
Figure 13. Skills Averages of Observation Data Results for Viola



Note. The Teacher Effectiveness Scale has four overall skill levels: Instructional Skills, Assessments Skills, Classroom Management Skills, and Personal Skills. The sub-skills for Instructional Skills are: I-1 Instructional Differentiation, I-2 Instructional Focus on Learning, I-3 Instructional Clarity, I-4 Instructional Complexity, I-5 Expectations for Student Learning and I-6 Use of Technology. The sub-skills for Assessment Skills are A-1 Assessment for Understanding and A-2 Quality of Verbal Feedback to Students. The sub-skills for Classroom Management are M-1 Classroom Management and M-2 Classroom Organization. The last set of sub-skills are for Personal Skills and are P-1 Caring, P-2 Fairness & Respect, P-3 Positive Relationships, P-4 Encouragement of Responsibility and P-5 Enthusiasm.

Teacher Sylvia. In contrast to Viola, Sylvia received an overall average of Level 4 in two areas: 1) Expectations for Student Learning (I-5) and Classroom Management (M-1). During both observations, Sylvia consistently encouraged students to engage in the instructional activities and put forth the maximum effort possible. She established working environments with clearly established boundaries via clearly stated rules and expectations when students were presented with educational tasks to perform (Figure 14).

Figure 14. Skills Averages of Observation Data Results for Sylvia



Note. The Teacher Effectiveness Scale has four overall skill levels: Instructional Skills, Assessments Skills, Classroom Management Skills, and Personal Skills. The sub-skills for Instructional Skills are: I-1 Instructional Differentiation, I-2 Instructional Focus on Learning, I-3 Instructional Clarity, I-4 Instructional Complexity, I-5 Expectations for Student Learning and I-6 Use of Technology. The sub-skills for Assessment Skills are A-1 Assessment for Understanding and A-2 Quality of Verbal Feedback to Students. The sub-skills for Classroom Management are M-1 Classroom Management and M-2 Classroom Organization. The last set of sub-skills are for Personal Skills and are P-1 Caring, P-2 Fairness & Respect, P-3 Positive Relationships, P-4 Encouragement of Responsibility and P-5 Enthusiasm.

Sylvia received overall score average of Level 3.5 in eight sub-skills areas.

She received Level 3.5 average scores in four of the six sub-skills areas of Instructional Skills: Instructional Differentiation (I-1) Instructional Focus on Learning (I-2), Instructional Clarity (I-3) and Instructional Complexity (I-4).

Guided and independent activities were an extension of the lessons presented. Students were engaged in classroom discussions related to the lessons presented that would allow for establishing and/or expanding background knowledge. Directions were presented using specific vocabulary and expectations for final products. Small group instruction provided students with instructional materials at their individual levels.

In Assessment Skills, Sylvia scores an average of Level 3.5 in both sub-skill areas. Throughout each lesson observed, Sylvia utilized informal assessments to gauge students' understanding of concepts that appeared in the form of higher level questioning and observing students at work. This appeared to allow Sylvia to provide additional clarification to a student or to present information in a different way.

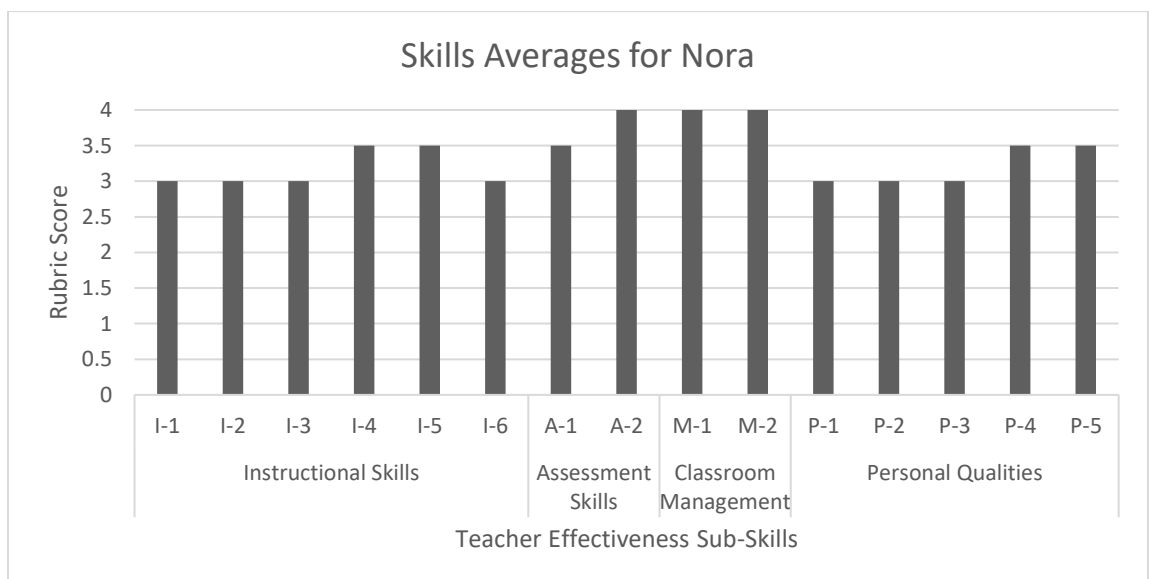
Classroom management appeared to be Sylvia's strength for she received an average score of Level 3.5 in the subskill of Classroom Organization (M-2). By the way students moved throughout the classroom—obtaining materials, turning in work, transitioning between activities—it was apparent Sylvia had instilled in her students the procedures of the classroom. There were specific areas where students could obtain required or needed materials for assignments. When a student was observed to approach Sylvia with a completed assignment, she prompted the student by asking, "When you finish with your work, where does it go?" The student was observed to pause and then turn toward an area of the room and place the finished product in a tray.

In Personal Qualities, Sylvia earned an average score of Level 3.5 on the sub-skill Fairness and Respect (P-2). During both observations, Sylvia was observed to use a quiet, even tone when communicating with her students. Throughout both small and whole group instruction, Sylvia facilitated discussion among the students related to the academic tasks. When students laughed or commented at their peers' discussion points, her response was to redirect in a calm tone. Sylvia modeled and reinforced the responsibility of the individuals in

the class to treat each other fairly and with respect through her actions and communication style.

Teacher Nora. Of the four participants observed, Nora was the only participant to receive an overall average of Level 4 in three areas: 1) Quality of Verbal Feedback to Students (A-2), 2) Classroom Management (M-1), and 3) Classroom Organization (M-2). During both observations, Nora utilized students' background knowledge and personal experiences to engage them in the instructional activities (Figure 15). It appeared to this observer that Nora's enthusiasm for the topics of discussion and activities had a positive effect on her students. During a science lab, Nora was observed to move between small groups, actively listening to discussion and providing relevant feedback. As with Sylvia's class, it was evident that students had been instructed in classroom procedures and knew where to find needed materials, where to turn in work and what to do when transitions occurred.

Figure 15. Skills Averages of Observation Data Results for Nora



Note. The Teacher Effectiveness Scale has four overall skill levels: Instructional Skills,

Assessments Skills, Classroom Management Skills, and Personal Skills. The sub-skills for Instructional Skills are: I-1 Instructional Differentiation, I-2 Instructional Focus on Learning, I-3 Instructional Clarity, I-4 Instructional Complexity, I-5 Expectations for Student Learning and I-6 Use of Technology. The sub-skills for Assessment Skills are A-1 Assessment for Understanding and A-2 Quality of Verbal Feedback to Students. The sub-skills for Classroom Management are M-1 Classroom Management and M-2 Classroom Organization. The last set of sub-skills are for Personal Skills and are P-1 Caring, P-2 Fairness & Respect, P-3 Positive Relationships, P-4 Encouragement of Responsibility and P-5 Enthusiasm.

Nora received overall score average of Level 3.5 in five sub-skills areas.

She received Level 3.5 average scores in two of the six sub-skills areas of Instructional Skills: Instructional Complexity (I-4) and Expectations for Student Learning (I-5). The science lab incorporated familiar materials students could observe to identify solutions and mixtures. The students were expected to utilize information obtained from the previous science lessons and their background knowledge to identifying each station's materials as either an example of a solution or a mixture on a graphic organizer. Nora facilitated discussion among teams at each station by asking higher level questions that appeared to draw on the topics of previous lessons.

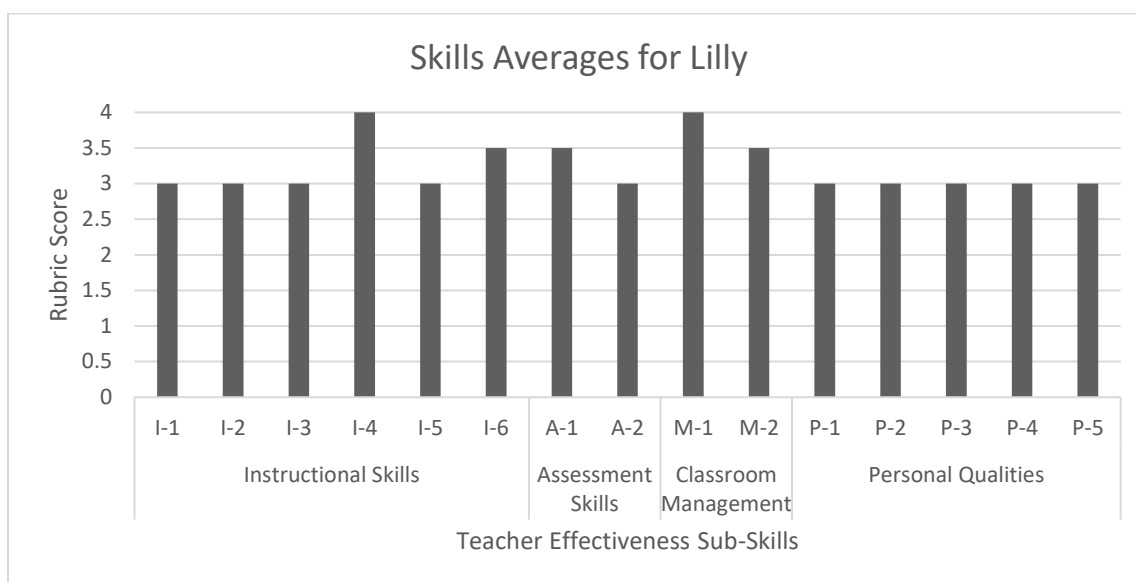
For the Assessment Skills section, Nora received an average of Level 3.5 in the sub-skill Assessment for Understanding (A-1). Nora gauged students' understanding using higher level questioning and observing students as they worked and held discussions in small groups. Nora was observed to provide further clarification when it was required or to provide verbal praise to those students who demonstrated understanding. Depending on the feedback Nora was given, allowed her to adjust her instruction to meet the needs of her students.

For the area of Personal Qualities, Nora received an overall average of Level 3.5 for Encouragement of Responsibility (P-4) and Enthusiasm (P-5). As

students worked in teams at each of the science lab stations, each team was observed to be focused on the task at hand whether Nora was near. Nora's enthusiasm for the activity was communicated to her students by her involvement in their discussions when she visited their station. She was frequently overheard to provide specific praise for student contributions to discussions. When the topic of discussion was serious, as with the family life topic, Nora listened attentively as students shared their experiences and contributions to solving real problems students face.

Teacher Lilly. On the observation protocol, Lilly received an overall average of Level 4 in two areas: Instructional Complexity (I-4) and Classroom Management (M-1). Instructionally, Lilly provided students with differentiated instruction and activities based on their needs (Figure 16). During the interview process, Lilly had shared her class was composed of students who were identified as gifted, students identified as average and other students identified as having educational disabilities. In the small group, guided reading activity, Lilly provided one group of students with strategies and vocabulary development activities to assist them with comprehension. For another small guided reading group, she allowed the instruction to be student driven with her in the role as facilitator.

Figure 16. Skills Averages of Observation Data for Lilly



Note. The Teacher Effectiveness Scale has four overall skill levels: Instructional Skills, Assessments Skills, Classroom Management Skills, and Personal Skills. The sub-skills for Instructional Skills are: I-1 Instructional Differentiation, I-2 Instructional Focus on Learning, I-3 Instructional Clarity, I-4 Instructional Complexity, I-5 Expectations for Student Learning and I-6 Use of Technology. The sub-skills for Assessment Skills are A-1 Assessment for Understanding and A-2 Quality of Verbal Feedback to Students. The sub-skills for Classroom Management are M-1 Classroom Management and M-2 Classroom Organization. The last set of sub-skills are for Personal Skills and are P-1 Caring, P-2 Fairness & Respect, P-3 Positive Relationships, P-4 Encouragement of Responsibility and P-5 Enthusiasm.

As with Nora and Sylvia, Lilly’s students appeared to have been provided instruction and reinforcement of the procedures for the class. As students moved between stations during the guided reading portion of the class, they appeared to know their assigned stations and where to obtain the materials necessary to complete the lessons at those stations. Lilly communicated with students in a low and even tone. Redirections to task were done in a manner that did not draw the attention of peers to the student.

Lilly received an overall score average of Level 3.5 in the sub-skills areas: Use of Technology (I-6), Assessment for Understanding (A-1), and Classroom Organization (M-2). The use of technology was observed during both observations in Lilly’s class. She consistently used the document camera when

providing whole group, direct instruction. During the first observation, one of the workstations allowed students to utilize the classroom laptops to visit specific sites to apply learned skills. Students appeared to be well versed on the procedures for accessing the server by entering user names and passwords and how to locate the appointed websites. Utilizing the laptops allowed students to choose a place to work; either at their desks or a table at the back of the room.

Lilly incorporated a variety of strategies to determine the students' level of understanding. During small group instruction, she asked different levels of questions ranging from simple recall to application and explanation. Students were encouraged to defend their answers by referencing materials or drawing upon their individual experiences. Instead of providing answers, Lilly assisted students in finding the answers themselves.

As with Nora and Sylvia, Lilly's students appeared to have a clear understanding of locations of materials when needed, the procedures of the classroom and signals that Lilly would use to obtain student attention. The classroom set up and structure allowed an ease of transitions between activities.

As data was disaggregated, themes began to emerge that correlated to the identified a priori codes. Those themes are recorded in Table 28.

Table 28

Themes Based on A Priori Codes

A Priori Codes	Themes
Behavioral Interventions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Behavior Management must include reinforcers and consequences that are based on student input and must be consistently implemented.

A Priori Codes	Themes
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It is important to understand that family stressors and environmental stressors can impact how a student responds to interactions within the academic setting and to provide an atmosphere of trust.
Clear and Concise Routines	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consistent implementation of routines within the classroom environment allows the teacher to focus on the process of teaching and increases the potential for student engagement.
Establishing Personal Relationships	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Personal experiences influence how teachers interact with their students. • Positive interactions between students and their teachers facilitate the establishment of personal relationships.
Novel and Engaging Instruction	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Effective teachers aspire to grow as learners through further education, collaboration and increased knowledge of their students' needs. • Differentiation allows students with varying levels of knowledge and skills to access the general education curriculum and demonstrate understanding and mastery and increases the level of student engagement. • Encouraging high expectations for student behavior and academic performance does impact how students view themselves as learners.
Organized Environment Environmental Organization/Parameters	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students tend to thrive in learning environments that include clear directives, an awareness of time allotment to activities, allow for ease of transitions and have designated areas for materials.
Understanding Diverse Communication Styles	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communication between students and their teacher is important for it lets students know their thoughts, ideas, concerns and feelings are being heard. • By observing student behaviors, teachers are better able to address academic and behavioral needs. • When teaching individuals from different ethnicities, it is important to be aware of and acknowledge differences in communication

A Priori Codes	Themes
	<p>and learning styles to improve communication and instruction.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Engaging in self-reflection following instruction and interactions with parents and/or students allows teachers to consider and understand how their actions, motivations, and ideals/beliefs impact their approaches to instruction and communication.

Of the six a priori codes, Understanding Diverse Communication Styles contained four themes based on interview responses.

1. Participants communicated students needed confirmation that their concerns, thoughts and feelings were being heard. They also indicated a need for students to communicate with each other to share what they had learned.
2. Through observations, participants have identified: areas where students are struggling; students have witnessed their parents speaking in a negative way towards other adults; and students do not always mean what they say.
3. In terms of race awareness, the participants did not always consider race in relation to academic or behavioral needs, but what would be beneficial and meet the individual needs of each student. When pressed to identify behavioral differences, one participant did indicate African American males had a higher instance of refusing to do work.
4. Each participant communicated engaging in self-reflection at the end of a lesson or at the end of a day of teaching to identify instructional

techniques or activities or their approach to addressing a student's misbehavior and identifying alternative ways to address either in the future.

There was another category with three themes:

Novel and Engaging Instruction had three themes based on both interview responses and classroom observations:

1. All participants communicated they collaborated with grade level teams, resource teams and administration to increase their skills and knowledge to better support their students. Through discussions, they learned new strategies to implement for academic and/or behavioral needs.
2. By differing their instructional practices, the participants could reach more students. Students were still receiving the required content for each academic area, but the presentation was changed, the assignments were different and/or the way students were assessed looked different.
3. Lastly, participants were observed to provide verbal encouragement to students to complete work to the best of their abilities. When students worked individually on assignments, the expectation of the classroom atmosphere was reflected by the students' attention to the tasks.

Instructional Methods of Effective Teachers

Research Question 1: What instructional methods are employed throughout the learning process within the classroom setting that maintain

the engagement of African American males to enable them to demonstrate behavioral and academic success at the elementary school level?

To answer this question, the participants were asked a series of questions to assist me in identifying the instructional methods incorporated to convey the curriculum to students and capture and maintain their attention. Participants were asked to reflect upon the pedagogy they utilized that allowed students to access the curriculum and their perception of the students' response to that pedagogy. Some of the questions required participants to consider not only what instruction they viewed as effective, but what instructional methods they found were ineffective. Lastly, participants were asked to consider connections among curriculum, instruction and discipline within their individual classrooms.

Primary Influences

During the first interview, participants were asked to share those individuals who they viewed to have influenced on how they approach the task of educating youth. Of the participants, only one did not indicate an individual(s). Lilly was the only participant to indicate her influences were her observations of other teachers, in-services, and professional development she had attended featuring a prominent reading specialist.

Teacher Viola. Viola credited two veteran teachers with the type of teacher she had become. She stated these women “took me under the wing” and not only shared their knowledge, but found her ideas to be “refreshing,” Returning to the classroom, after serving as the media specialist, Viola found she had the support of her grade level peers to assist her with the transition.

I had Lilly who kind of...we were team teaching. We didn't know each other and it was, "Ok, we're going to work together." And luckily, you know, we kind of hit it off and she would help me as much as possible. She also found support from building administrators who helped her.

One thing Viola incorporated from working with these individuals has been the belief that she and her students are family. This was also what she conveyed to her students:

We spend more time with each other during the school year than we do with our outside family. So, I really try to instill that we are family...we are going to have good days and bad days....um...but that you know I care about them, my co-teacher cares about them. We all care about each other, even if we're having a bad moment.

She tried to incorporate different methods when working with students such as technology applications and hands-on activities. When students were observed to misuse materials, Viola stated she removed the materials and provided handouts, which students viewed as less desirable.

Teacher Sylvia. Sylvia gave credit to three veteran teachers at her school as her primary influences. Each of these teachers held a different position within her building: one was the school's instructional specialist who retired; one was the school's former communication skills specialist and the last was a veteran fifth grade classroom teacher who moved up to teach middle school. She stated these three women,

set the bar high for how to do reading; how to do writing. Um...now that I don't have any of them, I feel like I...we joke around like when we have our meetings about like the (state assessments) and stuff. I'm like, "Alright. I'm gonna burst out my [former communication skills specialist] everybody."

Sylvia indicated her need to continue to share these teachers' influence with her grade level peers.

Teacher Nora. For Nora, her primary influences were three behaviorists she worked with while at a children's institute in her home state and the teacher she was assigned to during her student teaching. She stated the three behaviorists trained her to manage behavior before it started; techniques she found beneficial in her current position. After working in the field as a behaviorist, she decided she wanted to work with students in a different capacity. During her student teaching, she was assigned to work with a teacher for an entire year. It was this person who Nora credited with the type of teacher she is today:

Like, I had never been a teacher. So, I would say, definitely, I...um...the fact that she was very organized, very detailed, note taking, the way she handled her classroom and the kids, she influenced me a lot.

Her cooperating teacher during her student teaching provided what Nora viewed as a positive role model on how a classroom should function.

Teacher Lilly. Lilly indicated she learned much from observing other teachers, in-services she had attended over the years and courses from a specific reading specialist as having influenced her teaching practices.

Actually, other teachers by observing and seeing what I liked and didn't like. A lot of in-services that I've been to. I've picked up a lot of information from that. And also, just trial and error of what I've done, what I didn't do and what works. But more from other people.

Lilly took what she learned from a cooperative learning program and the reading specialist to develop differentiated reading groups for her diverse group of students. She stated she implemented several strategies from one source to promote positive interactions and group participation. The strategies provided opportunities for students to interact with each other in groups ranging from two participants to five.

Lilly's class was composed of gifted students, French students and students who were functioning below grade level. The French students were part of the inclusion of students whose parent(s) were stationed in the United States as part of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO). These students were immersed in the American educational system while also maintaining their studies in French history by a French teacher affiliated with the program. This very diverse group of students posed a significant challenge for Lilly in ensuring each student was receiving the instruction he or she needed. Lilly stated she had observed a correlation between students being actively engaged and lowered behavioral problems in her class. She communicated an emphasis on direct teaching was not as effective with younger students. "If they're engaged in something they really like, they're not going to misbehave. But if they just sit

there and you're doing direct teaching – I mean they're little. They're going to start goofing off or whatever.”

Lilly stated she enjoyed providing her students with hands-on activities because she was also a hands-on learner. Lilly explained her lessons involved about five to ten minutes of direct instruction, then some form of group hands-on activity and a closing. Her closing required students to summarize what they had learned either through drawings with a fact listed or verbally sharing with a partner. Partners then shared with the class what his or her partner summarized. She stated these structured lessons allowed students the comfort of knowing what to expect.

For all the participants, there was more than one individual who influenced how they approach teaching and manage their classrooms. One of the participants indicated her influences came from in-services, observations of many different peers and self-reflection on her practices.

Instructional Methods Used to Deliver Instruction

The four participants had unique classroom situations, which may have influenced the instructional methods they used to deliver instruction. Sylvia and Nora shared the teaching responsibilities for two classrooms. Nora was responsible for teaching both classes Math and Science and Sylvia was responsible for teaching the same classes Reading, Writing, and Social Studies/History. Their shared responsibility allowed them to conference regularly about addressing student behaviors that they may both experience and teaching techniques of which each student responded. Viola, Nora, and Sylvia also had

the benefit of teaching with a special education teacher. That interaction also had the potential to influence the implementation of more hands-on instructional strategies and support with addressing behavioral challenges.

Teacher Viola. As with her peers, Viola stated she did not think in terms of gender or ethnic specific instructional practices. Instead she determined what her students' needs were as a whole. She found games, hands-on activities and activities that incorporated songs and movement to be effective. Viola explained,

Because I'm the inclusion class, I really have to see what works, you know, with my special ed. and my regular ed. So, with them, it's a lot of hands on. It's a lot of games. And I can't always incorporate that, but when they get a skill and then we can build it into a game and I can sell it to them, that's when I get them hooked.

She reported she uses a multiplication rap song to help students retain their facts, "they see me and I'm sittin' there spewing out the raps from memory. You know, they think it's kind of cool, and funny, because they're looking at me. I'm too old to be doing that." Viola stated she uses very few worksheets with her students because they require a higher level of involvement in their learning. When she does have to provide them with pencil and paper work, she views the assignment as more of a formative assessment; allowing her to have documentation of her students' understanding of the content.

Teacher Sylvia. "We do a lot of small group in here. Almost everything they do is small group," stated Sylvia. Reading groups were based on student levels identified through state assessment results and division benchmark

assessment data. In her capacity as classroom teacher, she collaborated with the special education teacher and the extended day tutor for the building to ensure students received appropriate instruction in these small groups. She observed that her students became more independent as the year progressed due to the interventions provided by the special education teacher and extended day tutor.

When asked about instruction relevant to the needs of African American males, Sylvia reported some of her highest performing students were African American males. Sylvia indicated she did not utilize instructional methods specifically for African American males. Instead, she incorporated methods that all learners needed. "It's pretty much the same with all of them. Yes, I will pick out something that they do well." She then builds upon those strengths by focusing on one or two areas at a time. She incorporates the use of student-produced samples, focusing on consistent errors to improve and show growth. Upon receipt of student consent, Sylvia used the student's products to teach specific skills to the class. This allowed others to see their peers are making the same mistakes. This strategy also helped the student whose work was used to build confidence.

Sylvia reported instruction was student specific which required her to have knowledge of student needs by reviewing data. Sylvia addressed student needs by providing them with different level reading passages or different level questions. Students functioning at a higher level received novels to read and received more challenging questions.

Sylvia reported she spoke with students about the strategies she implemented so they could see the relevance of using them independently. Through her own observations and knowledge of students, Sylvia was aware that students were afraid to appear different from their peers. To reassure them that it was okay to be different, she shared things that made her different from her own peers. She shared the strategies she used with her students are the same ones she used herself.

Teacher Nora. Nora found the issue was not so much instructional methods as addressing behavioral needs. It was important for her to discern behaviors that were disruptive as opposed to behaviors that were cultural. She stated she did not tolerate students being loud. She observed:

But I've come to learn that, in the African American community, that can be normal everyday talking, is being loud. So, when I have a kid that's three inches from my face and they're yelling at me about a math problem, they're not yelling...and so I've learned to tell them, 'Listen to the tone of your voice,' like lower your voice and so there are some things I have to learn culturally"

With this understanding, Nora focused on teaching students how to express themselves in a manner that was appropriate for society.

In her tenure at Ocean Elementary, Nora experienced her African American students to be more interactive when watching movies. She stated her students understand she does not watch movies the same way. Nora identified hands-on activities, use of visuals, and relating instruction to student experiences

was effective with all students, in addition to her African American male students. Providing students with relevant experiences was important to help them make the connection with curriculum materials. She shared a time when students had just entered the classroom following a fire drill. They had been standing outside in the cold before being given the all clear to return to class:

When we talked about matter; losing energy when it's cold. We were just in a fire drill the other day, for goodness sake...and it's like, 'What were you like outside?' and they were like, 'We were just vibrating and didn't want to move.' I was like, 'That's what the molecules, they're losing energy.' So, a lot of relating to their own life in order to help them to get to remember it.

Nora understood that most her students come to her working below grade level and with limited exposure to life experiences, which serve as background knowledge for acquiring new material. Even though she worked in a district that was close to beaches, she understood some of her students had never been to the beach; many of them had never ventured from their neighborhood.

Teacher Lilly. Upon hearing the question regarding instructional strategies, Lilly initially responded with the instructional delivery process she utilizes, "a hook, a little bit of intro direct and then hands-on and then back to, um, then some kind of closure and then what we learned in the lesson." Her belief was the more hands-on the lesson, the more involved the students.

When allowed to talk more, Lilly interjected she did not think in terms of race. Instead, her focus was on making sure the students received what they

needed. Initially, her focus was to increase cooperative and social skills. She did not allow students to work with the same person or persons every day. They were required to interact with different individuals. She also tried to incorporate student interest when presenting material. For example, if she knew a student did not like to read, she would select reading material on subjects of interest to entice them to read.

Lilly reported she incorporated “brain break” activities where students worked with partners and practice being good listeners or where the activity would not work unless all group members participated. It was important to Lilly that students learned to work cooperatively with one another whether they liked one another; to build rapport and positive relationships with one another.

Three of the four participants reported incorporating hands-on activities to engage students in the learning process. Three participants also reported not thinking in terms of ethnicity when planning and implementing instruction. Two participants incorporated what they referred to as “brain breaks” for their students. A couple of the participants indicated the need for small group interactions and instruction. Building students’ background knowledge through exposure to new experiences and ideas that they did not have access to in their current environment was viewed as important. In addition, social skills, use of visuals and incorporating student work into instruction were utilized.

Student Response to the Instructional Methods

The use of cooperative learning, hands-on activities, and visual supports were consistently observed. During interviews participants communicated

different strategies they use while teaching. When I was observing classes, I could see what the participants had described.

Teacher Viola. Viola stated her students were video game and music oriented. Based on that, she tried to incorporate these aspects in her approach to whole group teaching. “Cooperative learning. They like that. I try to do like one pagers or um...interactive notebook where you have the sheet of information.” For students who had trouble utilizing the interactive notebooks, Viola reported she provided paper copies of the interactive notebook. Viola also incorporated riddle books, flip charts and post-it notes with students. She implemented the use of informational booklets in which students could highlight information. Sometimes she would have students draw a picture and write a word or phrase to remember the concept.

Modeling and demonstrating were also techniques Viola used with her students. As with her peers, Viola found sharing her own experiences from when she was a young student were effective with her students, “I make the joke, like, ‘Yea, when the teacher’s doing it, oh it’s so easy.’ And then when you get the problems, you’re like, wait a minute. She didn’t do any problems like this. This is so much harder.” Viola, like her peers, indicated students gained further understanding of concepts when she could relate them to prior experiences.

Teacher Sylvia. Sylvia utilized visual prompts for directions by placing them on a document camera for all students to review. Sylvia incorporated very little verbal direction with her students especially in relation to the classroom routine and procedures. Students were instructed on where materials were and

what to obtain for each activity presented. The routines were so well established that students knew what to do with completed work and where and how to return materials. The established routine allowed students to demonstrate independence during station work enabling Sylvia to focus on small groups.

They need structure. They need structure. The days that we don't have a normal schedule; because of testing, because of programs, because of early release. Our days are not nearly...they're very...I leave more anxiety ridden and tense at the end of the day when we don't have a normal day.

Sylvia observed the same stress in her students when the routine was broken. She found transitions were harder for them because they were not sure about what would happen next.

Based on her experience with students, Sylvia stated her ability to deduce what they did not receive instructionally during the previous school year:

They think they're finished because they don't...they don't know what a...correct paper really looks like because they didn't have to really do it depending on where they came from...And so I think the push comes from, not that they don't want to do it, but they can't and don't know how to do it.

From the first day students entered Sylvia's classroom, she stated she made her students aware of her standards and expectations. She indicated all students entered with weaknesses in different areas and the expectation was set for them to move forward.

Teacher Nora. Nora stated her students “really like the hands-on stuff”. She attributed some of that to her pre-planning and having materials ready to use and roles for each member of the group predetermined. Her students especially enjoyed the scientific investigation process and conducting experiments. “Every time they come in for science, they’re like, ‘Are we doing...if there’s something out...’Are we doing an experiment today? Are we doing an investigation?’ So, they definitely like it.” Students also appeared to enjoy the level of independence the small group activities afforded them.

Teacher Lilly. Lilly stated she had a very diverse class, which made it difficult to engage all learners with direct instruction. She found hands-on activities helped engage all learners. “It’s a really...differentiation is fine in groups, but when you’re doing direct instruction, it’s hard because I see my gifted kids startin’ to drift off.” Lilly found sharing personal stories about her own experiences as a child helped to capture the attention of her students. That along with hands-on and small group activities allowed students to be productive learners.

Each participant communicated the importance of providing relevant instructional activities for students. The use of hands-on activities, allowing discussion among students as they collaborated and sharing their own learning experiences were methods the participants implemented. Direct instruction and interruptions in normal routines were issues mentioned as deterrents to student learning. One participant indicated the need to adjust instructional presentations to accommodate students as being an important aspect to student learning.

Instructional Methods Deemed Most Effective

The use of hands-on paired with discussion allowed students to utilize different learning modalities and be active learners. Implementing small group instruction and cooperative learning opportunities were also identified as effective methods of instruction.

Teacher Viola. Viola was the only respondent to indicate formative assessments as being the most effective instructional technique used. She found activities such as think-pair-share, utilizing dry erase boards, or non-linguistic representations, incorporating brain breaks and music were helpful to student learning. “I think those things because they’re not traditional, not one that way, because we all learn differently,” she reported.

Teacher Sylvia. Like her teammate, Sylvia observed hands-on to be the most effective instruction method. In addition, she found the use of visuals and modeling to be effective. “It takes a lot of modeling, a lot of support and a lot of teaching to get them to see how to work on hands-on things without being distracted, without going off topic.” When students were engaged, Sylvia observed that students performed better even if the topic was boring.

Sylvia observed that students enjoy receiving instruction in small groups while this also allows her the ability to provide individualized attention. “Every single one of my children received additional support from some sort of staff member; whether it was an extended day tutor, or the inclusion teachers, when we had a student teacher...They like the attention,” she reported. She indicated students were better supervised and, although it reduced the amount of

independent work they performed, it also reduced the potential for discipline issues.

Teacher Nora. For Nora, allowing students to verbalize their understanding along with hands-on activities was most effective. “The hands-on might be a difference between the C and the A that they’re getting,” she commented. Nora observed her African American males were most involved in discussion. When they were not called on to respond to her questions, they would become frustrated, characterized by making heavy sighing sounds and no longer raising their hands. When this occurred, Nora stated,

So, I’ll have to physically remember, you have to call on him, because they don’t...they have a hard time seeing...understanding that there are other kids in this room. And they don’t understand, why am not I calling on “Seth” when he’s clearly had his hand raised for 20 minutes and Seth just raised his hand?

Additionally, Nora shared it was important to provide students with repetition, “because they need to hear it over and over and over again.” She reported some of her top students were African American males. She also had a few students who, no matter how often hands-on activities were utilized, still did not grasp the concepts. One student was an African American male identified as a student with a disability. This student was assessed to be working at a first-grade level in her fifth-grade class.

Teacher Lilly. Lilly stated the smaller the group, the more attention her struggling learners could receive. She reported that in smaller groupings

struggling learners tended to try harder. She observed, “if they’re in whole group, they just kind of drift off. When you’re one to one with them, you’re paying attention...um...they, like the attention and it’s, I think they feel really, like...they try harder.”

All four participants indicated hands-on and small group activities were most effective with all students, not just African American males. Utilizing visuals with instruction, modeling expectations and allowing discussion amongst the students were also identified as beneficial supports for students during instruction. Nora was the only teacher to indicate that not all students were able to understand concepts even with the use of hands-on activities. She observed these students require a higher level of repetition. Nora and Sylvia both indicated their top students were African American males.

Failed Instruction

The participants did not always implement effective instruction. However, when they observed an instructional activity to be ineffective, they were flexible enough to change their approach and to also identify what additional supports needed to be in place to support the students as they engaged in the instructional activity.

Teacher Viola. In Viola’s class, the instruction that did not go well was a role-playing activity on Mali she found on the state website. The lesson required students to engage in role playing; pretending they were merchants from different areas of the world interacting at a trading center. As she observed the students, Viola found they did not know how to role-play, “because they were just kind of

all over the place and they, you know, there were like no dialogue.” She admitted she did not model what she expected from the activity and should have implemented the activity on a smaller scale. “I had a lot of kids who like to perform, but I guess because it was so grand, it was too large of a setting,” she commented. Viola’s high expectations would have been appropriate had her students engaged in smaller, teacher guided role playing activities prior to having them take on such a monumental task.

Teacher Sylvia. For Sylvia, the least effective instruction was reading out of textbooks “because they are not interested.” She found if she was not interested in or excited about the material, her students were not engaged. Her assessment of the reading material required for shared reading was “dry and boring.” Discipline issues were not the problem; the students were just not engaged and observed to be daydreaming. Sylvia communicated her desire to utilize more high interest novels for her students during reading in future lessons to engage them in the process.

Teacher Nora. Nora reported one hands-on activity for math that did not go as planned. The lesson focused on the distributive property and students would be using tiles. As the lesson progressed, Nora observed the activity to become time consuming. According to Nora, both she and her students were glad when the lesson was over because it was so time-consuming, noting, “And so at that point, everyone had shut down and no one wanted to think any more.” When reflecting on the lesson, Nora stated she had failed to provide the students with important background knowledge for them to complete the activity. The

following year, she had the students utilize base 10 blocks instead of tiles and students were better able to make connections and developed a better understanding of the distributive property.

Teacher Lilly. For Lilly, it was writing activities involving students having to edit their writings. She commented it has always been difficult for her third graders to edit their own writing and felt it was partly due to maturity level and third grade being the first year they were required to incorporate editing skills. “They find it difficult to look words up in a dictionary or a thesaurus and they don’t want to,” she reported. One strategy she found that worked in getting them to use the reference materials was to allow the student to utilize a computer to publish his or her writing or allowing the student to share his or her writing. Students had an increased tendency to misbehave during writing instruction because they were not engaged. Lilly reported she normally conferenced and edited student writings individually and the other students would “sit there and, you know, and then that’s when they might start talking and stuff. They’re not engaged enough as far as I’m concerned.” The use of reference materials was something that her students appeared to enjoy and was easy to incorporate in the writing lesson.

Each of the four participants indicated activities associated with different segments of instruction that did not go well. For Viola, it was a role-playing activity where students were required to pretend they were someone else during a period for which they were unfamiliar. Reading from textbooks was what Sylvia found to be least effective because the topics were not always interesting to her

students. Nora identified a math lesson focused on the distributive property that did not go as planned. She indicated her choice of manipulatives was too complicated for the students to utilize while following her instructions. Editing writing selections was what Lilly found was most difficult for her students. She attributed it to their age and lack of experience.

Research Question 1: Summary

The instructional methods employed throughout the learning process within the classroom setting that maintained the engagement of African American males included hands-on activities, opportunities to engage in discussion and opportunities to work collaboratively with peers. The need for students to be able to interact in a manner that was socially appropriate was the focus of the classroom environment as well. In response to the use of “African American males” for these questions, all four participants indicated they did not think in terms of ethnicity and gender when deciding on instructional methods to use. Instead, they each indicated they identified instructional methods that would be beneficial to all students.

Each of the participants reported when students had opportunities to be a part of the learning through hands-on activities and cooperative groups they were better able to show their knowledge, understanding, make connections to prior learning and build background knowledge. Small group instruction where lessons were differentiated based on student needs was utilized in all four classrooms. Each participant indicated sharing their own personal learning stories with students appeared to be effective. Another practice was to build

students' background knowledge by exposing them to new experiences and to relate instruction to personal experiences. The instructional experiences that did not go well were attributed to lack of effective planning, lack of exposure to the skills involved and the participants' lack of enthusiasm, which was apparent to students. Table 29 provides a summary of instructional methods incorporated into lessons for each of the participants.

Table 29

Summary of Instructional Methods

Participant	Primary Influences	Instructional Methods used to Deliver Instruction	Student Response to Instructional Methods	Most Effective Instructional Methods	Failed Instruction
Viola	Veteran teachers Grade level teachers	Hands-on activities Cooperative learning Games Differentiating materials for students Modeling Sharing personal experiences Song and movement Formative assessments	Students enjoy cooperative learning Students understand concepts better they can relate them to prior experiences	Formative assessments Cooperative learning activities Non-linguistic representation Using music and “brain breaks”	Unfamiliar activities such as role playing
Sylvia	Veteran teachers on her grade level	Small group Using data from state and division-wide assessments Differentiated reading materials	Respond well to routines Visual prompts	Hands-on activities Use of visuals Modeling Small group instruction	Reading out of textbooks
Nora	Three behaviorists	Hands-on activities Use of visuals	Students enjoy hands-on activities	Allowing students opportunities to	Not providing enough

Participant	Primary Influences	Instructional Methods used to Deliver Instruction	Student Response to Instructional Methods	Most Effective Instructional Methods	Failed Instruction
	Cooperating teachers during student teaching	Relating instruction to student experiences		verbalize their understanding Repetition of skills	background instruction Disruption, especially in transitions Individual behavior plan for some students Tries to determine purpose of the behaviors
Lilly	Observing other teachers In-services attended Courses she has taken with a specific reading specialist	Hands-on activities Cooperative groups Social skills Incorporating student interests	Students enjoy hands-on activities Sharing personal stories about herself as a learner	Small group instruction gives her lower students more attention Hands-on activities Utilizing visuals	Writing activities for third graders.

Classroom Behavior Management

Research Question 2: What classroom management and behavior intervention techniques do White, female teachers incorporate within the elementary classroom setting that have resulted in lower disciplinary referrals and growth in academic achievement for African American males?

To answer this question, the participants were asked a series of questions to assist me in identifying how the participants addressed the concept of classroom behavior management. Participants were asked to reflect upon the issue of school discipline and what they viewed as their personal role when infractions were occurring in their classrooms. I asked them to reflect upon the disciplinary situations within their classrooms; specifically, those they viewed as common among their African American male students and differences they observed between male and female students. They were asked to share specific instances that stood out for them in addressing the discipline situations with their African American male students and how their behavior compared to their peers.

Classroom behavior management strategies for African American males were identified through questions related to participants' description of discipline situations they encountered in class, reflecting on experiences with discipline issues involving African American males, identification of the most common disciplinary infractions of African American males, discipline differences between male and female students and how African American discipline issues compared to those of their peers. Once again, participants were asked to consider

connections among curriculum, instruction and discipline within their individual classrooms.

View of School Discipline by Teachers

Disciplinary infractions are a common event during the school day. As these events occur during the day, teachers are observing, taking note of what has occurred, and formulating their opinions and views as to how administration and/or peers handled the misbehavior. Participants were asked to share their views of how discipline is handled within their building.

Teacher Viola. Viola shared the school-wide discipline program and commented on how it was not implemented with fidelity in every grade level. For her team, it was due to the amount of curriculum they needed to cover in the instructional year. Instead, Viola informed the researcher, the instruction related to the school-wide discipline program was embedded in her lessons. She utilized teachable moments when students misbehaved. She promoted high expectations to her students for not only achievement, but also behavioral expectations. She communicated with parents through phone calls and her computer-based behavior management program. She viewed behavior management as a team effort where responsibility fell to her, the parents and administration. Like her peers, Viola attempted to address behavioral issues within the confines of the classroom. For behaviors that affected and hurt others, she would write a disciplinary referral to the administration.

Teacher Sylvia. Sylvia observed the administration as being more decisive on misbehavior than in the past. "Anything that I have sent to

administration for, I have gotten support and consequences that I felt were appropriate.” She indicated the observance of very little behavioral issues during the school year. She and Nora shared a group of five boys who appeared to be “trying to fight for alpha male of the room.” The most significant behavior she observed was the boys’ lack of controlling what they said to others, mostly calling out and “joking.” She was able to address the behavioral issues within the confines of the classroom. Unfortunately, she had one student with a disability who threatened to kill people and made comments to that effect daily. That student was ultimately suspended.

For behaviors, such as calling out and joking, Sylvia utilized her behavior management system of students moving their sticks along a continuum of consequences ranging from Warning to Disciplinary Referral to the office. She also held individual conferences with the students or joint conferences with the student and parents. Like Viola, Sylvia communicated high expectations to her students. She also modeled how she wanted her students to interact with each other and be what she referred to as “good citizens.”

Teacher Nora. Like Viola, Nora also indicated a school-wide program had been implemented by administration, but did not appear to be consistently executed. She did voice appreciation for how behaviors could be categorized and what behaviors were identified to require what level of consequence. Even with the program in place, Nora stated there were instances where the program did not work the way it was intended. When asked to clarify, Nora stated, “I still feel like there’s a lot of...and it’s hard when you go to discipline someone,

sometimes it's not black and white." She shared an experience she had where a seemingly well-behaved student, swore at the student teacher under his breath. Nora contemplated if the student deserved to be placed in In School Suspension. "And so, but then," she stated, "you might have a kid who's always saying, 'f-you' and so he automatically got the referral." In another situation, a student was caught stealing from the cafeteria.

We have some kids that'll steal from the cafeteria and it's because they're not getting food at home. And so, technically, stealing is a referral, but then you're like...aaah, like, they're stealing. I'm like, well that's true, I feel sorry for them, but at the same time, they can't go to the Wal-Mart and steal.

Nora noted the importance of practicing appropriate skills and demonstrating what good behavior was and looked like in everyday activities to student development.

Teacher Lilly. Lilly indicated she did not hold preconceived notions about her students. "It's everybody comes in with a clean slate." Lilly started the year with the expectation that the students would behave in her classroom and her students were made aware of that expectation. "I don't have any expectations of anybody misbehaving if that makes any sense at all. I go in, 'Ok. They're going to behave and that's the way it's going to be.' And if they don't behave then we deal with it."

Lilly's strategy was to keep the students engaged and should a behavior issue arise, she would contact the parent. Her communication with parents included

phone calls, use of a communication folder and a calendar. She also talked with the student to determine if something was wrong or if someone was bothering him or her. If it was a serious behavior issue and she was not able to get in touch with the parent and was not able to get through to the student, then she would write a disciplinary referral. If the behavior did not warrant a disciplinary referral, she would place the student on an individual behavior system.

When asked about their view of school discipline among students, the four participants shared some similar views, but also had their own views based on their experiences. Three participants indicated they communicated either high behavioral and/or academic expectations with their students, attempted to address behavior issues within their classroom and not involve administration and communicated with parents in a variety of different ways. Similar views were also noted by regarding the school-wide discipline program at the school. They indicated the program had been instituted for the building, but believed that it was not being implemented with fidelity because not all staff were implementing it in their classrooms. Two participants stated they held individual conferences with students when they misbehaved in class. Two participants also indicated the importance of modeling appropriate behaviors and skills with their students.

Each of the participants also indicated differences in views of discipline. Viola shared she was incorporating the school-wide discipline program in her lesson plans. She viewed behavior management as a team effort that included the parent and administration and only referred behaviors that affected or hurt others. Sylvia indicated the behaviors she sees most often are exhibited by her

male students. Those behaviors include calling out and making fun of others. She also noted there were a small group of boys competing for leadership roles. Nora noted there were times when behaviors and how to address those behaviors fell outside a “black and white” area of decision and provided what she believed were examples of these situations. Lilly stated she held no preconceived notions about the students new to her class that were based on what other teachers had experienced with a student. Lilly also stated she only wrote disciplinary referrals when she was unable to contact the parent or get through to the student.

Personal Role during Disciplinary Infractions in the Classroom

Teachers have several responsibilities as a part of their position. One of those responsibilities is to maintain the learning environment to ensure student behavior is not impacting their learning or the learning of their peers. Participants were asked to reflect on their role as disciplinarian when infractions occur in their classrooms.

Teacher Viola. “The mother, the counselor, the parent...um...a little bit of everything,” was how Viola viewed her role. Regardless of whatever misbehavior a student displayed the previous day, Viola always told the student tomorrow would be a new day and he or she would have a “fresh start.” She believed you cannot take what a student says or does personally. She held regular morning classroom meetings with her students; especially if a “big, major incident” occurred the day before. “We always talk...we’ll talk about it and what we’re going to do differently,” she shared.

It was important to Viola to create personal interactions with her students and allow them to have some voice in what transpires in the classroom. The classroom meetings allowed students time to self-reflect and make decisions regarding how to behave going forward. She found the support and willingness of her peers to brainstorm strategies to support students' behavioral needs and provided those students with consistent responses to their behaviors.

Teacher Sylvia. When Sylvia referred a student to the school administration, she felt included in the decision-making process. "I feel like any time that a child has been sent to the offices that my say has been taken in consideration. That it's a willingness to listen to everything, understand the problem and consequences are given." Her consistent communication with parents was met with support. The relationships she established with students' parents were helpful even when she was faced with addressing misbehavior of a sibling from another grade level.

Sylvia attributed her students' lack of significant behavioral issues to the level of structure and consistency in her classroom. "They do pretty well with it. Um...like they know and if they get in trouble, it only happens once." From the first day of school, Sylvia reviewed procedures and rules with her students. When she observed students to be inconsistent with a procedure, she retaught the procedure. Sylvia modeled for her students how to speak to each other by saying please and thank you. She provided students with rationale for why they needed to comply with her request.

Teacher Nora. Nora viewed herself as the mediator for her students. She utilized conflict mediation with her students when handling minor incidents. “The kids are either pulled to...the front of the classroom or the hall and we have a chit-chat and we talk about what you did and what you did and then it’s, Uhum.” In addition, she incorporated time out, detention and conduct notices. For more serious incidents, she also referred students to administration.

Teacher Lilly. Lilly was forthcoming about handling minor behavior issues with the support of parents. She involved the school counselor especially when instances of bullying and fighting back occur. For more serious behaviors involving hitting another student, she tried to ascertain from the parent and student what was happening. If the behavior escalated, she would write a disciplinary referral. “I think my role is to find out what’s going on and why and develop some type of plan to stop the behavior,” she shared.

When asked to describe her definition of disrespect, Lilly found it difficult at first.

I think it’s really the way they address me and speak to me and to their classmates. Also, of course, when they steal and cheat and things like that...don’t roll your eyes at me. You know, unless it’s, you’re from another culture and that’s your tradition. No, you know better or don’t make a gesture at me that kind of thing.

She also included arguing with adults as another way students exhibited disrespect. Lilly incorporated individual behavior plans for minor behaviors, which included being out of your seat, not completing work and not maintaining

attention to tasks. Rewards viewed as desirable by the student were incorporated. Lilly indicated a need to focus on providing students with positive responses to behavior because she understood they each had unique situations and unique needs. Lilly's belief was:

You have to look at where they're coming from...You might not have a mom to go over everything with you every night. You know what I'm saying? So, you let them bring the homework to you and you go over it with them.

Out of the four participants, two indicated the establishment of relationships with their students was important when addressing disciplinary infractions. Two participants also indicated there was a need for them to determine the motivating factors contributing to the disciplinary infractions, although they took different approaches. Nora approached conflict through mediation. She stated she also held private conversations with a student to identify the motivating factors behind the misbehavior. On the other hand, Lilly involved the school counselor when incidents of bullying or fighting back occurred. For more serious infractions, she worked collaboratively with the student and his or her parents. Lilly also implemented behavior plans for minor incidents that focused on providing students with positive reinforcement. For Lilly, it was important to view each situation as unique and each student as unique and having unique needs.

Discipline Situations Encountered in Classrooms

There are many factors that influence our children both in and outside of school: technology that allows them to access various images from around the web; violence in their neighborhoods, on television, and even some of their video games; gang influences; and family stressors to name a few. There are times when these influences follow the student into the classroom and teachers are faced with a child who is in crisis, depressed, angry, or withdrawn. It was important to have participants identify the discipline issues they encounter in their classrooms. As they spoke of these, they also were able to identify the setting event(s) and/or antecedents influencing their students' behaviors.

Teacher Viola. Viola described discipline issues in her class as not fitting into specific molds. "I've learned through my teaching experience, it's really not a one size fits all. Because everybody's unique and everybody's different. And um, my room in particular has a lot of family issues. Lot of family dynamics." When addressing behavior issues, Viola considered the student's unique situation when meting out discipline.

One thing Viola reported she did not tolerate was students who attempted to intimidate her. She shared an interaction with a student who attempted to intimidate her the previous year. She reportedly told the student, "You aren't going to scare me and I'm not going to back down from you." She reported she did not experience any intimidation tactics from the student when he entered her class the following year. In her interactions with the student the following year, Viola noted,

And I know when he's really acting out or he's really having an attitude that means there's more chaos going on in the home. Like I said, I have quite a few that the home life is not stable at all.

In Viola's room, the computerized behavior management program allowed her to provide points to students when they were displaying what she viewed as positive behaviors and remove points for students who misbehaved. She stated sometimes students' behavior would change just based on who the teacher was and the classroom environment. As with her peers, Viola found it was important to explain to students the purpose of her requests.

Teacher Sylvia. Sylvia identified disrespect as the biggest discipline issue in her class. For Sylvia, disrespect was characterized by:

Smacking of your teeth, rolling of your eyes, talking back to me, refusing to do something when I ask you to and using that ugly, nasty tone that I'm sure your son uses with you at home. Basically, trying to argue with me as if I was one of your peers as opposed to talking to me as if I am an adult.

There was one male student she identified as demonstrating disrespect in her classroom. Nora and Sylvia had been working with this male student all year on not arguing with them. She indicated the reason for the behavior was that he viewed them as peers and when redirected to stop talking, he would respond saying he was not talking. He would also talk over them and would not listen to them. To reduce and eventually eliminate the behavior, she would provide him with explanations as to why his behavior was inappropriate. She also had a

conversation with him explaining she was not his peer, she was an adult, “because he...he thinks all adults here are his peers. He doesn’t see the boundary.” Sylvia indicated Nora had a relationship with the family as she had taught an older sibling. Nora knew the student’s parents did not tolerate that behavior from him at home. Sylvia addressed the behavior by ignoring him, “not feeding into him.”

When asked if there were behavioral issues when transitioning in the hall outside the classroom structure, Sylvia stated no, “Because we have expectations for them. We stop the behavior before it starts. They’re taught how to walk in the hallway. They’re...they know what the expectations are and if they’re out of line, they’re called out immediately.” Students were required to practice the desired behavior in all areas of the school building. She modeled what she expected from students when communicating with her and each other. As such, Sylvia reported very few issues.

Teacher Nora. For Nora, serious infractions such as bullying another student, use of profanity, or maliciousness towards another, required a disciplinary referral to the administration. For minor infractions, Nora utilized conflict mediation, “I get all parties involved. We talk and I’m basically like straight up with them.” She used conflict mediation for a situation where a student touched another student’s chips at lunch. The owner of the chips became angry. After incorporating the conflict mediation, the issue was settled. Nora’s behavior management program is a continuum of consequences starting with students receiving a warning to the students receiving a referral to the office.

Each student has a clothespin with his or her name on it. For these minor behaviors, Nora does not feel the need to have students move their clothespins. Nora refers to clothespins as “clips.”

Nora found the use of positive verbal praise was effective with redirecting students who were off-task:

So, for example, I'll have some kids that'll finish early, they know they're to get out a book. The kids that do that consistently, like, I'll mention, OOOO, I like how Jay is reading while he's waiting, you know, for everyone else to be done. And sometimes kids get the hint; sometimes not. I know some kids don't like to read, so I'll be like, put your head down.

Behaviors Nora did not tolerate were disruption and students not doing assignments. She also stated she did not reinforce what she referred to as “calling out” behavior. Students who spoke out of turn were reminded of the class rule to raise their hand to participate. “I'll say, I don't want to hear you because you're calling out and I move on to another student, but I don't...I don't make them move their clip, you know.”

Teacher Lilly. Lilly indicated she considered possible family stressors when students misbehaved. One of Lilly's students was experiencing significant family stressors which caused him to regress academically and cry more often/easily. The student's mother had been institutionalized and he was placed with his grandparents. The student was seeing a counselor and Lilly maintained regular communication with his grandmother. The student's grandparents were

elderly and experiencing difficulties with the student at home. Seeing they were in need, Lilly consulted the school counselor who could connect the grandparents with outside supports for the family.

Each participant responded differently when asked about behaviors they encountered in their classrooms. Viola stated the behavior she did not tolerate was intimidation. Sylvia experienced disrespect as one of the main behaviors she had observed. When asked to clarify her definition of disrespect, Sylvia described it as a student smacking teeth, rolling eyes, talking back, refusing a reasonable request and speaking in an “ugly, nasty tone.” In Nora’s classroom, she observed bullying, use of profanity and maliciousness towards others as referable behaviors. Lilly considered possible family stressors as a basis for student misbehavior or regression. Two of the participants indicated the importance of determining the purpose behind the behaviors students exhibited.

Reflecting on Past Experiences Involving Discipline of African American Males

Educators find themselves in uncharted territory at times when attempting to address the misbehavior of their students. During these times, they do not always make the best decisions to deescalate situations. As they reflect on their actions later, they identify alternative approaches to addressing the misbehavior. Participants were asked to reflect on their own missteps involving discipline situations that occurred with their African American males. They also shared the alternative approaches they considered during their individual self-reflections.

Teacher Viola. With the district comprised of predominantly African American students, one approach was not appropriate for all students. Viola, as with Lilly and Nora, also found family stressors contributed to discipline issues in her classroom. Her approach was to let her students know she was vested in their success and there to support them. She shared that some students were being raised by grandparents or single parents. In some instances, even though the students were third graders and young, they were the oldest children in the family and accepted many adult responsibilities to help. “So, that’s kind of like, school is the only time for them to really be a kid.”

Generally, Viola found when a student became a little more aggressive or disrespectful in class, it was an indication the home situation was more chaotic than usual. She found ignoring the behavior was not as effective as pulling the student aside and conferencing with him or her individually. She would tell them,

You know, I may not understand. I don’t know, you know, personally, but I’m here for you. I’m here to help you. You need to talk to me. You know...whatever...this is not helping the problem. Um...and I guess, once that relationship and that rapport had been established, generally, the student would kind of, you know, change.

Viola’s approach to addressing her students’ behaviors were simple: establish relationships, empathize with the students’ situations at home without making excuses for them, provide students a sanctuary within the classroom that allows them to be kids, and communicate with the students to provide a means to allow them to talk about what they are experiencing.

Teacher Sylvia. Sylvia observed most of her discipline issues derived from her White students. When she experienced discipline issues with her African American male students, she found the best approach was to talk quietly and firmly with empathy; this provided the best results. She observed the leading discipline issue with her African American males was competing for leadership status in the class. As she explained,

We had a few boys this past year, most of...were African American...going for the alpha role in the classroom. And just by being real with them, and honest with them, and asking for their honesty in return, we found that, I find that works best with them. Building those relationships.

For Sylvia, being firm and consistent was important. She also cultivates relationships with her students which communicates her support and caring for their welfare. She also shows empathy towards her students by providing them opportunities to share their experiences.

Teacher Nora. Nora concurred with Lilly, in regards to the impact on behavior that family stressors could have on students. For one of her African American males, he had experienced difficulties throughout his schooling. The student's father had died the year prior to him entering the class and his mother was described by Nora to be "God fearing." According to Nora, the student was angry all the time and he would harass a female student from the class. On one occasion, the male student was reported to have knocked the female student's

books out of her hands. When Nora asked why he did it, the male student refused to respond. Instead, he told her he wanted to go to the restroom.

And I said, "You can't go to the bathroom until you tell me what's up." And so, he tried...he walked out of my room and went to the bathroom and I blocked the boys' bathroom and I said just go to the office...And had I had to redo it over, I would have let him go to the bathroom and I would have let him go to the bathroom instead of sitting in the doorway with all my other kids in my room goofin off and me like, NO, because he could have pummeled me.

As with Lilly, Nora learned confrontation was not the appropriate stance to take with the student. From that experience, Nora learned the importance of "picking your battles."

In another situation, Nora had an African American male call her racist because he was redirected for talking and a female student, who had also been talking, was not. According to Nora, the female student was also African American. Nora shared,

It really upset me because this boy was raised by his sister. His sister had my cell phone number because she was young and she really didn't know how to raise him. So, she would call me all the time. He'd run away from home; she'd call me all hours of the night. I had done all this extra work for him; stayed after school and helped him. And then for him to treat me like that...you know, I was like, he said, you're a racist and I like grabbed

his arm, and I was like, and I just basically said, all the stuff I do for you and you think I don't like you cause you're Black?

Nora shared the student did apologize to her the following day, without prompting. From that point, Nora changed how she redirected students, by making sure they had an understanding as to why she was redirecting them. She also had them repeat what she said back to her so they did not feel as though she was singling them out. Another thing Nora communicated to her students was if there were a conflict between her and a student, it would be forgotten by the time they returned to school the following day. Nora noted her African American male students tend to be more boisterous, but she had more African American males in her class than White males. Understanding cultural differences mattered to Nora and she attributed the knowledge she gained to her tenure at Ocean Elementary.

Additionally, Nora found providing students with the opportunity to remove themselves to a quiet area of the room helped reduce behavioral issues. Sometimes providing them with space to recover and return to instruction without penalization was helpful.

Teacher Lilly. When asked to reflect on past experiences involving discipline of African American males, Lilly believed sometimes relationships with families could influence how a student behaved in the class. She shared her experience with one African American male with whom she had established a relationship with his family due to having taught the older sibling. According to Lilly, the brothers were opposites in relation to their demeanor. The older brother

had been very well behaved. The younger brother was described by Lilly as being very angry all the time and he would run when he would get angry. On one occasion, the student became angry at her student teachers. As he was preparing to run, Lilly placed herself in front of the door and prompted the student to take a deep breath and go somewhere in the room. She further described the situation:

I was literally through, he was bigger than me...he was going to...uh...I felt like, you know, it was like, I didn't touch him, I didn't do anything. I just said, take a deep breath. Go sit anywhere you want. And he was just like, he and I just standing there and I was like, if he runs, I'm not going to be able to catch him. And like my student teacher was like horrified [laughs], but he didn't try that...But he ended up just turning it around and just going and you know sitting in the chair.

Having knowledge of the student and being able to accommodate his behavior allowed Lilly to deescalate the situation. Lilly had knowledge that allowed her to be prepared with a strategy to address the student's behavior. It also allowed her to provide the student with a strategy to use when he became angry. The stressors experienced by this family included a father who was a merchant seaman, a job that took him away from home for a significant amount of time, and a mother who was diagnosed and living with Multiple Sclerosis and confined to a wheelchair. Lilly developed an understanding that it was not personal. She also learned to adapt how she responded to her students' behaviors,

I couldn't react to him. I tried not to take it personally. No...it wasn't aimed at me, but that was a big learning experience for me...I had to really adapt my behavior with him...more than...usually I don't...you know, it's like I try to teach them to behave. But I really had to change the way I dealt with children, with him.

A common reflection for most the participants was the impact family stressors played in relation to student behavior. In a district that is predominantly African American, one participant found most of her discipline issues were from her White students. For all four teachers, establishing relationships with their students, being able to communicate with them and develop a trusting relationship was important. When addressing misbehavior, Viola, Sylvia and Nora found it most effective to conference with students individually and not in front of their peers. Lilly communicated the importance of establishing and maintaining a relationship with the family has most effective.

Most Common Disciplinary Infractions for African American Males

Urban school divisions have a higher percentage of minority students and a fraction of that population is composed of African American males. Participants were asked to identify those disciplinary infractions they observed from their African American males.

Teacher Viola. In Viola's room, she tended to observe calling out behaviors, students off-task and disrespect. With her African American male students, she observed they exhibited more a lack of patience with their peers. She explained:

Being an inclusion classroom, I do notice my African American males who are above average in ability have told me that, sometimes they, you know, that impatience, especially if I'm calling on a student who is special needs or maybe a slow learner.

In the case of disrespect, Viola reported observing this behavior more between students and expressed it may have been due to the students' home environment. She stated, "I think it may be...it might be cultural differences, of what, like, maybe how they communicate at home." As with her peers, Viola provided students with reasons for her requests or directives. At the start of a new school year, she stated she read the cumulative folders of her students, "because I want to have an idea. I don't kind of have the first day, first week blind."

Viola identified her African American males demonstrated behaviors such as disrespect, calling out and demonstrating a lack of patience with their peers. She attributed these behaviors to possibly being due to the students' home environments and how they may communicate that way in their own homes.

Teacher Sylvia. As with her peers, the most common infraction for Sylvia was disrespect. In the past, fighting was more prevalent, but over the last two years, she indicated students were more prone to refuse to complete work and "talk back." She could ascertain the cause of the disrespect stemmed from personal issues, sometimes triggered by another peer. "That is 90% of the time what happens. That they...someone does or says something that puts them in a foul mood and then they start to shut down." When this happened, Sylvia would

allow the student to take some time to themselves and either go for a walk or get a drink of water. When the student returned, she observed he or she could reengage in learning.

Teacher Nora. Nora found disruption to be the top disciplinary infraction in her classroom, especially when transitions occurred. She reported one student had an individual behavior plan for transitioning because he would end up hitting someone in the back. To effectively address his behavioral difficulty, it was important to Nora to determine what was causing him to have a difficult time with transitioning. By doing so, she could develop the individual behavioral plan for him. She was not sure why some of her students had difficulty with transition, but observed their difficulty with returning to calm after transitioning. She noted her African American males were more prone to call out during discussions instead of raising their hands to be called on. She attributed this to their home environments,

I think some of that, I don't know for sure, but I know like, in speaking to parents and stuff, everyone yells over each other at home in order to hear each other. So sometimes I feel they think they're being...it's typical...we're loud at home we're boisterous at home. We call out and say what we want at home. And so, they don't understand that the rules are different when they get in here.

When engaged in discussions with her students, Nora attempted to reinforce the desired behavior of raising your hand to be called on during discussion. If a student called out, she would ignore the student's answer and

call on someone else. When the student who called out, raised his or her hand, she would then call on that student.

Teacher Lilly. For Lilly, it was disrespect towards adults, how they spoke to her and other adults at times. She characterized the disrespect as how they would speak to their friends. “And I don’t know if it’s because a lot of them...um...are by themselves or with babysitters...if they’re single family and they don’t ...you kn...mom might work a lot and not,” replied Lilly. She found having a common definition of disrespect and reinforcing when students were respectful was beneficial.

Lilly believed disrespect was a behavior students learned at home. She shared an experience she had with a parent, “I’ve been at conferences where the parents are just as disrespectful to me and the kid is sitting right there. And that’s not 100%, but I have seen that and that’s the kid that’s being disrespectful to me.” As such, Lilly provided her students with opportunities to practice being respectful through organized pairs and grouping activities.

When asked what the most common disciplinary infractions they observed from their African American male students, three of the four participants indicated disrespect as the primary infraction. Other behaviors reported were calling out, off-task, lack of patience and disruption. Two of the participants indicated they utilized individualized behavior plans to address misbehavior. Both also indicated the need to determine the purpose behind the behavior when creating the behavior plans.

Discipline Differences between Males and Females

Overall, the participants indicated there were discipline differences between how males and females behaved in their classrooms. For Lilly and Viola, female students tended to engage in behaviors that were not easily observed. Lilly described the female students' behavior as being "sneakier" than their male counterparts. She stated, "I think they're a little more savvy at eight than the little boys are...I don't know."

Teacher Viola. Viola described female students' behavior, in the past, as more "stir the pot and try to get them all against each other." She commented on how that tended to change and female students were now "very laid back. Just every once in a while, I would get one crying, she hurt my feelings and she said she didn't want to be my friend."

Viola observed her male students to demonstrate more disrespect and having the potential of being more physical. Her male students, when angered, tended to ball their fists, preparing to punch someone. During lunch and recess, she found them to be more disrespectful. "The rough housing. The playing, the, the, they become so competitive. Usually it's that, the joking around and competitiveness. So, I guess it's the maturity," she stated. Viola observed her female students' behaviors to be more covert and her male students' behaviors to be more overt.

Teacher Sylvia. In Sylvia's class, she observed female students to have the tendency to "shut down." Her female students also were more emotional than her male students. She shared her experience with one African American female

who would refuse to do work and would disengage from the learning process. Sylvia had taught the older sister. “She refused to do anything you asked her to do. As simple as taking out a piece of paper. I mean she wouldn’t do anything.” Once Sylvia built a relationship with the student, the student’s work improved along with her behavior. That all lasted until close to the end of the school year. The behavior started again and at that point, Sylvia and Nora conferenced with the female student. They praised her improvement over the course of the year and her behavior improved for the rest of the school year.

Sylvia described male behavior as being more aggressive than female. She observed her female students did not get as physically angry as her male students. “We have some boys that, you know, huff and puff and grunt. And one last year started acting like an ape...it was crazy!” She described this male student’s actions as running around the room, swinging his arms and grunting like an ape. As with Viola, Sylvia also viewed her female students’ behaviors to be more covert than her male students.

Teacher Nora. In contrast, Nora found female students to engage in “petty” or “gossipy” behaviors. The females would say something about each other and get mad, but on the following day, they would be friends. Nora observed her male students to engage in more physical confrontations. “I don’t let them duke it out, but if they could just duke it out, it would be over the next day.” When administering discipline, Nora reported her male students accept the consequence if they saw that a peer was also receiving a consequence. She shared one student’s reaction to what he perceived to be an injustice:

If they don't feel like I disciplined correctly, or if...they...like, they didn't get what they want...like the one boy that was that just recently moved, he always was like, they never get in trouble. I always get in trouble...they never get in trouble. Um...and so I was like, they do, but you're not privy to what they...you're not privy to the notes I send home...you're not privy to the phone calls I make...that's...you have to trust me that I'm taking care of it.

Nora's observation of her male students' behavior was the same as Sylvia and Nora; that they tend to be more physical and verbal. They needed to know that they had been heard and that Nora was going to handle the problem.

Teacher Lilly. As with her peers, Lilly observed her male students to be more physical. For Lilly, male students in her class, regardless of race, exhibited more disrespectful behaviors and had a greater tendency to be loud. "The boys are like out there. So, I...think that sometimes the boys I disciplined more because the girls keep quiet." She indicated part of the reason might be her male students lack the level of maturity their female counterparts possessed.

In describing male student behaviors, all four participants indicated their male students engaged in more physical behaviors and disrespect. Female students were described as more emotional and tended to gossip or exclude each other from their group. Lilly found her males to lack the level of maturity of her female students. Nora observed her male students were more apt to accept a consequence for physical aggression if they observed the other person receiving a punishment.

Comparison of Discipline Differences between African American Males and Peers

For participants, the differences between female and male students were easy to distinguish. When identifying possible differences between ethnic groups, it was not always as easy. Participants were asked to identify and describe any discipline differences they had observed.

Teacher Viola. For Viola, most of the discipline issues arose from two males in her class, both identified as students with disabilities. She described one as White and the other as multi-racial. The White student indicated a desire to be anywhere but in school; in-school suspension and out-of-school suspension were viewed as reinforcing his desire to be home. As her peers reported, Viola felt it was important to identify what is occurring in the student's life because, "they may lack the verbal skills to articulate, hey, I'm having a hard time at home and this and that. And I really don't care about your lesson on Mali today."

Viola wrote the most disciplinary referrals of all participants. She wrote a total of six disciplinary referrals over the three-year period of data reviewed, but only two students were the referees. Student 003 was described as a male with two or more ethnicities. He received two separate disciplinary referrals during the 2012-2013 school year for Harassment. The infraction notes for one of the harassments indicated he hit a student in the face during dismissal. The principal was reported to have spoken to him before he boarded the bus where he hit another student. For this infraction, the student received two days OSS. The second harassment infraction was described as the student hitting a student

repeatedly, including in the face, over a female student. For this infraction, he received 1-day OSS.

The second student, a male of African American ethnicity, received four separate disciplinary referrals from Viola during the 2013-2014 school year for Harassment, Throwing objects and Bullying. The Harassments included hitting and choking another student and placing a thumb tack on a student's chair and lying about it. He was also observed to throw a chair and hit a peer with it. The bullying incident was described as the student hitting a student in the throat and chest. Over the course of that school year, the student accrued 10 days out of school suspension. At the conclusion of the 3-year review, Viola had generated the most referrals of the other three participants.

Teacher Sylvia. For Sylvia, her students were treated the same regardless of color. "I don't care what race you are. I don't care how high or low you are. You all get treated the same," she stated. In the past, behavioral issues were observed to be from the White males in her class. Upon reflection, Sylvia indicated her African American males tended to engage in minor discipline issues such as refusal to do work. She also had a group of African American males who appeared to be vying for what Sylvia referred to as "alpha male" of the class. Like Lilly, Sylvia indicated a need to consider what was happening with the student outside of school,

They're angry that mom didn't bring me a birthday present or they're angry about what dad did that morning or you know siblings. A lot of their hatred and dislike from their home life comes with them to school. And some of

them start their day that way and, you know, in talking to them about that, we...my data always told me you can start your day over at any time.

Over the last three years, Sylvia was reported to only submit one disciplinary referral. During the 2013- 2014 school year, Sylvia referred an African American male for Threatening a Group of Staff and Students for which the student received four days OSS. Specifically, the student threatened to hurt the teacher and shoot up the school.

Teacher Nora. Nora found herself talking more to her African American males, but indicated there were more of them in the class, "I do find that I do talk to them more than their peers, but I don't talk to them without a reason to be talking to them." Nora tended to weigh the need to speak with her students. If they were getting their work done and not causing a distraction for their peers, she would leave things alone.

Discipline data for Nora showed she submitted three disciplinary referrals over a three-year period. All three disciplinary referrals were written during the 2013-2014 school year. She referred three African American males for Harassment: punching a student in the face, hitting another student in the head and groin, and slamming a student to the floor. Although these behaviors were coded as harassment, it appears they involved more physical contact.

Teacher Lilly. For Lilly and Sylvia, ethnicity was reported to not be a consideration. Instead, they focused on behavior. Lilly stated,

I look at home life...you know, I know this year, I had a little boy whose dad raised him and was never home. I had one that had...they have like

seven kids. So, that kind of stuff I take in consideration, but other than that...you know, like home life, parents, you know what...you know somebody's not doing their homework...maybe they might be homeless or whatever...that's...and discipline...that's what I look at more than anything.

Even though she took these factors into account, she did not use these issues to create excuses for the behaviors.

Upon review of discipline data, Lilly was observed to have submitted four disciplinary referrals for two different students over the course of three years. Two of these students were African American males and one was a White male. The White male received a total of two disciplinary referrals during the 2012-2013 school year. Both disciplinary referrals were for Harassment, hitting a student. The infraction notes for one of the harassments indicated he hit a student in the stomach. He was reported to have hit the same student, a week prior and to have taken the student's candy, but given it back. He received 1-day ISS for this infraction.

The second disciplinary referral was for hitting a female student whom he reported cut him in line. For this infraction, the student received three days OSS. The other two students were described as African American males. In 2011-2012, one of these students was referred for Horseplay. Specifically, the student had twisted another student's arm. The disposition he received was to write a behavior essay. The other African American male received a disciplinary referral during the 2013-2014 school year for Threatening (a) Student(s). Specifically, he

was reported to have held scissors to a classmate's throat. He received a long-term suspension.

Three of the four participants indicated a need to understand what was happening outside the school setting, which could contribute, to misbehavior from a student. Two participants reported they did not consider the race of the student when addressing misbehavior. In addition, two participants indicated they observed more misbehavior from White males in their classrooms.

Disciplinary referrals submitted by all participants included striking another student with an object or hand or threatening bodily harm to another.

Research Question 2 Summary

On any given day, educators will observe their students exhibit a plethora of behaviors during the school day. What sets educators apart is how they address misbehaviors as they are occurring. Through discussion of discipline situations, they encountered within their own classroom environment, each participant provided the researcher with the expectations that were communicated to their students and how they approached addressing misbehavior.

The classroom management and behavior intervention techniques incorporated within the elementary classroom setting included a classroom behavior management system. This system provided students with specific rules of acceptable classroom behavior and with consequences that were leveled from least punitive (warning) to most punitive (disciplinary referral to the office). Participants also incorporated individualized behavior plans to address the

specific behavioral needs of students with specific rewards and consequences. One participant utilized a computer-based behavior management system, which allowed students to earn points for demonstration of acceptable behavior and lose points for misbehavior. Points accrued could then be used towards a desired reinforcer.

Each of the participants indicated disrespect to be the most prevalent behavior they have had to address. Other behaviors included touching other's belongings, competing for attention, talking out, not doing work, making unnecessary noises and the potential for a student to run when angry. All four participants indicated their preference for addressing behaviors within the classroom environment. The only behaviors they agreed upon which warranted a disciplinary referral to the administration were fighting and significant bullying. When asked if the behaviors of African American males differed from those of their peers, each participant indicated "not really." One person noted a tendency for them to appear more boisterous and to call out more, but attributed that to cultural differences. According to the participants, female students tended to be more "sneaky" and male students tended to be louder and more physical. Table 30 provides a summary of the Classroom Behavior Management of the participants.

Table 30

Summary of Classroom Behavior Management

Participant	View of School Discipline by Teachers	Personal Role During Disciplinary Infractions in the Classroom	Discipline Situations Encountered in Classrooms	Reflecting on Past Experiences Involving Discipline of AA Males	Most Common Disciplinary Infractions for AA Males	Discipline Differences between Males and Females	Comparison of Discipline Differences between AA Males and Peers
Viola	<p>Behavior management viewed as a team effort between teacher, parent and administration</p> <p>Communication with parents</p> <p>Only refer for behaviors that affect her or others to administration</p> <p>School-wide discipline program imbedded into lesson plans</p>	<p>Cannot take what they say or do personally</p> <p>Feels she fulfills many roles when disciplinary infractions occur</p> <p>Holds class meeting allow students to reflect and make decisions on how to move forward</p> <p>Students get a fresh start the following school day</p>	<p>An understanding that all students are unique with unique needs</p> <p>Intimidation</p>	<p>Conferencing one-on-one was more effective</p> <p>If students came in a little more aggressive it was an indication that the home setting was more chaotic than usual.</p> <p>Ignoring behavior was not effective</p> <p>Some of her students were the oldest and had many adult responsibilities which left little</p>	<p>Calling out, off task, lack of patience, disrespect</p>	<p>Female students tend to hurt each other's feelings</p> <p>In the past, female students tended to single out another female student for exclusion.</p> <p>Males demonstrate more disrespect</p>	<p>Most of the misbehavior observed in her class was from students with disabilities both of whom were not AA</p> <p>The only AA male receiving a disciplinary referral from Viola was for hitting and choking another student, placing a tack on a student's chair, throwing a chair and hitting another, and hitting a student in the chest</p>

Participant	View of School Discipline by Teachers	Personal Role During Disciplinary Infractions in the Classroom	Discipline Situations Encountered in Classrooms	Reflecting on Past Experiences Involving Discipline of AA Males	Most Common Disciplinary Infractions for AA Males	Discipline Differences between Males and Females	Comparison of Discipline Differences between AA Males and Peers
				time for them to be children Understanding that not all students are not living in a traditional family structure: living with grand-parents, relatives or single parents			
Sylvia	Behavior management includes a continuum of consequences ranging from Warning to Disciplinary Referral to office. Boys competing for alpha male status. Calling out and 'joking' uses	Consistent communication with parents Models behavior she wants students to exhibit Procedures are reviewed regularly Provides students with	Communicate expectations during transitions Disrespect was the most frequent behavior observed: described as: smacking teeth, rolling eyes, back talking, refusing a reasonable	AA males were competing for leadership status in class. Experienced more discipline issues with her White students When experiencing discipline issues with her AA males, she found talking quietly and firmly with	Disrespect sometimes stemming from personal issues or another peer Allows students the opportunity to decompress helped	Female students tend to "shut down" and are more emotional	AA males tend to engage in minor discipline issues such as refusal to do work In the past behaviors were observed from White males One disciplinary referral of an

Participant	View of School Discipline by Teachers	Personal Role During Disciplinary Infractions in the Classroom	Discipline Situations Encountered in Classrooms	Reflecting on Past Experiences Involving Discipline of AA Males	Most Common Disciplinary Infractions for AA Males	Discipline Differences between Males and Females	Comparison of Discipline Differences between AA Males and Peers
	<p>behavior management system of students moving sticks</p> <p>Holds individual conferences with students and conferences with students and parents.</p> <p>Lack of controlling what they say to others for boys</p> <p>Models the behavior she wants to see her students exhibit</p>	<p>rational for her requests</p> <p>Structure and consistency allow for lowered behavioral issues</p>	<p>request and an “ugly, nasty tone”</p> <p>Modeling her expectations for behavior and communicating</p>	<p>empathy helped</p>			<p>AA male for threatening to hurt a teacher and shoot up the school</p>
Nora	<p>Important to practice appropriate skills and demonstrate what good</p>	<p>Incorporates time out, detention and conduct notes</p>	<p>Bullying, use of profanity, malicious-ness towards another were viewed as</p>	<p>AA males tend to be more boisterous in her class</p>	<p>AA males more often call out during discussion which she attributed to</p>	<p>Female students engage in gossip</p>	<p>Discipline showed she referred three AA males for</p>

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	<p>behavior was and looked like in everyday activities to student development.</p> <p>Voiced her feeling that the program did not always work as intended because she felt as though there were times when discipline a student was not always black and white</p>	<p>Only refers serious incidents</p> <p>Private conversations with students to determine motivations behind behaviors</p> <p>Utilizes conflict mediation during conflicts</p>	<p>referring behaviors</p> <p>Did not tolerate disruption or students not doing assignments</p> <p>Minor infractions she incorporated conflict mediation and does not require students to move their clothes pins</p> <p>Views verbal praise as effective in redirecting off-task students</p>	<p>Communicated to them there was no hard feelings should there be a conflict</p> <p>Picks her battles</p> <p>Provides students for rational behind her directions and allow students to restate them</p> <p>Understanding cultural differences is important</p>	<p>home environment</p> <p>Disruption, especially in transitions</p> <p>Individual behavior plan for some students</p> <p>Tries to determine purpose of the behaviors</p>	<p>Males are more susceptible to accept punishment if they see the other person is also receiving punishment</p>	<p>physical altercations</p> <p>Finds she talks more to her AA males</p>
Lilly	Did not hold preconceived notions about	Disrespect is a behavior she has observed	Considered possible family stressors as a basis for	Understanding student and being able to accommodate	Disrespect Provides opportunities	Males more disrespectful	Does not consider race

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	students at the start of the year If behavior was serious enough and she was unable to get in touch with the parent or get through to the student, then she wrote a disciplinary referral Important to keep students engaged Utilized individual behavior systems	where students argue with the adults Focuses on providing students with positive reinforcement For behaviors involving hitting, she works with the parents and students Handles minor incidents in class with parental support Incorporates behavior plans to address minor behaviors such as out of seat, completing work and	student misbehavior or regression Disrespect	the behavior deescalates the situation	for student to practice being respectful during organized pair and group activities.	Males tend to be louder Males lack the maturity of their female peers	Submitted two disciplinary referrals for AA males and one for white AA male: one for hitting another student in the stomach and the other for hitting a female student, twisting another student's arm and threatening to cut a classmate's throat with scissors

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		<p>maintaining attention to task</p> <p>Involves the school counselor especially during incidents of bullying and fighting back</p> <p>Only when behaviors escalate does she refer the student to the administration</p> <p>Reinforces behaviors with student identified rewards</p> <p>Sees her role and trying to determine what is going on, why and develop a plan</p>					

Participant	View of School Discipline by Teachers	Personal Role During Disciplinary Infractions in the Classroom	Discipline Situations Encountered in Classrooms	Reflecting on Past Experiences Involving Discipline of AA Males	Most Common Disciplinary Infractions for AA Males	Discipline Differences between Males and Females	Comparison of Discipline Differences between AA Males and Peers
		to stop the behavior. Under-stands each situation is unique and the students have unique needs.					

Note. AA = African American

Dispositional Characteristics/Qualities of Effective Teachers

Research Question 3: What dispositional characteristics/qualities do White, female teachers demonstrate which contribute to lower classroom disciplinary referrals for African American males in elementary classrooms?

To answer this question, the participants were asked a series of questions in individual interviews to assist the researcher in identifying the dispositional characteristics/qualities of each participant. These questions covered what they viewed as their teaching styles, who or what their primary influences were, the type of teacher they wanted to be when they reached their teaching peak, their opinion of their classroom atmosphere and what they viewed as the connection between curriculum, instruction and discipline in their classrooms. I also considered the participants' view of school discipline among students and what they felt the role of the school administrator is and his/her approach to discipline issues within the building.

Interviews were followed up by classroom observations that allowed me to compare what was conveyed during interviews to the reality within the classroom setting. During interviews, all four participants described themselves as caring, involved teachers. Each expressed the need to establish relationships with their students and share their personal experiences as children and adults. All four participants stated they had high expectations for each student's educational and behavioral performance. They all expressed a need to ensure a safe and productive environment for their students.

Teaching Style

In this day of high tech, exposure to instructional videos on various websites, fast paced games, and instant gratification experience from several these things, competition for teachers to capture students' interests for any amount of time is a challenge. More than ever, teachers must demonstrate several different teaching styles, some of which may be outside of their comfort zone.

Teacher Viola. When asked about her teaching style, Viola stated she involves humor, kinesthetic activities, and "brain breaks."

This is the second year that I've been working with inclusion. Um...and it's more of the higher needs. So, it's interesting. You have to kind of approach teaching a little bit differently with them. I have to kind of gage how much they can do...what they can take. They're not a lot...they...they don't like worksheets a lot...they don't...it has to be...I have to trick them...so it has to be a game.

She used a computer-based behavior management program where students could earn points for exhibiting desired behaviors and lose points for undesirable behaviors. According to Viola, students appeared to be responsive and the parents were becoming more involved. There are times that she collaborates with other teachers to create behavioral incentives for students who may need an additional layer of support.

Sometimes, you know, parental support can be a little lacking. So, then that...comes up with you know thinking like with the co-teacher and myself

or other teachers, like creative ways to...um...incorporate...like behavior modifications and incentives. Ms. R., Ms. S. in the past, even, you know, Ms. T. downstairs...you know, so very happy and fortunate that in this building, the staff is very supportive of each other so if you can go and say, "Hey, I'm having an issue" ...you know...they'll try to work with you and see what incentives.

Viola tried to communicate with parents in a variety of ways. One way was through the computer-based behavior management program, which allowed her to send out classroom and individual messages to parents. If parents had activated the parent code for the program, they could see how their student was doing in class and send messages to Viola. Other ways she communicated with parents was through phone calls and email. Emailing provided her with written documentation of parental contact. On the rare occasions, she shared her personal cell phone number, Viola provided parents with boundaries for using it to contact her.

Viola stated she preferred to handle discipline issues within the confines of the classroom. Understanding her student's home situations allowed her insight into the causes behind behaviors. She understood family stressors could impact students' behavior. As such, she preferred to handle most discipline issues herself.

During the first observation, the students were involved in a math lesson where they were utilizing a deck of playing cards to create a number totaling 1000 without going over. Viola provided students with explicit instruction through

step-by-step instructions teamed with modeling what she wanted students to do when they were with their partners. Students were observed to be engaged and enjoying the competition with their partner. Students were observed to take turns dealing cards to their partner and saying words of encouragement such as, “You are good at this game.” Viola monitored student engagement and provided positive reinforcement by calling the team members’ names and saying, “good job.” There was very little off task behavior during this activity.

As the students focused on creating their own avatars during the science activity, Viola provided students with explicit instruction through step-by-step directions and modeling what she wanted students to do when they created their personal avatar. Points are assigned or removed based on behavior. Although the students did not utilize technology, the teacher did use her document camera to demonstrate the math activity.

During the second observation, the students were involved in a math review. As they were working, Viola walked around monitoring progress. After students were done, they were encouraged to share their answers. Students appeared excited to get started and some had already begun drawing their squares. One student had a set of headphones on her chair, reportedly to block out noise. When working on solving problems using the lattice method, Viola encouraged all students to work through the steps of the process and provided verbal prompts when students got stuck.

Teacher Sylvia. Sylvia and Nora team taught by dividing up the subjects to be covered between each other. Sylvia taught reading, writing and social

studies which did not always lend themselves to hands-on activities. She did state she was very hands-on with her students, especially in writing. She also incorporated a great deal of small group instruction.

So, we do reading groups. We do small group writing. You know, I pull them over for that. Um...very hands-on from my end, not them necessarily with manipulatives, but overseeing every ounce of their writing process. Crazy...

On the board, Sylvia had identified assignments that the students would be working on as they awaited their reading group time. As students transitioned between small group and independent work, Sylvia would provide students with a prompt to allow them to get ready for the transition. Time periods for each activity were closely followed. Interactions between Sylvia and the students were seamless.

Sylvia asked for volunteers, but also called on students who did not volunteer during different activities. Each input/example/answer that was provided by the student was met with an encouraging statement from the teacher. When a student wrote “a lot” correctly on her paper, Sylvia communicated to the rest of the class, “She gets a gold star! She placed a space between these two words.” The reference of what the student had done appeared to be a verbal reinforcement of Sylvia’s expectation of placing a space between the words “a” and “lot”. It appeared to me that students were writing “a lot” as one word instead of two separate words. A student was observed to allow her paper to be edited by the teacher. Sylvia stated that the student was a “good

sport.” Sylvia used humor with the students by joking with those who shared incorrect sentence structures, but who were also able to identify their mistakes and correct them, which helped them to promote their own learning. Students were provided with verbal praise for their contributions to the activities such as: “nice job,” “I like the way you answered that.” Students were consistently asked to justify/support their initial answers to questions by Sylvia asking the question, “Why?” Students were not “given” answers, but instead were provided with a variety of leveled questions, which helped them reach a conclusion. For those answers that may have required additional information, Sylvia would ask, “Why do you think that is?” or “Who has something to add to what was shared?” During whole group reading, Sylvia prompted students with the question, “Ever been somewhere where you weren’t good at something and were embarrassed because others were?” This allowed students to reference their own personal experiences to connect with the character’s feelings about a new experience.

Teacher Nora. Nora viewed her approach to teaching as flexible and relaxed. She did not have a strict approach to students having to remain seated throughout the day if they were engaged in required activities.

If the children are doing what they are supposed to be doing, then it doesn’t matter to me if they are standing instead of sitting...um...if they’re wearing gloves or their winter coat (laughs). I don’t care, like I pick my battles.

She employed a traditional behavior management system where students moved clothespins for misbehavior. She did report she was not consistent with her

behavior management system because she does not make students move their clothespins for what she viewed as subjective behaviors. Nora indicated she was aware that some behaviors were not the student being defiant, but perhaps a result of family stressors. Nora stated she was more concerned with students understanding the material and being able to complete assignments correctly. She shared there was a male student in her class that would bang on his desk in a rhythmic manner:

And I've trained the kids now.... like, 'cause they tell him to stop. I was like, "He can't stop." I was like, "So what you can tell him to do is be quiet." So instead of using the pencil tip you know, use the pencil eraser.

Nora stated she used incentives along with her behavior management program. Students could earn homework passes or candy at the end of the week if their clothespins had not been moved.

During the first observation, the students were involved in a science activity. Nora provided students with an overview of the activity the students would be engaging in with their partners. She provided a detailed explanation of how to complete the provided sheet to record their information. She spoke briefly about each of the different stations and demonstrated at each station what would be required of the partners and modeled what she expected by having a student be her partner.

In the second observation of Nora's classroom, discussion centered on pressure statements from others and how students would address them. Nora read eight situations involving pressuring a person to do something. Students

were provided with a scenario and asked to write what they would do if they were in the situation. The scenarios were difficult social situations that students would possibly face in and out of school and from their peers or older individuals. Some students were able to verbalize their approach to Nora as she walked around monitoring students. Other students wrote descriptions of how they would confront the difficult social situation. The activity allowed students to draw on their own past experiences or those of their peers to devise a solution to the social situation.

Teacher Lilly. Lilly's approach to teaching was like her peers regarding implementing the use of hands-on materials for instruction. She believed students needed to be more involved in their learning. She observed her students benefited from repetition of skills using different modalities. "I found that they are more attentive if they are actively engaged...um they actually learn more and um...it just makes for a better learning environment," she reported.

Prior to moving into reading groups during the first observation, students were provided with directions for what they were expected to do when getting on computers and going to designated educational websites. Students could utilize classroom laptops at their desks to access the educational websites identified by Lilly. If a student did not have needed materials, Lilly provided them for him or her. Directives were presented in a clear manner. Students were instructed as to what needed to be completed prior to getting a laptop. Lilly also instructed students which websites were to be visited when laptops were brought to the students' desks.

The focus of instruction during the second observation was on bullying. Student pairs were called upon to share what their partners had to say about bullying. Lilly could keep students on topic by walking around the room and stopping to listen as they shared. Many students shared experiences of being bullied and how they handled it in the past. Students were observed to quietly transition between each of the activities presented. The think-pair-share activity required students to discuss with their partner the question given to them by Lilly and defend their thoughts pertaining to the question. Students were encouraged to talk with their peers about the subject matter and problem-solve how they could handle similar bullying situations themselves. Lilly monitored student discussions and activities by navigating the classroom and giving relevant feedback.

During observations, all four participants teaching style included engaging students in discussions, providing students with explicit instruction and directions for completing activities, hands-on activities that easily engaged students and the participants monitored student engagement in the activities presented. Three of the participants were observed to provide encouraging words to students and positive reinforcement and have cooperative learning activities. Two of the four participants were observed to model expectations and processes for students prior to the students engaging in an activity. This allows students to demonstrate independence, autonomy and their own strengths. Each of the four participants utilized a different approach to facilitate the engagement of students in the lessons presented.

Individual Personal Qualities

Teachers bring their own idiosyncrasies, individualism, and uniqueness to their classrooms. Sometimes these things can have a positive impact on the flow of instruction, interactions with students, and the climate and culture of the classroom. Other times, these can have a negative impact. During classroom observations, I was able to identify those aspects of the participants' individual personal qualities that had positive impacts.

Teacher Viola. While visiting Viola the first time, she was observed to use humor and sarcasm with her students, which caused many of them to laugh. She used endearments such as "hon" and "sweetie" when speaking to her students. One student was observed to enter the room and immediately crawl into Viola's lap and curl into a fetal position. Appearing to sense the student's need, Viola placed her arms around the student in an almost protective pose. She shared that the student had been removed from the home by Child Protective Services and was having trouble. Viola's nonthreatening approach and use of humor with her students appeared to provide them with a feeling of security and a willingness to take chances. All students were observed to participate in the math activity. All students appeared to be engaged while Viola created a new avatar, even going so far as to instruct her on what she needed to do each step of the way.

Viola spoke with students individually, as she moved between groups. She would smile at the student and appeared to be actively listening to what they were telling her. She provided some support through questioning when a student

was having difficulty adding up his/her cards. When a student could come to the answer, Viola provided specific feedback such as, "You did a great job figuring out the answer. Way to go!" Viola appeared to enjoy modeling the math activity for the students and sat amongst them as they worked through how to get to 1000. For the avatar program, Viola used humor and sarcasm to create an avatar of her husband. The students were observed to laugh at her humor and her sarcasm. Viola's enthusiasm for the two activities observed appeared to have a positive impact on her students' attention to tasks. Providing a temporary safe-haven in her lap for the student also demonstrated her caring and attention to her students' needs.

During the second observation, Viola continued to provide a supportive learning environment by cheering on students as they participated in Around the World multiplication. As she walked around the room, Viola was observed to make eye contact and actively listen to student questions.

Viola demonstrated respect towards students when encouraging them during activities and conferring with them as they worked independently on math problems. This also encouraged her students to participate and meet with success. Viola's interactions with her students demonstrated caring for their success. Viola communicated to students, through her actions, her desire for students to take responsibility for their learning. She was not observed to give answers or to monopolize the instructional time. There was just enough direct instruction to encourage students to be engaged in the activity. Viola approached each aspect of the lesson with an infectious enthusiasm. This was

especially true when students were engaged in the Around the World activity. Empathy and caring were aspects of Viola's personality that showed when interacting with her students. She was attentive and intuitive to the needs of her students. The students appeared to react to her mannerisms in a positive way; participating in the activities and maintaining on-task behaviors.

Teacher Sylvia. During transition between classrooms on the first observation, Sylvia stood at her door welcoming the students from her other class as they entered her room. She spoke to each of the students, asking how their day was going. During each transition from workstations to small group, she was observed to touch base with each student; checking on personal issues or family members. During whole group instruction, Sylvia provided students with opportunities to share their ideas and answers to the teacher-directed review of editing using student created writings. Prior to placing a writing sample on the overhead, Sylvia would ask permission from a student to use his or her writing. She would allow the student to identify both strengths and areas of improvement. She provided specific praise for those areas that students had improved on in their writings.

Sylvia was observed to interact with her students in a quiet and non-threatening manner. During small group instruction, students were provided with opportunities to utilize different writing materials to assist with their editing of writings (e.g., highlighters, colorful pens). In reading groups, students used dry erase markers and special paper protectors to identify main ideas and details. When a student was off-task, Sylvia was observed to provide the student with

redirection, which allowed the student to ask questions if there was confusion over what was to be done. She was also observed to quietly redirect students in her small group. Sylvia was observed to use “please” and “thank you” with her students whenever she made a request and when a student followed through with a request.

The organization of the room and established routine promoted independence and responsibility. There was an area set up containing such materials as pencils, pens, paper, and highlighters where students were observed to go when needed. There was a tray at the front of the room where students were to turn in completed assignments. If a student approached Sylvia with a completed assignment, she would quietly ask, “Where does that need to go?” and the student would turn and proceed to the tray. She also used humor with a student who forgot her glasses. The student stated she was not able to identify the concept in the reading activity. Sylvia was observed to smile and say, “You couldn’t find them because you couldn’t see!”

Sylvia’s interactions with her students were positive. She showed interest in stories/experiences students shared with her. Even though the reading selection was a required story for the school district, she found a way to convey the material to her students so that they found it interesting. She shared her own experiences as they related to the story and encouraged students to share their own experiences.

During the second visit to the class, Sylvia was observed to communicate to her students the importance of asking questions and sharing relevant

information without feeling silly or being ridiculed. Her interactions with her students were positive and encouraging. Presenting a set of ground rules that everyone would follow during the discussion of the topics for the next few days communicated to the students she cared about them feeling comfortable and the need for the environment to be non-threatening.

With the inclusion of ground rules, Sylvia communicated to her students that their contributions to the discussion would be met with respect and fairness. When Sylvia heard a student make a laughing sound, she redirected by stating, “remember our rules.” She communicated to the students the expectation that they were to refrain from judging each other or putting each other down when answering questions or asking questions. She expressed that no question would be considered silly or irrelevant. Sylvia stated the rules would be reviewed every day prior to starting instruction. If anyone was observed to not follow one or all the rules, the class would then revisit the rules.

Sylvia’s interactions with her students were friendly and personable. She provided positive praise when she read students’ sentences. She also provided feedback in a way that was non-threatening and supportive to individual students, which would allow for future willingness to take risks. Students were encouraged to share their sentences with the class and replace the silly or odd word with a more appropriate word when talking to their doctor or the school nurse. Students were then directed to correct their silly sentence and share with their neighbor.

Sylvia's approach to the lesson with setting the boundaries and reinforcing those throughout the lesson allowed students to take chances and appear to be more willing to participate. It appeared to be important to her that the students understand they could talk freely about this subject. When students asked questions that Sylvia was not allowed to answer, she encouraged students to ask those questions to their parents/guardians. This would allow parents to be involved in the discussion of family life to further student understanding.

Teacher Nora. During the researcher's first visit to Nora's class, she was observed to speak with both partners as she moved between stations. She smiled at, and at times laughed with, students as they discussed the activity and their observations. Each student was provided with individual attention and guidance throughout the activity. Due to the nature of the collaborative activity, each student was afforded the opportunity to participate and meet with success academically and socially. The activity required the students to actively listen to each other, discuss their viewpoints and observations, and encourage each other. When Nora entered a conversation with a group, she was observed to listen quietly, before providing her own feedback to what she observed.

Upon completion of the activity, Nora commented on how well the teams appeared to work together. Nora's interactions with her students were observed to be positive with relevant and constructive feedback and students appeared to be at ease when interacting with her. As she moved from group to group, Nora encouraged students to use their own experiences and knowledge to assist them with the activity. Her discussions with students showed a high regard for what

each student contributed to the activity and what understanding he or she took away from the activity.

For the science activity, there were over 10 stations set up that students moved through. It appeared great care was taken by Nora to select the materials used for the activity and to arrange the setting to allow for ease of movement. Student pairings were also pre-selected to allow for more cooperation amongst team members. Nora presented the activity with enthusiasm for she was excited about the different materials she viewed as relatable to the students (e.g., different snack foods, rocks, sand, etc.). Throughout the activity, Nora was observed to enjoy working with each of the teams as they moved through the different stations.

During the second observation, Nora was observed to take an interest in what her students were writing and what they would share with her. She provided words of encouragement for students who appeared to be struggling with their decisions. Nora provided many different opportunities for students to participate in the discussion and share what they had written. Her response to their solutions to pressure situations was thoughtful and respectful.

Students appeared to consider the feedback Nora provided as was evident by students nodding their heads and reconsidering different means of addressing pressure. The interactions between Nora and her students were positive; Nora was observed to smile at her students and place a hand on their shoulder or have a seat next to them. She did not just leave them to work on the assignment, but worked alongside of many of them, discussing/weighing options

they brainstormed. The nature of the assignment lent itself to promotion of responsibility and individuality. Students appeared to take on the challenge. Some of the ideas that were shared were mature considering they are only fifth-grade students.

Nora could demonstrate her passion for her responsibility as teacher by how she provided the background instruction and relevance to the lives of her students. Her responses to some of the more violent responses identified by students was to be concerned about how that approach would further endanger the student. She encouraged these students to think of more non-violent ways to address the pressure situation.

Teacher Lilly. Lilly presented a calm and even tone and demeanor when interacting with her students during the first classroom observation. Even when she provided redirection, she used endearments such as “honey” in a quiet, non-threatening tone. When a student was speaking with her in small group, Lilly was observed to focus her attention on the student and use non-verbal cues such as turning and leaning toward the student who was speaking and nodding periodically to show she was actively listening.

During whole and small group instruction, Lilly provided a safe, non-threatening environment for students to participate in discussion and share their thoughts. She gave positive praise to students who took chances and answered questions with what they felt were correct answers. When one student tried to correct another or take over her duty as teacher, Lilly would say, “Excuse me. I can do this.” Lilly’s interactions with her students were observed to be positive.

Even when she was redirecting students, she used endearments such as “honey” in a quiet and calm demeanor. She appeared to want to see her students succeed. She provided ways to allow her students to demonstrate their knowledge instead of providing them with answers.

While Lilly was engaged in small group instruction, her students were independently obtaining necessary materials to complete assignments. Students were observed to obtain laptops and visit websites that were encouraged by Lilly to visit. Lilly projects a calm, even demeanor with her students. That calmness appears to have a positive influence on how her students interact with her and each other. Lilly utilized a few different approaches to learning for her students, which appeared to cause her students to be engaged in the instruction. These approaches included visuals accompanying vocabulary words, interactive websites to support learned objectives, and graphic organizers.

Lilly’s interactions with her students were positive. She used statements such as, “That is a good way to stand up for yourself.” She made sure to touch base with each of the students during the activity discussing the drawings being created. As she learned about a student’s experience, she would speak with them about how the student handled the situation and what they could have done differently.

Lilly encouraged all students to participate. For those who indicated, non-verbally, that they were uncomfortable with sharing whole group, Lilly respected their choice. However, she did speak with those students individually to get their thoughts. Lilly’s interactions with her students were positive. She listened to

their comments in a respectful manner, allowing them to complete their thought, nodding and giving them appropriate eye contact. She was observed to let the teams know that they had done a “great” job on the activity.

Even when students were not comfortable sharing whole group, Lilly did hold them accountable for participation when speaking with them individually. During the think-pair-share activity, Lilly followed the lead of her students; allowing their conversations to guide the instruction. Lilly demonstrated personal interest in the topic being discussed. She expected students to be involved in identifying solutions for when, and if, they ever had to defend themselves from a bully. She shared her own experiences with being bullied as a child and how she defended herself.

All four participants presented several similarities in their personal qualities. During the observations, each participant actively listened to their students either during instruction or when talking about events that had occurred outside the educational environment. All four participants were empathetic to the needs of their students, be it emotional support or academic. Students in all classrooms were provided with encouraging words as they took chances when answering questions posed by the participants. During those times, the participants were found to be engaged in the process of learning along with their students. Each participant expressed their passion for the learning process through the instruction provided to students and the educational activities they planned to support instruction and student understanding. Throughout all

observations, participants were observed to demonstrate respect toward their students either in their actions or words.

Classroom Atmosphere

Establishing and maintaining a positive classroom atmosphere is an important aspect of teaching. Students need to feel they are wanted and supported while in school. A positive and accepting environment can help students to feel accepted and willing to take chances because they feel supported. Classroom observations allowed me to identify the classroom atmosphere established and maintained by the participants.

Teacher Viola. Viola shared that in her class, the students were supportive of each other and looked out for one another. Two students were observed to have difficulty working with others. In the classroom, Viola had some student volunteers who were assigned to work with the students having behavioral difficulty. Viola indicated that students felt safe taking chances and making mistakes that, "It's human, you know, we just call each other on it, you know in a nice way. That type of thing. We don't try to make fun of anyone's faults or anything like that."

Both Viola and Sylvia stated it was important for teachers to share their own experiences with their students. It was important to the participants to let the students see their teacher was no different than them. They made mistakes and were not always sure of themselves. Sylvia shared with her class that she lived with her grandparents when she was little and that she lived in an

apartment. She stated, “by showing them just a connection and that you’re human. You’re not this perfect thing that sleeps in the closet over here.”

Viola danced, rapped and sang in front of and with her students. “I’d like to say I’m a little unorthodox and I think part of it is showing them that I’m human.” She also shared stories of learning to weightlift and her own feelings of doubt about trying new exercises.

Viola’s non-threatening approach and use of humor with her students provided them with the feeling of security where they were willing to make mistakes. All students were observed to participate in the math activity. During the preceding activity where she was creating a new avatar, students appeared to be engaged; even going so far as to instruct her on what she needed to do each step of the way. All students were treated respectfully. Viola encouraged students by cheering for them and when she conferenced with them while working on math problems independently. This also encouraged her students to participate and meet with success.

Teacher Sylvia. Like Nora, Sylvia also had “Come to Jesus” meetings with students. Some were a collaborative meeting involving Nora or the student’s parents. In all instances, Sylvia indicated the purpose had been to enlighten the student as to what behaviors were impeding progress and ways for the student to improve with the support of the teachers and parents. Sylvia stated she pushed her students to put forth their best efforts. She understood this might cause a student to feel as though she does not support them. During those meetings, she expressed to the student:

I don't push you because I hate you. I push you because I love you.

Because I want more from you and I know what you are capable of doing.

I have very high expectations for them and I think they know that.

Sylvia indicated that she and Nora shared common classroom management styles and expectations. She believed students need structure and routine, "we're just firm with them. And a lot of them need that. They don't have that at home. It's just a hot mess free for all."

Sylvia stated she did not engage in favoritism with her students. They were all treated the same. She rarely yelled at her students or raised her voice, which was observed by the researcher on two separate occasions during classroom visits.

Even when I'm super pissed off. It's more of...in your face, at your level, in a normal conversation. And the quieter I get, the more pissed off I am and the more serious I am. And I think we talk to them like...people. We have conversation with them. We have...show an interest of what they're doing outside of school.

According to Sylvia, her students were responsive to her approach. She reported students showed affection towards her by giving her hugs in the morning and afternoon and were more protective of her. Sylvia understood her students' need to know their teacher cared for them. "I think just showing them that little interest that you care really changes them."

After school, Sylvia coached an all-girl running club. She made connections and could cultivate relationships with students. She indicated it also

allowed her to cultivate relationships with the students' families. Due to family stressors, the sibling of one of her former runners was experiencing what Sylvia described as "severe issues." She stated she "butted heads" with the young man almost a whole school year. Then, halfway through the school year, she told the young man that she had spoken to his grandmother, with whom he had been living, and shared the grandmother had told her he was an altar server, which appeared to please him.

Another example she shared of cultivating relationships was with a young lady in her class who had been a former member of her running club and who had experienced some behavioral issues in class. Her communication with the young lady's mother was consistent and open. Sylvia indicated she had a "Come to Jesus" meeting with the young lady and her mother which altered the student's behavior for the better. In this instance, Sylvia had developed a positive relationship with the parent, which allowed them to work collaboratively to change the young lady's behavior for the better.

During whole group instruction, Sylvia provided students with opportunities to share their ideas and answers to the teacher directed review of editing using student created writings. Prior to placing a writing sample on the overhead, Sylvia would ask a student if it was all right to use the writing. She would allow the student to identify both strengths and areas for improvement. She provided specific praise on those areas that students had improved on in their writings. Sylvia was observed to interact with her students in a quiet and non-threatening manner.

During small group instruction, students were provided with opportunities to utilize different writing materials to assist with their editing of writings (e.g., highlighters, colorful pens, etc.). In reading groups, students used dry erase markers and special paper protectors to identify main ideas and details. When a student was off-task, Sylvia was observed to provide the student with redirection, which allowed the student to ask questions if there was confusion over what was to be done. She was also observed to quietly redirect students in her small group. Sylvia was observed to use “please” and “thank you” with her students whenever she made a request and when a student followed through with a request.

Sylvia was observed to interact with her students in a quiet and non-threatening manner. She showed interest in stories/experiences students shared with her. Even though the reading selection was a required story for the district, she found a way to convey the material to her students so that they found it interesting. She shared her own experiences as they related to the story and encouraged students to share their own experiences.

Teacher Nora. Nora indicated her requirement of the classroom to be quiet during small group instruction so the students in small group could hear each other and her. According to Nora, her students appeared to enjoy coming to class and even expressed to her their enjoyment or disappointment if not attending her class:

If they are practicing for the (state assessment), I get a class all day and then the next day I'll get the other class all day. Um...and they're like, “Do

we get to stay with you all day today?” And I’m like, “Yea.” And they’re like, “Yeah!” And when they don’t, they get upset and the other class will be like, “Do we see you today?” And I’m like, “No”. And they’re like, “Aww!”

Nora contended the subjects she taught contributed to the positive classroom environment: math and science. Both subjects allowed Nora to create more hands-on activities and experiments. “like when they come in here, they’re doing sci...they’re either working with food or science activities or you know, like getting out tiles.”

Another aspect that contributed to the relaxed atmosphere, according to Nora, was, “I don’t sweat the small stuff.” If a student wanted to wear a winter coat or stand while working on an assignment, Nora overlooked it if the student was engaged in learning. She also talked to individual students about their behavior, sent notes home or called parents. Sometimes she observed calling a parent as worse punishment for a student than simply moving his or her stick. When speaking with parents, Nora took the approach of collaborator; something she learned from her cooperating teacher during her year of student teaching. Instead of only communicating concerns, she attempted to enlist the assistance of the parent:

Every time I’ve called a parent, they have been supportive. But I also feel that I have a little bit of a super power with that...when I call...I do not take it from a vantage point...and this is what I learned from my...uh...student...uh mentor teacher...I don’t take it from the vantage

point of your child's doing this, what are you going to do. I'm like, look, they're doing this and it's really hurting their grades and I'm just really concerned about them. Do you have any suggestions for me in the classroom?

Nora reported she had taken on many supportive responsibilities to ensure students had what they needed to complete homework assignments at home and support parents such as: filled out the assignment planner, made sure materials made it into the student's book bag and ensured everything was labeled. When there was no parental follow through, she was disappointed.

In Nora's classroom, she stated students understand they have a responsibility to do their best. She has communicated her expectations and she has observed students rising to meet them. During those instances where a student did not behave responsibly or fulfill expectations, Nora sat down with the student and had, what she referred to as, a "Come to Jesus" talk. On one of those occasions, following the talk, Nora reported she observed, "all of a sudden, he started to blossom and he started doing really well and stuff in all his subjects."

During one of the observations in Nora's classroom, the subject matter focused on family life. Nora was observed to take an interest in what her students were writing and what they would share with her. She provided many different opportunities for students to participate in the discussion and sharing what they had written. Her responses to their solutions in pressure situations were thoughtful and respectful. She offered words of encouragement for

students who appeared to be struggling with their decisions. Students appeared to consider the feedback Nora provided as evidenced by students nodding their heads and reconsidering different means of addressing pressure.

Teacher Lilly. Lilly stated she felt her classroom was comfortable and safe where students are, “not afraid, you know, they know the routine. They know their limits. They’re comfortable.” Lilly stated the students were aware of her expectations. “They know me too, I think, which is very important.” She ensured students received repetition of the routine and schedule. Lilly indicated all her students, from the gifted to the lower functioning, needed a setting where there was a routine and no surprises. “I think you have to look at your population.”

Throughout both observations conducted in Lilly’s classroom, she presented a calm and even tone and demeanor when interacting with her students. Even when she provided redirection, she used endearments such as “honey” in a quiet, non-threatening tone. She provided ways to allow her students to demonstrate their knowledge instead of providing them with answers.

While Lilly was engaged in small group instruction, her students were independently obtaining necessary materials to complete assignments. Students were observed to obtain laptops and visit websites Lilly had directed them to visit.

During the bullying lesson for family life, Lilly was heard to use statements such as, “That is a good way to stand up for yourself.” She made sure to touch base with each of the students during the activity discussing the drawings being created. As she learned about a student’s experience, she would speak with

them about how the student handled the situation and what they could have done differently.

Lilly encouraged all students to participate. For those who indicated, non-verbally, that they were uncomfortable with sharing whole group, Lilly respected their choice. However, she did speak with those students individually to get their thoughts. She listened to their comments in a respectful manner, allowing them to complete their thoughts, nodding and giving them appropriate eye contact. She was observed to let the teams know that they had done a “great job” on the activity.

During the think-pair-share activity, Lilly followed the lead of her students; allowing their conversations to guide the instruction. She expected students to be involved in identifying solutions regarding when, and if, they ever had to defend themselves from a bully. She shared her own experiences with being bullied as a child and how she defended herself.

The classroom atmospheres for all four participants shared the most of the same traits. Students were educated in supportive and non-threatening environments, which allowed them to take educational challenges. Students were observed to be actively engaged in discussion related to their learning. Students appeared to feel safe taking risks by allowing their peers to use their work as examples or as learning devices. All four participants encouraged their students to connect their learning to their prior experiences. Interactions between participants and their students created an atmosphere of mutual respect and regard.

Aspirations for the Future

As educators, we want our students to aspire to be the best and most successful person he or she can be. As educators, it is also important for us to aspire to be the best in our field; the most successful. Participants were asked where they would like to see themselves; what do they aspire to be remembered for?

Teacher Viola. At this point in her teaching career, Viola stated she does not feel she is at her peak and would not refer to herself as the best teacher, but stated, “I try really hard. Every day, even if I don’t feel well, I...I you know, I really try to put forth my best effort.” She stated she would like to have more patience and incorporate what she referred to as “fresh ideas.” She was teaching a collaborative class and expressed an interest in learning more about working with students with disabilities. She communicated a desire to learn more about accommodations, “because a lot of these things I kind of try to do it by common sense and just personal experience. Uh...I would like to be a teacher that is known for her passion for teaching.”

Viola’s desire to learn more about meeting the needs of her students with disabilities was one of the aspirations she communicated. It would be important for the district to provide general educators, such as Viola, professional development with a focus on specially designed instructional approaches and how to accommodate (and in some instances, modify) the curriculum to allow equal access to her students with disabilities.

Teacher Sylvia. Sylvia was the only teacher to indicate a desire for the schedule to be more flexible to provide students with more quality instruction.

I would like more freedom to schedule. Like, if I want to do reading groups three days a week instead of everyday and do more whole group. I feel like in order for me to do valuable whole group lessons, I need more than the twenty minutes that shared reading is allocated out of my day.

Sylvia would like to be more hands-on and utilize activities from small group into whole group. She would like the freedom to incorporate picture books and novels with her students instead of the basal readers. She stated the constraints on time reduced her ability to have more hands-on activities, which causes the instruction to be “very cut and dry.”

We get, you know, twenty minutes for reading and in that twenty minutes, I also need to fit Social Studies in. You know, the whole, like, cram it where you can. Um...so, it is very...our shared reading is very boring and very dry and I know that. It's just, read the story...read the Social Studies workbook.

The activities she created for small group could be incorporated into a whole group activity, but with the time constraints, Sylvia was unsure if it would be possible without involving more prep work.

Teacher Nora. Nora indicated she would like to be more consistent and implement more hands-on activities for math lessons. Students were permitted to eat breakfast in the classroom, which allowed them to enter the classroom at

an earlier time. “But every year, I’m like, uh, I should be more consistent with that.”

She stated she was not as comfortable making activities related to the math objectives as she had been with science. She expressed activities needed to allow students to gain a better understanding of the concepts being taught because her students were visual learners.

Nora would like to maintain what she referred to as a “relaxed environment.” Her description included students being able to joke and laugh with her, but “get down to business and....they’re not afraid to come in here.” She wanted them to understand when she imparted discipline it was not always a bad thing.

Teacher Lilly. Lilly stated she wants to be known as the type of teacher who “always has good ideas and very creative, and you know, has something for every lesson” and someone with strong disciplinary skills. Her goal was to facilitate lessons where students were “totally engaged all the time. And they are basically running the class, not me, you know.”

Lilly credited her tenure as a third-grade teacher for possessing an understanding of her students’ interests. She attempted to tie learning to students’ strengths and interests.

With certain kids, you know, it’s going to depend on the kid. If I know that, he’s, we’re doing simple machines and he’s interested in cars, I’ll have him work on a car or something, you know. Especially the behavior problems.

To determine student interests, Lilly has them write about what activities they would like to do in third grade. At the end of the year, she has them write to the second graders and share what they did and did not like in third grade. She stated this helped her adjust her lessons and plans for what she would do the following year.

Research Question 3 Summary

All four participants indicated a desire to be allowed the freedom to be more creative with their teaching approaches. Within the district, the elementary teachers followed block scheduling with designated time blocks devote to core subjects. The communication skills block required two and a half hours and teachers were to provide reading and writing instruction. Reading instruction comprised the largest block of time: 1.5 hours. Every day during this block, teachers were required to conduct shared reading, guided reading and station activities related to the specific reading topic. The last 30 minutes of the block allowed teachers to provide students with writing instruction. The math block was an hour long and included whole group instruction and stations related to the math curriculum. There was approximately 15 to 20 minutes of instruction allowed for science and/or social studies.

The dispositional characteristics/qualities of the four participants were identified through observing teaching styles, individual personal qualities and classroom atmosphere. Future aspirations were obtained through interviews. All four participants demonstrated similar teaching styles. Collaboration during grade level planning, professional development presented by the district and that

which the participants have sought, and past experiences have prepared these individuals for their capacity as educators.

Whether it was a science lab, math lesson or writing activity, students were provided with hands-on materials. For science lab, the participant utilized familiar every day materials. Decks of cards, dry erase tablets and markers were utilized in math lessons. For writing, paper sleeves and dry erase markers and colored pens were utilized. Students were provided with explicit step-by-step instructions and modeling prior to and during direct instruction. Students could work with partners or in small groups on instructional materials.

Throughout the instructional observations, participants provided students with relevant encouraging statements/words specific to behaviors observed. When not providing direct instruction to small groups, participants were observed to move throughout the class, monitoring student engagement. Even in small group instruction, participants were observed to regularly look up and scan the room providing redirection or responding to student questions. Positive reinforcement, both verbal and visual, was consistently observed in each classroom. All four participants held students accountable for their learning through discussion and having students share their work. Once a student shared an answer, he or she was then responsible for justifying how they arrived at the answer. Follow up activities to lessons appeared to be differentiated based on students' needs. Classroom agendas provided students with prior knowledge of the flow of the lesson during specific blocks of time. Verbal and auditory prompts were used to alert students to upcoming transitions. Prompting was also used to

assist learners with arriving at answers to questions. The classroom environments appeared to have been established that allowed students to feel comfortable taking chances. Participants also designed instruction to relate to students' personal experiences or to build background knowledge.

Although the participants entered the field of education from different experiences, they all demonstrated similar qualities. They all communicated, verbally and/or through their actions during observations, their desire to make a difference for their students and provide them with instructional experiences that will help the students grow as learners. All four participants welcomed students as they entered their classrooms. In each of the observations, the participants attempted to relate to the students through humor, personal stories and encouragement. The use of humor was expressed in different ways at different times during the observation. Sometimes the participant would incorporate a funny story about herself into the lesson to engage students. Other times, the humor was expressed through a general sarcastic statement. The participants allowed students to observe them making mistakes or they would share with students mistakes they made that were like those the students were making.

During instruction, participants were observed to interact with students as they engaged in discussions relevant to the instruction. They spoke with individual students about activities and situations occurring outside the school environment. There were also times when a participant took a student aside to speak with him or her privately. Communication towards students was

consistently done in a calm and even voice tone. Feedback was specific to student needs and the task with which the student was engaged.

Based on the classroom atmosphere, it was assumed that expectations had been established for how students interacted within the classroom environment. This was also modeled by the participants' interactions with students and other adults that entered the room. All four participants used encouraging words that were behavior specific. They were observed to check for understanding throughout the instruction and adjust teaching to address misconceptions.

The classroom atmosphere in each class appeared positive and welcoming. Students were observed to support one another during partner and small group activities with encouraging statements, modeling steps to complete an assignment and providing leading questions and supports. Participants shared personal stories of their experiences when they were in elementary school; both school related experiences and family experiences. Individual conferences were held with students to allow an outlet for stressors students may be experiencing. Students were observed to share knowledge or thoughts, which demonstrated their feelings of being in a safe supported environment. The classroom environments were organized and appeared to be student focused for materials were readily accessible. Pre-planning was evident in the lessons that were presented requiring group interactions. Table 31 provides a summary the teachers' dispositional characteristics/qualities.

In the interviews, the participants communicated their aspirations to expand their repertoire of instructional strategies to allow their students' greater access to the curriculum. The past experiences and training of each participant influenced how they approach teaching and interacting with their students. All of them spoke to the importance of cultivating relationships with students and family, which was demonstrated during each of the observations conducted. Their passion for ensuring students are receiving the instruction they need to be academically successful through hands-on activities and small group was evident during classroom observations.

Each participant voiced a desire to cultivate their skills as educators; not settling for what they were doing. The classrooms entered by me held an air of relaxation and calm. Students appeared to be happy to be in class and interested in the instructional delivery from the teacher. They appeared to be engaged when participating in hands-on activities and while in small group with their teacher. Lessons involving hands-on activities were planned down to the roles students would hold within their cooperative groups demonstrating the connection between curriculum, instruction and discipline. The most referred-to discipline issue for all participants was disrespect. They each held the belief it was their duty to model and reinforce respect to their students.

Table 31

Summary of Dispositional Characteristics/Qualities of the Teachers

Participant	Teaching Styles	Individual Personal Qualities	Classroom Atmosphere
Viola	Cooperative learning Discussion Encouragement Explicit instruction and directions Kinesthetic activities Hands-on activities Modeling Monitoring student understanding and engagement Positive reinforcement Verbal prompts	Active listener Empathetic Encouraging Engaged in student learning Enthusiastic High expectations Humor Passionate Respectful Sarcasm Supportive Use of endearments	Atmosphere of respect Encouraging Non-threatening Risk taking Safe Supportive
Sylvia	Discussion Encouragement Explicit instruction and directions Hands-on activities Higher level questioning Humor Modeling Monitoring student engagement Positive reinforcement Require students to justify/support answers given Small group instruction Verbal prompts Visual reminder of assignments	Active listener Empathetic Constructive in feedback Encouraging Engaged in student learning High expectations Organized Passionate Respectful Structured Supportive Welcoming	Atmosphere of respect Encouraging Non-threatening Risk taking Safe Structured Supportive
Nora	Cooperative learning Discussion Encouragement Explicit instruction and directions Hands-on activities Monitoring student engagement Positive reinforcement	Active listener Empathetic Constructive feedback Encouraging Engaged in student learning Enthusiastic High expectations Humor Organized Passionate Respectful Structured Supportive	Atmosphere of respect Encouraging Non-threatening Relaxed Risk taking Safe Structured Supportive

Participant	Teaching Styles	Individual Personal Qualities	Classroom Atmosphere
Lilly	Cooperative learning Discussion Explicit instruction and directions Hands-on activities Monitoring student engagement	Active listener Empathetic Constructive feedback Encouraging Engaged in student learning High expectations Organized Passionate Respectful Sarcasm Structured Supportive	Atmosphere of respect Encouraging Non-threatening Safe Structured Supportive

Parameters Established within the Classroom Environment

Research Question 4: What environmental parameters are established and maintained within the classroom setting that are perceived by White, female teachers to contribute to African American males' ability to navigate their environment to demonstrate their knowledge and socially acceptable behaviors in the elementary classroom?

To answer this question, the researcher observed each participant during classroom instruction. The focus in the observations was to confirm that information shared during their interviews related to instructional methods and correlated to what was happening in their classroom.

Instructional Methods Observed

Differentiation and Designing with the End in Mind have been an integral part of education for many years (Tomlinson & McTighe, 2006; J. L. Brown & Wiggins, 2004; Walker-Dalhouse, Risko, Esworthy, Grasley, Kaisler, McIlvain, & Stephan, 2009). In-services and professional development presentations have emphasized the importance of creating instructional activities to address the needs of all students and to keep the result always in the forefront. During the interviews, the participants communicated the various instructional methods they include in their instructional presentations. I observed some of those instructional methods during my visits.

Teacher Viola. During the first observation, Viola introduced a math lesson where students would utilize a deck of playing cards, each student choosing six cards and arranging those cards into two three-digit numbers to

then add and have their sum come close to totaling 1000 without going over. The students utilized dry erase boards and markers to solve the addition problems and then tallied points on a sheet of paper. For the card game, she modeled the process using another student as her partner. The card game required students to have the base knowledge of place value and estimation. Students also received verbal praise when they were on task and engaged in the math activity.

For science, Viola revisited a website that the students had previously accessed to create an avatar; identifying physical adaptations they made to the avatar. For the computer-designed avatar, the students were observed to direct her as to what she should do to complete each step. The program has avatars, created by the students, which represent each student. The avatar development was something that required students to draw on their own creativity and preferences as they were only given a body. The program has avatars, created by the students, which represent each student.

As the researcher observed a second time in Viola's classroom, the students engaged in a Daily Math Review with Viola. Viola introduced the lesson by asking students what they had done for multiplication the day before. Students were asked what the two numbers are called that you multiply. Students were asked what some of the steps were to solve a multiplication problem using the lattice method. For the lesson, each student had a dry erase board, dry erase marker and a sock for an eraser. Viola called on students to give the steps and she wrote them down. She then demonstrated how to use the

lattice method to solve 53×4 and directed students to try a few problems by themselves. The lattice method required students to follow a set of predetermined steps to solve multiplication problems. Viola used the document camera to project the problems on the board.

The Around the World multiplication activity required one student to race to answer a simple multiplication problem. The first one to answer advanced to the next student. The students were directed to play a game of around the world to reinforce multiplication skills. Viola cheered the students on. Students were also observed to be working on a math website that incorporated characters and games to reinforce skills on the classroom laptops.

Teacher Sylvia. At the beginning of class during the first observation, the students were going over an assignment that required them to identify the correct use of I/me in conjunction with another person in a sentence. Sylvia utilized the document camera to project the homework sheet on the white board for all students to see. She provided a verbal cue to help students remember the rule of use of I and me: “put your friends first”. Additionally, she provided visuals teamed with verbal cues to demonstrate (e.g., covering the person’s name and then the I or me). Sylvia also reinforced prior skills learned (e.g., capitalization). There were certain students that she provided with guided questions and a slightly longer “wait time” to allow them to process and provide their answers.

During whole group reading, Sylvia utilized a microphone that projected her voice as she read the story to the class. To assist students, Sylvia related the experiences of the character to life experiences the students’ might have had.

She asked a lot of higher level questions which allowed students to attempt inferencing, justifying their thoughts, and comparing/contrasting themselves with the main character. She provided some students with a series of lower level, recall questions working them up to answering a higher-level question.

Reading groups appeared to be created to allow for more differentiated instruction. Reading groups were provided with a variety of paragraphs on different topics which had them focusing on the main idea and supporting details. The assignment required them to identify the sentence that did not belong in the paragraph and explain their reasoning behind picking that sentence. One reading group was required to read the text and think about their answers before they were called upon by the teacher. For another reading group, Sylvia read each of the paragraphs to the students, had the group identify the main idea, and told them to find the sentence that did not belong. Once they appeared to grasp the concept, she allowed them to complete the activity while she monitored their progress. This group also had a picture beside each paragraph to give them a visual to refer to when identifying the main idea. One student in the group was reminded to use his microphone while reading to himself.

During both small group and whole group activities, Sylvia provided students with multiple examples of the topic being covered. She provided visuals teamed with verbal cues/prompts and differentiated the level of support for students in her class. Guided practice included identifying the correct usage of I and me in sentences as well as identifying sentences in paragraphs that did not match with a paragraph's overall main idea. She also utilized "teachable

moments” during different activities to reinforce skills that have already been taught.

Throughout the instructional period, Sylvia provided students with higher level questioning. Students were asked to analyze cause and effect during shared reading (e.g., “Why doesn’t the character want to go with the other boys on the hunt?”) and identify problems that the character was experiencing in the story and provide reasonable solutions based on their own experiences. Students were instructed throughout to justify their answers and/or defend their opinions as they went over their homework, worked in small group reading, and listened and answered questions during shared reading. Small reading groups were differentiated based on student performance. For one group, the students read to themselves and then were brought back together to discuss what they had read. Students discussed the main idea and details that supported answers to teacher questions. For another group, she read to the students, asking the meaning behind words that she anticipated they might not know. Students were asked to provide a definition for the term “main idea”. They were then instructed to highlight the sentence that did not convey the main idea. Students were asked to share their answers.

Teacher Nora. During the first observation in Nora’s class, the focus of the science activity appeared to be on observing and discussing the different stations and determining if the materials used were mixtures or solutions. The lesson was an extension of prior instruction. The science lesson included ten stations set up around the room to represent solutions or mixtures: powdered

drink and water, marbles and sand, mixed fruit salad, yogurt parfait, water and pepper, sand and water, chocolate powder and milk, salt and water and candy mixtures. Students were paired up and given responsibility for observing at each station, taking notes on what they observed and discussing, with their partner, those observations. Students moved easily from station to station, staying at a station for approximately three minutes with a 30-second warning from Nora for groups to make one last notation before moving to the next station.

Upon completion of the activity, the class was brought together and each team was given the opportunity to share what they observed and discussed with each other. Enough time was provided for the students to experience each of the stations. Nora provided a five-minute review with students as to what a solution and a mixture are along with the directions for how the teams would proceed. She also provided direction on how to complete the provided graphic organizers for recording answers: mixture, solution, and the reason they identified the materials as such.

A couple of the teams became loud during the activity and demonstrated a lack of focus on the tasks at hand. This behavior required Nora to focus some of her instructional time on redirecting those students. The result was that some rotations lasted approximately 30 seconds to a minute longer than the allotted three minutes. The discussion allowed students to share their thoughts related to each of the stations and provide a rationale for their thoughts. As the partners engaged in the activities, Nora was observed to move amongst the teams, entering their discussions and asking follow up questions to their responses.

Nora utilized the document camera to present the directions the students were to follow.

While observing the class a second time, the students were assigned one of eight peer pressure scenarios and instructed to write what they would do if it were them being pressured. Students were provided with adequate time to complete the assignment before sharing out as a class. Nora could have students clarify the different pressure lines that get individuals into bad situations if they were to give in and the ramifications of that decision. She provided an example of what she wanted students to do when they were given their own scenario to respond to (how they would problem solve). She also modeled one scenario for the students. She then navigated the room, monitoring what students were writing. At that time, she would answer questions to assist with clarification, providing verbal feedback, and asking the students questions. The activity required students to draw on their own experiences and background knowledge to formulate a response to the pressure scenario. Unlike the initial activity, this one was to be completed independently.

The activity required students to determine what the issue was they were being confronted with and what the ramifications could be if they submitted to peer pressure. Once they identified a solution to avoid the situation, they had to provide the reasoning behind their decision. Throughout the lesson, Nora consistently moved between students providing support, redirection, clarification, and guidance when needed. She encouraged students to think through their

scenarios and to think about how their approach would impact not just them, but others such as peers and family.

Teacher Lilly. During the first observation in Lilly's classroom, she utilized visuals paired with discussion to review relevant curriculum in science. Students were also observed to access different educational websites at their desks using classroom laptops. In reading groups, Lilly reviewed vocabulary on index cards associated with the designated text to be read. For one group, if the student was unaware of the definition, she would use the word in a sentence and incorporate a picture. Her other reading group held more of a conversation about the vocabulary.

Lilly would refer to prior learning when identifying vocabulary words. A group of students were called to reading group. The group started with review of the vocabulary for the story they would be reading. Students were instructed how to break down a word to identify its meaning (e.g., unaware). If a student did not know the meaning of a word presented, Lilly provided the student with a sentence using the word. The expectation Lilly appeared to be conveying to her students was they would be required to provide the answers, but she would provide examples to assist if needed. The students then conducted a picture walk with Lilly of the text they would be reading. At different points, Lilly would ask students to think about what was happening in the picture and make some predictions.

Once the students finished reading the story, Lilly asked questions about the story. She stated she had not read the story and so she modeled making

predictions by looking at the pictures. Students provided Lilly with confirmation of her thoughts. Lilly posed inference questions and directed students to refer to the story to identify the text that supports their answers.

In reading group, students were consistently encouraged to think about vocabulary words and determine what they thought the word meant without Lilly giving them the definition. She provided cues such as determining what the prefix meant for one word. If no student could define the word, she would use it in a sentence. Students were then encouraged to use context clues to determine meaning.

During the whole group lesson, Lilly utilized the document camera to project the review sheet when working with the class. When students transitioned to independent work, they were encouraged and observed to get on the classroom laptops and review skills on designated educational websites.

When presenting the topic of bullying in the second observation, Lilly incorporated discussion, drawing, and think-pair-share to engage students. Students appeared to be familiar with the technique of think-pair-share. During this process, she would ask follow up questions either to teams or individuals. The students were observed to actively listen to each other as they took turns discussing the topic of bullying. Students appeared to be well versed in think-pair-share. Lilly did use the document camera to project the different scenarios on bullying that were discussed during whole group instruction.

Following the think-pair-share activity, students were required to present their conversations through drawings with captions. When instructing students

as to what she expected from their drawings and captions, Lilly provided students with detailed directions. Examples she modeled were obtained from student volunteers. The drawing and caption activity required students to identify a problem and pose a solution. This was an extension of the discussion on bullying. Students were to depict stories of bullying that were shared and how they would have dealt with the bully.

Observed Response from Students of Instructional Methods

Students communicate their engagement in instruction either by non-verbal cues or verbal statements. They tend to demonstrate a higher engagement in instructional activities that allow them to interact with their peers, discuss and defend their views, and participate in hands-on activities. The observations allowed me to experience the responses students had to the instructional methods presented by the participants.

Teacher Viola. During both observations, the students in Viola's class appeared to be engaged in the activities she had planned. During the math activity of the first observation, students were observed to be engaged and enjoying the competition with their partner. Students were observed to take turns dealing cards to their partner and saying words of encouragement such as, "You are good at this game." Viola monitored student engagement by providing positive praise by calling the team members names and saying, "good job." Students were observed to arrange their six cards in a way that allowed them to get as close to the sum of 1000. The paired partners were observed to either

provide prompts or, in very few cases, laugh when their partners sum was lower than their own.

During the second observation, Viola provided each student with a dry erase board, dry erase marker and a sock for an eraser. Viola demonstrated how to multiply a double-digit number by a single digit number using the Lattice method. Students appeared excited to get started and a few students were observed to have drawn squares on their dry erase boards. One student had a set of headphones on her chair to reportedly block out noise. As the students engaged in the activity, Viola walked around observing student work and providing verbal prompts to assist students with the steps to solve the problem. Once the students had worked through a few problems, Viola announced, "Now you are going to teach me." She then placed a few problems on the board and had students demonstrate the lattice method while providing a narrative of the steps they were following. Most students were observed to raise their hands to model for the class.

Teacher Sylvia. Instruction during the first observation included a whole group lesson for writing and small reading groups. During the writing lesson, Sylvia shared feedback with students on the writings they had submitted in an earlier class. A student was reported to have written the words "a lot" correctly on her paper. Sylvia stated, "She gets a gold star! She placed a space between these two words." Students were observed to volunteer to share sentences they wrote with the class. A female student allowed her paper to be edited by the teacher, which included some grammatical issues. Sylvia stated that the student

was a “good sport.” Sylvia used humor with the students by joking with those who shared incorrect sentence structures, but who were also able to identify their mistakes and correct them, which helped them to promote their own learning. Students were provided with verbal praise for their contributions to the activities such as: “nice job”, “I like the way you answered that.” As each student received recognition for their work, others would raise their hand to share their work; communicating to the observer they appreciated the recognition.

During the small reading groups of the first observation, Sylvia had the paragraphs inserted in document cover sheets and students used light-colored dry erase markers to highlight sentences that did not belong. Students appeared engaged in the activity, reading and highlighting different sentences. When Sylvia asked for volunteers to share their highlighted sentences, all the students at the table raised their hands.

The second observation occurred during a lesson related to family life. Sylvia started the lesson by sharing a paragraph about an 8th grade teacher speaking to her history class about the dawn of using trains as transportation. Some of the words used in the paragraph were odd or silly with the students responding by laughing or giggling. Students were encouraged to either underline or highlight the words that appeared to be odd to them and share them with the class. With a partner, students were instructed to write a sentence to either their doctor or the school nurse about a medical issue. As students worked together in pairs, they were observed to brainstorm possible medical

ailments and what they have heard the ailments called. This resulted in some groups giggling quietly at their desks.

Teacher Nora. A science lesson was the focus of the first observation in Nora's class. She had prepared several different materials at stations set up around the room to represent solution or mixtures: powdered drink and water, marbles and sand, mixed fruit salad, yogurt parfait, water and pepper, sand and water, chocolate powder and milk, salt and water. Students were paired up and responsible for observing at each station, taking notes on what they observe and discussing, with their partner, what they observed. Students appeared to enjoy the activity, picking up the containers of materials at each station, discussing whether it was a solution or mixture and defending their choice if it differed from their partners. When the interactions became loud enough to be heard over other teams, Nora would approach the team and provide quiet redirection. Students transitioned easily between stations, staying at a station for approximately 3 minutes and a 30 second warning from Nora for groups to make one last notation before moving to the next station. Upon completion of the activity, the class was brought together and each team was given the opportunity to share what they observed and discussed with each other. All the student teams were observed to want to share their results as evidenced by them raising their hands and making verbalizations such as "Oo-hoo!" or "Ihhh."

The second interview occurred during a discussion centered on pressure statements from others and how students would address them. Nora read eight situations involving pressuring of a person to do something. Students were

provided with a scenario and asked to write what they would do if they were in the situation. Some students could verbalize their approach to Nora as she walked around monitoring students. The scenarios were ones that students would possibly face in and out of school and from their peers or older individuals. Nora asked for volunteer to share their scenario and how they would say “No.” Most of the students volunteered to share and provided thoughtful strategies to refuse pressure put on them by others. Some of the responses included engaging in physical altercations with the person. For these responses, Nora provided direct feedback, including, “I would be careful about punching because a drug dealer may have a weapon. You don’t want to put yourself in danger,” and, “Violence begets violence, so you want to be careful.”

Teacher Lilly. A small reading group was observed during the first visit to Lilly’s class. The group started with review of the vocabulary for the story they would be reading. Students were instructed on how to break down a word to identify its meaning (e.g., unaware). If a student did not know the meaning of a word presented, Lilly provided the student with a sentence using the word. The expectation Lilly appeared to be conveying to her students was they would be required to provide the answers, but she would provide examples to assist if needed. While Lilly was working with one student, the rest of the group were observed to be looking at the words they were given in, what appeared to be, anticipation for her calling on one of them next. The students then conducted a picture walk with Lilly of the text they would be reading. At different points,

students provided their predictions as to the story's plot. Students were then observed to read silently until called upon by Lilly to read aloud.

While Lilly conducted her reading group, other students in the class were observed to be engaged in a learning activity. Students were observed to be working on individual writing assignments, utilizing a dictionary and writing down definitions, completing a spelling activity or engaged in a computer based educational activity on laptops at their desks.

Lilly introduced a topic on bullying during the second observation. She incorporated discussion, drawing, and think-pair-share to engage students. Students appeared to be familiar with the technique of think-pair-share. The students were observed to actively listen to each other as they took turns discussing the topic of bullying. Student pairs were called upon to share what their partners had to say about bullying. Many shared experience of being bullied and how they handled it in the past. Students were observed to quietly transition between each of the activities presented.

During observations, students were found to be engaged for a longer length of time when they could discuss the learning activity with a peer, group or the teacher. Students also appeared to be more actively engaged when they were manipulating materials or engaged in an investigation. During these times, the classroom noise level was higher, the participants were observed to encourage students to raise their hands, but no one was observed to be reprimanded or made to move their clothespin. Instead, the volume level of the classroom would reduce and students would begin raising their hands.

Classroom Structure

Routine and structure were aspects of the educational environment viewed as important through the researcher review. During the classroom observations, I could see how the teachers handled transitions, where they stored materials for student use, and what procedures and routines they had established with their students.

Teacher Viola. Viola's desk was located at the front of the room near the windows. Student desks were arranged in groups of four with the tables all turned so students were facing one another. The arrangement of the room allowed students to navigate the room with little to no difficulties. With the desks facing each other, it was easy for the students to sit across from each other and have the desk space to complete the tasks. When transitions did occur, Viola would say, "If you can hear me say one."

When the noise level of the classroom became too loud, Viola provided students with appropriate redirection to task. At one point, she allowed the noise indicator of the computer based behavior management system to provide reinforcement to students to work cooperatively and try their best. Viola could redirect students who were off task by employing proximity and asking probing questions to determine if there was a specific reason for them not working.

Teacher Sylvia. Sylvia's desk was located toward one side of the room with two small group tables located at the back of the room. Between these two small group tables was a small bookshelf that housed student materials: paper, pencils, pens, etc. Students' desks were arranged in different sized groups and

located in the center of the room. There was a single student desk for a student who was reported to need a less distracting location. There were some groups of two, a few groups of three, and a group of five. A desk of computers was to one side of the classroom and two large wire-shelved racks on the opposite side of the room that contain bins with classroom materials and teacher materials. Space between the student desks allowed for easy transitions and movement throughout the room. It also allowed Sylvia to navigate through the room during shared reading. Student books and folders were in their individual desks and readily available when needed. When transitioning, Sylvia would say, "If you can hear me, clap once." All students would clap and the room would get quiet.

There appeared to be a system of procedures in place that students followed without being prompted. When students entered the class during small group instruction, they were observed to report directly to their desks, review the activities listed on the board and begin working. Transitions appeared seamless; when the class was done with the review of the homework assignment, each student was observed to put away their homework and take out the reading basal. By the time Sylvia put on the hands-free microphone, all students were turned to a specific page in the basal and awaiting her directive.

Prior to starting the instruction on Family Life, "ground rules" were communicated to the students on how the lesson would proceed. Students were not to share what they learned with students outside of the grade level, do not judge each other or no put downs when answering questions or asking questions, no personal questions and take the topics seriously. If something

could not be answered in class, students were directed to ask parents/guardians when they get home. Sylvia indicated the rules would be reviewed every day and if students were observed not to follow the rules, they would revisit them again.

For the Family Life lesson, the classroom desks were set up so that all students were facing toward the classroom white board. Desks were arranged in groups of two and four. Sylvia was positioned at the front of the room during direct instruction, but during student practice, the room arrangement allowed her to easily navigate the room as she monitor students.

Teacher Nora. Nora's desk was located at the front corner of the room opposite the door in front of the windows. Student desks were arranged so that a row of desks faced the door, a row faced the windows and then two rows facing the front of the room. Student desks were arranged into groups and allowed for ease of movement from different points of the room. Workstations were set up around the room in a manner that allowed students to move easily from one station to the next without bumping into each other or furniture. Materials were already gathered and the stations set up to allow for optimal instructional time. Students had enough room at their stations to place their materials down to write and far enough away from the other stations to allow for a lack of disruption. Nora provided students with a verbal prompt to let them know how much time remained before they would be transitioning to the next station: "Remember where you're going next," and "Stop, look and listen. Move back to your seats.

Be seated by the time I count back to one.” As she counted down from five, students were observed to move back to their seats.

When a student was off task, Nora was observed to redirect them by moving toward the student and quietly redirecting them. Her consistent movement around the room and visiting with each team throughout an activity allowed for minimal disruptions. Students appeared to know the classroom procedures and the expectations of Nora. Nora consistently utilized proximity, speaking with students and monitoring their progress.

Teacher Lilly. Lilly’s desk was located at the front of the room closest to the windows. Student desks were all facing toward the front of the room, where direct instruction occurred. Student desks were grouped by twos, threes and fours. Transitions occurred with minimum disruptions as students appeared to know what was expected and required of them. The arrangement of the room appeared to be conducive to the lessons that were presented.

Students appeared to follow established routines and procedures. During small group instruction, Lilly was faced toward the rest of the class to allow ease of monitoring student behavior. When a student was off-task, Lilly quietly said the student’s name and redirected him or her back to task, utilizing the endearment, “Honey.” This redirection was met with quiet compliance. Students worked quietly at their desks during this time on various activities or on a laptop. If a student was observed to be off task and had not responded to her redirection, Lilly was heard to inform that she would move the student’s stick.

The flow of instruction and subsequent activities in Lilly's class did not leave time for off-task behavior. Lilly utilized monitoring and proximity with partners during discussion and oversight during activities were students worked independently to deter off task behavior. Procedures for think-pair-share appeared to be second nature to students.

Classroom procedures were followed without issue. When it was time to transition between activities, students could move throughout the room without incident and obtain needed materials from an area holding instructional materials. It appears the students are aware of expectations when transitioning and obtaining materials.

All four classroom environments had similar set ups. Participants were rarely observed to be seated at their desks. Instead, they could be found working with small groups at the kidney shaped tables, facing the rest of the class as the students worked on independent activities. At times when students were participating in investigations or hands-on activities, the participants could be found moving between groups, engaging students in discussion related to what their findings.

Connections among Curriculum, Instruction and Discipline

Educator preparatory programs stress the importance of the cycle of instruction: knowledge of the curriculum, instructional approaches, and the need to conduct formative and summative assessments to adjust/remediate and/or continue with the next learning objective. Another aspect of teaching involves

discipline. To paraphrase a statement Viola made during one of our interviews, without discipline and classroom management, learning cannot occur.

Teacher Viola. Viola's teaching approach communicated the need for the students to understand they were also responsible for their learning. During classroom meetings, Viola discussed with students why it was important to study, how to study, what tools they needed, what resources were available and the importance of reviewing material that she sent home. She also provided opportunities for students to review the common formative assessment results and compare their results to the benchmark identified for mastery. Viola indicated her understanding of how family stressors impacted the progress of some of her students. She shared her experience with a student who lived with his father and whose mother was no longer "in the picture". The father was reported to have told Viola he was not much of a disciplinarian and let the student do what he wanted. When the father began utilizing the parent portal for the computer-based behavior management program, he became more involved in his student's education.

In terms of parental involvement, Viola indicated parents' involvement in their student's education varied.

Last year, I had a decent amount. This year, um...not so much...um...only when they decide to look at the grades and say, ah, why is my child having this grade, you know, even though I'm sending home papers every week and I print out the [computer generated] report that says.

In the first observation conducted in Viola's classroom, the focus of instruction was addition problems in math. Viola had the students working in groups of two with a deck of cards. Students were to add the numbers and try to come as close to 1000 without going over. During the small group activities, when specific students' voice levels were judged by Viola to be too loud, she would provide them with redirection to task, "Jay, I can hear you over the class. Please speak quietly to your partner."

The second observation in Viola's classroom was also during math and focused on multiplying double-digit by single-digit numbers. Viola employed proximity, moving closer to the student, to redirect off-task behavior. She also asked probing questions to determine if there was a specific reason why the student was not working. The arrangement of the room allowed students to navigate the room with little to no issues. With the desks facing each other it was easy for the students to sit across from each other and have the desk space to complete the tasks. When transitions did occur, Viola would say, "If you can hear me say one."

Teacher Sylvia. In Sylvia's class, much of the instruction took place in small groups. She had several adults who provided different levels of instructional intervention for her students. This resulted in students being with an adult for most the time they were in her classroom and a reduction in the opportunities for disruptions.

Teacher Nora. Nora stated that creating hands-on activities required more behavior management, prior planning, and organizing than simply providing

direct teaching of a concept and having students complete a follow-up activity independently. She stated the extra time taken to plan and organize the activity and the student groups was worth the effort. She viewed the hands-on activities as an opportunity for students to make connections to the curriculum.

I mean you want to say that they learn more from the hands-on, and some of them, I think do. I think what is more is, when I reference something...I can say, "Remember that activity?" and then all of a sudden it pops in their brain. Do they automatically think of it when I mention it? No, but if I say, "Oh when I remember the ocean's activity?" "Oh Yea!"

Nora observed more "out of the box" thinking when students were participating in activities. Although, there were times when she observed more behavior problems, such as students getting frustrated when another peer was not as engaged or did not understand the concept as well as they did. The result was Nora purposefully selecting groups prior to the lesson.

Teacher Lilly. Lilly indicated the need for the teacher to move around the room while students were engaged in activities. By remaining at the front of the room, Lilly observed, "you're gonna lose some of them. If they ask...if they're actually doing it, you're not gonna lose...they're not gonna misbehave." Lilly described herself as a hands-on learner and understood her students would be bored if all she did was lecture. Due to the differing ability levels of the students in her class, Lilly incorporated activities that allowed her students to work within different groups. This also allowed students to work on their social skills. She purposefully created heterogeneous groups when games were involved and

homogenous groups when academic skills were involved. She incorporated activities that allowed students with lower level skills to show strengths that their gifted peers may not possess. In an activity for simple and compound machines, Lilly provided an example where her students with lower level skills were able excel at creating these machines. The gifted students were observed to struggle creating their machines.

Like Viola, Lilly also indicated her understanding of how family stressors impacted the progress of some of her students. For Lilly, it was a lack of what she viewed as follow through from the parent in reviewing skills with his or her student. For that student, Lilly understood the parent was raising several children on her own while working. Lilly suspected her student was helping the parent by watching the younger siblings.

Summary of Research Question 4

All four participants communicated a direct relationship between curriculum and instruction and the impact on student discipline. Three of the participants indicated when students were engaged in instruction they were less likely to misbehave. "I think the bottom line is," stated Lilly, "if you don't make the instruction interesting and they can't make a connection to it or be involved in it, that's when the discipline just starts." Viola viewed the connection from the perspective of classroom management, "Well, if you don't have classroom management, then you can't effectively instruct the children." Table 32 provides a summary of the parameters the participants established and maintained in their classrooms.

Table 32

Summary of Parameters Established and Maintained

Participants	Instructional Methods Observed	Observed Student Responses to Instructional Methods	Classroom Structure	Connection Among Curriculum, Instruction, and Discipline
Viola	Hands-on	Appeared engage, discussing the activities presented	Teacher's desk located at front of room	Students responsible for their learning
	Use of authentic materials		Student desks arranged in groups of four with students facing each other	Importance of studying: how, resources and tools needed
	Cooperative learning	Hands-on activities		Students review assessments
	Verbal praise	Modeling	Room arrangement allowed for ease of navigation	Family stressors do impact student progress
			Transition signals prior to changing activities	
			Use of computer-based behavior management system to provide reinforcement	
Sylvia	Verbal cue	Engaged in teacher lead activity utilizing a peer writing prompt.	Teacher desk located at front, side of the room	Small group instruction provides interventions and reduced opportunities for disruptions
	Use of student generated materials		Bookshelves housing student materials	
	Repetition of skills			

Participants	Instructional Methods Observed	Observed Student Responses to Instructional Methods	Classroom Structure	Connection Among Curriculum, Instruction, and Discipline
	High level questions Differentiation of supports Hands-on activities Discussion	Relating learning related to past events	Student desks arranged in single desk to four desk groups Students needing less distracting location had a single desk Room arrangement allowed for ease of navigation Transition signals prior to changing activities Established procedures and routines reduced disruptive behavior	
Nora	Cooperative learning Discussion Hands-on activities Use of authentic materials Modeling	Engaged Discussion	Teacher desk located at front, side of the room Student desks arranged in U shape facing the front of the room with an extra row of desks behind the row facing the board	Hands-on activities require behavior management and prior planning and organizing Hands-on activities provide opportunities to make connections to curriculum

Participants	Instructional Methods Observed	Observed Student Responses to Instructional Methods	Classroom Structure	Connection Among Curriculum, Instruction, and Discipline
			<p>Materials already prepared for students prior to activities</p> <p>Room arrangement allowed for ease of navigation</p> <p>Transition signals prior to changing activities</p> <p>Proximity used to redirect students</p>	<p>When participating in activities students expand on their understanding</p>
Lilly	<p>Visuals paired with discussion</p> <p>Differentiation of materials</p> <p>Discussion</p> <p>Small group</p>	<p>Engaged</p> <p>Actively</p> <p>Listening to each other</p>	<p>Teacher desk located at front, side of the room</p> <p>Student desks faced front of room in groups of two to four desks</p> <p>Established procedures and routines reduced disruptive behavior</p>	<p>Important for teachers to move around the classroom and monitor student engagement</p> <p>Hands-on activities allow students with differing abilities to be engaged in learning</p> <p>Activities should allow students with different strengths to excel</p> <p>Understands family stressors can</p>

Participants	Instructional Methods Observed	Observed Student Responses to Instructional Methods	Classroom Structure	Connection Among Curriculum, Instruction, and Discipline
				impact progress

Chapter 5: Summary, Discussion and Implications

In this phenomenological study, the focus was guided by the overarching research question, “What dispositional characteristics/qualities, instructional methods, environmental parameters, and classroom management techniques do White, female teachers perceive contribute to lower classroom disciplinary referrals for African American males in the elementary classroom?” Considering the current composition of teachers and students in urban school settings, research focusing on how the approach of some White, female teachers can help to reduce the disproportionality of discipline issues for African American males is crucial.

This final chapter is presented in four sections. The first section will present a summary of the data collected through observations, interviews and discipline data. The second section will be a discussion of the data and the connection to findings from the extensive literature organized to match questions that guided the study. Implications on how the findings of this study can be applied to instructional and behavior management techniques with African American males in the classroom are presented third. Lastly, recommendations to further this research will be presented.

Summary of Results

What dispositional characteristics/qualities, instructional methods, environmental parameters, and classroom management techniques do White

teachers perceive contribute to lower classroom disciplinary referrals for African American males in the elementary classroom? This is the overarching question that plagues all stakeholders of an urban school division. The answer is a culmination of answers to the four questions presented within this chapter. The dispositional characteristics/qualities of the participants in this study revealed themselves to be the cultivating of relationships with their students and the students' family members. Three of the four teachers shared these relationships continued to grow as they were requested by parents to teach siblings of former students. They not only communicated, but also demonstrated a passion to see their students be successful both academically and socially. There was a desire conveyed by the participants to hone their craft by cultivating additional strategies to support students.

Instructional methods were employed that supported student ownership of the learning process. These participants were observed to utilize hands-on activities, engage students in discussion and allow students to work collaboratively on activities. These were deemed to be effective for all students, but African American males appeared to respond positively to these techniques. It was important to the participants for students to understand the connection between what they were learning in the classroom and their personal experiences. Participants also communicated the need to build background knowledge and skills for students to ensure their understanding of the lessons presented.

Environmental parameters were viewed to be important for student learning and to ensure that, routines were incorporated and embedded into the instructional program. Participants also provided students with structure to ensure transitions were non-disruptive and materials were easily obtained. These routines were practiced until students demonstrated mastery and revisited when procedures were deviated from.

Classroom management and behavior intervention techniques drew upon the parameters, routines and structure established by the participants. Rules and expectations were explicitly communicated to students with relevant consequences for failure to comply. For students requiring an additional level of support, individualized behavior plans were incorporated to address specific needs with student specific rewards and consequences identified. All four participants viewed disrespect as the most prevalent behavior they addressed. They all indicated a need to address misbehavior within the classroom environment to allow students to remain in the educational environment. The only behaviors viewed as those requiring the need for administrative intervention were significant bullying and fighting. All four participants indicated the need to consider family and outside stressors when addressing a student's misbehavior.

Analysis of the data revealed the four participants had similar philosophies about teaching, interacting and engaging students in the educational process and a desire to see each student be successful both academically and behaviorally. They recognized there was a connection between achievement and behavior. Major findings from the study included:

1. Engaging students in the educational process can be achieved by incorporating student interests, providing relevance to their lives and present them with hands-on activities.
2. Establishing relationships with students, understanding their needs, interests and family stressors is one important aspect of teaching.
3. Small group instruction allows teachers to differentiate based on student needs.
4. Cooperative learning activities allow students to engage in discussion, practice collaborative skills and potentially increase social interactions.
5. Viewing parents as allies in the education process and establishing regular and consistent communication with family provides an added level of expectation for academic and behavioral success in the classroom.
6. Understanding that family stressors can have a negative impact on student behavior, which results in lowered academic progress.
7. Teachers need to have an awareness and understanding that students come from a variety of different environments and experiences than themselves.
8. Classroom routines, organization and procedures need to be determined prior to student arrival. The teacher needs to model for students what is expected and practice the routines and procedures until they have been mastered. Throughout the year, students will need to review and practice routines and procedures.

9. It is important to understand the purpose behind student behavior to address that need instead of being reactionary. Engaging students in private conferences, parent/teacher conferences or accessing resource staff is important to addressing those needs.
10. Teachers who had fewer disciplinary referrals tend to address misbehavior within the confines of the classroom. Only those behaviors viewed as serious infractions were referred for disciplinary action.
11. Encouraging words when students take educational risks provides an atmosphere of support and the chance students will continue to take risks when learning.
12. Respect was modeled and expected when interacting with peers and teachers. When teachers were respectful toward students, there was a tendency for them to receive respect.
13. When students know the teacher cares and is passionate about teaching, they tend to be more engaged and enjoy the educational process.
14. The concept of caring includes, but is not limited to, emotional support, structured environments to communicate safety and security, high expectations that employs the use of constructive feedback, and demonstrating “tough love” when individuals are not working to their potential.

Discussion of Findings

Through interviews and observations, participants communicated how they prepare for, implement and academically and behaviorally support the

students in their care each day. Their approach to instruction and behavior management were like those found in research, but each followed a different path to the classroom. Lilly and Nora had training on how to address students' individual needs: Lilly through her coursework, which earned her a Master's degree in Special Education and Nora through her work as a behaviorist. They also possess bachelor degrees in psychology, which focuses on the theories developed to identify and explain human behavior. Viola had her own unique experience as having been educated in the same school district in which she was teaching. Sylvia had the benefit of placements in urban classrooms as part of her undergraduate degree in education and her exposure to cultural differences presented through some of her courses. Observations conducted during their interactions with students as they navigated the instructional setting revealed many similarities to the qualities of effective teachers that align with those identified by the *Teacher Effectiveness Scale* (Stronge et al., 2008a, 2008b, 2010).

Behavioral Interventions

Being proactive and having a behavior management plan that identifies specific expectations should be the foundation of any educator's classroom management program. Gathering data about student interests, likes and dislikes allows the teacher to include reinforcers and consequences that are specific to each student and provide both support for desired behaviors and deterrent to undesired behaviors.

Theme: Behavior management must include reinforcers and consequences that are based on student input and must be consistently implemented. Understanding not only the behaviors students exhibited, but also the meaning behind those behaviors for teachers to know (Saeed, 2009). This can be achieved by conducting a private conference with a student following the misbehavior. Encouraging students to be independent learners' helps to foster a climate that communicates the importance of learning. Teachers should focus on pro-active strategies to support students and potentially avoid misbehavior. Strategies should coincide with the planning and communication of boundaries and expectations through the establishment of classroom rules (Bacon et al., 2007; Hubbard, 2005).

Within each of the classes visited, discipline procedures were clearly displayed with three of the four participants utilizing a system requiring students to move a stick or clothespin when misbehavior or off task behaviors were exhibited. Sylvia and Nora utilize the same behavior system to provide their students with consistency between the two rooms. This is not surprising as they share the responsibilities of educating each other's students and they meet once a week with their grade level team. In Viola's class, the computer based behavior system was projected on the whiteboard. Students were assigned an Avatar monster and had the opportunity to earn points for on task behaviors or lose points for off task or misbehavior. The culture of the building dictates the requirement for each classroom to have a behavior management system that was visual and simplistic so that the students are able to understand how it works

and be able to explain it to anyone entering the classroom. Also, since the four participants have weekly meetings with their respective grade levels, it was not uncommon for them to share ideas related to behavior management systems and/or asking for and receiving support on how to address student behaviors.

When students were observed to be off-task, failing to follow through with a directive, or talking out, they were not observed to move a stick or clothespin. Instead, the participant was observed to approach the student and quietly redirected him or her; stating specifically what the student should be doing. Students were observed to comply when redirected in this manner.

Discipline data revealed that the participants had a lower referral rate than their peers in relation to African American males. During the 2011-2012 school year, Oak Staff wrote approximately 54% of their referrals for African American males compared to only 9% between the participants. In 2012-2013, none of the participants submitted referrals for African American males as compared to their peers who wrote approximately 40%. This continued in 2013-2014 where approximately 37% of all referrals were for African American males and participants only submitted 6% for African American males.

Theme: It is important to understand that family and environmental stressors can impact how a student responds to interactions within the academic setting and to provide an atmosphere of trust. Previous research indicated a need for teachers to listen without judgment and demonstrate empathy (Abe, 2004; D. F. Brown, 2005; Cooper, 2003). Each participant communicated an understanding that family stressors had an impact on student

performance, both academic and behavioral. It was this understanding that motivated them to conference with students, privately, when a misbehavior occurred or the potential for an incident to occur. Participants communicated their understanding that some of their students came from single parent households. For some of them, they may have been the oldest and have been given adult responsibilities even though they were still young children. Still other students lived with grandparents, relatives or had been removed from their homes and placed into foster care. Still other students witness domestic violence, a death of a parent, or parents who are incarcerated. For these students, it was important to each participant to be their sounding board and listen (Fenwick, 1998).

During interviews, each participant communicated their need to determine the cause behind a student's misbehavior. For Nora and Viola, it entailed an individual conference with the student in a private setting to determine the function of the behavior instead of taking a reactionary approach. If the misbehavior was part of a conflict, Nora conducted mediation with the students involved. Sylvia also conducted private conferences with students, which she referred to as "Come to Jesus" talks or moments. Sometimes these conferences were held with the parent or adult guardian. Lilly would enlist the assistance of the school counselor to provide the student with additional support, if necessary, following a conference with a student.

During observations, each participant was observed to provide students with specific and relevant feedback that communicated a proactive approach to

managing student behavior instead of a reactive approach. Participants expressed a need to understand the motivating factors behind misbehavior and the need to establish and maintain communication with families in a myriad of ways.

Clear and Concise Routines

Providing students with clear and concise routines provides them with a sense of stability, feeling of safety, and the willingness to take chances. Routines increase student time on task and increased instructional time for teachers because they do not have to address off-task or misbehavior.

Theme: Consistent implementation of routines within the classroom environment allows the teacher to focus on the process of teaching and increases the potential for student engagement. Effective behavior management focuses on positive and pro-active approaches (Christle et al., 2005; Fenning et al., 2004; Little & Akin-Little, 2008, Mendez et al., 2002; Soodak, 2003). Students will respond to known expectations (Noguera, 2003) and clearly established and reinforced classroom rules (Abe, 2004; Bacon et al., 2007; Boynton & Boynton, 2005; D. F. Brown, 2005; Monroe, 2009; Monroe & Obidah, 2004; Pedota, 2007; Skiba & Peterson, 2003; Stronge, 2010). The participants modeled their behavioral expectations and verbalized their academic expectations to their students. During the interview period, each participant stated they had practiced behavioral and procedural expectations with students. The students would practice the procedure until they had demonstrated mastery. During the observation periods, when students were observed to not follow

procedures, the participant provided either verbal or visual redirection. In contrast, when students were on task and following procedures, they were provided with positive reinforcement by means of praise or points.

Of the four participants, two were observed to be very structured in how their classes were managed. The establishment of routines was achieved through explanation followed by students practicing the routines until they exhibited mastery. They were observed to utilize more sarcastic exchanges with their students and were more direct. Their approach was more facilitating the learning of the students in activities created. Having created an environment with established routines with clear directions, the students only required a prompt if they strayed from the routine. In other instances, the students could problem solve to follow through with an established procedure.

Establishing Personal Relationships

As human beings, it is natural to want to cultivate relationships that allow us to share our thoughts, feelings, fears, desires, and aspirations. When teachers establish those relationships with their students and their families, the importance of education becomes more of a focus. Our own ability to establish those relationships is influenced by our experiences.

It is important to note here, within the confines of their classrooms, the participants implemented a number of PBIS components that appeared to make a positive difference for their students. These included, but were not limited to, behavior-specific praise, structured classrooms with established routines and expectations that were consistently reinforced, and high expectations for both

behavior and academic achievement. They all utilized data from various assessments and observations in order to adjust their instruction for academic needs and to revisit routines and rules to support behavioral needs.

The participants also showed genuine caring for their students' welfare as well as their academic achievement and behavioral needs. It is important to note that their display of caring was not always "soft" characteristics entailed, but caring by means of demonstrating high expectations in both students' academic and behavioral achievements. They each exhibited and spoke to their need to be firm, consistent, and fair when communicating with their students. This tough approach in addition to the softer approach of interacting with their students, in addition to the number of components of PBIS they implemented allowed their students to demonstrate high abilities academically and behaviorally. It would appear that demonstrating this type of caring should be a part of the PBIS programming.

Theme: Personal experiences influence how teachers interact with their students. All four participants brought unique experiences to the classroom and interactions with students. Something that was not communicated in the literature reviewed for this study was educational trainings and programs, unique background experiences, and personal influences that teachers incorporate in their daily interactions with students. The participants' educational trainings and programs included degrees in psychology, a master's in special education and a multicultural course, which focused on cultural differences. These educational trainings provided the participants with the skills

to identify the behavioral needs of students and develop individualized behavior plans or to have a foundational understanding of cultural differences.

Background experiences. Unique background experiences included employment at an inpatient hospital developing behavior plans to address the needs of children with eating disorders, teaching collaboratively with a teacher of special education, and being a product of the urban district with which she is currently employed. The participants possess the skills to identify the antecedents to behaviors, consequences that contribute to reinforcing behaviors, and the skills to develop individualized behavior plans. They also possess the skills to identify students' educational needs and deliver specially designed instruction to meet the educational needs of students. Such instructional skills, while important for teaching students with disabilities, are also beneficial to all students. Being a product of the district provided not only perspective and understanding, but personal experiences of cultural differences. There are many teachers in this district who are graduates of schools in the district; whose entire educational experiences started as children attending schools in the district.

Educational influences. When discussing instruction, participants were observed to integrate social skills instruction to allow opportunities for students to increase their ability to work cooperatively with individuals who were different from themselves. Participants were observed to reinforce socially appropriate behaviors displayed by students working in cooperative teams. Strategies to assist students with instructional tasks included hands-on activities, use of

different graphic organizers, highlighting important information and color-coding to complete steps in a process.

Tolerance. As reflected in the research (AP/CRP, 2000; Ashford et al., 2008; Bireda, 2002; Gay, 2010; Day-Vines & Day-Hairston, 2005; Milner, 2006; Monroe & Obidah, 2004; Skiba et al., 2000; Souto-Manning & Mitchell, 2012), sometimes differing tolerance levels can impact perceptions of misbehavior. A common misbehavior noted by me and communicated by the participants in this study was disrespect. According to research, disrespect would be categorized as a subjective behavior due to differing opinions and experiences (Ashford et al., 2008; Skiba et al., 2002). When participants were asked to define respect, they had different definitions based on their experiences. Variability on tolerance levels of teachers in relation to student behavior, noise level and activity levels can have the potential to negatively impact the disciplinary differences. So, although disrespect was observable, the definition for disrespect was not consistent among the participants. When reviewing the discipline data of the participants, no student was referred for the behavior of disrespect. All behaviors referred were observable. Although disrespect is observable, people do not always define disrespect in the same way. Part of this plays into tolerance and the other part could be cultural understanding.

In addition to their background experiences and training, the four participants in this study had differing levels of tolerance for noise, behavior, and activity levels in their classrooms. Of the four, Sylvia and Lilly appeared to have the most structured classrooms. Students quietly interacted, voice levels no

louder than a whisper when working independently or in cooperative groups.

Transitions were methodical and incident free. This was an important observation made because many students tend to get into trouble during times of transition.

Professional influences. Each of the four participants also indicated further professional influences that impacted how they approach the task of teaching and behavior management. All four participants work collaboratively with the peers within their buildings, including resource staff (e.g., physical education, art or music teachers, or media specialists), peers within their grade level, or instructional support staff. For Lilly, she found inspiration and ideas through staff developments she attended as well as courses she completed.

Theme: Positive interactions between students and their teachers facilitate the establishment of personal relationships. McDermott and Rothenberg (2000) observed effective teachers not only established trusting relationships with students, but also their families by engaging in regular communication through a variety of means. All participants stated the importance of establishing relationships with their students. It was important to these women to have knowledge of the students' needs, interests and possible family stressors. The four participants spoke of caring for their students and were observed to demonstrate that caring through their verbal and non-verbal interactions. During each of the observations, the participants posed higher level questions, assisted student teams during cooperative learning activities and listening to the students' discussions. Each participant expressed and

demonstrated high expectations for their students' academic and behavioral success. Each participant communicated the importance of establishing and maintaining positive relationships with their students and their students' families. Interactions observed between participants and students were mostly positive. Participants spoke in tones that communicated respect when redirecting students. Participants were also observed to demonstrate empathy towards students, actively listen, to be engaged in the learning process with their students and encouraging students to do well.

Parent relationships. Each teacher in this study established a regular interaction with the parents either low or high tech: telephone, email, daily logs, and real time feedback through a behavior tracking program. It was not out of the ordinary for participants to have siblings of former students in their classrooms due to the relationships they had established with the family. The participants continued to be involved in their students' experiences. They also communicated continued relationships with caregivers long after the students had moved on to different schools. The participants viewed their relationships with family members as a partnership in support of the student.

Student relationships. Not only did students see their teachers during regular school hours, the participants were also involved in several afterschool activities with their students. These activities included a running club, after school tutoring and participants attending events in which students were involved.

Caring. The observation protocol emphasized the “soft” aspect of caring. The concept of caring demonstrated in the classroom did not represent the rubric descriptions for caring on the observation protocol. As demonstrated in the classroom, caring was demonstrated by the participants’ communication of high expectations for behavior and academic achievement. The explicit teaching and practice of classroom routines and the classroom organizational systems demonstrate that the participants want to students to experience successes at the lowest level of behavioral expectations: following directions, reduced opportunities for disruption and off-task behaviors when locating materials, and a reduction in reprimands from the participants for misbehaviors related to unknown expectations for procedures.

The participants consistently held conferences with those students who misbehaved in class or in the school building. They also facilitated mediation between students who were in conflict to identify the issues behind the conflict and help students identify possible resolutions to the conflict.

Parent/teacher/student conferences were held to include the parent in problem solving of behavioral issues a student demonstrated.

Participants incorporated opportunities for students to take risks in learning by sharing their thoughts, ideas, and work products with their peers. This included the implementation of small group instruction, pair/share activities, and a student permitting consent for participants to share and critique the student’s working to allow others to share from mistakes.

Theme: Effective teachers aspire to grow as learners through further education, collaboration and increased knowledge of their students' needs.

Participants conveyed their need to address the unique needs of each student within the classroom. The participants communicated their use of data collected from classroom formative assessments, division-wide assessments, and observations utilized to plan lessons and activities to address these needs (Stronge, 2010). Each participant also acquired new knowledge and understanding following the implementation of lessons. Based on student performance and observed interest, instructional activities that were found to be ineffective were discarded. Participants then researched other instructional activities to convey the content to their students. They could identify other instructional activities collaboration and discussion with peers or through staff development activities. Although they did not communicate their role as facilitators of the learning environment, when observed during lessons, each participant allowed their observation of student involvement and level of understanding to drive the lesson. They utilized cooperative learning experiences where students utilized hands-on materials and/or computer-based instructional tools teamed with discussion to acquire new knowledge or expand on existing knowledge.

Each participant possessed a comprehensive knowledge of the curriculum they taught which allowed them the flexibility to incorporate new ideas and remove ineffective activities from their teaching repertoire (Abe, 2004; Ladson-Billings, 2009; Milner, 2007; Souto-Manning & Mitchell, 2012; Saeed, 2009;

Stronge, 2010). Each conveyed their need to think of unique ways to teach to the students by incorporating the students' strengths and interests. They relied on data from different assessments and observations to plan instruction that would allow students to access the general education curriculum if they were functioning below grade level.

Novel and engaging instruction. As stated earlier in this study, presenting students with novel and engaging instruction requires teachers to plan differentiated instructional strategies for each aspect of their lesson plan. There are many outside influences that compete with our students' attention.

Classroom atmosphere and similarities in teaching style. All four participants cultivated relationships with students through encouragement, support, and communicating high expectations for educational and behavioral performances. The participants encouraged students to support each other by modeling their own support of students as they engaged in new learning experiences. Students were provided with classroom atmospheres that supported feelings of being safe to take chances and make mistakes.

All participants shared their own experiences of mistakes they had made and what they learned from those experiences. By doing so, the participants allowed their students to see that they were no different than them; they also made mistakes and were not always sure of themselves.

The participants used a non-threatening approach to teaching and learning in the classroom that encouraged students to take chances and be accepting of each other's differences. The participants treated all students

respectfully. None of the participants were observed to raise their voices in anger at their students. Students were redirected to tasks and reminded of the classroom procedures and routines when necessary.

Students worked collaboratively and learned how to communicate in order to complete projects and assignments. This was also accomplished through the modeling presented by the participants. Students supported those who were experiencing difficulties or volunteered to work with students that no one else wanted.

Participants demonstrated empathy by speaking frankly with students and parents about challenging behaviors and/or academic tasks. It was through these discussions and identifying those behaviors that were impeding student progress within the educational environment that allowed the participant, student and/or parent to identify strategies to support the student. Participants also communicated a willingness to see things from others prospective while maintaining a high expectation for educational and behavioral performances.

Impact on academic performance. Achievement data on statewide assessments showed variations in pass rates for African American males for all participants when compared to the performance of students at their grade level. In 2011-2012, the African American males in Viola and Lilly's classes outperformed their counterparts in other third grade classes in Math, Science, and History/Social Studies. The African American in males in Viola's class outperforming even the African American males in Lilly's class in Reading during that same year. In the succeeding years, the scores of African American males

in both participants' classes did go down in some subject areas and up in others. However, this subset of students still outperformed peers in some subject areas. The African American males in Lilly's class outperformed their peers in Reading, Science, and History/Social Studies during the 2012-2013 school year and in Math, Science, and History/Social Studies in 2013-2014.

For Nora's class, the African American males performed higher in Reading, Math, Science, and History/Social Studies during the 2012-2013 school year, but only slightly lower than their peers in Writing. During the 2013-2014 school year, Nora was responsible for teaching only Math and Science to her students and Sylvia's students. Both sets of African American male students in Nora's two classes outperformed their peers in the other fifth grades in both Math and Science.

Theme: Differentiation allows students with varying levels of knowledge and skills to access the general education curriculum and demonstrate understanding and mastery and increases the level of student engagement. When teachers incorporate a connection between the instruction in class and their daily lives outside of school, teachers can make a greater impact on student achievement and involvement (Abe 2004; Ladson-Billings, 2009; Monroe & Obidah, 2004). Using a variety of strategies such as peer grouping (Bloom, 1984), scaffolding instruction to meet student needs (Ladson-Billings, 2009), and encouraging students to work collaboratively (Ladson-Billings, 2009) also contribute to academic success. Throughout the observations and discussions with participants, different instructional techniques

were implemented to promote student achievement. Students were also observed to be engaged in various cooperative-learning activities that appeared to address both achievement and promote appropriate social skills.

One of the studies juxtaposed instructional methods utilized urban classrooms and those utilized in suburban classrooms (Brophy & McCaslin, 1992), reported teachers in urban settings provided students with seat work, minimal opportunities for peer interactions, larger class sizes and homogeneous and ability grouping. In contrast, suburban classrooms were reported to be problem-based and interactive opportunities for peer interactions, smaller classes and mixed grouping. This pattern of urban school instruction was not observed in the four classrooms of the participants.

Instructional Methods. During classroom observations, students were viewed to be actively engaged in the learning process. Students interacted in small groups or teams and utilized familiar real world objects during science, math, and reading. Students were observed to utilize technology to create fictional species and how their bodies adapted to designated environments.

Cooperative learning was implemented in all eight of the observations conducted. In Nora's class, students were involved in a cooperative learning activity involving a scientific investigation. The materials involved were items students would be familiar with and have access to outside the classroom environment. Discussion initially revolved around the materials used but quickly moved to determining what the substances created. Students took turns speaking and listening as they recorded their observations.

Discussion and problem solving in groups were observed in each classroom. During the classroom observations, the lessons focused on family life topics. Students were observed to discuss family life topics; three of the four participants had students working in pairs to identify strategies to address incidents of peer pressure or bullying. Students were required to discuss questions posed by the teacher and actively listen to each other's responses. When called upon, each student had to communicate with the class what his or her partner shared during that discussion (Abe, 2004; Bacon et al., 2007; Bloom, 1984).

Theme: Encouraging high expectations for student behavior and academic performance does impact how students view themselves as learners. Another area of need as reported through research was for teachers to communicate high expectations for their students (Brophy, 1983; Fenwick, 1998; Pedota, 2007). During the interviews, the participants each stated they communicated high expectations for their students academically and behaviorally. During the observations, they each demonstrated high expectations through the instructional activities presented and the questioning used to assess student understanding.

The interactions between students and participants underlined a mutual respect (Fenwick, 1998; McDermott & Rothenberg, 2000) and trust (McDermott & Rothenberg, 2000). While teachers were providing instruction in small groups, the rest of the students were observed to work quietly on assignments at their seats or complete lessons on classroom computers or laptops. Their behavior

communicated respect for the time allotted to complete their assignments while also being respectful of the instruction occurring during the teacher led small groups.

Organized Environment and Environmental Organization/Parameters

An organized environment where there are clear boundaries set for students to follow is important. As shared by some of the participants, many of their students fulfill the role of adult if they live in a single parent home. The parameters of child and adult are fuzzy for them. It is important for educators to provide students with parameters of responsibility and access in the classroom setting.

Theme: Students tend to thrive in learning environments that include clear directives, an awareness of time allotment to activities, allow for ease of transitions and have designated areas for materials. The research indicated a need for teachers to pre-plan classroom transitions (Boynton & Boynton, 2005; Fenwick, 1998), access needed materials, and the ability for the teacher to observe students (Boynton & Boynton, 2005). In various research studies, structure and routines were important aspects of a supportive learning environment (Beliner, 1986; Brophy, 1983; Cooper, 2003). Structure and routine were consistently stated from each participant. Each of the participants emphasized a need to communicate the rules and requirements of the classroom and establish routines within the school building (Abe, 2004; Bacon et al., 2007; Boynton & Boynton, 2005; D. F. Brown, 2005; Monroe, 2009; Monroe & Obidah, 2004; Pedota, 2007; Skiba & Peterson, 2003; Stronge, 2010). These were then

practiced daily during the first week to two weeks of school and revisited by participants as needed. Expectations for behavior during small group activities and cooperative learning activities were communicated prior to student engagement (Dwyer et al., 1998).

Students also need to be provided with an organized environment (Berliner, 1986; Brophy, 1983; Cooper, 2003; Rancifer, 1993; Stronge, 2010). Each classroom was organized to allow students the ability to navigate their environment, locate needed materials or submit final products without assistance from the teacher (Boynton & Boynton, 2005; Fenwick, 1998). Transitions were observed to be non-disruptive. Students could locate necessary materials when working on independent activities with little to no teacher intervention. The arrangement of the room allowed students to navigate the classroom with ease when retrieving materials needed to complete assignments (Boynton & Boynton, 2005; Brophy, 1983; Rancifer, 1993). If the participants chose to sit at any time during the instructional day, the position of the teacher desk in each room provided them with the ability to observe students as they completed assignments. At no time during the observation periods were the participants seen sitting behind or going near their desks. There have been situations where I have observed teachers never leaving from behind their desks during instruction. I have also observed very little interactions.

Understanding Diverse Communication Styles

Urban education settings have a diverse population of students and educators from different cultural settings and approaches to communication,

mannerisms, norms, and expectations. Teachers must understand the different cultural norms and communication styles that students enter their classrooms.

Theme: Communication between students and their teachers is important for it lets students know their thoughts, ideas, concerns and feelings are being heard. Throughout the interview process, participants shared the need they observed in their students to be heard. D. F. Brown (2005) referred to the concept of congruent communication. This allows students to be heard without being judged and teachers synchronizing their own verbal and non-verbal language with that of their students. Teachers who are not in sync with their African American male students' communication styles tend to view the students' need to communicate as him speaking disrespectfully and being argumentative (D. F. Brown, 2005). During observations, African American male students appeared to be more inclined to cooperate when they felt they had been heard. If D. F. Brown (2005) is correct, providing opportunities for African American males to have their ideas, thoughts, and feelings heard will allow these young men to develop the belief that they are responsible for their own behavior and develop an internal locus of control.

Theme: By observing student behaviors, teachers are better able to address academic and behavioral needs. As discussed in the literature review, good teaching involves the teacher entering the task of instruction through a cycle of reviewing the curriculum, providing relevant instruction and assessing student understanding of the curriculum presented. Teachers who are effective instructors realize that teaching is complex (Stronge, 2007). There are

many facets to teaching; it is not sufficient to only know the curriculum; teachers also need to have knowledge of the academic strengths and needs of their students and the best approach to allow all students to gain understanding of the lesson presented.

Students do not always verbally let teachers know when they do not understand what they are being taught. However, students do let teachers know in other ways. Sometimes it is through body language. Other times, students will engage in avoidance behaviors: sharpen their pencil even though it is already sharpened, taking things to the trash, drawing a picture or even teasing another student. The key is to identify those behaviors that communicate a lack of engagement and to adjust the instruction to meet the needs of that student. By doing so, the student avoids getting in trouble for the off-task behavior and gains additional support to demonstrate his or her understanding.

Theme: When teaching individuals from different ethnicities, it is important to be aware of and acknowledge differences in communication and learning styles to improve communication and instruction. Through the extensive literature review, understanding communication styles was an important skill for teachers learn in order to establish boundaries of acceptable classroom behavior and set parameters that would define the teacher student relationships and the relationships teachers cultivate with parents and the community (Boynton & Boynton, 2005; D. F. Brown, 2005; Christle et al., 2005; Dwyer et al., 1998; Freiberg & Lamb, 2009; Mendez et al., 2002; Soodak, 2003). Trust and respect are two areas that teachers must foster if they are going to

build productive and positive relationships with their students (Bacon et al., 2007; Day-Vines & Day-Hairston, 2005). Trust building is especially necessary when attempting to establish a positive relationship with African American male students (Johnson, 1997).

Of the participants interviewed, Nora was the only one to describe the moment she first identified just how different her communication style was from her students. She stated the class was watching a movie version of a novel they had read. As she sat quietly, listening to the dialogue between the characters, her students were talking to each other about what they were watching, not whispering. Not only that, they were talking to the characters on the screen. It was a learning experience not only for her, but also for her students. They learned that their teacher enjoyed sitting quietly while watching a movie. Nora learned that her students enjoyed the interaction and discussion they engaged in that related to the events unfolding on the screen. Culturally, she viewed the behavior as being rude and disruptive.

Discussions that were held at various times during observations involved students explaining a concept or answering a question in passion filled voices—somewhat loud and excited. There were times when students spoke over each other to be heard. The only response from participants was to calmly signal students to be quiet and request that students take turns when speaking so that their thoughts could be heard by everyone. Discussion contributions from students usually included a narrative of a shared personal experience with a character, an event or a place. By allowing students to utilize their

communication style, participants could enrich the learning experiences for everyone, but with boundaries that would be considered socially appropriate for a classroom setting.

Theme: Engaging in self-reflection following instruction and interactions with parents and/or students allows teachers to consider and understand how their actions, motivations and ideals/beliefs impact their approaches to instruction and communication. Effective teachers are those who consistently engage in self-reflection (Stronge, 2007). This includes, but is not limited to, their interactions with students and parents and reflecting on how a lesson went or reflecting on the events of the day. To be effective, self-reflection needs to include identifying issues that arose during those interactions, lessons or events of the day and what steps can be taken the next time those issues arise. Once they have done that, they would implement those steps and then enter that cycle of self-reflection once again.

During the interview, participants were asked about past events they experienced as teachers, which enabled them to engage in self-reflection. For some, it was a lesson that did not go as planned the first time they taught it and what steps they were going to take the next time. Self-reflection has allowed participants to avoid conflict with students by adjusting how they respond to a student's misbehavior. Self-reflection has also allowed them to identify their own beliefs, values and cultural differences and how those could influence their interactions with students who do not share those same beliefs and values. It has allowed them to compromise—identify those differences that are acceptable

and provide boundaries and parameters within a classroom setting for those differences that could lead to conflict.

Implications for Practice

Most of the research focusing on reducing disproportionate disciplinary practices of African American males occurred in the secondary grades: middle and high school (Algozzine et al., 2008; Bohanon et al., 2006 Lassen, S. R., Steele, M. M., & Sailor, W. ,2006; Monroe, C. R. (2009). Skiba, R. J. et al., 1997; Tuzzolo, E., & Hewitt, D. T., 2006-2007; Algozzine et al., 2008). Although the findings from these researchers' studies are informative, disproportionate disciplinary practices do not occur at that level of education exclusively. One of the differences between high school and elementary school is that students in elementary school tend to have one primary teacher and resource staff. As they enter secondary grades, they are required to interact with a larger number of adults. Also, as students move through the continuum of grades, teachers have larger groups of students to plan for and are only responsible for teaching one subject. Subjects such as reading, writing, and social studies do not lend themselves to the elaborate hands-on activities provided to students at the elementary level. Student engagement is reduced to them listening as the teacher falls back on providing content through direct instruction followed by independent work. It is important for research to focus more on how to reduce discipline disparity while increasing academic achievement.

Engaging Students in the Learning Process

As educators in urban school settings, it is important to continue to provide instruction that involves students in the educational process through investigative techniques and demonstrations as to the relevance of the concepts being taught regardless of age or grade level. The evidence supports the need for high interest activities such as small group work, hands-on activities, visual supports, and building background knowledge contribute to student learning and engagement. During the observations conducted, at no time were students sitting at their desks without an activity that allowed them to engage in one of the instructional practices listed.

For many of these students, there is an ongoing need for structure, procedures and parental involvement; especially parental involvement due to the lack of parental involvement as communicated by the participants. They had to go through a myriad of different strategies and be patient when attempting to engage parents in the educational process. When students are engaged and find relevance with the content, this study showed there was a reduction in misbehavior, which equates to a reduction in disciplinary referrals. Students are also learning valuable soft skills required for employment: collaboration, turn taking and relevant discussion. The need for structure is important to present when working with African American males as they navigate the unspoken curriculum of the school culture and setting.

The data from the statewide assessments and the discipline data collected for each participant showed that they are effective teachers for African American

male students. They submitted fewer referrals and the referrals that were submitted were for objective behaviors that were impeding the learning of the students and/or their peers. The lack of referrals allowed the African American males the opportunity to engage in the educational setting and within the activities aligned with the curriculum standards. The three participants who provided consent to review their achievement data from statewide assessments did show that their African American males performed at or above their peers consistently in Math, Science, and History/Social Studies.

Improvement to Teacher Preparation Programs

A second implication for practice is the educational background and experiences with which the participants entered the field of education. Behavior management and planning strategies to implement for students demonstrating challenging behaviors, with strategies and a more focused understanding of the educational, social, and behavioral needs of students living in urban settings. In urban districts, many children attending school each day live in poverty, have increased food insecurity, and live either in a single parent household or with extended family members.

Teachers are increasingly faced with the challenge of engaging these students instructionally while at the same time attending to the residual emotional and behavioral difficulties. Teacher preparation programs need to evolve to include courses that provide the foundational skills teachers need to address the needs of these students. Programs need to provide education students with practicum experiences in urban school divisions. Additional coursework related

to teaching students in poverty and coursework in sociology to study the differences in cultures would be a step in the direction of teachers having an increased understanding of the social structures of different cultures residing in the community.

Educators can no longer give only lip service to differentiated instruction and student specific behavior plans. Differentiation based on formative and benchmark assessments has become a mainstay in teacher lesson plans. Increasing behavioral difficulties have instituted a national move toward Positive Behavioral Instructional Support programs. Viola, Sylvia, and Nora alluded to the implementation of such a program at their school, but did not have enough understanding of the process to determine if it was being implemented with fidelity at their school.

Engaged Building Leadership

A third implication for practice is having engaged building leaders. Leadership of a school has a direct and substantial impact on the culture of a building. Effective leadership involves administrators who are visible throughout the school environment, are in classrooms monitoring instruction, are attending grade level planning meetings, are in the hallways monitoring class transitions, are in the cafeteria interacting with students, and are visible in the morning and afternoon when students are arriving and leaving school.

Teachers rely on their administrators as instructional leaders for the building. Leadership of the building needs to collect data on staff instructional skills/delivery and classroom management techniques to identify professional

development opportunities that align to their staffs' needs. Once the staff needs are identified, the building leadership will need to identify the resources that would support the professional development delivery, either from outside resources or within the construct of their district. Data should include results from classroom observations, attending lesson planning meetings, and talking with students about what they are learning.

Building leadership should review discipline referrals to ascertain those behaviors that are consistently referred and who is submitting the referrals. Regular discipline meetings with stakeholders would allow for an in-depth look at the precipitating factors to the referral, identify when and where the behaviors are occurring and develop building wide strategies to reduce those behaviors in high activity areas. For referrals that are written consistently by specific teachers, a support plan should be implemented that provides those individuals with professional development and peer support related to development of a useful classroom management system that reduces disruptive/referable behaviors while increasing time on instruction.

Teachers follow the lead of their building administrators for better or worse. The evidence of this study supports the idea that engaged and involved administrators promote engaged and involved educators.

Engaging Parents in the Learning Process

The fourth implication for practice is the level of engagement of parents in the learning process. There are parents who will avoid entering a school to attend school functions or parent/teacher conferences. It should not be assumed

that these parents are not concerned about the educational progress of their child; there may be relevant reasons for the lack of engagement. For some of these parents, they have residual negative experiences from when they attended school. For other parents, their work schedules do not always correspond with the school schedule. Teachers need to reach out to parents and empower them to be a partner in the education of their child. They will need to be able to foster respect and trust with the parents of their students. This would require them to provide an environment where parent and student feel welcomed and appreciated for what they contribute to the relationship. The participants made every effort to engage parents in the learning process in order to support their students. Part of this was due to the expectations of the building administrator, which was to contact parents on a regular basis. How that contact was approached was based on the experiences of the participants, themselves, and the level of technological access to which the parents/families had access.

A Common Vocabulary

The last implication for practice is related to zero tolerance policies that contribute to the disproportionate number of disciplinary referrals for perceived misbehavior, especially for African American males. It would need to start with an understanding of cultural communication styles and defining subjective behaviors to be observable and measurable. As shown revealed during one of the interviews with each participant, when asked to provide a definition for the behavior of disrespect, each participant had to consider what they observed as disrespect. After some thought, each participant provided a different definition of

respect which was based on their individual experiences and biases. A lack of a common definition, little understanding of cultural differences and personal bias and experiences have the potential of a behavior being characterized as one falling under the concepts of zero tolerance and students being subjected to the consequences associated with the policy.

Recommendations for Further Research

This study attempted to identify the dispositional characteristics/qualities, instructional methods, environmental parameters, and classroom management techniques White, female teachers perceived contributed to lower classroom disciplinary referrals for African American males in the elementary classroom. One of the participants does consider herself to be Asian and Italian; however the district information lists her as White. It followed the teaching practices and classroom structures of four White, female teachers as they presented curriculum and subsequent interviews to discuss what was observed and further understand their approach to teaching. There is a plethora of empirical studies focused on effective instructional strategies and behavior management strategies as they relate to student achievement and a reduction in the achievement and discipline differences.

This study provided added value to the research on disproportionate disciplinary practices by focusing on a subset of students, African American males, and teachers, White, female teachers, in an elementary setting. The observation tool had only been utilized to observe teachers as they interacted with the students in their classrooms. Its use in this study was to focus on only

those interactions between the African American students and their teacher.

This study also was conducted at the upper elementary level of which there are very few studies. As such, suggestions for further research include:

1. Extend this study to include academic data along with student and parent focus groups to gain insight and data related to their view of the meting out of discipline in the schools and how urban school districts can make a difference for African American males.
2. Focus on teacher preparation programs and professional influences of a cross section of effective teachers within the urban educational environment and the impact on reducing the discipline differences for African American males.
3. Compare effective White, female teachers with those White, female teachers identified as ineffective in an urban school district and determine the impact on African American males in relation to discipline issues and academic progress.
4. Conduct empirical studies that focus on what is the impact of cultural differences between students and teachers on achievement and discipline differences of African American males.
5. Look at teachers at different career stages to identify possible impact on the discipline differences with African American males.

Summary and Conclusions

There has been a significant amount of research focused on the disproportionate discipline of African American males (Algozzine et al., 2008;

Bowditch, 1993; Fenning & Rose, 2007; Gregory, 1997; Howarth, 2008; Mendez et al., 2002; Skiba et al., 2002; Townsend, 2000), a diverse group of teachers implementing effective instructional strategies that have positively impacting students' performance academically and behaviorally (Abe, 2004; Banks et al., 2007; Baines & Jacobs, 1990; Berliner, 1986; Howard, 2008), and proactive means of addressing potential disciplinary issues (Anderson, 2009; Boynton & Boynton, 2005; Breulin et al., 2004; D. F. Brown, 2005; Day-Vines & Day-Hairston, 2005; Fenning et al., 2004). The research focusing on educating African American males have been fewer, especially research on how White, female teachers in elementary school effectively educate African American males with lower incidents of disciplinary referrals for misconduct. The focus of Cooper's (2003) research was on effective instruction for all African American students in the primary grades. Ladson-Billings' (2009) research focused on the achievement differences. Other researchers focused on how the concept of cultural understanding can impact the educational experiences for African American students (Bireda, 2002; Milner, 2007, 2010; Monroe & Obidah, 2004). There has been very little research related to how White, female teachers can reduce the achievement differences and the disproportionate disciplinary practices for upper elementary African American males.

The four participants' actions and words were consistent with much of what was conveyed in the extensive literature review as they related to middle and high school studies. There have been relatively few studies focused on what teachers at the elementary level are doing to reduce the discipline differences.

This study shows much of what have been effective practices with African American males in the middle and high school environments are also effective with students in the elementary environment. The teacher effectiveness scale developed by Stronge (2007) was not normed for a specific ethnic and gender group within the educational setting in relation to either teacher or student. By using it to focus on the instructional and behavioral needs of African American males, I was able to confirm that good teaching for all students is good teaching for African American male students.

African American males continue to receive a disproportionate number of disciplinary referrals than their peers. Zero tolerance, a lack of observable and measurable subjective behaviors reported by teachers and family stressors were identified as possible contributors to this phenomenon. The four participants in this study had low numbers of disciplinary referrals and the disciplinary referrals that were submitted to the administration for review involved objective behaviors such as fighting and bullying which were observable and measurable when they occurred. Many of the techniques and approaches aligned with the concept of effective teaching of all students, especially African American males, were observed and communicated by the participants. However, this is only one study and it does not include the parents and students' perspectives, but it begins to provide insight into what teachers believe they are doing to support students.

Overall, all the participants in this study were effective teachers of African American males even though they possessed different definitions and meanings of tolerance. Based on the comparison of discipline data, the participants'

referral rates were lower than their peers. Disrespect and insubordination were two behavioral categories with high numbers of African American males represented by their peers. The referrals written by the participants did not include these behaviors.

Most the teaching staff has been a part of Oak School for at least five years. The participants were teaching at Oak School prior to Dr. Jones appointment as principal. The former principal, Mrs. Stephens, had been the principal for 12 years before she retired. During her tenure, she cultivated a culture of acceptance of all students regardless of ability, patience, flexibility, and a sense of family. When Dr. Jones was appointed principal following Ms. Stephens' retirement, she possessed similar beliefs and values, which strengthen the culture of the building. The culture and climate of the educational environment at Oak School could have had an influence on how the participants approach their positions as educators.

Another aspect associated with Oak School is the level of peer interaction and desire to identify ways to increase student behaviors and increase academic success. The participants met weekly to review lesson plans and share challenges they encountered, either academic or behavioral, from their students. They also referred to their past experiences and trainings to provide them with different strategies to support students.

Past personal, educational, and training experiences appeared to have influenced these participants in their approach to academic instruction and behavioral interventions. Two of these participants earned a bachelor degree in

psychology; thus, they had more educational training in the study of human behavior. Their additional training through an advanced degree in special education (Lilly) and as a behaviorist (Nora) further influenced how they conducted themselves in the educational environment and their instructional and behaviorist styles. Lilly and Nora were also members of the grade level teams of which Sylvia and Viola were members. Nora's and Lilly's knowledge of behavioral and instructional interventions could have had a positive influence on how Sylvia and Viola approached their own instructional and classroom management plans.

Behavioral expectations must be clearly defined and modeled by teachers. When addressing misbehavior, employing private conferences with African American males allows them to maintain their self-esteem. As reported in the research on PBIS, explicit instruction of behavioral expectations and providing positive reinforcement and relevant consequences are an effective way for educators to support African American males and their peers in urban settings to intuitively acquire the behaviors expected. It is also important that behavioral supports must be consistently implemented across settings within the school environment. The added implementation of employing clear and concise routines support the behavioral expectations within the classroom environment and the requirements illustrated by PBIS. The participants in this study did not speak to the SWPBIS within the context of their school. However, they were observed and spoke to their students' needs to have specific behavioral and academic feedback and to include differentiated instructional materials in their

lessons in order to address the needs of their students. The participants' implementation of a number of attributes of PBIS showed in their classroom structure, their interactions with their students, and the instructional materials they utilized during observations and spoke of during the interview process.

Educators must also have an awareness and understanding of the family stressors associated with living in an urban location. For the participants, there were African American male students living in poverty with one parent as the main wage earner. These males were inadvertently placed in the role of adult and supervisor of younger siblings. Conversely, there were African American male students living with grandparents or other family members for different reasons: incarceration of one or both parents, death of parents, absent parents, or legal issues that have led family members to obtain custody of the student. Determining the purpose behind a student's misbehavior will be important to devise a plan with reinforcers and consequences to support expected behaviors.

By establishing personal relationships with African American males and their families, teachers communicate a vested interest in the lives of these students. Not all parents are willing to engage in the educational experience of their children. This potentially may be due to their own negative educational experiences. For the participants in this study, lack of parent participation was a challenge they worked to overcome. Incorporating different modes of communication to engage parents needs to be identified because phone calls are not always effective. Incorporating home visits and conferences for reporting of positive behaviors can begin to change the perception of these parents.

For some African American male students, past educational experiences have contributed to their perception of school and teachers. Disengagement from the learning process and misbehaviors provide these students with a means of escaping through suspensions from either the classroom environment or the school setting altogether. Determining the purpose behind students' behaviors and establishing trust serves as building blocks for these students to begin re-engaging in the educational process. This also has the potential of rebuilding interest and investment by the student in his academic success.

Differentiation of instructional strategies for African American males allows these students to demonstrate their understanding of the content taught. The participants described African American males as passionate, social with their peers, hands-on learners, and active within the classroom environment. When the participants incorporated instructional strategies that spoke to their strengths, their African American male students demonstrated their knowledge and progressed in the general education curriculum. Class discussions, related to the educational concepts introduced, support their need for verbal interactions and that of interacting with their peers. By allowing for activities that include movement and the integration of hands-on activities, engages all aspects of learning for these students and an opportunity for demonstrating their understanding and knowledge without having to rely on intricate verbal explanations.

Differing communication styles should be considered when interactions with African American males appear nonconforming to the communication style

of White female teachers. Participants observed their African American males to convey passion when engaged in discussions where they can communicate their understanding and knowledge. This may be misconstrued as the African American male student being confrontational or argumentative. The participants in this study identified differing communication styles as conducive to the interaction style used in the home setting and was a result of the students' culture. Their competency of the cultural differences between their African American males' communication style and their own has not been supported by empirical studies. However, researchers have attempted to look at differing communication styles between the different cultures.

African American males do need effective teachers. This study confirmed that the aspects of good teaching are effective when teaching African American males: high expectations, effective instructional strategies, strong, positive discipline approaches, cultivating relationships, and experience. The evidence supports the idea that White, females can be effective teachers of African American males.

Appendix A: Key Reference Tables from Literature Review

Table A2

Key References: Dispositional Characteristics/Qualities of Effective Teachers

Author (Year)	Establishing Personal Relationships	Understanding Diverse Communication Styles	Effects of High Expectations on Student Achievement
Abe (2004)	X	X	X
Bacon, Banks, Young, & Jackson (2007)	X	X	X
Baines & Jacobs (1990)	X		X
Bireda (2002)		X	
Birrell (1995)		X	
Bloom (1984)	X		X
Boynton & Boynton (2005)	X		
Brophy (1983)			X
D. F. Brown (2005)	X	X	
Cooper (2003)	X		
Christle, Jolivet, & Nelson (2005)	X		
Day-Vines & Day- Hairston (2005)		X	
Dwyer, Osher, & Warger (1998)	X		
Fenwick (1998)	X		

Author (Year)	Establishing Personal Relationships	Understanding Diverse Communication Styles	Effects of High Expectations on Student Achievement
Freiberg & Lamb (2009)	X		
Gay (2002)	X		
Gay (2010)		X	
Howard (2008)			X
Hubbard (2005)	X	X	
Johnson (1997)		X	
Ladson-Billings (2009)	X	X	X
McAllister & Irvine (2002)	X	X	
McDermott & Rothenberg (2000)	X		X
Mendez, Knoff, & Ferron (2002)	X		
Milner (2007)	X	X	
Monroe (2005)		X	
Monroe & Obidah (2004)		X	
Pedota (2007)	X		X
Soodak (2003)	X		
Souto-Manning & Mitchell (2012)			X

Author (Year)	Establishing Personal Relationships	Understanding Diverse Communication Styles	Effects of High Expectations on Student Achievement
Spaulding & O'Hair (2004)		X	
Stronge (2010)	X		
Veney (2008)	X		
Weinstein, Tomlinson-Clarke, & Curran (2003)		X	
Wren (1999)		X	

Table A3

Key References: Instructional Methods of Effective Teachers

Author (Year)	Clear Instructions and Feedback	Focus on Students' Efforts and Providing Challenges	Relevance to Students' Lives and Interests	Person-Centered Classroom
Abe (2004)			X	
Bacon, Banks, Young, & Jackson (2007)		X		
Baines & Jacobs (1990)	X			
Berendt & Koski (1991)	X			
Bloom (1984)	X	X		
Brophy & McCaslin (1992)		X		
Cooper (2003)	X	X		
Freiberg & Lamb (2009)				X
Hines, Cruickshank, & Kennedy (1985)	X			
Karsenti & Thibert (1998)	X	X		
Ladson-Billings (2009)			X	

Table A4

Key References: Classroom Behavior Management

Author (Year)	Theories and Behavior Management Plans	Importance of Organized Classrooms and Establishing Routines	Social Power and Behavior Management	Establishing Clear, Concise Rules	Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports
Abe (2004)	X	X	X	X	
Bacon, Banks, Young, & Jackson (2007)	X	X	X	X	
Baines & Jacobs (1990)		X	X		
Bear (1998)		X		X	
Berliner (1986)		X			
Bohanon, Fenning, Carney, Minnis-Kim, Anderson-Harriss, Moroz, & Pigott (2006)					X
Boynton & Boynton (2005)	X	X	X	X	
Bradshaw, Reinke, Brown, Beans, & Leaf (2008)					X

Author (Year)	Theories and Behavior Management Plans	Importance of Organized Classrooms and Establishing Routines	Social Power and Behavior Management	Establishing Clear, Concise Rules	Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports
Brophy (1983)		X			
Brophy & McCaslin (1992)	X		X	X	
D. F. Brown (2005)	X	X	X		
Carr, Dunlap, Horner, Koegel, Turnbull, Sailor, Anderson, Albikn Koegel, & Fox (2002)					X
Chase (2001)			X		
Christle, Jolivette, & Nelson (2005)	X	X		X	
Cooper (2003)		X	X		
Curwin, Mendler, & Mendler (2008)		X			
Fenning, Theodos, Benner, &	X			X	

Author (Year)	Theories and Behavior Management Plans	Importance of Organized Classrooms and Establishing Routines	Social Power and Behavior Management	Establishing Clear, Concise Rules	Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports
Bohanon-Edmonson (2004)					
Freiberg & Lamb (2009)				X	
Howard (2008)		X			
Hubbard (2005)			X		
Koutsoulis (2003)		X			
Ladson-Billings (2009)		X	X		
Lassen, Steele, & Sailor (2006)					X
Little & Akin-Little (2008)	X		X	X	
McDermott & Rothenberg (2000)		X			
Mendez, Knoff, & Ferron (2002)	X			X	

Author (Year)	Theories and Behavior Management Plans	Importance of Organized Classrooms and Establishing Routines	Social Power and Behavior Management	Establishing Clear, Concise Rules	Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports
Milner (2007)		X	X		
Monroe (2009)	X		X		
Monroe & Obidah (2004)	X		X	X	
No Child Left Behind Act of 2001					X
Noguera (2003)	X				
Office of Special Education Program (2004)					X
Pedota (2007)	X	X	X		
Rancifer (1993)		X	X		
Saeed (2009)	X				
Skiba & Peterson (2003)	X	X		X	
Soodak (2003)	X	X	X	X	

Author (Year)	Theories and Behavior Management Plans	Importance of Organized Classrooms and Establishing Routines	Social Power and Behavior Management	Establishing Clear, Concise Rules	Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports
Souto-Manning & Mitchell (2012)		X	X		
Stronge (2010)	X		X	X	
Todd, Lewis-Palmer, Horner, Sugai, Sampson, & Phillips (2012)					X
Yamaguchi & Strawser (1997)		X			

Table A6

Key References: Origins of Misbehavior

Author (Year)	Patterns of Behavior	Misbehavior: Actual vs. Perceived	Subjective or Objective Behaviors	Impact on the Disciplinary Differences on Minority Students
Algozzine, Christian, Marr, McClanahan, & White (2008)	X		X	X
Ashford, Queen, Algozzine, & Mitchell (2008)	X	X	X	X
Bowditch (1993)				X
Breunlin, Cimmarusti, Bryant-Edwards, & Hetherington (2004)				X
Coleman, Campbell, Hobson, McPartland, Mood, Weinfeld, & York (1966)				X
Durmuscelebi (2010)				X
Eamon & Altshuler (2004)				X

Author (Year)	Patterns of Behavior	Misbehavior: Actual vs. Perceived	Subjective or Objective Behaviors	Impact on the Disciplinary Differences on Minority Students
Edelman (1975)				X
Fenning & Rose (2007)			X	X
Garibaldi (1992)				X
Gregory (1997)				X
Mendez, Knoff, & Ferron (2002)			X	X
Monroe & Obidah (2004)			X	
Morgan (1991)				X
Morris (2005)				X
Nicholson, Crotty, Birchmeier, & Valentine (2009)				X
AP/CRP (2000)	X			X
Sbarra & Pianta (2001)				X
Sheets (1996)				X
Skiba, Michael, Nardo, &	X		X	X

Author (Year)	Patterns of Behavior	Misbehavior: Actual vs. Perceived	Subjective or Objective Behaviors	Impact on the Disciplinary Differences on Minority Students
Peterson (2002)				
Skiba, Peterson, & Williams (1997)			X	X
Ward (1998)				X
Wu, Pink, Crain, & Moles (1982)				X

Table A7

Key References: Summary of Literature Review

Author (Year)	Establishing Personal Relationships	Understanding Diverse Communication Styles	Effects of High Expectations on Student Achievement	Clear Instructions and Feedback	Focus on Students' Efforts and Providing Challenges	Relevance to Students' Lives and Interests	Person-Centered Classroom	Theories and Behavior Management Plans	Importance of Organized Classrooms and Establishing Routines	Social Power and Behavior Management	Establishing Clear, Concise Rules	Patterns of Behavior	Misbehavior: Actual Vs. perceived	Subjective or Objective Behavior	Impact on the Disciplinary Differences on Minority Students
Abe (2004)	X	X	X			X		X	X	X	X				
AP/CRP (2000)												X			X
Algozzine, Christian, Marr, McClanahan, & White (2008)												X		X	
Ashford, Queen, Algozzine, & Mitchell (2008)												X	X	X	X
Bacon, Banks, Young, & Jackson (2007)	X	X	X		X			X	X	X	X				

Author (Year)	Establishing Personal Relationships	Understanding Diverse Communication Styles	Effects of High Expectations on Student Achievement	Clear Instructions and Feedback	Focus on Students' Efforts and Providing Challenges	Relevance to Students' Lives and Interests	Person-Centered Classroom	Theories and Behavior Management Plans	Importance of Organized Classrooms and Establishing Routines	Social Power and Behavior Management	Establishing Clear, Concise Rules	Patterns of Behavior	Misbehavior: Actual Vs. perceived	Subjective or Objective Behavior	Impact on the Disciplinary Differences on Minority Students
Baines & Jacobs (1990)	X		X	X					X	X					
Bear (1998)									X		X				
Berliner (1986)									X						
Berendt & Koski (1991)				X											
Bireda (2002)		X													
Birrell (1995)		X													
Bloom (1984)	X		X	X	X										
Bowditch (1993)															X
Boynton & Boynton (2005)	X							X	X	X	X				
Breunlin, Cimmarusti, Bryant-Edwards, &															X

Author (Year)	Establishing Personal Relationships	Understanding Diverse Communication Styles	Effects of High Expectations on Student Achievement	Clear Instructions and Feedback	Focus on Students' Efforts and Providing Challenges	Relevance to Students' Lives and Interests	Person-Centered Classroom	Theories and Behavior Management Plans	Importance of Organized Classrooms and Establishing Routines	Social Power and Behavior Management	Establishing Clear, Concise Rules	Patterns of Behavior	Misbehavior: Actual Vs. perceived	Subjective or Objective Behavior	Impact on the Disciplinary Differences on Minority Students
Hetherington (2004)															
Brophy (1983)			X						X						
Brophy & McCaslin (1992)					X			X		X	X				
D. F. Brown (2005)	X	X						X	X	X					
Chase (2001)											X				
Christle, Jolivet, & Nelson (2005)	X							X	X		X				
Coleman Report (1966)															X
Cooper (2003)	X			X	X				X	X					

Author (Year)	Establishing Personal Relationships	Understanding Diverse Communication Styles	Effects of High Expectations on Student Achievement	Clear Instructions and Feedback	Focus on Students' Efforts and Providing Challenges	Relevance to Students' Lives and Interests	Person-Centered Classroom	Theories and Behavior Management Plans	Importance of Organized Classrooms and Establishing Routines	Social Power and Behavior Management	Establishing Clear, Concise Rules	Patterns of Behavior	Misbehavior: Actual Vs. perceived	Subjective or Objective Behavior	Impact on the Disciplinary Differences on Minority Students
Curwin, Mendler, & Mendler (2008)									X						
Day-Vines & Day-Hairston (2005)		X													
Durmuscelebi (2010)															X
Dwyer, Osher, & Warger (1998)	X														
Eamon & Altshuler (2004)															X
Edelman (1975)														X	X
Fenning & Rose (2007)														X	X
Fenning, Theodos,								X			X				

Author (Year)	Establishing Personal Relationships	Understanding Diverse Communication Styles	Effects of High Expectations on Student Achievement	Clear Instructions and Feedback	Focus on Students' Efforts and Providing Challenges	Relevance to Students' Lives and Interests	Person-Centered Classroom	Theories and Behavior Management Plans	Importance of Organized Classrooms and Establishing Routines	Social Power and Behavior Management	Establishing Clear, Concise Rules	Patterns of Behavior	Misbehavior: Actual Vs. perceived	Subjective or Objective Behavior	Impact on the Disciplinary Differences on Minority Students
Benner, & Bohanan-Edmonson (2004)															
Fenwick (1998)	X														
Freiberg & Lamb (2009)	X						X				X				
Garibaldi (1992)															X
Gay (2002)	X														
Gay (2010)		X													
Gregory (1997)															X
Hines, Cruickshank, & Kennedy (1985)				X											
Howard (2008)			X						X						

Author (Year)	Establishing Personal Relationships	Understanding Diverse Communication Styles	Effects of High Expectations on Student Achievement	Clear Instructions and Feedback	Focus on Students' Efforts and Providing Challenges	Relevance to Students' Lives and Interests	Person-Centered Classroom	Theories and Behavior Management Plans	Importance of Organized Classrooms and Establishing Routines	Social Power and Behavior Management	Establishing Clear, Concise Rules	Patterns of Behavior	Misbehavior: Actual Vs. perceived	Subjective or Objective Behavior	Impact on the Disciplinary Differences on Minority Students
Hubbard (2005)	X	X								X					
Johnson (1997)		X													
Karsenti & Thibert (1998)				X	X										
Koutsoulis (2003)									X						
Ladson-Billings (2009)	X	X	X			X			X	X					
Little & Akin-Little (2008)								X		X	X				
McAllister & Irvine (2002)	X	X													
McDermott & Rothenberg (2000)	X		X						X						

Author (Year)	Establishing Personal Relationships	Understanding Diverse Communication Styles	Effects of High Expectations on Student Achievement	Clear Instructions and Feedback	Focus on Students' Efforts and Providing Challenges	Relevance to Students' Lives and Interests	Person-Centered Classroom	Theories and Behavior Management Plans	Importance of Organized Classrooms and Establishing Routines	Social Power and Behavior Management	Establishing Clear, Concise Rules	Patterns of Behavior	Misbehavior: Actual Vs. perceived	Subjective or Objective Behavior	Impact on the Disciplinary Differences on Minority Students
Mendez, Knoff, & Ferron (2002)	X							X			X			X	X
Milner (2007)	X	X							X	X					
Monroe & Obidah (2004)		X						X		X	X			X	
Morgan (1991)															X
Morris (2005)															X
Nicholson, Crotty, Birchmeier, & Valentine (2009)															X
Noguera (2003)								X							

Author (Year)	Establishing Personal Relationships	Understanding Diverse Communication Styles	Effects of High Expectations on Student Achievement	Clear Instructions and Feedback	Focus on Students' Efforts and Providing Challenges	Relevance to Students' Lives and Interests	Person-Centered Classroom	Theories and Behavior Management Plans	Importance of Organized Classrooms and Establishing Routines	Social Power and Behavior Management	Establishing Clear, Concise Rules	Patterns of Behavior	Misbehavior: Actual Vs. perceived	Subjective or Objective Behavior	Impact on the Disciplinary Differences on Minority Students
Pedota (2007)	X		X					X	X	X					
Rancifer (1993)									X	X					
Saeed (2009)								X							
Sbarra & Pianta (2001)															X
Sheets (1996)														X	X
Skiba, Michael, Nardo, & Peterson (2002)												X		X	X
Skiba & Peterson (2003)								X	X		X				
Skiba, Peterson, & Williams (1997)														X	X

Author (Year)	Establishing Personal Relationships	Understanding Diverse Communication Styles	Effects of High Expectations on Student Achievement	Clear Instructions and Feedback	Focus on Students' Efforts and Providing Challenges	Relevance to Students' Lives and Interests	Person-Centered Classroom	Theories and Behavior Management Plans	Importance of Organized Classrooms and Establishing Routines	Social Power and Behavior Management	Establishing Clear, Concise Rules	Patterns of Behavior	Misbehavior: Actual Vs. perceived	Subjective or Objective Behavior	Impact on the Disciplinary Differences on Minority Students
Soodak (2003)	X							X	X	X	X				
Souto-Manning & Mitchell (2012)			X						X	X					
Spaulding & O'Hair (2004)		X													
Stronge (2010)	X							X		X	X				
Veney (2008)	X														
Ward (1998)															X
Weinstein, Tomlinson-Clarke, & Curran (2003)		X													
Wren (1999)		X													

Author (Year)	Establishing Personal Relationships	Understanding Diverse Communication Styles	Effects of High Expectations on Student Achievement	Clear Instructions and Feedback	Focus on Students' Efforts and Providing Challenges	Relevance to Students' Lives and Interests	Person-Centered Classroom	Theories and Behavior Management Plans	Importance of Organized Classrooms and Establishing Routines	Social Power and Behavior Management	Establishing Clear, Concise Rules	Patterns of Behavior	Misbehavior: Actual Vs. perceived	Subjective or Objective Behavior	Impact on the Disciplinary Differences on Minority Students
Wu, Pink, Crain, & Moles (1982)														X	X
Yamaguchi & Strawser (1997)									X						

Appendix B: Teacher Effectiveness Scale

Summary Rating Form

Observer: _____

Teacher: _____

School: _____

Grade/Subject Observed: _____

Date: _____ Beginning Time _____ Ending Time: _____ Observation Total Time: _____

Directions: Make notes as needed across all teacher effectiveness categories as they are observed throughout the observation period. Once the observation period has been completed, score each individual category as soon as possible using the rubric for each item: Level 4 = most effective, Level 1 = least effective. Do not average the scores across all categories. Each category on the *Scale* should be scored on the level that best describes the teacher's demonstrated behavior during the observation period on that particular category. When the observed behavior in a given teacher effectiveness category crosses more than one level on the scoring rubric, score the item in the category in which the preponderance of evidence falls. For example, if some of the observed evidence for *I-1, Instructional Differentiation*, is reflected in Level 4, some in Level 2, but the majority/plurality of evidence is in Level 3, then the teacher would be scored in Level 3 for *Instructional Skills*.

SUMMARY SCORES

INSTRUCTIONAL SKILLS

ASSESSMENT SKILLS

Item	Score		Item	Score
I-1 Instructional Differentiation			A-1 Assessment for Understanding	

I-2 Instructional Focus on Learning			A-2 Quality of Verbal Feedback to Students	
I-3 Instructional Clarity				
I-4 Instructional Complexity				
I-5 Expectations for Student Learning				
I-6 Use of Technology				

CLASSROOM MANAGEMENT

PERSONAL QUALITIES

Item	Score		Item	Score
M-1 Classroom Management			P-1 Caring	
M-2 Classroom Organization			P-2 Fairness & Respect	
			P-3 Positive Relationships	
			P-4 Encouragement of Responsibility	
			P-5 Enthusiasm	

Area I: Instructional Skills

Effective teachers organize for instruction by maintaining and communicating a focus on instruction, demonstrating high expectations for students, allocating time, and engaging in effective planning. Responsive instruction hinges on a flexibility and facility with a variety of teaching strategies. Teachers who successfully employ a range of strategies reach more students because they tap into more learning styles and student interests.

Title and #	Level 4	Level 3	Level 2	Level 1
<p style="text-align: center;">I-1</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Instructional Differentiation</p>	<p>The teacher uses a broad repertoire of instructional strategies with fluency and flexibility to differentiate instruction for individual or groups of students constantly.</p>	<p>The teacher uses an adequate variety of instructional strategies that appeal to the interests/needs of individual students with multiple approaches to teaching.</p>	<p>The teacher uses a limited number of instructional strategies to meet the individual needs of some students, but the majority target the whole class.</p>	<p>The teacher relies heavily on instructional strategies primarily for the whole class (i.e., lecture, worksheets, questioning, etc.) with little, if any, individualization.</p>
<p>I-1 SCORE: _____ NOTES/RATIONALE:</p>				
<p style="text-align: center;">I-2</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Instructional Focus on Learning</p>	<p>The teacher allocates maximum time towards instructional activities resulting in minimal interruptions; academic learning time is clearly the focus of instruction</p>	<p>The teacher reinforces his/her focus on instruction through appropriate allocation of time to the teaching and learning process.</p>	<p>The teacher allows non-instructional activities to reduce instructional time and curtail teaching objectives.</p>	<p>The teacher demonstrates little urgency in making use of instructional time and prolongs interruptions.</p>
<p>I-2 SCORE: _____ NOTES/RATIONALE:</p>				

I-3	The teacher communicates effectively with individual students and classroom groups. Provides plentiful instructional examples and guided practice.	The teacher communicates with clarity and gives step-by-step directions. Provides some examples and practice.	The teacher does not consistently communicate with clarity or often does not provide adequate directions, examples, or practice.	The teacher provides confusing directions, examples, or practice. The teacher does not fully or clearly explain concepts.
Instructional Clarity				
I-3 SCORE: _____ NOTES/RATIONALE:				

Area I: Instructional Skills (continued)

Title and #	Level 4	Level 3	Level 2	Level 1
I-4	Learning activities require complex thinking as a major focus or extension of the lesson(e.g., students may be asked to analyze cause and effect, identify a problem and pose reasonable solutions, speculate giving details or justification, defend options or argue a position with evidence to a great extent).	Some activities require complex thinking as a secondary focus of the lesson.	Learning activities primarily involve students in tasks that require rote memory or only limited amounts of complex thinking. (e.g., students may be asked to summarize straightforward information, infer simple main ideas).	Learning activities involve students in tasks that do not require any significant degree of complex thinking. Students may be asked to recall basic information.
Instructional Complexity				
I-4 SCORE: _____ NOTES/RATIONALE:				

<p>I-5</p> <p>Expectations For Student Learning</p>	<p>The teacher consistently encourages maximum effort from students and provides the encouragement to promote it; stresses student responsibility.</p>	<p>The teacher encourages consistent effort from students and provides encouragement to promote it.</p>	<p>The teacher sets uneven (different) expectations for students without a clear rationale for the differentiation; does not adequately empower students to assume responsibility for learning.</p>	<p>The teacher sets low expectations for most or all students; is not surprised with low performance and demonstrates practice that students are not capable of independent learning.</p>
<p>I-5 SCORE: _____ NOTES/RATIONALE:</p>				
<p>I-6</p> <p>Use of Technology</p>	<p>The evidence indicates that the teacher consistently and effectively integrates available technology and other resources into meaningful and coherent lessons. The teacher creates tasks to further student expertise.</p>	<p>The teacher consistently uses available technology and other resources, when appropriate to objectives</p>	<p>The teacher uses available technology and/or other resources inappropriately or on a limited basis.</p>	<p>The teacher uses little or none of the available technology and/or other resources in instruction.</p>
<p>I-6 SCORE: _____ NOTES/RATIONALE:</p>				

Area A: Assessment Skills

Effective teachers use a variety of assessment practices to monitor student learning, including formal and informal assessments and formative and summative assessments. Assessments are used to monitor progress, provide feedback to students and parents, and to adjust instruction. When necessary, effective teachers re-teach material that has not been learned thoroughly.

Title and #	Level 4	Level 3	Level 2	Level 1
<p>A-1</p> <p>Assessment for Understanding</p>	<p>The teacher regularly checks in with students to monitor their level of understanding, interest, frustration, etc. Student understanding is assessed through a variety of methods (observation, group questioning, individual conversations, looking at student work, etc.). The teacher remains flexible in instructional decision-making and seems to continuously use “data” to adjust instruction.</p>	<p>The teacher checks in with students periodically, particularly at the end of the lesson to gauge their understanding of content. The methods and extent of checks for understanding are sufficient to identify and address serious misunderstandings but the probing is not detailed and extensive. The teacher may spend additional time questioning individuals.</p>	<p>The teacher may check for understanding once or twice during a lesson by asking for any questions but does very little probing or acting on the information and makes few adjustments to respond to any confusion students express. The teacher seems to either miss student cues that indicate lack of understanding or recognize them but not act on them. Questions are asked to whole class, not individuals.</p>	<p>The teacher seldom or never checks for understanding and seems to teach the lesson as planned with little flexibility for responding to misunderstandings. The teacher does not use observation or questioning or other assessment methods to monitor student understanding.</p>
<p>A-1 SCORE: _____ NOTES/RATIONALE:</p>				
<p>A-2</p> <p>Quality of Verbal</p>	<p>The teacher provides <i>verbal</i> feedback consistently, addresses individual student strength and weaknesses, and encourages student self-reflection. Feedback is fair and demonstrates high expectations for all students by encouraging all students to ask questions or contribute to the discussion.</p>	<p>The teacher provides <i>verbal</i> feedback that is appropriate and consistently addresses individual student strengths and weaknesses. Feedback provides good idea of how students can improve. The teacher spends additional time in explanation or probing questions before moving on if there is confusion.</p>	<p>The teacher provides minimal <i>verbal</i> feedback on student performance. Feedback does not adequately address individual student strengths or weaknesses. Re-direction is inconsistent or limited to only a small number of students.</p>	<p>The teacher provides <i>verbal</i> feedback that is limited to correctness of response (“Good answer.”) There is little or no direction provided for improvement in performance. If a student answers incorrectly, the teacher moves on to another student without discussion.</p>

Feedback to Students				
A-2 SCORE: _____ NOTES/RATIONALE:				

Area M: Classroom Learning Environment

The effective teacher creates an overall classroom environment conducive to learning with skills in organization and classroom management. He/She is consistent in their behavioral expectations and responses, and attends to these elements in a proactive way to establish a positive classroom climate oriented toward learning.

Title and #	Level 4	Level 3	Level 2	Level 1
M-1 Classroom Management	The teacher uses effective organizational strategies to maintain momentum and variety. Uses preventive management strategies. Students appear to know procedures without being reminded.	The teacher responds to inattention and redirects students. Anticipates and resolves minor inattention without disruption to overall lesson. (May include walking over to student and standing close by.)	The teacher uses primarily reactive management strategies (names on the board, calling students down, etc.). Attempts to intervene met with limited success. Students may continue in disruption.	The teacher reacts to or ignores disciplinary incidents rather than trying to prevent them. Disruptions escalate with minimal intervention by teacher.

M-1 SCORE: _____ NOTES/RATIONALE:					
M-2	Classroom Organization	The teacher incorporates tasks, materials, and space so effectively into ongoing classroom procedures and expectations for students that they seem to know automatically what to do at certain times during the lessons without being told. The arrangement of the room and materials may change from lesson to lesson to support on-going instruction. Transitions, if any, are smooth.	The teacher organizes tasks, materials, and space to facilitate learning by students by arranging the room and materials to support the lesson. Any movement of students, materials, equipment, etc., occurs with a purpose and supports the lesson.	The teacher is inconsistent in his/her organization of tasks, materials, and space such that once or twice the lesson was interrupted by unnecessary movement or searching for materials.	The teacher demonstrates little organization of tasks, materials, and space such that instructional time is wasted. The room/materials are not set up to accommodate students and the lesson.
		M-2 SCORE: _____ NOTES/RATIONALE (describe the room setup)			

Area P: Personal Qualities

A teacher's ability to relate with students and to make positive, caring connections with them plays a significant part in supporting the learning environment and student achievement. Effective teachers care about their students and demonstrate that caring so that students are conscious of it.

Title and #	Level 4	Level 3	Level 2	Level 1
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P-1 Caring	The teacher demonstrates sustained caring and commitment toward each individual student.	The teacher generally demonstrates a caring manner.	The teacher inconsistently demonstrates a caring manner with students. Treats some students with less concern than others.	The teacher is uncaring and distant with students. Demonstrates little concern for some students.
P-1 SCORE: _____ NOTES/RATIONALE:				
P-2 Fairness and Respect	The teacher consistently demonstrates fairness and respect toward students and actively promotes these qualities in students.	The teacher treats all students with fairness and respect by providing opportunities to participate and succeed.	The teacher treats some students with less respect than others. Limits some students' opportunities for involvement and success.	The teacher shows a lack of respect for students and treats students in an unfair manner.
P-2 SCORE: _____ NOTES/RATIONALE:				

Area P: Personal Qualities (continued)

P-3	The teacher consistently models and nurtures supportive relationships among students. Initiates activities to make school an enjoyable experience.	The teacher interacts with students in a friendly and personable manner. Participates in activities to make school an enjoyable experience.	The teacher inconsistently responds to students, not always showing interest in students as individuals.	The teacher does not demonstrate a friendly and personable manner toward students either as a group or individuals.
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Positive Relationships				
P-3 SCORE: _____ NOTES/RATIONALE:				
P-4 Encouragement of Responsibility	The teacher actively encourages students to take responsibility for their own learning in ways that communicate high regard and high expectations.	The teacher promotes enthusiasm for learning and encourages students to be active participants in their learning.	The teacher assumes primary responsibility for students' learning and shows limited evidence of trusting students with their learning.	The teacher maintains sole responsibility for student learning and discourages independent thinking by students.
P-4 SCORE: _____ NOTES/RATIONALE:				
P-5 Enthusiasm	The teacher is enthusiastic and demonstrates a passion for teaching that is evident in the care with which instruction is prepared and presented; promotes students' enjoyment of learning	The teacher demonstrates a positive attitude about life and teaching; demonstrates care about student outcomes	The teacher shows positive feelings toward student learning in inconsistent ways; seldom encourages students' enjoyment of learning	The teacher rarely, if ever, shows positive feelings toward instruction or student learning; overtly discourages student enjoyment of learning

P-5 SCORE: _____ NOTES/RATIONALE:
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Teacher Effectiveness Scale Summary Rating Form-Combined

Note: For use with two observers per classroom observation

Observers: _____

Date: _____

Teacher: _____

Transcribe the ratings for each item by the two observers to this sheet and reach consensus on the "Agreed upon" score with 1, least effective, to 4, most effective, based on the Teacher Effectiveness Scale.

INSTRUCTIONAL SKILLS

Item	Observer #1	Observer #2	Agreed Upon Score
I-1 Instructional Differentiation			
I-2 Instructional Focus on Learning			
I-3 Instructional Clarity			
I-4 Instructional Complexity			
I-5 Expectations for Student Learning			
I-6 Use of Technology			

ASSESSMENT SKILLS

Item	Observer #1	Observer #2	Agreed Upon Score
A-1 Assessment for Understanding			
A-2 Quality of Verbal Feedback to Students			

CLASSROOM MANAGEMENT

Item	Observer #1	Observer #2	Agreed Upon Score
M-1 Classroom Management			
M-2 Classroom Organization			

PERSONAL QUALITIES

Item	Observer #1	Observer #2	Agreed Upon Score
P-1 Caring			
P-2 Fairness & Respect			
P-3 Positive Relationships			
P-4 Encouragement of Responsibility			
P-5 Enthusiasm			

Appendix C: Letters from the College of William and Mary Protection of Human Subjects Committee and the district's Department of Strategic Evaluation, Assessment and Support

This is to notify you on behalf of the Education Internal Review Committee (EDIRC) that protocol EDIRC-2016-01-28-10890-jhstro titled A Qualitative Focus on Instructional Skills, Behavioral Expectations, and Classroom Management Practices of White, Female Teachers in Urban Schools with Low Percentages of Disciplinary Referrals for African American Male Students has been EXEMPTED from formal review because it falls under the following category(ies) defined by DHHS Federal Regulations: 45CFR46.101.b.1.

Work on this protocol may begin on 2016-02-01 and must be discontinued on 2017-02-01.

Should there be any changes to this protocol, please submit these changes to the committee for determination of continuing exemption using the Protocol and Compliance Management application (<https://compliance.wm.edu>).

Please add the following statement to the footer of all consent forms, cover letters, etc.:

THIS PROJECT WAS FOUND TO COMPLY WITH APPROPRIATE ETHICAL STANDARDS AND WAS EXEMPTED FROM THE NEED FOR FORMAL REVIEW BY THE COLLEGE OF WILLIAM AND MARY PROTECTION OF HUMAN SUBJECTS COMMITTEE (Phone 757-221-3966) ON 2016-02-01 AND EXPIRES ON 2017-02-01.

You are required to notify Dr. Ward, chair of the EDIRC, at 757-221-2358 (EDIRC-L@wm.edu) and Dr. Ray McCoy, Chair of the PHSC at 757-221-2783(rwmcco@wm.edu) if any issues arise during this study.

Appendix D: Letter to Participants

March 31, 2014

Dear Colleague:

I am currently a doctoral candidate at the College of William and Mary. As a part of the dissertation process, I am conducting a qualitative field research study in the area of disproportionate quantity of discipline referrals and subsequent disciplinary sanctions which have removed African American males from the educational environment and denied them access to foundational academic skills. The purpose of my study is to determine what instructional and behavioral techniques teachers are implementing which may contribute to a reduction in the disciplinary differences for African American males. I wish to compile a list of possible effective instructional skills and behavior management plans which may address the issue of reducing the disciplinary differences.

Disproportionate disciplinary practices in regards to African American males are an issue that administrators, teachers, and school divisions wrestle with on a daily basis. Your participation and feedback will assist in identifying those instructional skills and behavior management plans deemed effective for working with African American males.

The interview process will include three separate interview sessions, at a location that is convenient for you, which requires approximately an hour of your time for each meeting within a two months' time period, plus follow up contact to review the transcripts. I will also require access to your classroom in order to

conduct two observations lasting no longer than 45 minutes to reduce disruption to the classroom environment. This time frame is consistent with the district's requirement of 45 minute observations of teachers for formal and informal observations. In addition, three years of discipline data and state assessment results will also be required for review. Following the completion of the study, I will share my findings with you. The results of this project will be analyzed in order to provide possible strategies to assist with reducing the disciplinary differences. I guarantee that your responses will not be attributed to you, as you will be asked to provide me with a pseudonym to refer to you with. Please know that your participation is voluntary and there is no penalty if you do not participate. You may also withdraw from this study at any time. If you choose to participate, your responses will contribute to the identification of effective teaching and behavior management.

Should you have any questions about this study, you may contact my dissertation chair, Dr. James Stronge at (757) 221-2339 or jhstro@wm.edu. To report any dissatisfaction with the study, please contact the Chair of the Education Internal Review Committee, Dr. Ward, chair of the EDIRC, at 757-221-2358 (EDIRC-L@wm.edu) and Dr. Ray McCoy, Chair of the PHSC at 757-221-2783(rwmcco@wm.edu).

Thank you again for you time.

Kelly MacPherson

The College of William and Mary

(757) 628-3377

krmacp@wm.edu

THIS PROJECT WAS FOUND TO COMPLY WITH APPROPRIATE ETHICAL STANDARDS AND WAS EXEMPTED FROM THE NEED FOR FORMAL REVIEW BY THE COLLEGE OF WILLIAM AND MARY PROTECTION OF HUMAN SUBJECTS COMMITTEE (Phone 757-221-3966) ON 2016-02-01 AND EXPIRES ON 2017-02-01.

Appendix E: Consent Form for Participants

Reducing Disproportional Discipline Referrals for African American Male Students at the Elementary Level

I, _____, agree to participate in a study of instructional skills, behavioral expectations, and classroom management practices and the impact on the disciplinary differences. The purpose of this study is to gain an understanding of how instructional practices, behavioral expectations, and classroom management could have a positive impact on how White teachers and their African American male students interact and the subsequent disciplinary impacts on these students. I understand that the researcher has selected 10 White teachers who have been identified by their principals as being successful in their urban school. I understand the researcher is conducting this study and will be reporting on the lived experiences and perceptions of participants as part of a dissertation (EPPL 800) at the College of William and Mary.

As a participant, I understand that my involvement in the study is purposeful in that I am currently a teacher in an urban school. I was chosen for the purpose of gathering varied perspectives concerning the impact of instructional skills, behavioral expectations, and classroom management practices of White, female teachers when working with African American male students. Further, I understand that I will be asked to participate in a three-part interview. The interview will last between 60-90 minutes. I agree that I will read and review summaries of the information that is generated during the sessions to check for accuracy. Additionally, I agree to allow the researcher to conduct two

observations in my classroom, obtain and review the last three years of discipline and standards of learning data.

The researcher has informed me that information obtained through the interview will be audio taped to ensure accuracy of information I supply. To ensure confidentiality, a pseudonym, of my choosing, and a corresponding key linking me to the pseudonym will be used to protect my identity. All audio recordings and the key linking my name to the pseudonym will be stored on a password protected computer which will be accessible only by the participating researcher. Once recordings have been transcribed, they will be erased and no longer available for use. At the conclusion of the study, all pseudonyms and other identifying information will be destroyed. I understand that all efforts will be made to conceal my identity in the study's report of results and to keep my personal information confidential.

Through participation in this study, I may be increasing my awareness and furthering the awareness of others' about how instructional skills, behavioral expectations, and classroom management can impact, either positively or negatively, the interactions of White, female teachers and their African American male students which may lead to either a reduction in disciplinary referrals or an increase in said referrals. My input in this study may assist in creating the foundation for identifying key aspects of instructional skills, behavioral expectations, and classroom management and convey those to other educators of African American males in order to reduce the discipline differences that exists

for these young men. It is my understanding that I will receive a copy of the results of the study via email.

I understand that there may be minimal psychological discomfort directly involved with this research. I also understand that I do not have to answer every question, and may withdraw my consent and discontinue participation in this study at any time by informing a researcher by telephone or email. My decision to participate or not participate will not affect my relationships with administration or faculty. If I have any questions I should contact James Stronge, Ph.D., professor of EPPL 800 at 757-221-2339 or jhstro@wm.edu. If I have problems or experience dissatisfaction, I understand that I may contact Dr. Ward, chair of the EDIRC, at 757-221-2358 (EDIRC-L@wm.edu) and Dr. Ray McCoy, Chair of the PHSC at 757-221-2783(rwmcco@wm.edu) if any issues arise during this study.

_____ Signature of Participant	_____ Signature of Researcher
_____ Date	_____ Date

THIS PROJECT WAS FOUND TO COMPLY WITH APPROPRIATE ETHICAL STANDARDS AND WAS EXEMPTED FROM THE NEED FOR FORMAL REVIEW BY THE COLLEGE OF WILLIAM AND MARY PROTECTION OF HUMAN SUBJECTS COMMITTEE (Phone 757-221-3966) ON 2016-02-01 AND EXPIRES ON 2017-02-01.

Appendix F: Letter to Principal

February 22, 2014

Dear Ms. Smith:

I am currently a doctoral candidate at the College of William and Mary. As a part of the dissertation process, I am conducting a qualitative field research study focusing on the disproportionate quantity of discipline referrals and subsequent disciplinary sanctions which have removed African American males from the educational environment and denied them access to foundational academic skills. The purpose of my study is to determine what instructional and behavioral techniques teachers are implementing which may contribute to a reduction in the disciplinary differences for African American males. I wish to compile a list of possible effective instructional skills and behavior management plans which may address the issue of reducing the disciplinary differences. Data will be gathered through three sources: a three-tiered interview process, three classroom observations, and the three-year discipline data for the identified teacher(s) to verify the percentages of disciplinary referrals relative to others in the school.

In order to compile this information, I require your assistance in obtaining access to those teachers whom you believe have been successful educators of African American males. Please submit the names of teachers in your school who have been identified as successful educators of African American males and whose Summative Teacher Appraisal Instrument indicates Meets or Exceeds Standards in each of the seven domains: knowledge of content and curriculum,

human relations and communication, professionalism, planning for instruction, management of student behavior, delivery of instruction, and monitoring and evaluating student and program outcomes. The results of this project will be analyzed in order to provide possible strategies to assist with reducing the disciplinary differences. Anonymity of teachers will be guaranteed for teacher(s) will be asked to provide me with a pseudonym name. Please know that the teacher(s) participation is voluntary and there is no penalty if the teacher(s) you identify do not. The teacher(s) may also withdraw from this study at any time. If the teacher(s) choose to participate, responses will assist the researcher with identifying and describing teacher characteristics/qualities, instructional methods, and classroom behavior management techniques that appear to have a positive influence on reducing the disciplinary differences.

Disproportionate disciplinary practices in regards to African American males are an issue that administrators, teachers, and school divisions wrestle with on a daily basis. Your assistance in obtaining access to those teachers whom you believe have been successful educators of African American males will be appreciated.

Should you have any questions about this study, you may contact my dissertation chair, Dr. James Stronge at (757) 221-2339 or jhstro@wm.edu. To report any dissatisfaction with the study, please contact the Chair of the Education Internal Review Committee, Dr. Ward, chair of the EDIRC, at 757-221-2358 (EDIRC-L@wm.edu) and Dr. Ray McCoy, Chair of the PHSC at 757-221-2783(rwmcco@wm.edu).

Thank you again for you time.

Kelly MacPherson
The College of William and Mary
(757) 628-3377
krmacp@wm.edu

THIS PROJECT WAS FOUND TO COMPLY WITH APPROPRIATE ETHICAL STANDARDS AND WAS EXEMPTED FROM THE NEED FOR FORMAL REVIEW BY THE COLLEGE OF WILLIAM AND MARY PROTECTION OF HUMAN SUBJECTS COMMITTEE (Phone 757-221-3966) ON 2016-02-01 AND EXPIRES ON 2017-02-01.

Appendix G: Email Correspondence with Principal at Oak School

Dissertation Assistance Request

From: Kelly R. MacPherson

Sat 2/22/2014 4:31 PM

To: Principal of Oak School

1 attachment (37 KB)

Letter to Principal of Oak School.doc;

Good afternoon, Ms. Smith,

I hope this finds you doing well. My son talks about you just about everyday - you have made quite an impression! I am writing to request your assistance. I was recently given approval to being my research for my dissertation. My focus is on disproportionality in disciplinary sanctions for African American males with a focus on the elementary level. There are not many studies that I found that looked at this age population. Since we are an urban district, we have a higher population of these students with the majority of our teachers being white females. As such, I am looking to interview and observe teachers within this population. I have attached a letter detailing what I would like to do. Please let me know if you have any questions. I look forward to hearing from you soon.

Thank you,
Kelly MacPherson

Re: Dissertation Assistance Follow Up

Mon 3/31/2014 8:07 PM

From: Ms. Smith

To: Kelly MacPherson;

All of the teachers I asked have agreed to help you with your study. You can email them and set up interview and observation times.

On Mar 31, 2014, at 7:22 AM, "Kelly MacPherson" wrote:

Good morning Ms. Smith,

Thank you for meeting with me on Wednesday concerning identification of teachers who may fit the demographics for my dissertation. If you have those names, I can contact the teachers and ask if they are interested in participating. I know, as principal, you are extremely busy. It would allow me to answer any detailed questions the teachers may have.

I look forward to hearing back from you soon.

Thank you,
Kelly MacPherson

Help with Dissertation

From: Ms. Smith

To: Viola, Lilly, Nora, Sylvia, Jane, and Simone

Mon 3/31/2014, 8:52 AM

Mrs. Kelly MacPherson is completing her dissertation and need help from teachers at Oak. I am asking that you assist her in her process. This will consist of an interview and a brief observation. She will be contacting you to explain the purpose of the study.

Ms. Smith
Principal
Oak School

Appendix H: Students Disaggregated by Gender/Ethnicity

Table H12

Students Enrolled in Viola's Class by Gender/Ethnicity each School Year (Number and Percentage)

School Year	AA Males	AA Females	White Males	White Females	Asian Males	Asian Females	Hispanic Males	Hispanic Females	Multi Males	Multi Females
2011-2012	5 (25%)	5 (25%)	2 (10%)	5 (25%)	1 (5%)	(-)	(-)	(-)	1 (5%)	1 (5%)
2012-2013	5 (27.8%)	3 (16.7%)	4 (22%)	3 (16.7%)	(-)	(-)	1 (5.6%)	1 (5.6%)	(-)	1 (5.6%)
2013-2014	5 (25%)	3 (15%)	2 (10%)	4 (20%)	(-)	(-)	2 (10%)	1 (5%)	2 (10%)	1 (5%)

Table H13

Students Enrolled in Sylvia's Class by Gender/Ethnicity each School Year (Number and Percentage)

School Year	AA Males	AA Females	White Males	White Females	Asian Males	Asian Females	Hispanic Males	Hispanic Females	Multi Males	Multi Females
2012-2013	1 (4.6%)	3 (13.6%)	5 (22.7%)	3 (13.6%)	(-)	(-)	2 (9.1%)	3 (13.6%)	2 (9.1%)	3 (13.6%)
2013-2014	10 (27.8%)	9 (25%)	7 (19.4%)	8 (22.2%)	(-)	1 (2.8%)	(-)	(-)	1 (2.8%)	(-)

Table H14

Students Enrolled in Nora's Class by Gender/Ethnicity each School Year (Number and Percentage)

School Year	AA Males	AA Females	White Males	White Females	Asian Males	Asian Females	Hispanic Males	Hispanic Females	Multi Males	Multi Females
2011-2012	4 (17.4%)	10 (43.5%)	3 (13%)	3 (13%)	(-)	(-)	(-)	2 (8.7%)	1 (4.3%)	(-)
2012-2013	7 (29.1%)	7 (29.1%)	5 (20.8%)	3 (12.5%)	(-)	(-)	(-)	1 (4.2%)	(-)	1 (4.2%)
2013-2014	10 (27.8%)	9 (25%)	7 (19.4%)	8 (22.2%)	(-)	1 (2.8%)	(-)	(-)	1 (2.8%)	(-)

Table H15

Students Enrolled in Lilly's Class by Gender/Ethnicity each School Year (Number and Percentage)

School Year	AA Males	AA Females	White Males	White Females	Asian Males	Asian Females	Hispanic Males	Hispanic Females	Multi Males	Multi Females
2011-2012	2 (10.5%)	4 (21.1%)	5 (26.3%)	5 (26.3%)	(-)	(-)	(-)	(-)	3 (15.7%)	(-)
2012-2013	6 (31.5%)	2 (10.5%)	3 (15.8%)	4 (21%)	(-)	1 (5.3%)	(-)	1 (5.3%)	1 (5.3%)	1 (5.3%)
2013-2014	4 (21.1%)	3 (15.8%)	4 (21%)	1 (5.3%)	1 (5.3%)	(-)	3 (15.7%)	1 (5.3%)	(-)	2 (10.5%)

Appendix I: State Performance Data Graphs

Figure 17. Oak School Third Grade State Performance Data 2011-2012

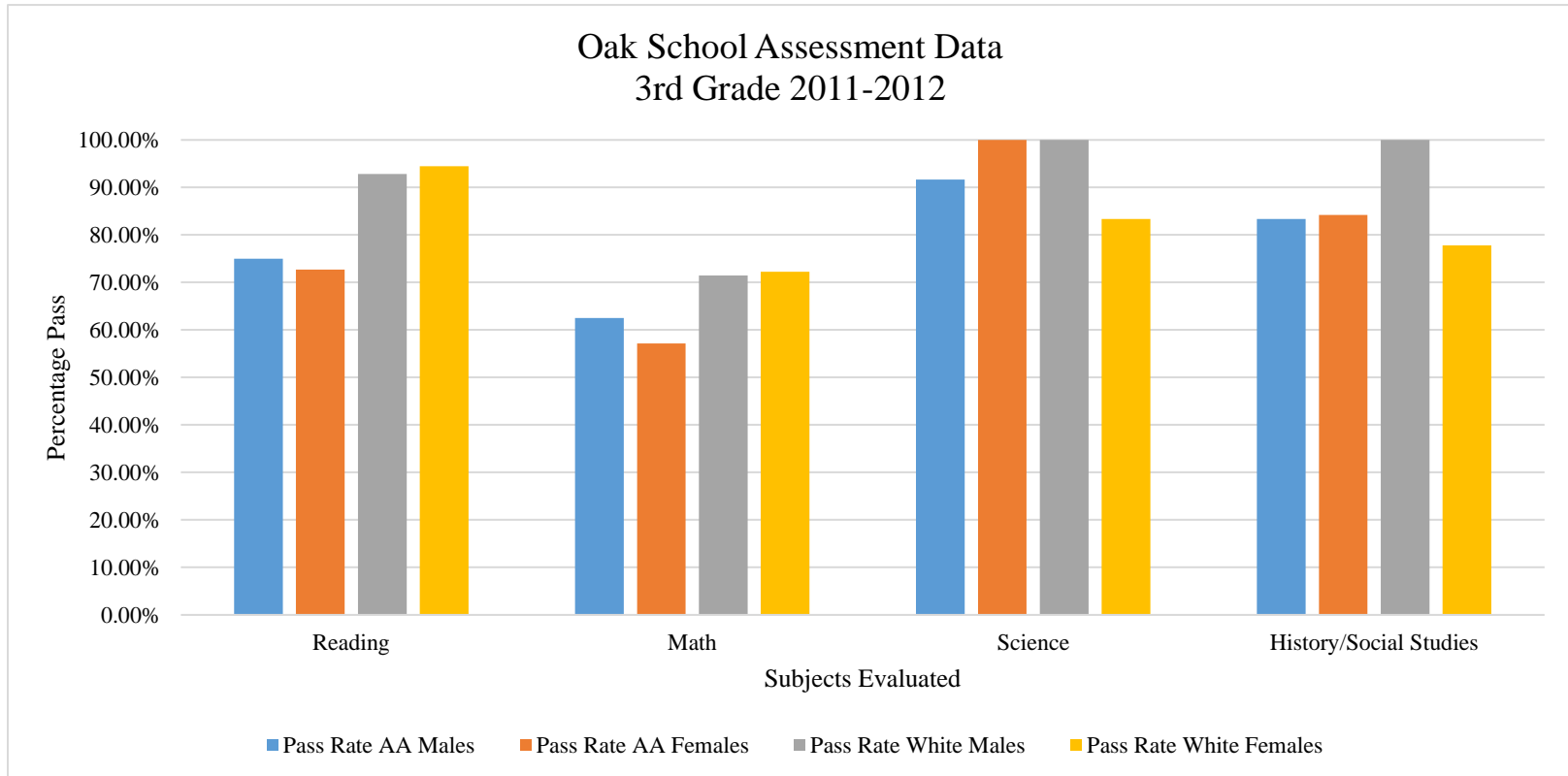


Figure 18. Number of Students Tested 2011-2012 for Viola and Lilly

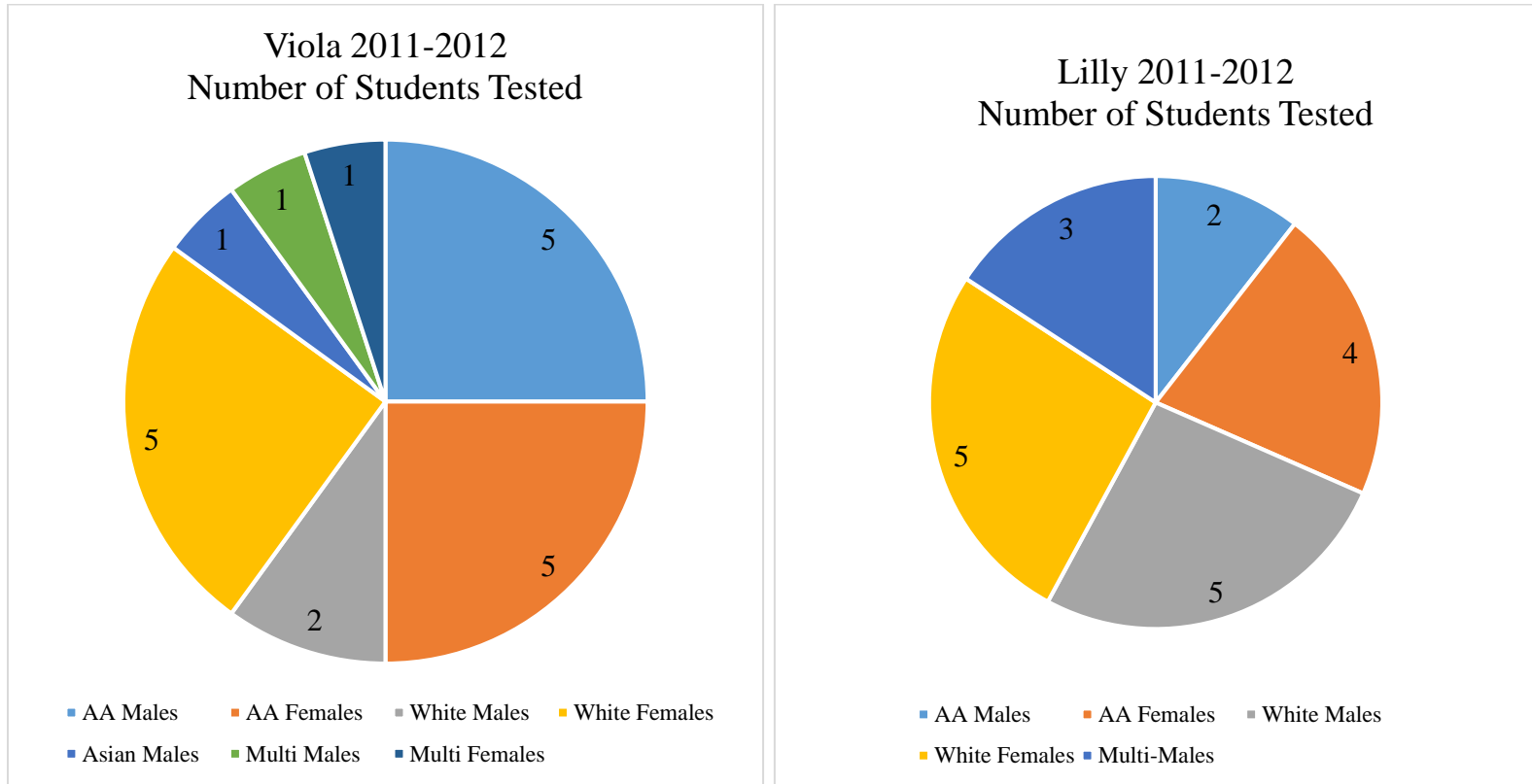


Figure 19. State Performance Data 2011-2012 – Viola

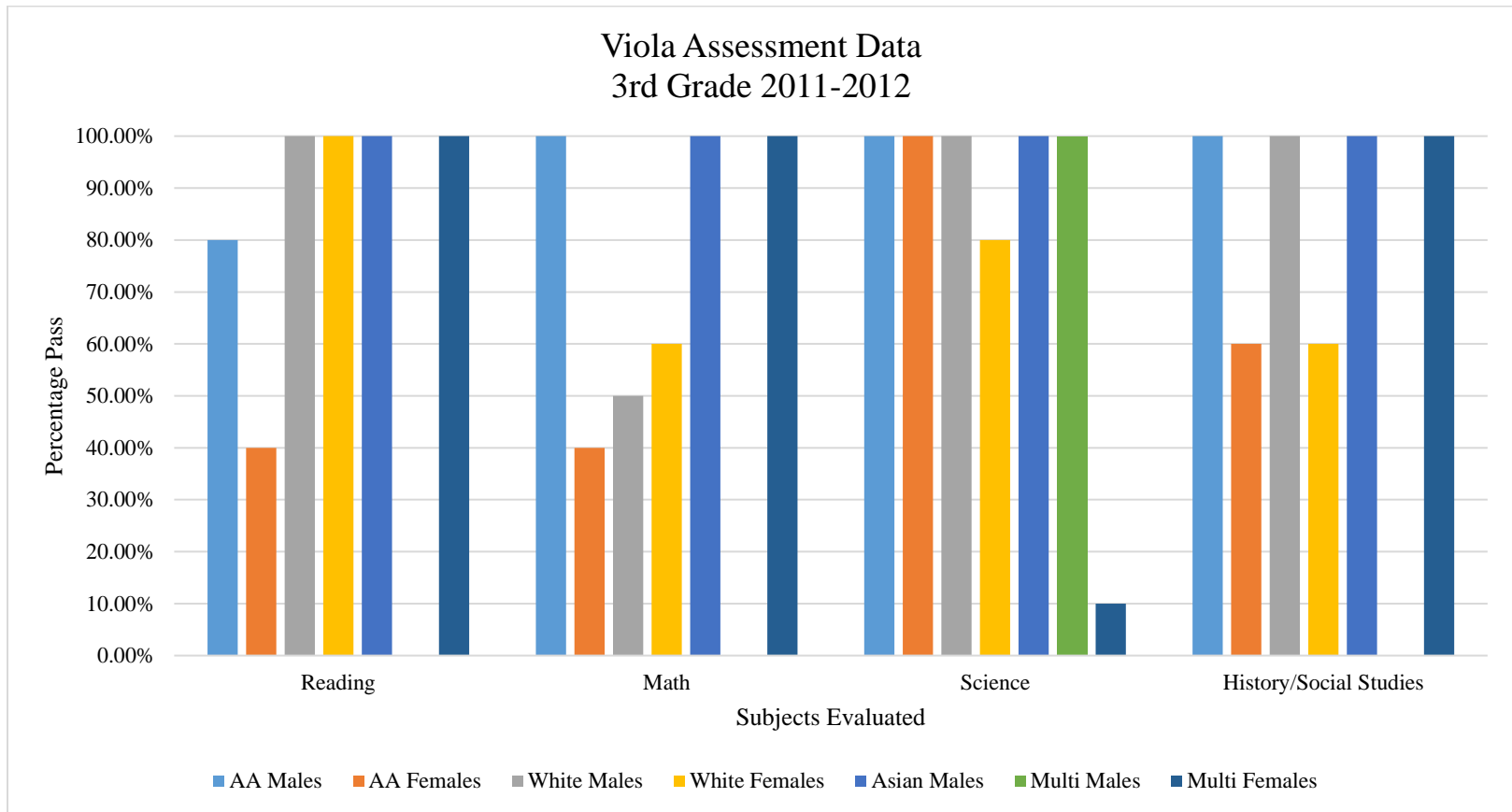


Figure 20. State Performance Data 2011-2012 - Lilly

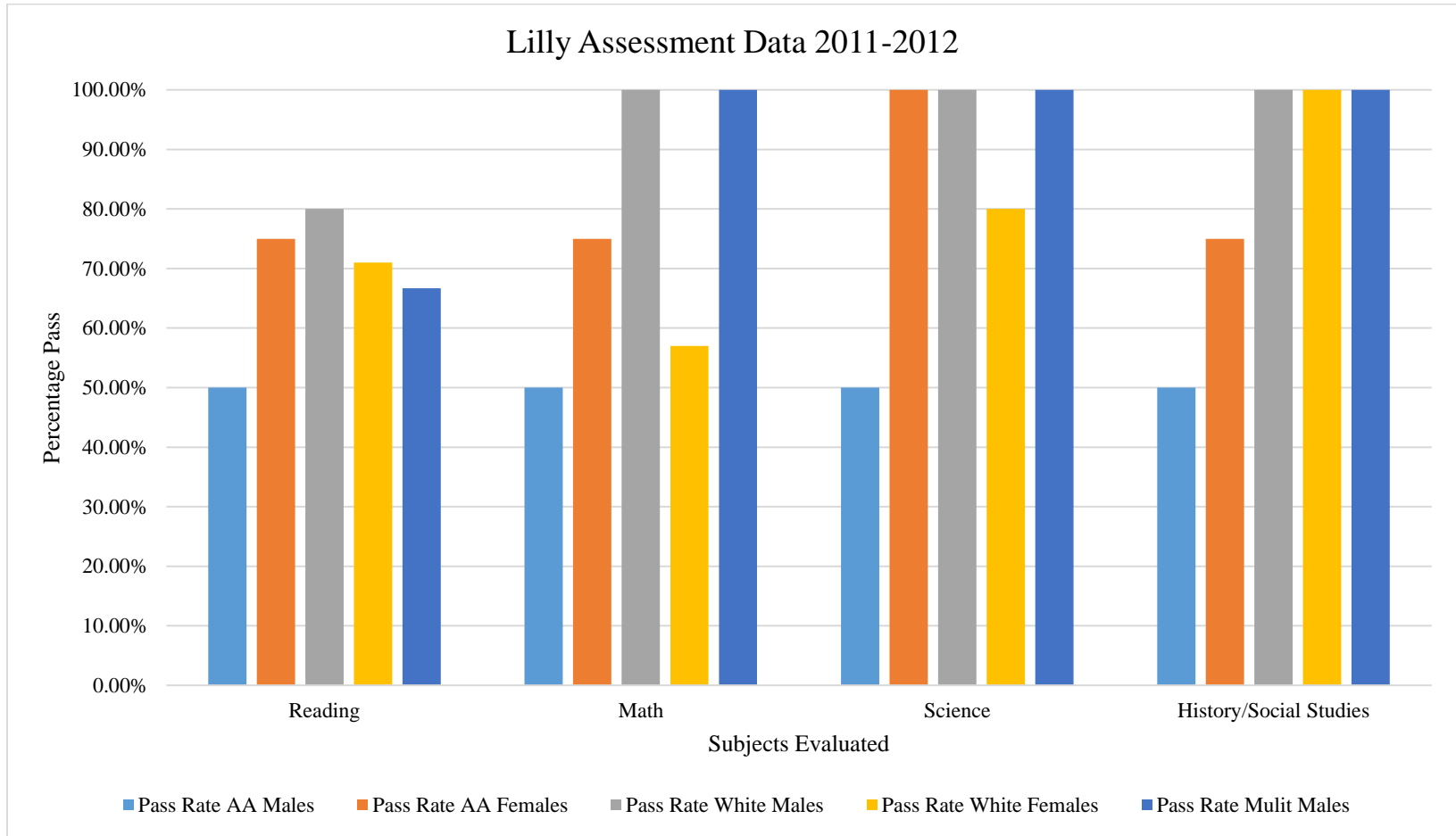


Figure 21. Oak School Third Grade State Performance Data 2012-2013

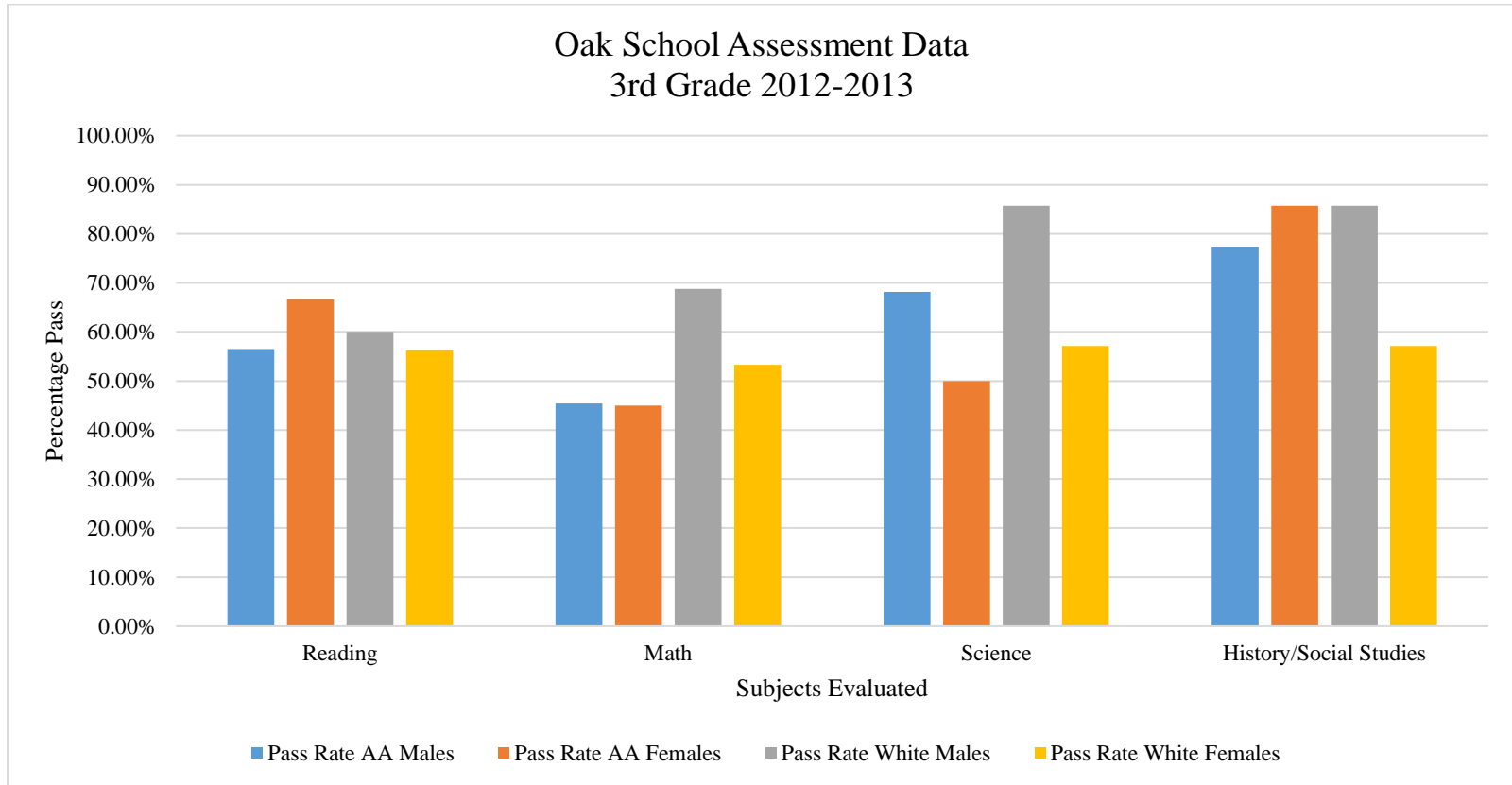


Figure 22. Number of Students Tested 2012-2013 for Viola and Lilly

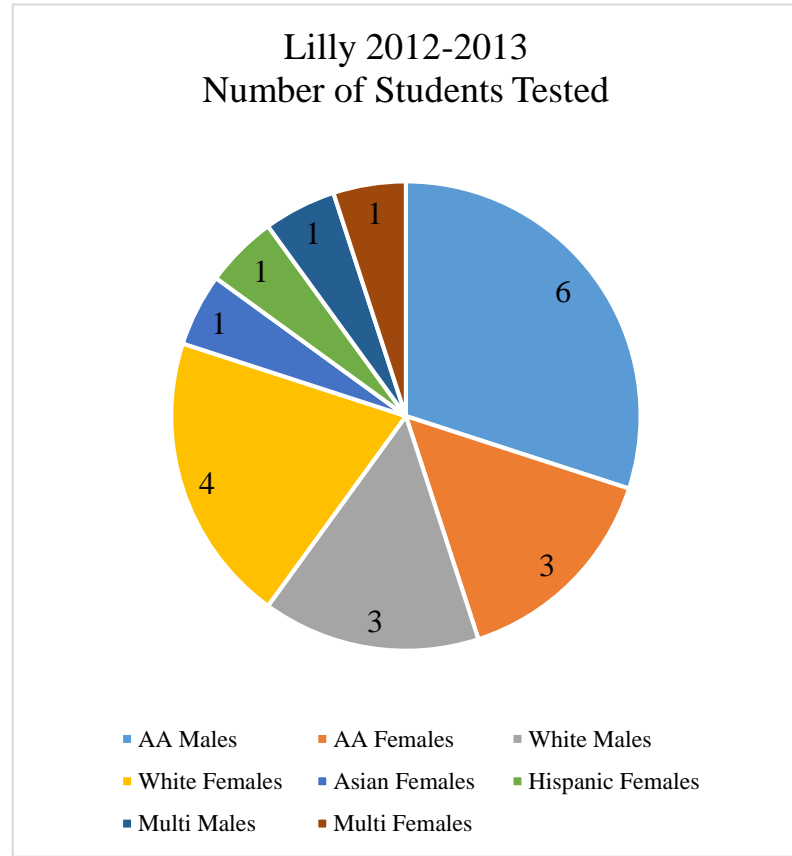
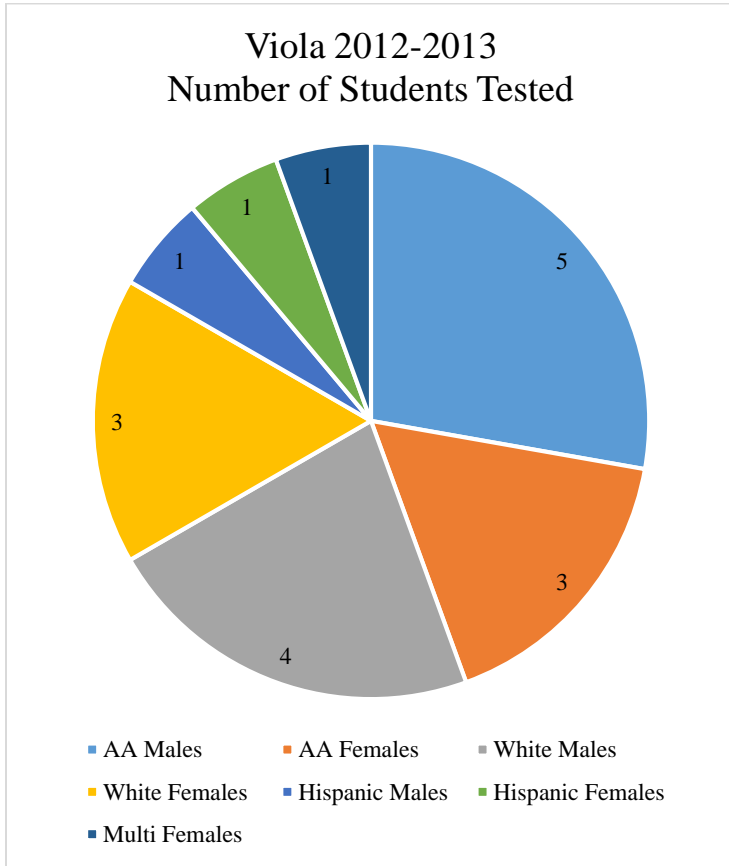


Figure 23. State Performance Data 2012-2013 – Viola

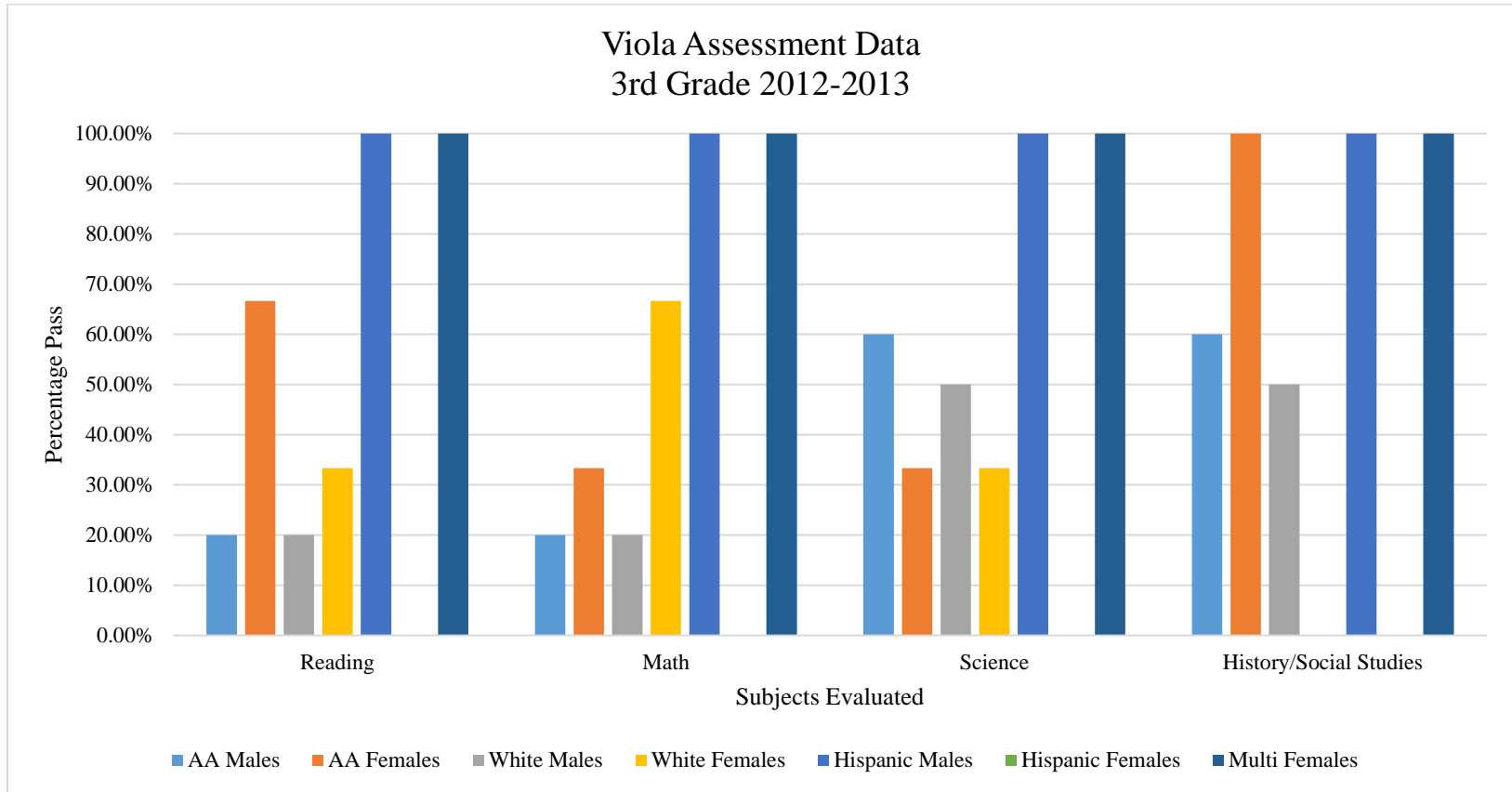


Figure 24. State Performance Data 2012-2013 – Lilly

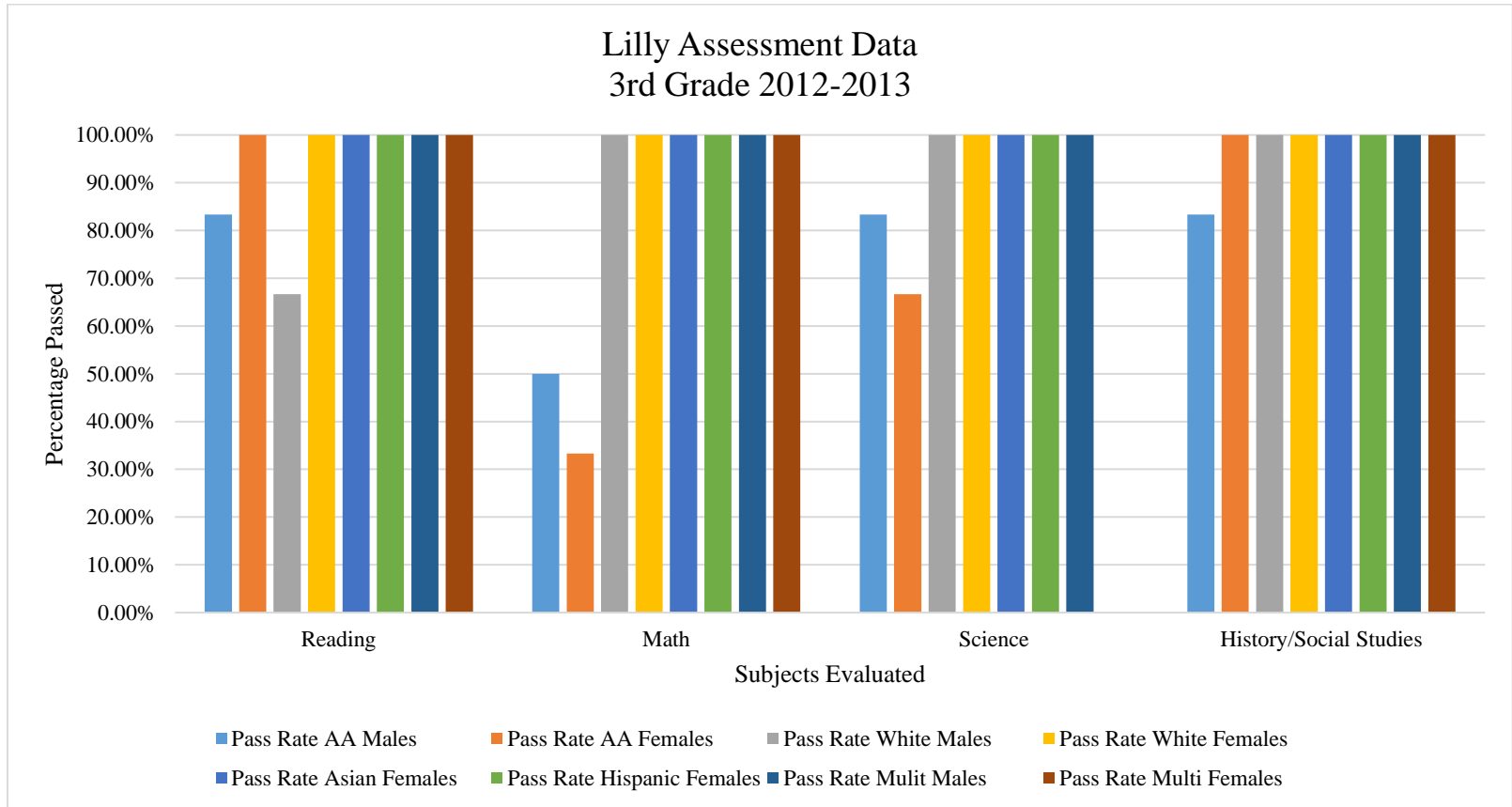


Figure 25. Oak School Third Grade State Performance Data 2013-2014

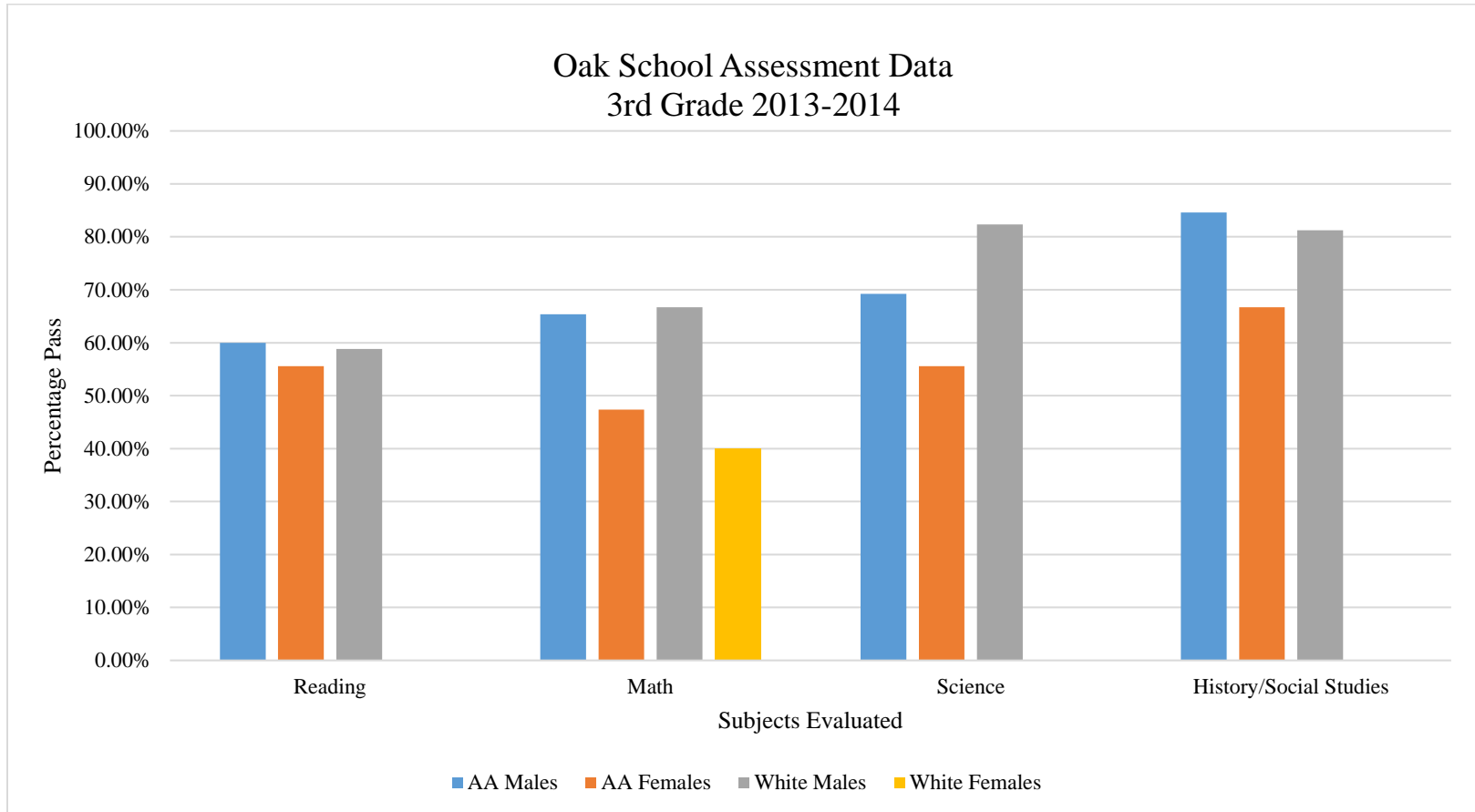


Figure 26. Number of Students Tested 2013-2014 for Viola and Lilly

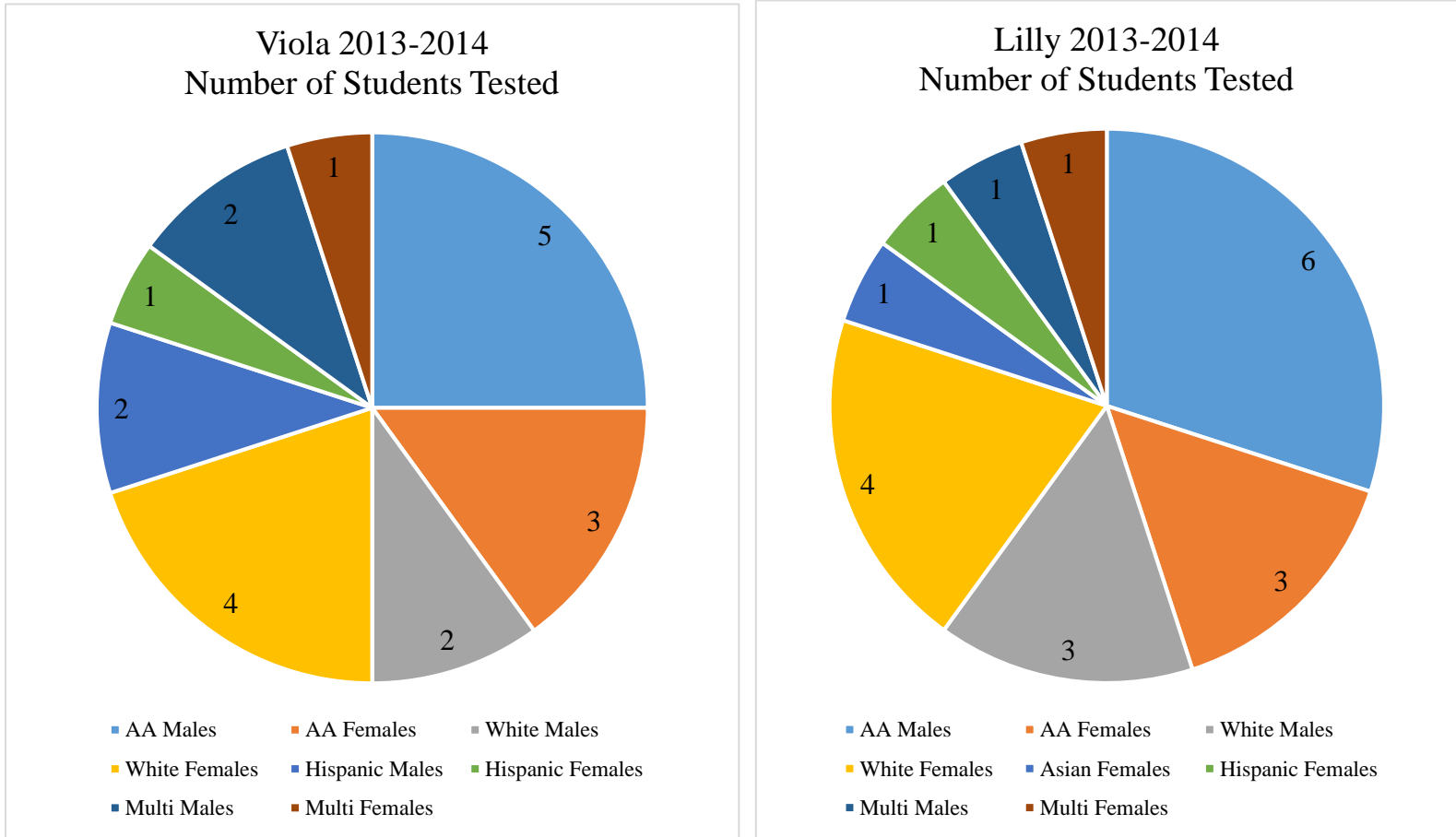


Figure 27. State Performance Data 2013-2014 – Viola

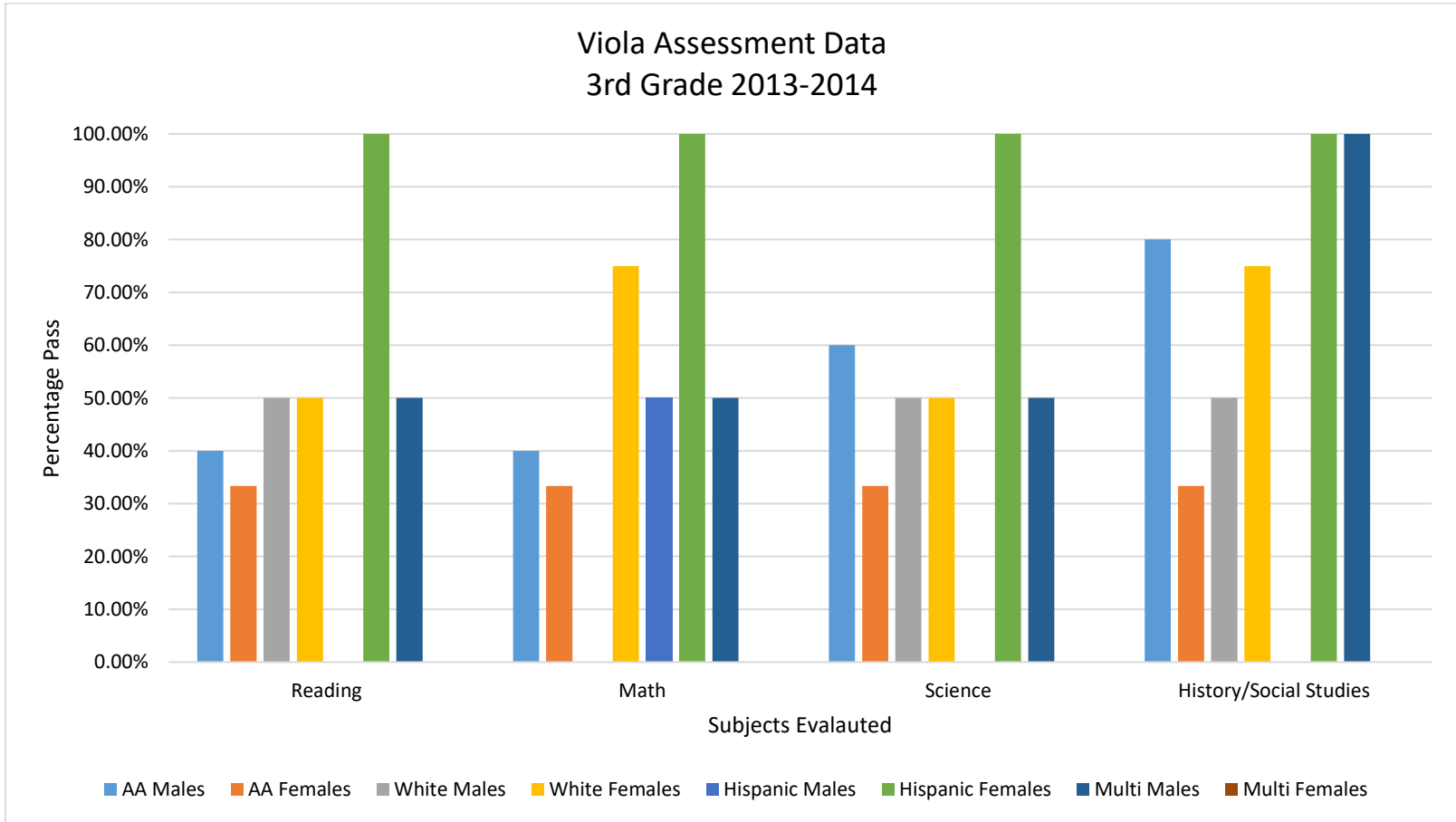


Figure 28. State Performance Data 2013-2013 – Lilly

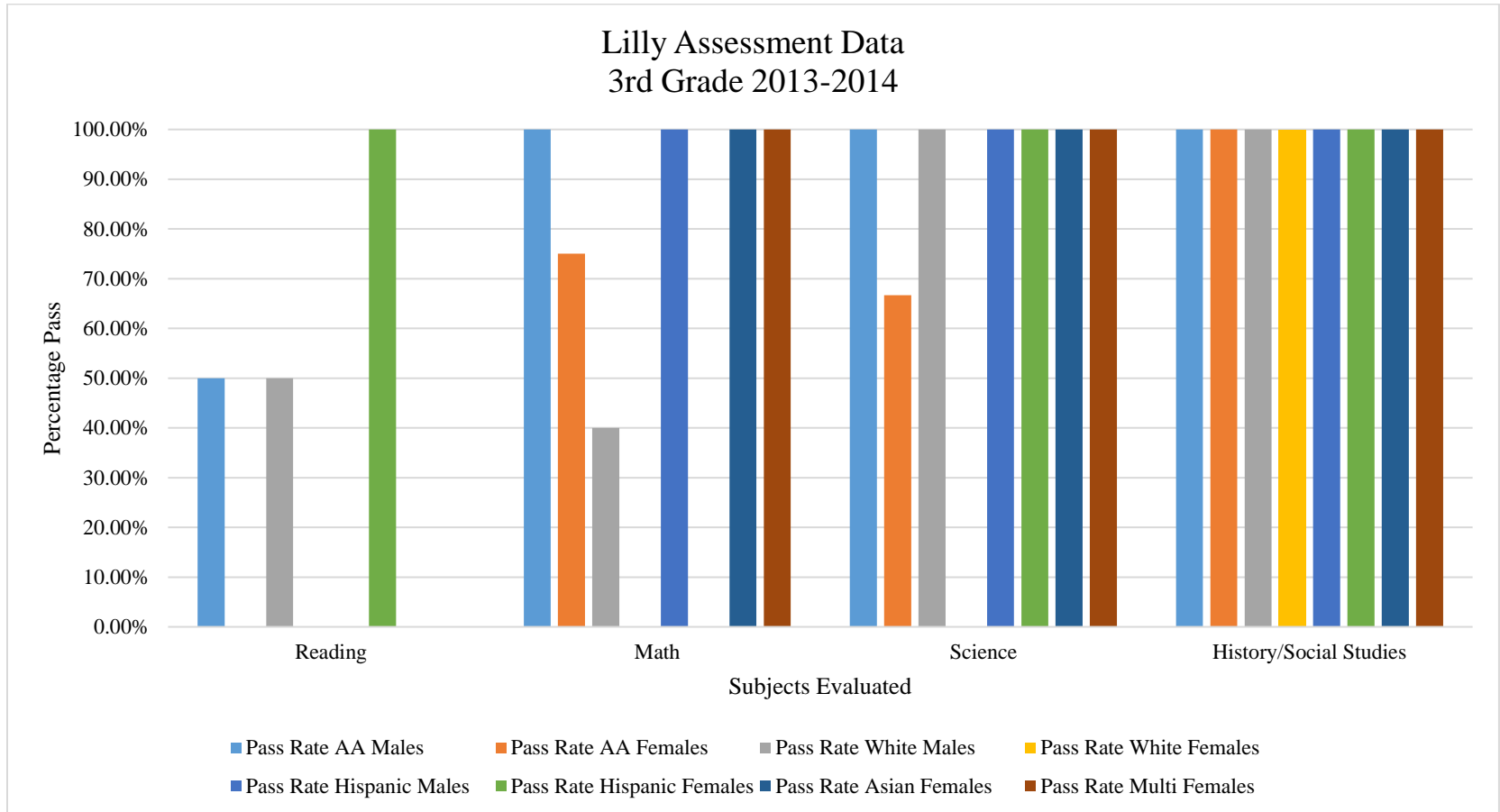


Figure 29. Oak School Fifth Grade State Performance Data 2011-2012

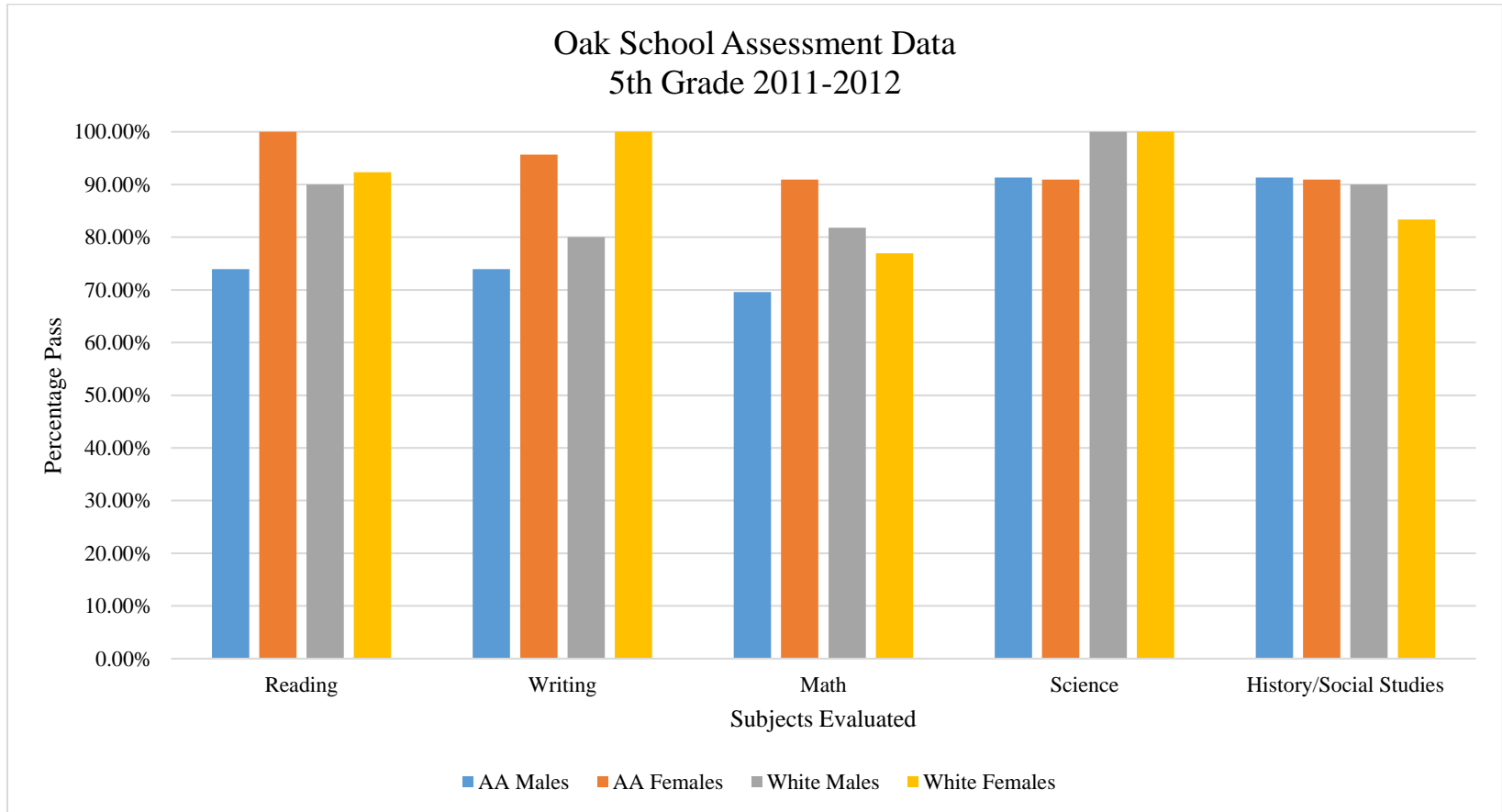


Figure 30. Number of Students Tested 2011-2012 for Nora

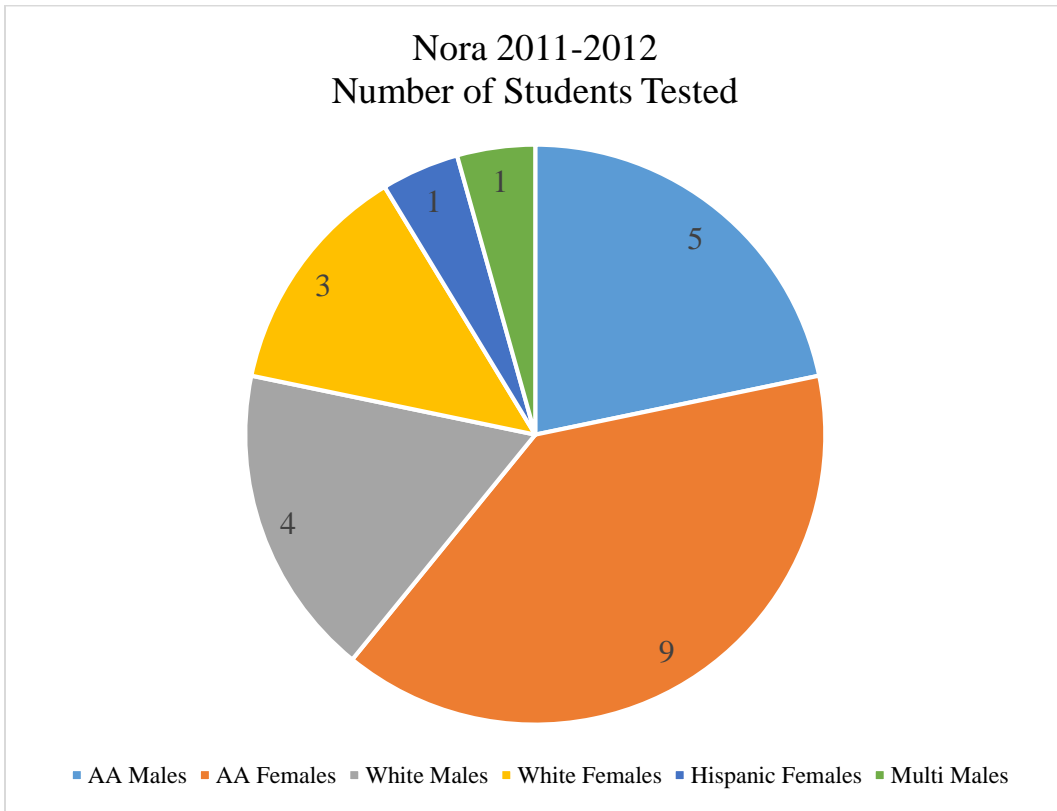


Figure 31. State Performance Data 2011-2012 – Nora

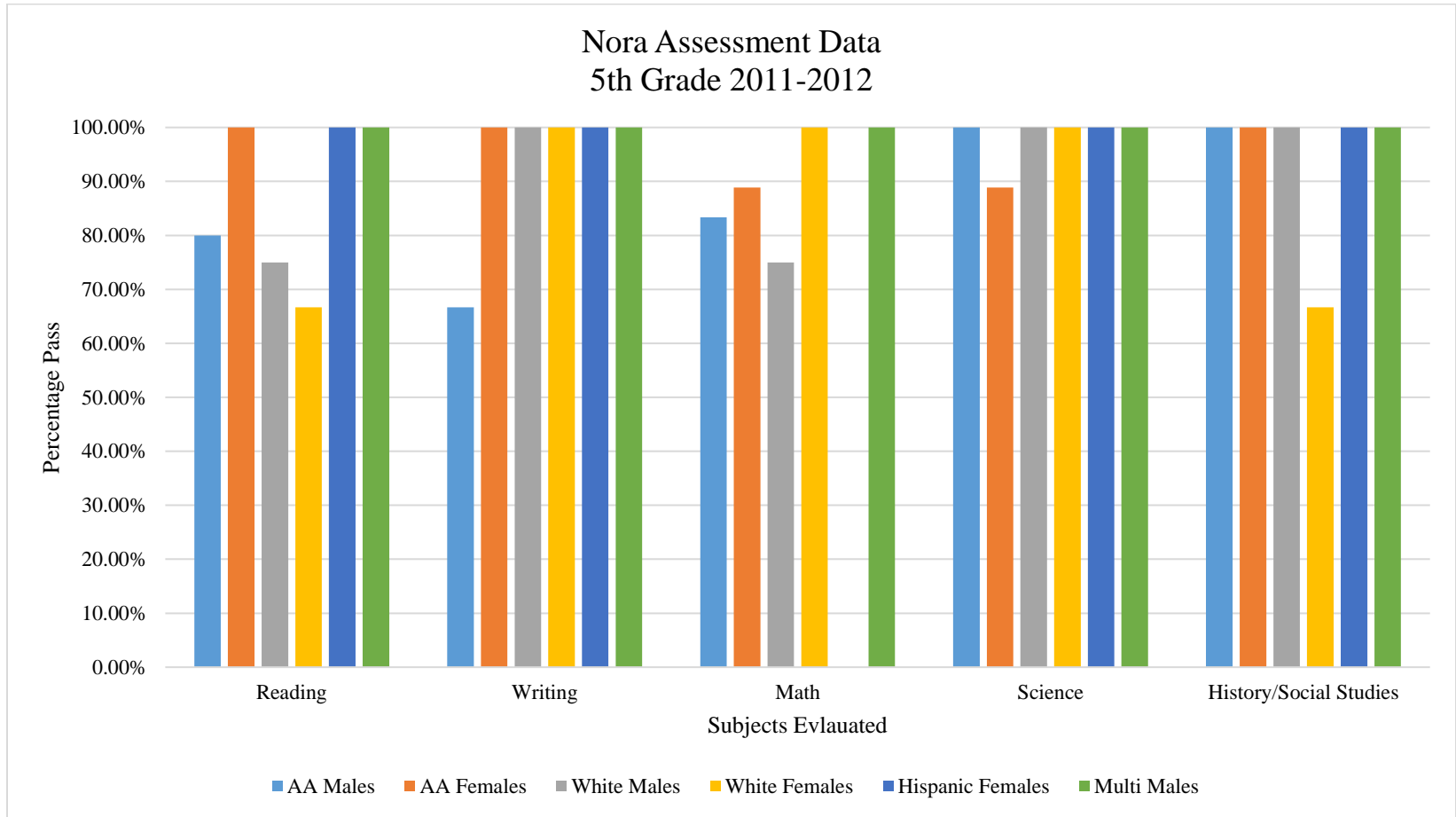


Figure 32. Oak School Fifth Grade State Performance Data 2012-2013

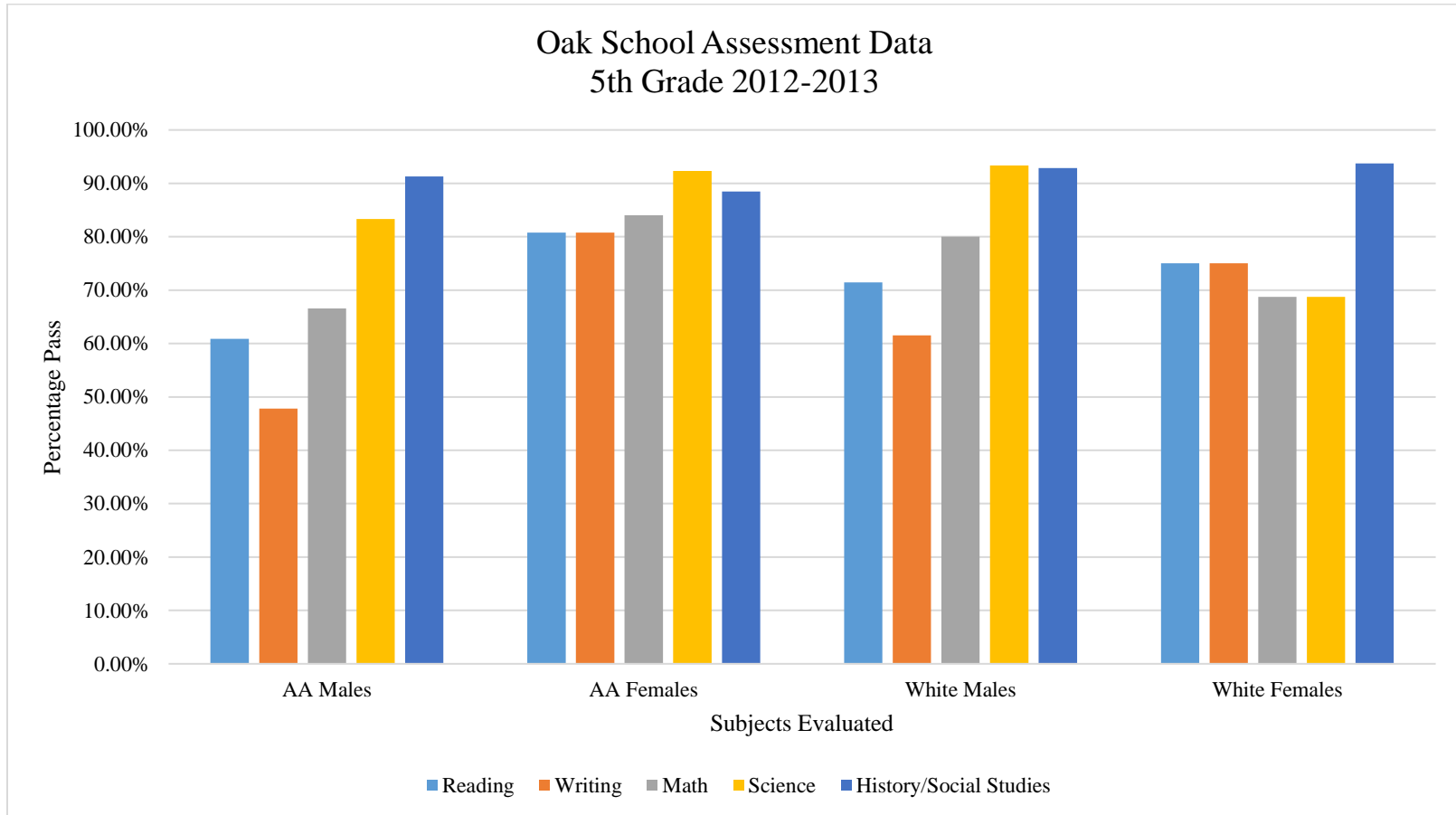


Figure 33. Number of Students Tested 2012-2013 for Nora

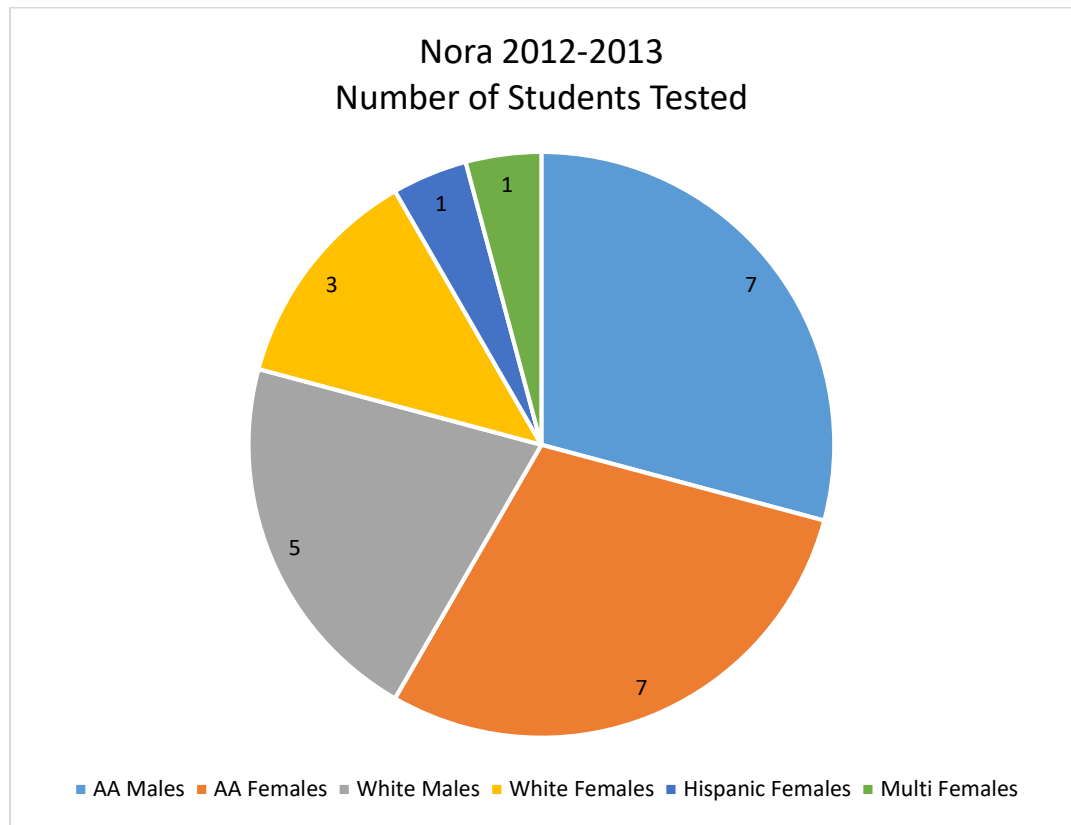


Figure 34. State Performance Data 2012-2013 – Nora

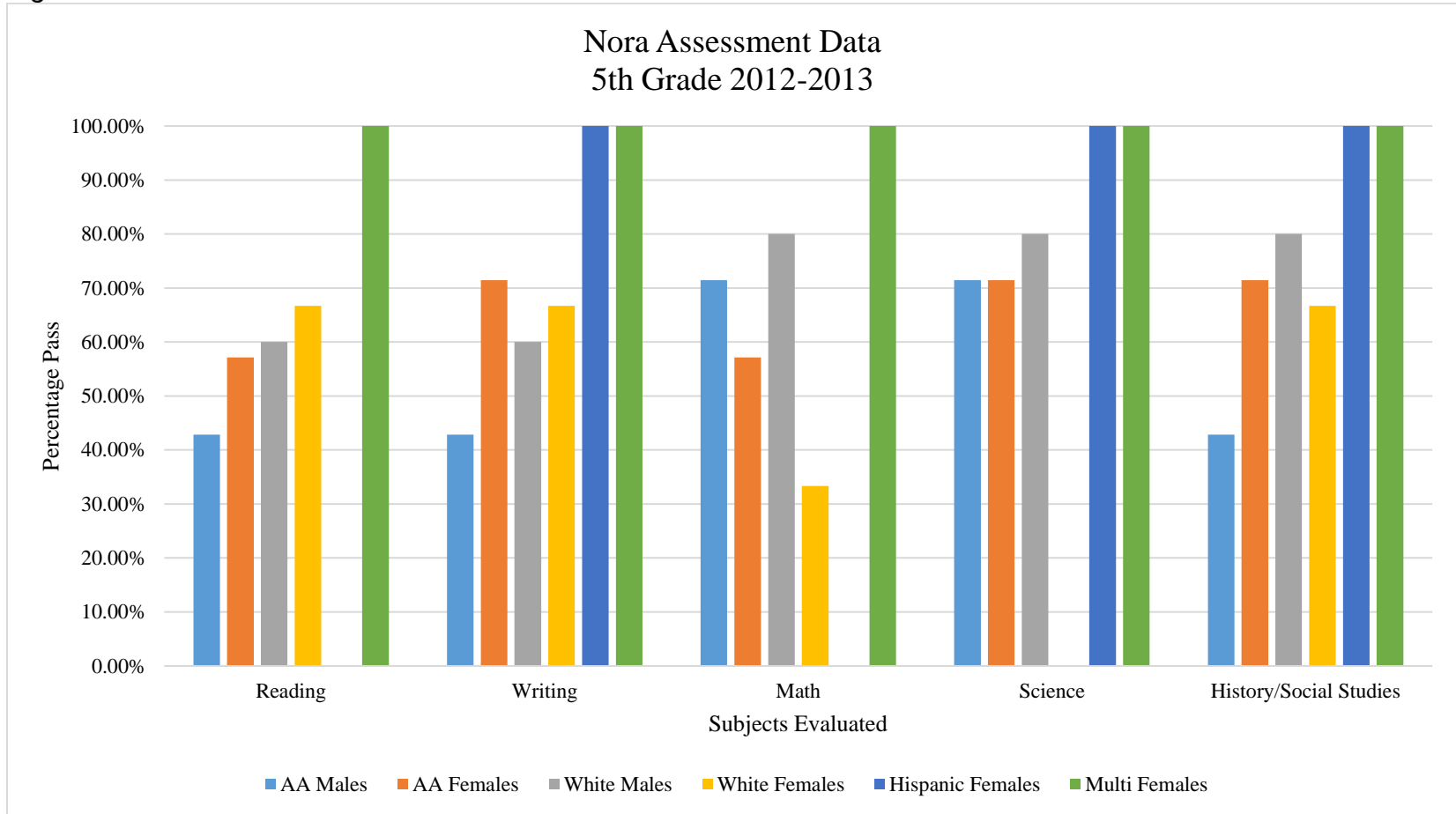


Figure 35. Oak School Fifth Grade State Performance Data 2013 – 2014

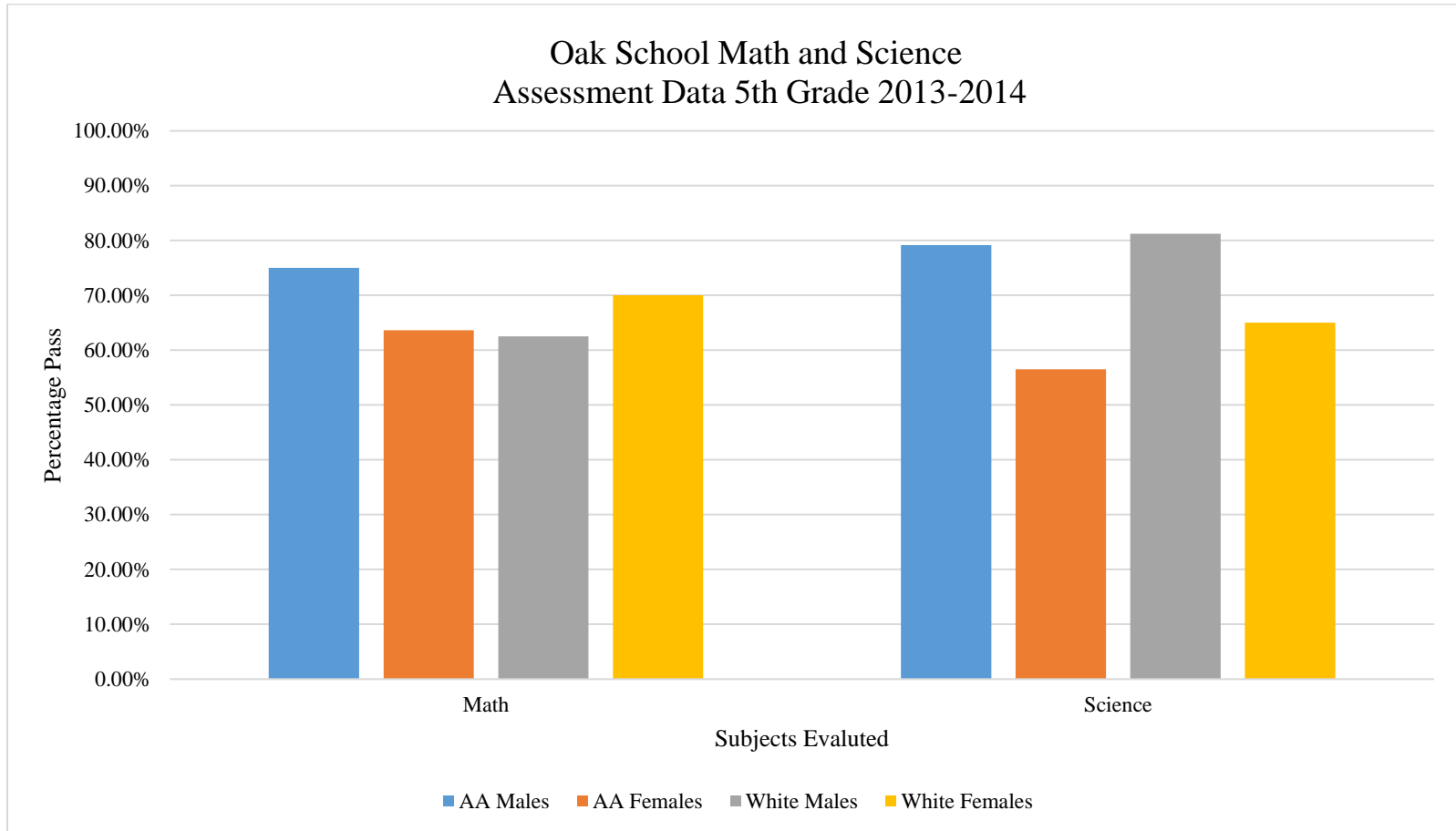


Figure 36. Number of Students Tested 2013-2014 for Nora

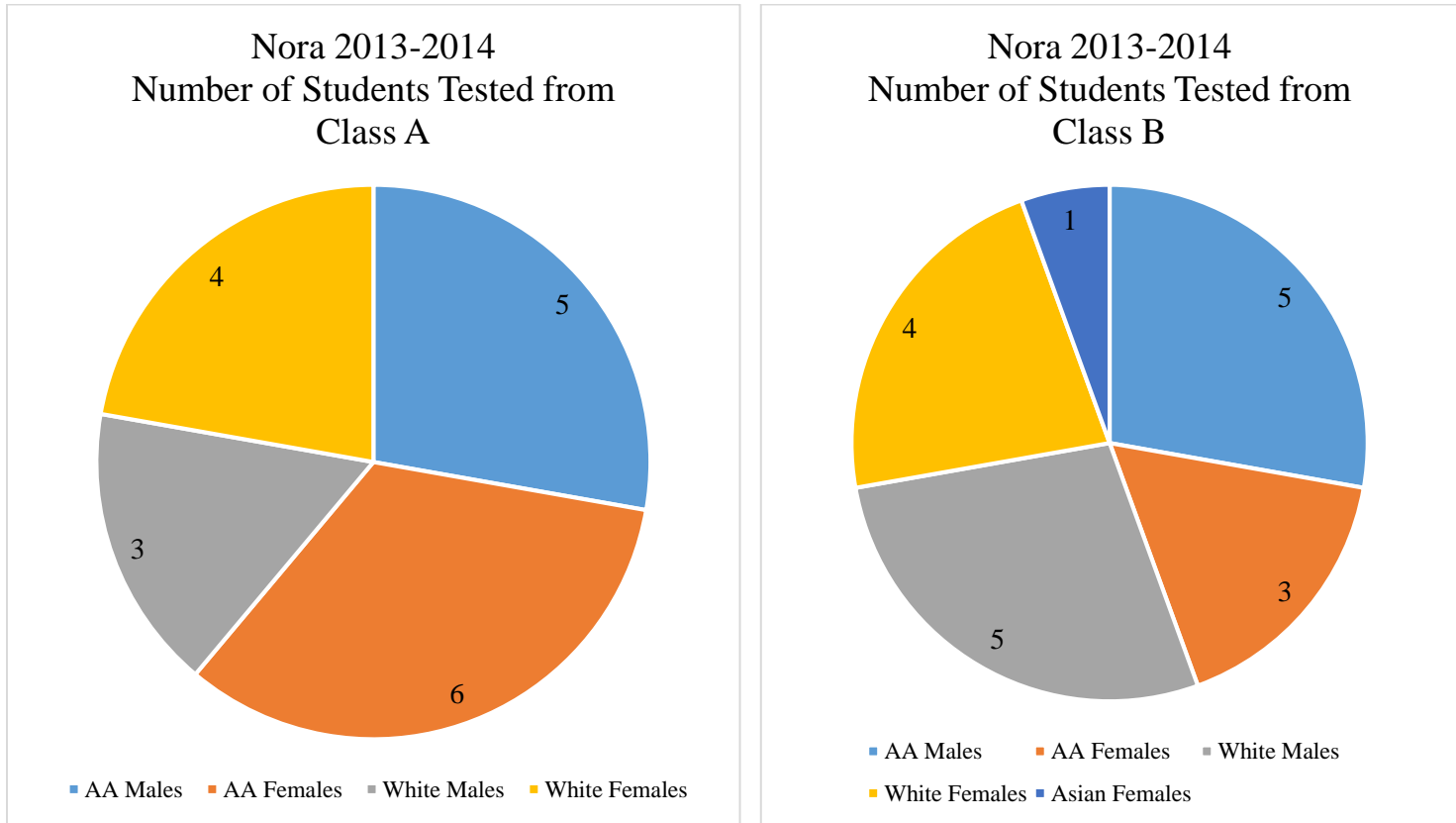
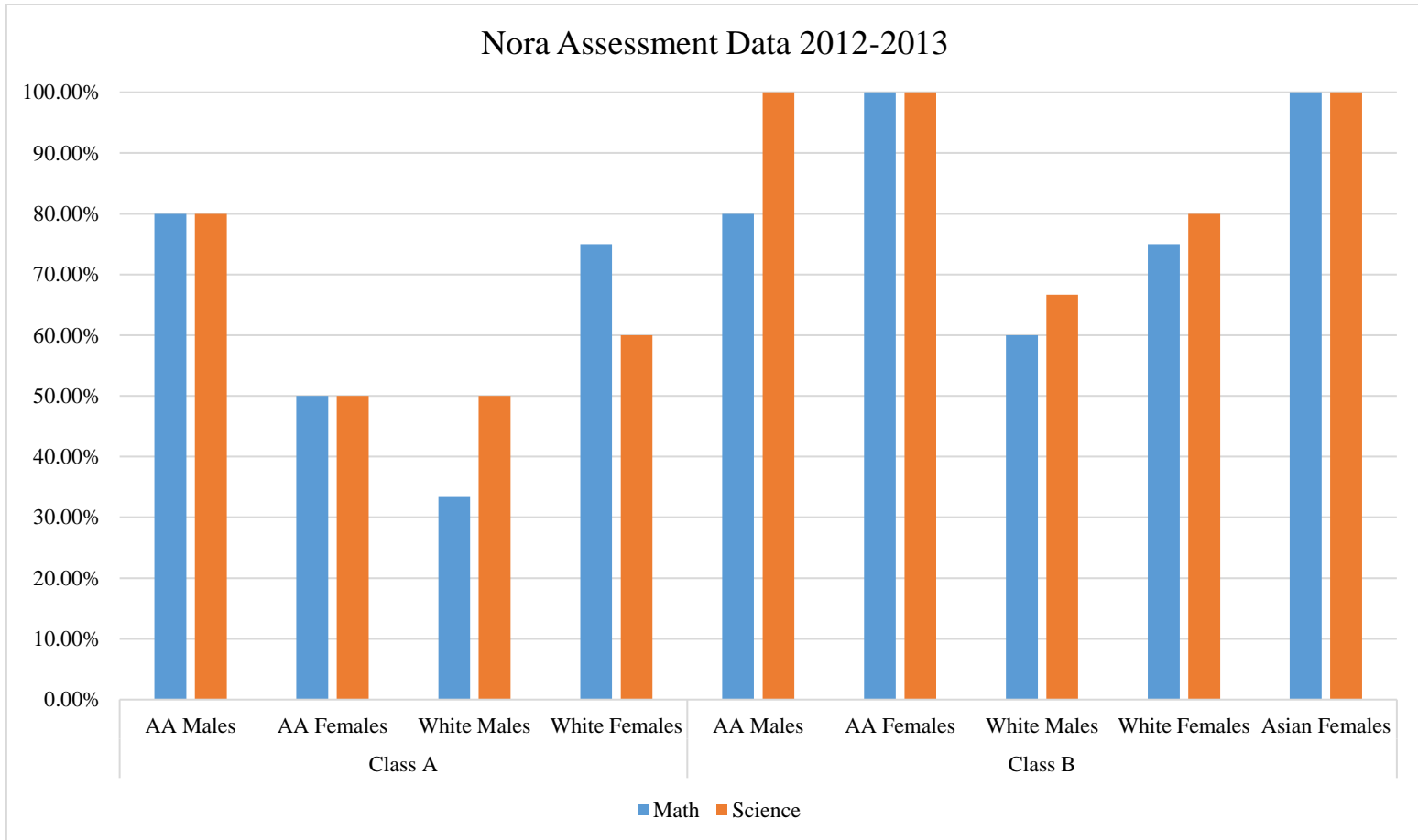


Figure 37. State Performance Data 2013-2014 – Nora



Appendix J: Teacher Interview Questions

Adapted from Abe (2000) interview protocol

Questions for First Interview

1. How would you describe your teaching style?
2. Who or what would you say are the primary influences that have helped make you the teacher you are today?
3. Assuming you are not there yet, describe the kind of teacher you would like to be when you reach your teaching peak.
4. How do you view the issue of school discipline among children?
5. How do you view your personal role as a teacher during a time when disciplinary infractions are taking place in your classroom?

Questions for Second Interview

1. Describe the instructional methods you are using to deliver the curriculum, and explain why they are particularly appropriate for African American males?
2. How are the students responding to the instructional methods?
3. In your opinion, what appears to be the overall atmosphere of the classroom?
4. How would you describe the discipline situation in your classroom?
5. What connection have you observed among curriculum, instruction, and discipline in your classroom?

Questions for Third Interview

1. As you look back on your teaching career, what specific instances stand out for you in dealing with African American males in discipline situations?
2. What kinds of disciplinary infractions are most common among your African American males? When and why do you think these occur?
3. Are there discipline differences between male and female students?

4. How does the discipline of African American male students compare to their peers?
5. What instructional methods were most effective for African American students? Why?
6. What instruction did not go so well? Why?

Appendix K: Correspondence with Dr. Daudi Abe

From: MacPherson, Kelly 3/31/2011
To: Abe, Daudi

Good morning Dr. Abe,

This past summer (July) I wrote to you about your dissertation entitled: *Effects of non-traditional instruction on the classroom discipline of African American students* in relation to how you conducted your research. I am currently drafting my chapter three and have reread your dissertation once again because my own proposal is focusing on the disproportionate disciplinary referrals for African American males and how instructional practices, behavior management, and classroom management of teachers could result in the reduction of disciplinary referrals of these young men in urban school districts and higher achievement.

The reason I am contacting you, once again, is to ask permission to use the questions from your interviews with teachers from your own study. There may be some modification of a few because I'm not focusing on cultural aspects of the participants. My original focus was on cultural competency, but I was discouraged from going that route due to limited empirical studies. One day I'll be able to do that I hope.

My current focus is to interview teachers who are providing classroom instruction, classroom management and structure, as well implementing discipline practices that are allowing these young men are finding success in school. I am also going to be conducting observations and reviewing discipline and assessment data.

I look forward to hearing from you and being able to answer any questions you may have for me as they relate to my request and my proposal.

Sincerely,
Kelly MacPherson
doctoral candidate
The College of William and Mary

From: Abe, Daudi J. 4/6/2012
To: MacPherson, Kelly

Kelly,

I have no problem at all with you doing this, but on one condition: That you send me a copy of your dissertation once it is completed. I would very much like to read about your study and findings.

Good luck,

--Dr. Abe

From: MacPherson, Kelly 4/6/2011
To: Abe, Daudi

Thank you very much Dr. Abe. And that is a deal! Any validity and reliability information that you may have would be greatly appreciated, also. I know I am asking a lot, but am very grateful for any assistance you could provide. Once again, thank you and I hope I can contact you at times if I have any questions.

Have an great week!

Sincerely,

Kelly MacPherson
Doctoral Candidate
College of William and Mary

Appendix L: Correspondence with Executive Director of Strategic Evaluation, Assessment, and Support

Response to Request - Dissertation Research/Kelly MacPherson/W&M

Dr. K. B.

Fri 1/10/2014 1:38 PM

To: Kelly R. MacPherson

Hello Kelly, see notes below. Thanks.

PERMISSION GRANTED:

Permission is granted for the researcher to contact school principals and teachers who may volunteer to participate in the study. Participation by principals and teachers is voluntary--not mandated, nor required.

IRB/College of William & Mary approval (exempted review) has been received; however, the methodology presents a concerning level of burdens on school principals and teachers: 3-teacher interviews and class observation, extensive criteria for teacher-sample selection, time-frame for conducting the study, and researcher-employee release time.

The following stipulations apply in seeking volunteer participants:

- The school principal agreement for their teachers who volunteer to participate. Copy principal agreement and teacher names to Dr. K. B./ARA (email ok).
- Teachers and schools may not release student, teacher or school discipline data. Contact ARA/Dr. K. B. School level discipline data is available on the state website.
- Teachers may provide anecdotal information about discipline during teacher interview.
- The researcher's school principal has authority/responsibility regarding all aspects of researcher-employee release time to conduct teacher interviews and observations. Release time is not mandated/nor required/nor granted by this permission.
- Research activities may not disrupt school instructional or testing activities. Please consult school and district calendars.
- Voluntary participation allows each participant (principals and teachers) to decide whether to participate, and withdraw at any time, without question or consequences. All participants and schools will remain anonymous in data collection, and reporting results. Identifiable characteristics or linkage to the identity of any individual or school is prohibited.
- Permission does not constitute commitment of resources or the endorsement of the study or its findings by the school district or the School Board.
- Data collected and results will not become part of any principal, school, or

teacher record. All research records must be locked in a secured location.
•The researcher will notify when study activities are completed, and email attachment copy of the final report for the school district file, and report any changes or problems while conducting the study to Dr. K. B.

Dr. K. B.
Executive Director
Assessment, Research & Accountability

Dissertation Research Proposal/KMacPherson/W&M/

From: E. G. F.

Mon 11/25/2013, 7:27 AM

RE: EdD/Dissertation Research proposal: A Qualitative Focus on Teacher Disposition/Character, Instructional Methods, and Classroom Behavior Management Practices of White, Female Teachers in Urban Schools with Low Percentages of Office Referrals for African American Male Students
College of William & Mary

Dear Ms. MacPherson,

Thank you for sending research proposal documents:

It looks like you are Dept Chair, Special Ed--is that correct?

I have reviewed the research proposal documents and find:
concerning level of burdens (time-interviews/observations/timeframe; complex criteria for teacher-sample selection) to conducting/convolute/complaints the study district (see below)

note: approval does not recommend or mandate release/paid time for researcher observations/interviews:
will require researcher's Principal decision--regarding researcher's release/paid-unpaid times for interviews/observations

please review and comment--this is opportunity to indicate how the study may be adjusted to reduce burden/concerns--making feasible to conduct study:

do you already know teachers or principals who would participate on your behalf?

Positive Behavior Intervention System: there has been extensive district-wide training--why are sample participants excluded? it may be a Best practice--in the topic/discipline

school level:

tendency of high variability (tolerance) in discipline/referrals due to developmental ages at elementary school level
"office *referrals*"--no data for office referrals per se

time:

3-interviews (up to 3 hours-3 separate sessions?) -or- 3-part interview (implies 1-interview; see Teacher/Principal letter)?

observations: at least 1-per teacher (pls confirm only the researcher will observe, i.e. 2-rater TES rating forms...)

ok--IRB--exempted from formal review

note: teachers do not release data to researchers

Teacher--sample selection criteria (concerning burdens/sample criteria):

-top- 6 teachers (?)

principal per school agreement to participate/teacher nomination:

white, female (in title; not indicated in Principal letter?), and

at least 2-Af-Am male students, and

"successful educator" w/Af-Am males; and

teacher evaluation--meets/exceeds standards across all 7-domains (new Teacher Eval System started last year), and

teacher discipline data--3 years of data; and

teacher who voluntary agrees to all the above criteria and time for interview/observation/discipline data.

interview time-- 3-interviews (up to 3-hours?);

6 or 10 teachers (?; varies across proposal)

classroom observations (how many observations? see Principal letter; 1 or 2 observers?--see Tchr Eff.Form)

(will require Principal decision--about release time--personal leave? --or time w/o pay?)

Time Frame: March-April 2013: indicated time frame for conducting the study (check SOL testing/Writing testing in March; Spring break)

My initial suggestions to adjust, that may make study feasible:

consider conducting the study at your school; thus, containing burdens/time with increased flexibility in your building...

-or- within the context of a qualitative study--gathering rich information on topic

1-interview/1-hour max
5 teachers (goal; participation not guaranteed)
reduce criteria for teacher nomination--be aware that principals may inherently not nominate teachers of SOL tested subjects/grades3-5); what are most critical factors?
only the researcher/ 1-observation
conduct study in January-February
use school level discipline data (see below; you could ask teacher general question in interview to estimate about how many referrals)
some schools will not be recruited due to prior commitments, etc.

Dr. G. F., PhD.
Assessment, Research & Accountability

>>> Kelly MacPherson 11/07/13 4:39 AM >>>

Thank you Dr. F. I look forward to meeting with you.

Sincerely,

Kelly MacPherson
Doctoral Candidate

>>> G. F. 11/06/13 7:58 AM >>>

Hi Kelly,

Thank you for send the proposal. I am reviewing, and will get back to you to schedule a meeting (Admin Bldg).

Dr. G. F., PhD.
Assessment, Research & Accountability

>>> Kelly MacPherson 10/30/13 5:17 AM >>>
Good morning Dr. F.,

My name is Kelly MacPherson and I am a doctoral candidate from the College of William and Mary. I am interested in conducting the attached study to fulfill requirements for completion of my dissertation and would appreciate your consideration of conducting that research through the school division. Please let me know if you would like for me to call your office to schedule an appointment to consult with you. I appreciate your consideration and look forward to hearing from you.

Thank you,

Kelly MacPherson
Doctoral Candidate

Appendix M: Priori Codes and Categories within A Priori Codes from Interviews

A priori Code	Categories Within A priori Codes	Definition	Number of Participants Identifying with Categories within A priori Codes	Examples from Data
Behavioral interventions	Behavior	The actions or verbalizations a person exhibits	Three out of four	<p>“The only thing is my guy here who’s cursing and bullying, like, the kindergarteners.” (Viola)</p> <p>“you are bullying another student, you’ve sworn, you’ve been malicious with another student,” (Nora)</p> <p>“he was very, very bright, but if he did not get what he wanted, he would get very angry and one time, he, I had my student teacher, and she would try and tell him something and he just really angry and he was getting ready to run out” (Lilly)</p>
	Behavior management	A proactive approach to development and implementation of a system of rules with rewards/consequences established in an attempt to control a large group;	Three out of four	<p>“basically sticks and you move your stick if you’re warned.” (Lilly)</p> <p>“We do the clips for negative behavior, however, if it’s a kid who, you know, I want you to move your clip for not doing your work, but if you can continue to do your work for the rest of writing, you can move it back down.” (Sylvia)</p> <p>“I used to do like to traditional, you know, whatever, if it’s the traffic light or the bees and the colors, but I like classroom doja because I can pull it up on my phone or the iPad and parents have codes that they can see constantly.” (Viola)</p>

A priori Code	Categories Within A priori Codes	Definition	Number of Participants Identifying with Categories within A priori Codes	Examples from Data
Behavioral interventions	Consequences	An act that follows a poor decision and/or misbehavior	Four out of four	<p>“It’s only if you get a time out...if you continue to misbehave three times.” (Lilly)</p> <p>“oh he cursed, and you know we’re talking to him and taking points, but I don’t know if it’s really sinking in.” (Viola)</p> <p>“They have had time outs, silent lunch, lost recess, um...” (Sylvia)</p> <p>“I inform them the consequence will be taken further – detention, conduct notice...” (Nora)</p>
	Reinforcers	The strength of a task, object or emotional reaction that is capable of increasing the probability of a desired response.	Four out of four	<p>“Put your chair down, thank you.” He didn’t get a lot of verbal praise...he didn’t get a lot praise at all. And so he would put his chair down and it kind of made him feel good that he was doing what you asked him to do and it put an end to it.” (Sylvia)</p> <p>“I’ve talked to him, he likes wrestling. Wrestling stuff is rather expensive. I’ve even offered, “I’ll buy comics.” (Viola)</p> <p>“homework passes or candy at the end of the week cause no one ever moves their clips. But do we start” (Nora)</p> <p>“And then, on Friday, if you got all stamps, you get pizza...not pizza, but a treat or whatever.” (Lilly)</p> <p>“I’m high fiving her. (laughs).” (Viola)</p> <p>“You did an excellent job in the front of your paper you know in the beginning of your paper, you know, I want you, now</p>

A priori Code	Categories Within A priori Codes	Definition	Number of Participants Identifying with Categories within A priori Codes	Examples from Data
Clear and concise routines and rules	Consistency	Establishing and maintaining a set policy to guide everyday activities.	Two out of four	<p>let's carry it through the rest of your paper." (Sylvia) "OOOO, I like how Jalen is reading while he's waiting, you know, for everyone else to be done." (Nora)</p> <p>"And it needs to be one way. And the kids see it and that child, of course, is not being sent to the office so he is going to continually do it. So it needs to be more consistent." (Lilly) "They all get treated the same. I don't care what color you are. I don't care what race you are. I don't care how high or low you are." (Sylvia)</p>
Clear and concise routines and rules	Monitoring academics	The collection of educational and behavioral data used to measure student growth	Two out of four	<p>"I've had a lot of progress this year with even with my kids that didn't know how to multiply and divide and now they're doing it like gang busters and so they're feeling some success which is good." (Nora) "kind of like reiterating that fact and showing them and letting them look at their grades. I would like them graph their CFAs. Um, I had their CFAs taped to their desk." (Viola)</p>
Clear and concise routines and rules	Relaxed Environment	A classroom setting that promotes common goals, sharing of knowledge	Three out of four	<p>"I honestly think it has to do with the fact of that, um, of that relaxed atmosphere." (Nora)</p>

A priori Code	Categories Within A priori Codes	Definition	Number of Participants Identifying with Categories within A priori Codes	Examples from Data
		and understanding and has a feeling of safety and security.		“Um it’s just a very like calm, cumbia environment.” (Sylvia) “I think my students feel very comfortable. Um, they feel safe.” (Lilly)
	Routine	Tasks, duties and procedures that are utilized on a daily basis.	Two out of four	“So we took recess Tuesdays and Thursdays and we practiced, like going to the cafeteria and going through the lunch lines.” (Nora) “They have that breakfast in the classroom and on that chart they have to check off that they had breakfast every morning.” (Sylvia) “They’re taught how to walk in the hallway. If they can’t walk in the hallway the right way. If they can’t do the expected behaviors then we practice at recess.” (Sylvia)
	Supported	The maintaining of a person’s endurance for decision making and instructional procedures by supplying emotional and/or material support.	Two out of four	“Anything that I have sent to administration for, I have gotten support and consequences that I felt were appropriate.” (Sylvia) “That it’s a willingness to listen to everything, understand the problem and consequences are given. I feel like I’m a part of the decision making process.” (Sylvia) “That type of thing, we don’t try to make fun of anyone’s faults or anything like that.” (Viola)

A priori Code	Categories Within A priori Codes	Definition	Number of Participants Identifying with Categories within A priori Codes	Examples from Data
Environmental organization/ parameters	Boundaries	A residual result of the establishment of a system of rules that focus on behavior, routines, and expectations.	Two out of four	<p>“you ask Ms. N. will you please, or Ms. H., they will by all means, say sure, we’ll come to this meeting, we’ll come to this conference.” (Viola)</p> <p>“That I was like, these things aren’t going to fly. You aren’t going to scare me and I’m not going to back down from you.” (Viola)</p> <p>“They know what they have to do and what’s expected of them and they know there’re consequences.”(Lilly)</p>
	Organized	Purposeful planning and implementation of a process to include materials to be used, the grouping of individuals and an identified area for materials to be collected and returned.	Three out of four	<p>“everything’s in place so that, when I come in at 7:30 in the morning, I don’t have to do anything.” (Nora)</p> <p>“It’s all about, when I say structure, I mean that’s what we do in every lesson” (Lilly)</p> <p>“Put stuff back the way it should be put back.” (Sylvia)</p> <p>“Um...so I try to plan for it ahead of time.” (Nora)</p> <p>“I think this is me, too, being organized...like everything is set out.” (Nora)</p> <p>“and I have to make sure I don’t put certain kids together and certain groups aren’t close together.” (Nora)</p>
	Unstructured environment	A setting that lacks clear and concise	Two out of four	<p>“But the cafeteria is the worst situation for them.” (Viola)</p>

A priori Code	Categories Within A priori Codes	Definition	Number of Participants Identifying with Categories within A priori Codes	Examples from Data
Establishing personal relationships	Experience	Individual observations/recall of past interactions, trainings, and employment that have influenced current practices within the classroom environment.	Three out of four	<p>“And in the lunch room, I’m not there and it’s all the other classes.” (Viola) “Like they had a really hard time with transitions.” (Nora)</p> <p>“so that comes in to a lot of my training here to deal with behavior. Um...learning to kind of manage the behavior before it starts type of thing.” (Nora) “and I’m going to tell you....and I think a lot of it is from teaching 3rd grade for so long that I know basically what they like and what they don’t like....the majority of the kids. And I use that.” (Lilly) “so there are some things I have to learn culturally are not...I hate when we watch a movie and they repeat everything and then laugh about it.” (Nora) “Um...I...every child, as I’ve learned through my teaching experience, it’s really not a one size fits all.” (Viola) “I remember the first time I watched a movie with my very first class, my very first year I was here and they were arguing about who was blacker.” (Nora)</p>
Establishing personal relationships	Professional	Specialized training, education, and skill for a position as a teacher.	Three out of four	<p>“this is her actual first year as a special education teacher even if she was a para”(Viola) “They trained me to be a behaviorist ad so that comes in to a lot of my training here to deal with behavior...she taught</p>

A priori Code	Categories Within A priori Codes	Definition	Number of Participants Identifying with Categories within A priori Codes	Examples from Data
				<p>me how to be a teacher because I had never studied to be a teacher before that..." (Nora)</p> <p>"It's kind of a mixture of everything. A lot of in-services I've learned a lot and then kind of tweaked it to what I thought would work." (Lilly)</p>
	Building relationships	The act of sharing experiences with other and demonstrating a mutual interest in life activities as well as developing mutual respect.	Three out of four	<p>"You know I tell them too, from personal experience, uh you know I make sure I let them know, it's like...when I went to school it was a lot different (laughs)." (Viola)</p> <p>"If I make mistakes with them, I try to do a public apology to them." (Viola)</p> <p>"Usually when we're are doing instruction where they're working in groups, I have, they don't work with the same person every day." (Lilly)</p> <p>"Get to know things about them and their family and, you know, when you're talking to them about things...And you have got to let them know that you do know about their lives and you do care about them." (Sylvia)</p>
Establishing personal relationships	Collaboration	Two or more people working together toward an agreed upon ending result.	Three out of four	<p>"We have resource staff. When I have, even with the non-special ed., if I say, 'ok, you know oh I have this issue. Ok let's try this...' you know...or just having, because of the inclusion and we're having, like, the OT or speech come up</p>

A priori Code	Categories Within A priori Codes	Definition	Number of Participants Identifying with Categories within A priori Codes	Examples from Data
Establishing personal relationships	Expectations	Clearly defined parameters for assignment completion, academic achievement, and behavioral displays within the classroom and/or school building.	Three out of four	<p>and if we say, oh yea, just kind of bounce it off...so and so is doing this oh why not try that." (Viola)</p> <p>"we joke around like when we have our meetings about like the SOLs and stuff, I'm like, 'alright, I'm gonna bust out my Maggie everybody.'" (Sylvia)</p> <p>"It also helps that I have a...a really good special education teacher. We're very in sync. So as we refer, we're the two mammas in the room." (Viola)</p> <p>"Or there are games they play where the games don't work unless all the members of the team do it. So they have to learn to work together." (Lilly)</p> <p>"It's like, what can I do, what's going to make, what can I do. Can we work together, what do you like...more positive verses negative." (Lilly)</p> <p>"But I also want them to talk about it. I don't like them just copying things from the board and things like that. To me that's so not really...you know, I want them to actually pull it out of them." (Lilly)</p> <p>"you know, I like, we talk about respect and speaking to others. A lot times that changes during the course of the year after they know what I expect." (Lilly)</p> <p>"I have very high expectations for them, behaviorally and academically. Um...when they're in here, I want to</p>

A priori Code	Categories Within A priori Codes	Definition	Number of Participants Identifying with Categories within A priori Codes	Examples from Data
Establishing personal relationships	Family stressors	The impact of activities and/or events experienced by families that cause negative results for a student within the classroom environment.	Three out of four	<p>instill in them they need to learn please and thank you and how to be polite and how to be good citizens in addition to being good students.” (Sylvia)</p> <p>“They know that there’s, they need to be sitting, they need to be doing the work.” (Nora)</p> <p>“We set our expectations high. We set our standards that the kids know what they want...what we are going to expect from them.” (Sylvia)</p>
	Influences	Individuals whose actions, words, ideas have had the power of altering the way a teacher approaches	Four out of four	<p>“but this one’s having a family issue, you know, it’s domestic violence.” (Viola)</p> <p>“If you have a dad and a mom in jail and you live with your grandma, I’m saying, ok homework is not going to be the best, so we have to work on something else.” (Lilly)</p> <p>“His dad had died a few...maybe a year before he had me, but I have a feeling he had problems before dad died.” (Nora)</p> <p>“Like I said, I have quite a few that the home life is not stable at all. That one I shared with you, that CPS got involved...” (Lilly)</p> <p>“the three behaviorists that I worked with at the Children’s Institute in Pittsburg.” (Nora)</p> <p>“she’s just a freakin’ rock star and I know that I’m not even doing half of what she</p>

A priori Code	Categories Within A priori Codes	Definition	Number of Participants Identifying with Categories within A priori Codes	Examples from Data
Establishing personal relationships	Knowledge of students	his/her teaching practices, opinions related to instruction and behavior intervention, and the personal interactions with the students within the classroom environment.	Three out of four	<p>did and I have no idea how she did it all with all of us being new.” (Sylvia)</p> <p>“When I started, I was lucky to have a really good mentor that I became friends with and, um, she’s retired, they kind of took me under the wing and we were team teaching and that was probably the most fun I ever had teaching.” (Viola)</p> <p>“Actually, other teachers by observing and seeing what I liked and didn’t like. A lot of in-services that I’ve been to.” (Lilly)</p>
		The acquirement of information related to students cognitive understanding, behavioral needs, academic history, individual interests and related family experiences.		<p>“And then some of my kids, like, I know that they can’t physically help that. Like I have a kid that’s constantly like...(begins banging her pen and hands on the table rhythmically).” (Nora)</p> <p>“five very strong males that are trying to fight for alpha male of the room and the one that was the “ring leader”, the worst of the alpha males, has left in the past few weeks and the other alpha males are now fighting for his place in the circle of life.” (Sylvia)</p> <p>“Wrestling, wrestling. Wrestling. He loves wrestling.”</p> <p>“he wanted me was to tell them that he did a good job. He didn’t want any prizes. So that was his,” (Viola)</p> <p>“They’re very video, music oriented. Game oriented, hands on oriented.” (Viola)</p>

A priori Code	Categories Within A priori Codes	Definition	Number of Participants Identifying with Categories within A priori Codes	Examples from Data
	Lack of parental involvement	Little to no involvement in the educational process by a parent to include biological mother and/or father, appointed guardian(s) and/or adopted mother/father.	One out of four	<p>“so he wasn’t...he had been held back twice already.” (Nora)</p> <p>“it’s like the mother cares, but she’s not as involved as she should be” (Viola)</p>
Establishing personal relationships	Parental involvement	The involvement in the educational process by a parent to include biological mother and/or father, appointed guardian(s) and/or adopted mother/father.	Three out of four	<p>“parent who really is working with their child, there’s something not clicking”(Viola)</p> <p>“We’ve met with parents a couple of times, phone calls home, the parents are very supportive of it.” (Sylvia)</p> <p>“open communication with mom – she’s a teacher here – so, we emailed quite frequently” (Sylvia)</p> <p>“If he gets everything done in the morning, I write a note to note to his grandmother, because he lives with her.” (Lilly)</p> <p>“And really there was no follow through, but once I started implemented this, I don’t know, dad got on the band wagon.” (Viola)</p>

A priori Code	Categories Within A priori Codes	Definition	Number of Participants Identifying with Categories within A priori Codes	Examples from Data
	Relating to students	The sharing of similar personal experiences and/or interests with students in an effort to establish a positive comfort level within the classroom environment.	Three out of four	<p>“I also feel like I’m very real with them.” (Nora)</p> <p>“I’ve done the multiplication rap and they think it’s the craziest, funniest thing. But I think just showing them that you’re human...you know...” (Viola)</p> <p>“years I lived in an apartment and I made it a point to tell them, I live in an apartment, because for a lot of our kids, they live in an apartment and I know that they want more for themselves...” (Sylvia)</p> <p>“I try to tell them things that...you know, look this is like life lessons or things that you can apply and hopefully they go this lady’s not nuts and oh yea ok she’s right.” (Viola)</p>
Establishing personal relationships	Relationships	An emotional connection that occurs between students and their teachers.	Three out of four	<p>“know that their parents do not...and I think because they know that I know their parents don’t tolerate it.” (Sylvia)</p> <p>“She’s a sweetheart and you know she called me over the summer and let me know when her husband had passed away and I knew it was just like, you know, this woman is a saint to take in two children and try to raise them and to raise them right.” (Viola)</p> <p>“So it becomes, like, not, what are you going to do as a parent, but what can you help me as a teacher and then I’ve never had a problem.” (Nora)</p>

A priori Code	Categories Within A priori Codes	Definition	Number of Participants Identifying with Categories within A priori Codes	Examples from Data
Novel and engaging instruction	Aspiration	A desire or ambition to achieve greater skill in the capacity of being a teacher	Four out of four	<p>“I have one little girl who always like she’ll always volunteer for the two that she knows that nobody wants...nobody really wants to work with them.” (Viola)</p> <p>“because she was young and she really didn’t know how to raise him so she’d call me all the time.” (Nora)</p> <p>“That in a sense we are this kind of this make shift family.” (Viola)</p>
	Differentiation	Understanding individual learning needs and utilizing different instructional strategies within the classroom environment to meet	Four out of four	<p>“I would like to be the kind of teacher that always has a really good ideas.” (Lilly)</p> <p>“So I would like to be able to do more hands on stuff to get them, you know, to where they understand it because I know a lot of my kids are visual learners.” (Nora)</p> <p>“I’d like to take the types of activities that I do in small group and be able to do them whole group.” (Sylvia)</p> <p>“I would like to be a teacher that is known for her passion for teaching.” (Viola)</p> <p>“But everything else is small group on their ability level which makes the best use of their time. Especially with writing...they are very needy as you know from lack of confidence, lack of knowledge, just not where they need to be and so having smaller groups with the writing is a huge help.” (Sylvia)</p>

A priori Code	Categories Within A priori Codes	Definition	Number of Participants Identifying with Categories within A priori Codes	Examples from Data
Novel and engaging instruction	Instruction	Knowledge and information that is transferred from the teacher to the students within the classroom environment through a variety of methods.	Three out of four	<p>those individual needs.</p> <p>“I try to use all the modalities: visual, audio, um...hands on, kinesthetic. Just because I know that...um, you know, all students learn differently.” (Viola) “If the children are doing what they are supposed to be doing then it doesn’t matter to me if they are standing instead of sitting um if they’re wearing gloves or their winter coat (laughs) I don’t care, like I pick my battles.” (Nora) “the more attention and the smaller the grouping seem to do a lot with the ones that were struggling. Now my gifted, if I gave them assignments and gave them something really challenging it was great.” (Lilly) “we try to do a lot of hands on/visual things in part because they at times don’t know how to...all of them really.” (Sylvia) “That it’s not a one size fits all kind of discipline.” (Viola)</p> <p>“We do small group writing, you know I pull them over for that.” (Sylvia) “When we...at the beginning of the year, I have them, for writing, write what they want to do in 3rd grade and what they like and I use a lot of that...their writing.” (Lilly) “it’s, and I’ll be like, oh atoms are, you know a million atoms could fit in that period,” (Nora)</p>

A priori Code	Categories Within A priori Codes	Definition	Number of Participants Identifying with Categories within A priori Codes	Examples from Data
Novel and engaging instruction	Intervention	Additional educational supports such as tutoring, conflict medication, or instructional tasks in order to improve the academic and/or behavioral outcomes for a student.	Three out of four	<p>“Um...but everything, like, we just did just piles/tiles, the other day and they were all doing growing patterns in groups of four...” (Nora)</p> <p>“That kind of stuff that role is, I become, um, mediator, where the kids are either pull to Um...conflict remediation basically, the front of the classroom or the hall and we have a chit-chat and we talk about what you did and what you did and then it’s umum” (Nora)</p> <p>“Those that get services from the special ed inclusion teacher or our extended day tutor.” (Sylvia)</p> <p>“I’ll write that referral um a lot...refer to the coun...well he’s been to the counselor and it’s not you know...And maybe put that person on a behavior system...an individual one.” (Lilly)</p> <p>“their planner, but I’ll fill out the planner. I’ll make sure all the stuff goes in the book bag before they go home, you know. I’ll make sure that everything is labeled,” (Nora)</p> <p>“And at that point, it’s usually, they need, you know, the cooling off time...they need some time to themselves and they need to go for a walk, a drink of water, and then after that...try to talk it out a little bit.” (Sylvia)</p>

A priori Code	Categories Within A priori Codes	Definition	Number of Participants Identifying with Categories within A priori Codes	Examples from Data
Novel and engaging instruction	Making connections	The act of creating educational activities that assists in the establishment of background knowledge and form a connection to a curriculum learning objective for students.	Two out of four	<p>“when I remember the ocean’s activity? Oh Yea! Sunlight...it...it, you know, it gets darker as it goes down. It does help them refer to things and put a visual to things that they can remember the content.” (Nora)</p> <p>“we had like a shared reading story Dogzilla and the movie Godzilla was coming out and so I we...we kinda just like tied everything together. Then they did a collage like, you know, like you’re going to create your own monster and city and they had to present it.” (Viola)</p>
	Professional development	The process of building capacity, in educators, through training opportunities in and outside of the school environment to perform educational duties within the classroom environment.	Two out of four	<p>“I went to a vocabulary one in October that month that we had to...like the all day staff day, where it was vocabulary power and the presenter was really animated...I can’t remember her name, but she was like awesome high school teacher and she talked about the importance of knowing vocabulary and how, um, with special ed students,” (Viola)</p> <p>“A lot of in-services I’ve learned a lot and then kind of tweaked it to what I thought would work. Um...just an example is, I took a week of Keagan’s cooperative learning and I really got a lot of that.” (Lilly)</p>

A priori Code	Categories Within A priori Codes	Definition	Number of Participants Identifying with Categories within A priori Codes	Examples from Data
Novel and engaging instruction	Student engagement	The process of attracting and holding students' interests throughout an instructional activity.	Three out of four	<p>"Um, we've had a lot of in-services about, you know, really what a serious infraction," (Viola)</p> <p>"Ms. Harries Kindergarten: follow dir...they love that...it's like a rap. They like that or even multiplication rap." (Viola)</p> <p>"If they're engaged in something they really like, they're not going to misbehave." (Lilly)</p> <p>"Um...more, less direct teaching and more Hands on. The kids are more involved in their learning." (Lilly)</p> <p>"So things like that, keep them engaged and they're more independent and then they were able to talk about it and discuss and share and you know the students would give them feedback." (Viola)</p> <p>"But it's kind of the same for all the kids, and letting them...when they do that hands on stuff, letting them be vocal..." (Nora)</p>
Organized Environment	Planning	The process of selecting materials for individuals to use within the classroom environment	Two out of four	<p>"they don't like to read, and I will pick out things that I know that they'll...that they might be interested in so they will read." (Lilly)</p> <p>"want to get it perfect, like I want to make sure the lesson is exactly like they're going to get it taught on the SOLs so that</p>

A priori Code	Categories Within A priori Codes	Definition	Number of Participants Identifying with Categories within A priori Codes	Examples from Data
Organized Environment	Time management	The process of planning and implementing an activity or activities within the boundaries of a specified time.	Four out of four	<p>they're right, but everything's in place so that, when I come in at 7:30 in the morning, I don't have to do anything." (Nora)</p> <p>"I would like to be able to get out of here before 5:30 (laughs). So, I would like to be able...I mean schools done at 3 o'clock and I'm still here till, like, five thirty every night, just planning for the next day." (Nora)</p> <p>"maybe that's not the way it is, but I feel like I have to be to the minute every day each block what they're doing and that leaves no room for the whole group activities." (Sylvia)</p> <p>"but once you hit the intensity of the curriculum map, what needs to be covered." (Viola)</p> <p>"I was able to manage my time better and provide activities for each group" (Lilly)</p>
Outlier	Education	Specific coursework and training taken to be considered a highly qualified teacher/instructor.	Three out of four	<p>"I didn't originally go in teaching, I went into psychology and that's how I got the job as a behaviorist." (Nora)</p> <p>"I graduated from Old Dominion so the only special ed class was how to write an IEP. Well I will never write an IEP because I'm a regular ed teacher." (Viola)</p>

A priori Code	Categories Within A priori Codes	Definition	Number of Participants Identifying with Categories within A priori Codes	Examples from Data
Understanding diverse communication styles	Communication	Verbal and nonverbal means of expressing needs/wants/understanding	Four out of four	<p>“My undergraduate degree, I went to Radford and I have a degree in I really get psychology. took some classes to get my certification to teach. Then I decided to go ahead and pursue my masters which I got from...in special ed” (Lilly)</p> <p>“you have to trust me that I’m taking care of it.” (Nora) “And Nora and I sat down with her and we had our heart to heart, come to Jesus that, this isn’t how you’ve been acting all year.” (Sylvia)</p> <p>“I try to handle it myself whether I’m talking to them, working with them, or working with the parent.” (Viola)</p> <p>“just conferencing with them about how disruptive it is” (Sylvia)</p> <p>“and you’re trying to explain that, they have issues that sometimes they can’t control.” (Nora)</p> <p>“Or just turn to a partner and what did you learn today and have the partner share what the person did.” (Lilly)</p> <p>“I said, “let me ask you two questions: when you read without it, do you look at the words and think about what you’re reading or do look at the words and think about other things?” (Sylvia)</p>

A priori Code	Categories Within A priori Codes	Definition	Number of Participants Identifying with Categories within A priori Codes	Examples from Data
Understanding diverse communication styles	Cultural differences	The differences in ethnicity, nationality, and culture that include family heritage and personal experiences.	Two out of four	“I know that sometimes how they express their selves. They’re not necessarily being disruptive,” (Nora) “I think it may be it might be cultural differences, of what, like, maybe how they communicate at home.” (Viola)
	Observation	The act of watching over individuals in order to gain information on academic and behavioral progress within the classroom environment.	Four out of four	“Like we weren’t even talking about teeth or anything. And he was just like, took it out and put it back in (gestures with her hands).” (Nora) “now that we’ve been given that freedom this year it’s just so overwhelming” (Sylvia) “children were, they decided that they were going to write both answer choices on both sides and so when the real answer or the right answer was revealed they were...OH.” (Viola) “Now, he still...he does finish, it’s not the best, but he’s finishing.” (Lilly) “And they’ll talk a good game, and they never...they never give excuses. They’ll talk a good game, but not always follow through.” (Nora) “I’ve been at conferences where the parents are just as disrespectful to me and the kid is sitting right there.” (Lilly) “But they, when they get to their seats, it’s like they see all the words, and they shut down.” (Lilly)

A priori Code	Categories Within A priori Codes	Definition	Number of Participants Identifying with Categories within A priori Codes	Examples from Data
Understanding diverse communication styles	Opinion	A personal view or judgment created about an act, situation or person that is not grounded in fact.	Four out of four	<p>“That is the stupidest thing I think I’ve ever seen someone do just in the middle of my class.” (Nora)</p> <p>“You know, one that I suspect should be medicated, but that’s such a touchy subject, you just try to...you know, I try to keep that in the back of my mind and not harp as much.” (Viola)</p> <p>“I feel like administration thinks they can’t handle their class.” (Lilly)</p> <p>“Partially because they have no confidence. Partially because they’re lazy.” (Sylvia)</p> <p>“because they don’t... they have a hard time seeing...understanding that there are other kids in this room.” (Nora)</p>
Understanding diverse communication styles	Race awareness	Identifying that there are different races of students within a classroom, but approaching the teaching and behavior management of different students by their individual needs.	Four out of four	<p>“Because I don’t really think in terms of that, or race, do you know what I mean?” (Lilly)</p> <p>“It’s more dealing with their behavior than it is the academics” (Nora)</p> <p>“The little minor things, and they are minor, you know, the refusal to do work. That kind of thing. I guess that generally comes from my African American males. This past year it was an African American female that we had to have some heart to hearts with.” (Sylvia)</p> <p>“Games are very effective. I’ll be honest with you, when I teach, I don’t do it in particular for gender or particular for</p>

A priori Code	Categories Within A priori Codes	Definition	Number of Participants Identifying with Categories within A priori Codes	Examples from Data
Understanding diverse communication styles	Self-reflection	The active process of thinking about past experiences and carefully considering the consequences of decisions made or the successes created as a result of ones decisions.	Four out of four	<p>ethnicity. Because I'm in the inclusion class, I really have to see what works, you know, with my special ed and my regular ed. (Viola)</p> <p>"I am not a listener. I'd rather be engaged in it." (Lilly)</p> <p>"I think so. I think that's helped me. It's helped me in the past and so far it's, you know, been working." (Viola)</p> <p>"I'm out of energy and I'm out of ideas for...and I don't really know how else to spice up our green reading manual..." (Sylvia)</p> <p>"I never yell. I'm stern. And I've definitely, you know, I don't even say, I've gotten in their face." (Nora)</p> <p>"Hum...uh...we've had a couple most of the...to be honest with you...most of my discipline issues and behavior issues come from my White students, Eddie, Brett, the little boy I had my first year." (Sylvia)</p> <p>"so there are some things I have to learn culturally are not..." (Nora)</p> <p>"Well, if you don't have classroom management, then you can't effectively instruct the children." (Viola)</p>
Understanding diverse	Understanding	The background experiences and knowledge a person	Four out of four	"I...I still feel like there's a lot of...and it's hard when you go to discipline someone,

A priori Code	Categories Within A priori Codes	Definition	Number of Participants Identifying with Categories within A priori Codes	Examples from Data
communication styles		brings to a situation, decision or interaction.		<p>sometimes it's not black and white." (Nora)</p> <p>"I need to spend this time reviewing skills with them that they did poorly on on their practice test." (Sylvia)</p> <p>"They're finally getting to the point where they're somewhat independent, but that's still a struggle with them." (Viola)</p> <p>"And so some, sometimes I don't make them move their clips because I know that there's issues." (Nora)</p> <p>"I mean their little, they're going to start goofing off or whatever." (Lilly)</p> <p>"And I didn't know...so now I know when I hear that, and every once in a while you'll hear it, that I unders...that I can treat that as, you know, as discrimination or you know as being bullying." (Nora)</p> <p>"So, I need to do a lot to fill those differences or at least try to fill those gaps and that doesn't always happen." (Nora)</p>

Appendix 0: A Priori Codes and Categories within A Priori Codes from Classroom Observations

A priori Codes	Teacher Effectiveness Scale	Categories within A Priori Codes	Definition	Number of Participants Identifying with Categories within A Priori Codes	Examples from Data
Establishing Personal Relationships	Instructional differentiation	Active listening	During verbal interactions, the act of looking at the person speaking, leaning toward the person and nodding periodically while restating or asking clarifying questions.	Three out of four	Lilly was observed to focus her attention on the student and use non-verbal cues such as turning and leaning toward the student who was speaking and nodding periodically to show she was actively listening.
	Expectations for student learning				Nora was observed to move amongst the teams, entering their discussions and asking follow up questions to their responses.
	Assessment for understanding				While with a team, Nora was observed to listen to the discussion and ask follow up questions and request clarification/ justification of thoughts shared.
	Caring				
Understanding Diverse Communication Styles	Fairness and Respect				
	Positive relationships				

A priori Codes	Teacher Effectiveness Scale	Categories within A Priori Codes	Definition	Number of Participants Identifying with Categories within A Priori Codes	Examples from Data
					<p>The activity required the students to actively listen to each other, discuss their view points and observations and encourage each other. (Nora)</p> <p>She would smile at the student and appear to be actively listening to what they were telling her. (Viola)</p> <p>The students were observed to actively listen to each other as they took turns discussing the topic of bullying. (Lilly)</p> <p>Nora was observed to take an interest in what her students were writing and what they would share with her.</p>

A priori Codes	Teacher Effectiveness Scale	Categories within A Priori Codes	Definition	Number of Participants Identifying with Categories within A Priori Codes	Examples from Data
Behavioral Interventions	Instructional focus on learning	Behavior management	A system of rules, rewards and consequences which is implemented within an environment to increase the likelihood of reinforcing socially acceptable behavior or circumventing misbehavior.	Four out of four	The flow of instruction and subsequent activities did not leave time for off-task behavior. (Lilly)
Clear and Concise Routines and Rules	Classroom Management				Lilly was faced toward the rest of the class to allow her to monitor student behavior.
	Classroom organization				This behavior required Nora to focus some of her instructional time on redirecting those students.
	Expectations for student learning				When students' became loud during one transition, Sylvia stated in a normal speaking voice, "If you can hear me, clap once."
	Fairness and respect				Points are assigned or removed based on behavior. (Viola)
	Positive Relationships				If anyone was to be observed to not follow one or all of the rules, the class

A priori Codes	Teacher Effectiveness Scale	Categories within A Priori Codes	Definition	Number of Participants Identifying with Categories within A Priori Codes	Examples from Data
					would then revisit the rules. (Sylvia)
Clear and Concise Routines and Rules	Positive relationships Enthusiasm	Calm environment	An environment which is free of negative and/or punitive statements and promotes positive interactions while providing an atmosphere conducive to risk taking.	Two out of four	Sylvia was observed to interact with her students in a quiet and non-threatening manner. Lilly projects a calm, even demeanor with her students. That calmness appears to have a positive influence.
Environmental Organization/ Parameters	Instructional Focus on Learning Instructional Clarity	Clear directions	A statement or set of statements which pinpoint the exact procedures for completing an activity.	Four out of four	If there was something that appeared to need her attention, she made sure to provide additional information or instruction. (Lilly) Prior to moving into reading groups, students were provided with directions to

A priori Codes	Teacher Effectiveness Scale	Categories within A Priori Codes	Definition	Number of Participants Identifying with Categories within A Priori Codes	Examples from Data
	Assessment for understanding				what they were expected to do prior to getting on computers and going to designated educational websites. (Lilly)
	Classroom organization				She provided an example of what she wanted students to do when they were given their own scenario to respond to (how they would problem solve). (Nora)
	Positive relationships				Nora provided students with a verbal prompt to let them know how much time remained before they would be transitioning to the next station.
	Enthusiasm				Sylvia was observed to provide student with redirection which allowed the student to ask questions if there was confusion over what was to be done.

A priori Codes	Teacher Effectiveness Scale	Categories within A Priori Codes	Definition	Number of Participants Identifying with Categories within A Priori Codes	Examples from Data
Establishing Personal Relationships	Instructional differentiation Instructional focus on learning	Collaboration	The act of sharing thoughts/ideas with two or more individuals on a designated assignment/task in	Three out of four	<p>At the start of both activities, Viola provided students with explicit instruction through step-by-step instructions teamed with modeling what she wanted students to do when they were with their partners.</p> <p>She also communicated to students the importance of asking questions to their parents/guardians especially if it was a question or topic that would not be discussed in class. (Sylvia)</p> <p>Due to the nature of the collaborative activity, each student was afforded the opportunity to participate and meet with success academically and socially. (Nora)</p>

A priori Codes	Teacher Effectiveness Scale	Categories within A Priori Codes	Definition	Number of Participants Identifying with Categories within A Priori Codes	Examples from Data
Novel and Engaging Instruction	Instructional complexity	Assessment for understanding	order to develop a final work product.		<p>Students were observed to take turns dealing cards to their partner and saying words of encouragement such as, "You are good at this game." (Viola)</p> <p>They were allowed to collaborate with a partner to complete this task. (Sylvia)</p>
	Quality of verbal feedback to students				
	Classroom organization				
	Fairness and respect				
	Encouragement of responsibility				

A priori Codes	Teacher Effectiveness Scale	Categories within A Priori Codes	Definition	Number of Participants Identifying with Categories within A Priori Codes	Examples from Data
Clear and Concise Routines and Rules	Quality of verbal feedback to students	Consistent feedback	Providing clear, concise information to an individual or individuals related to performance.	Four out of four	Throughout the activity, Nora provided students with consistent verbal feedback related to their strengths and needs.
Establishing Personal Relationships	Positive relationships				<p>“I would be careful about punching because a drug dealer may have a weapon. (Nora)</p> <p>Feedback provided to students by Lilly was specific to each student’s product/conversation.</p> <p>Feedback provided was specific to each student and communicated with high expectations. (Sylvia)</p> <p>When a student was able to come to the answer, Viola provided specific feedback such as, “You did a great</p>

A priori Codes	Teacher Effectiveness Scale	Categories within A Priori Codes	Definition	Number of Participants Identifying with Categories within A Priori Codes	Examples from Data
Novel and Engaging Instruction	Instructional Differentiation	Differentiation	The process of providing instruction and/or assessments based on individual student needs that allows the student to demonstrate understanding of new information or show mastery of information learned.	Four out of four	<p>job figuring out the answer. Way to go!"</p> <p>She provided ways to allow her students to demonstrate their knowledge instead of providing them with answers. (Lilly)</p> <p>Some students were able to verbalize their approach to Nora as she walked around monitoring students.</p> <p>She provided visuals teamed with verbal cues/prompts and differentiated the level of support for students in her class. (Sylvia)</p> <p>Each student was provided with individual attention and guidance throughout the activity. (Nora)</p>
	Instructional Clarity				
	Instructional complexity				
	Expectations for student learning				
	Assessment for understanding				

A priori Codes	Teacher Effectiveness Scale	Categories within A Priori Codes	Definition	Number of Participants Identifying with Categories within A Priori Codes	Examples from Data
	Quality of verbal feedback to students				For those who indicated, non-verbally, that they were uncomfortable with sharing whole group, Lilly respected their choice.
	Classroom organization				She was also observed to change the way she formulated questions to meet the needs of the students. (Viola)
	Caring				
	Fairness and respect				
	Positive Relationships				
	Enthusiasm				

A priori Codes	Teacher Effectiveness Scale	Categories within A Priori Codes	Definition	Number of Participants Identifying with Categories within A Priori Codes	Examples from Data
Environmental Organization/ Parameters	Instructional focus on learning	Ease of transitions	The organization of a setting which allows individuals to move freely from one area of a space to another while possessing the ability to obtain necessary materials.	Four out of four	Space between the student desks allow for easy transitions and movement throughout the room. (Sylvia)
Clear and Concise Routines and Rules	Classroom management				When time came to transition, Nora said, "Stop, look and listen. Move back to your seats. Be seated by the time I count back to one." She then proceeded to count down from 5.
Organized Environment	Classroom organization				Students moved back to their seats.
					Students were observed to quietly transition between each of the activities presented. (Lilly)
					Transitions occurred with minimum issues as students appeared to know what was expected and required of them. (Lilly)

A priori Codes	Teacher Effectiveness Scale	Categories within A Priori Codes	Definition	Number of Participants Identifying with Categories within A Priori Codes	Examples from Data
Novel and Engaging Instruction	Instructional focus on learning	Encouragement	Providing an individual with words, statements or actions which reinforces the individual to take risks.	Four out of four	<p>The stations were set up around the room and the flow was set where students were able to move easily from one station to the next without bumping into each other or furniture. (Nora)</p> <p>The arrangement of the room allowed students to navigate the room with little to no issues. (Viola)</p> <p>Students were then encouraged to use context clues to determine meaning. (Lilly)</p> <p>For a student who was struggling with reading, Sylvia encouraged the student, "break it down."</p> <p>Lilly encouraged all students to participate.</p>
Establishing Personal Relationships	Instructional complexity				

A priori Codes	Teacher Effectiveness Scale	Categories within A Priori Codes	Definition	Number of Participants Identifying with Categories within A Priori Codes	Examples from Data
	Expectations for Student Learning				She provided words of encouragement for students who appeared to be struggling with their decisions. (Nora)
	Use of Technology				She referred to students using terms of endearments such as "honey" or "sweetie". (Viola)
	Quality of verbal feedback to students				
	Caring				
	Fairness and respect				
	Positive relationships				

A priori Codes	Teacher Effectiveness Scale	Categories within A Priori Codes	Definition	Number of Participants Identifying with Categories within A Priori Codes	Examples from Data
	Encouragement of responsibility				
	Enthusiasm				
Establishing Personal Relationships	Instructional differentiation	Expectation	The belief hold as to the future success of individuals.	Three out of four	Lilly posed inference questions and directed students to refer to the story to identify the text that supports their answers.
Novel and Engaging Instruction	Instructional clarity				She encouraged students to reflect on their learning and their comments by providing rationale for their comments. (Nora)
Clear and Concise Routines and Rules	Instructional complexity				Prior to starting the instruction on Family Life, there were “ground rules” related to how the lesson would proceed. (Sylvia)
	Expectations for student learning				

A priori Codes	Teacher Effectiveness Scale	Categories within A Priori Codes	Definition	Number of Participants Identifying with Categories within A Priori Codes	Examples from Data
Behavior Interventions	Assessment for understanding				She expected students to be involved in identifying solutions to when, and if, they ever had to defend themselves from a bully. (Lilly)
	Quality of verbal feedback to students				Sylvia checked student understanding by posing questions to the group and calling on individual students to provide answers and justify/explain their answers.
	Classroom management				
	Classroom Organization				
	Encouragement of Responsibility				
	Enthusiasm				

A priori Codes	Teacher Effectiveness Scale	Categories within A Priori Codes	Definition	Number of Participants Identifying with Categories within A Priori Codes	Examples from Data
Novel and Engaging Instruction	Instructional differentiation	Instruction	A statement, or series of statements, that provides details as to how to complete a task.	Three out of four	The students then conducted a picture walk with Lilly of the text they would be reading.
	Instructional focus on learning				During this process, she would ask follow up questions either to teams or individuals. (Lilly)
	Instructional Clarity				At the start of the class, the students were going over an assignment where they needed to identify the correct use of I/me in conjunction with another person in a sentence. (Sylvia)
	Instructional Complexity				
	Expectations for student learning				The math activity required students to arrange the three digit numbers in a way that they would be close to a sum of 1000 without going
	Use of technology				

A priori Codes	Teacher Effectiveness Scale	Categories within A Priori Codes	Definition	Number of Participants Identifying with Categories within A Priori Codes	Examples from Data
	Assessment for understanding	Quality of verbal feedback to Students			over and to get closer than their partners. (Viola)
	Classroom organization				
Novel and Engaging Instruction	Instructional differentiation	Instructional Materials	Materials used in the process of educating others. These include, but are not limited to: graphic organizers, materials for a science experiment, graph paper, pencils, etc.	Three out of four	The science lesson included a number of different materials at stations set up around the room to represent solution or mixtures: powdered drink and water, marbles and sand, mixed fruit salad, yogurt parfait, water and
	Instructional focus on learning				

A priori Codes	Teacher Effectiveness Scale	Categories within A Priori Codes	Definition	Number of Participants Identifying with Categories within A Priori Codes	Examples from Data
	Use of technology				pepper, sand and water, chocolate powder and milk, salt and water. (Nora)
	Classroom organization				It appeared great care was taken by Nora to select the materials used for the activity and how to arrange the setting to allow for ease of movement. (Nora)
	Positive relationships				During small group instruction, students were provided with opportunities to utilize writing materials to assist with their editing of writings (i.e. highlighters, colorful pens, etc.) (Sylvia)
	Encouragement of responsibility				
	Enthusiasm				The students utilized dry erase boards and markers to solve the addition problems and then tallied points on a sheet of paper. (Viola)

A priori Codes	Teacher Effectiveness Scale	Categories within A Priori Codes	Definition	Number of Participants Identifying with Categories within A Priori Codes	Examples from Data
Novel and Engaging Instruction	Instructional differentiation	Intervention	Implementing activities or strategies that will allow an individual to overcome difficulties.	Three out of four	For one group, if the student was unaware of the definition, she would use the word in a sentence and incorporate a picture. (Lilly)
Organized Environment	Instructional clarity				During small group instruction, she observed students as they looked for the sentence that did not belong in each paragraph; providing them with providing them with verbal cues and questions when they identified the wrong sentence. (Sylvia)
	Instructional complexity				She provided guidance and clarification questions. (Viola)
	Expectations for student learning				Once all the students were present, Sylvia read the paragraph aloud and then instructed students to underline/highlight the
	Use of technology				
	Assessment for understanding				

A priori Codes	Teacher Effectiveness Scale	Categories within A Priori Codes	Definition	Number of Participants Identifying with Categories within A Priori Codes	Examples from Data
	Quality of verbal feedback to students				<p>words that made the story sound funny.</p> <p>Viola encouraged students when she cheered for them and when she conferenced with them while working on math problems independently.</p>
Establishing Personal Relationships	Assessment for understanding	Knowledge of students	Knowing the educational background, abilities, strengths and needs of a student as well as the student's interactions and/or activities outside the school environment	Three out of four	<p>She appeared to use questioning in order to identify strengths and needs as the students worked through different activities. (Lilly)</p> <p>There were some skills that were included in different activities and Sylvia explained that these were</p>
	Quality of verbal feedback to students				
	Enthusiasm				

A priori Codes	Teacher Effectiveness Scale	Categories within A Priori Codes	Definition	Number of Participants Identifying with Categories within A Priori Codes	Examples from Data
Novel and Engaging Instruction	<p>Instructional differentiation</p> <p>Instructional focus on learning</p>	Making connections	Provided instruction that allows individuals to refer to past experiences in order to build on to current knowledge and	Three out of four	<p>skills that were identified on the most recent assessment as ones that needed revisiting.</p> <p>Even when students were not comfortable sharing whole group, Lilly did hold them accountable for participation when speaking with them individually.</p> <p>Providing a temporary safe-haven in her lap for the student also demonstrated her caring and attention to her students' needs. (Viola)</p> <p>Lilly would refer to prior learning when identifying vocabulary words.</p> <p>Nora referred them back to prior instruction on the concept and how it related</p>

A priori Codes	Teacher Effectiveness Scale	Categories within A Priori Codes	Definition	Number of Participants Identifying with Categories within A Priori Codes	Examples from Data
	Instructional clarity		acquire new knowledge.		to the activity for which they were involved.
	Instructional complexity				As she moved from group to group, Nora encouraged students to use their own experiences and knowledge to assist them with the activity.
	Expectations for student learning				During whole group reading, Sylvia related much of the information to student experiences, prompting, "Ever been somewhere where you weren't good at something and were embarrassed because others were?"
	Assessment for understanding				
	Caring				She then made a connection with the use of these words (she referred to them as "slang") and to avoid them in their writings. (Sylvia)
	Encouragement of responsibility				

A priori Codes	Teacher Effectiveness Scale	Categories within A Priori Codes	Definition	Number of Participants Identifying with Categories within A Priori Codes	Examples from Data
	Enthusiasm				
Environmental Organization/ Parameters	<p>Instructional differentiation</p> <p>Classroom management</p> <p>Classroom organization</p> <p>Enthusiasm</p>	Organized	<p>Having an orderly environment which allows for unencumbered transitions, obtainment of materials and minimal loss to instruction.</p>	Two out of four	<p>Student desks are all facing toward the front of the room, where direct instruction occurs. (Lilly)</p> <p>Materials were already gathered and the stations set up to allow for optimal instructional time. (Nora)</p> <p>Student pairings were also pre-selected to allow for more cooperation amongst team members. (Nora)</p> <p>When it was time to transition between activities, students were able to move throughout the room without incident and obtain needed materials from an area</p>

A priori Codes	Teacher Effectiveness Scale	Categories within A Priori Codes	Definition	Number of Participants Identifying with Categories within A Priori Codes	Examples from Data
Organized Environment	Classroom organization	Organized setting	Having an orderly classroom environment which allows students to collaborate and the teacher to easily monitor learning and behavior.	Four out of four	<p>holding instructional materials. (Lilly)</p> <p>Students had enough room at their stations to place their materials down to write and far enough away from the other stations to allow for a lack of disruption. (Nora)</p> <p>It appears the students are aware of what is expected and what they need to do when transitioning or when in need of materials. (Lilly)</p> <p>Student books and folders were located in their individual desks and readily available when needed. (Sylvia)</p> <p>Student desks are arranged in groups of four with the tables all turned so students</p>

A priori Codes	Teacher Effectiveness Scale	Categories within A Priori Codes	Definition	Number of Participants Identifying with Categories within A Priori Codes	Examples from Data
Establishing Personal Relationships	<p>Instructional focus on learning</p> <p>Instructional clarity</p> <p>Expectations for student learning</p>	Positive interactions	Interactions between students and teacher and students which promotes risk taking and communicates a supportive environment.	Four out of four	<p>are facing one another. (Viola)</p> <p>Sylvia was positioned at the front of the room during direct instruction, but during student practice, the room arrangement allowed her to easily navigate the room as she monitor students.</p> <p>That calmness appears to have a positive influence on how her students interact with her and each other. (Lilly)</p> <p>Upon completion of the activity, Nora commented on how well the teams appeared to work together.</p> <p>When a student wrote “a lot” correctly on her paper, Sylvia stated, “she gets a gold star!”</p>

A priori Codes	Teacher Effectiveness Scale	Categories within A Priori Codes	Definition	Number of Participants Identifying with Categories within A Priori Codes	Examples from Data
	Quality of verbal feedback to students				Viola monitored student engagement by providing positive praise by calling the team members names and saying, "good job".
	Caring				She used statements such as, "That is a good way to stand up for yourself." (Lilly)
	Fairness and Respect				
	Positive Relationships				
	Enthusiasm				
Establishing Personal Relationships	Instructional Complexity	Relating to students	Teachers sharing mutually shared experiences with their students which communicates to the	Two out of four	She stated she had not read the story and so she modeled making predictions

A priori Codes	Teacher Effectiveness Scale	Categories within A Priori Codes	Definition	Number of Participants Identifying with Categories within A Priori Codes	Examples from Data
	Caring		students they are not so different.		by looking at the pictures. (Lilly)
	Enthusiasm				<p>During transition from centers to her small group, she was observed to touch bases with each student; checking on personal issues or family members. (Sylvia)</p> <p>Lilly demonstrated personal interest in the topic being discussed.</p>
<p>Establishing Personal Relationships</p> <p>Novel and Engaging Instruction</p>	Expectations for student learning	Risk takers	The act of students placing themselves in educational situations that expands their knowledge and takes them out of their personal comfort zone.	Three out of four	<p>Viola's nonthreatening approach and use of humor with her students provided them with the feeling of security where they were willing to make mistakes.</p> <p>She gave positive praise to students who took chances and answered questions or what they felt were correct answers. (Lilly)</p>
	Quality of verbal feedback to students				

A priori Codes	Teacher Effectiveness Scale	Categories within A Priori Codes	Definition	Number of Participants Identifying with Categories within A Priori Codes	Examples from Data
	Fairness and Respect				<p>When a student volunteered to share the sentences she created, but had some grammatical issues, the student allowed her paper to be edited by the teacher. (Sylvia)</p>
	Enthusiasm				<p>Sylvia's approach to the lesson with setting the boundaries and reinforcing those throughout the lesson allowed students to take chances and appear to be more willing to participate. (Sylvia)</p>
Environmental Organization/ Parameters	Instructional differentiation	Routines	Schedules and procedures that are enacted for students in the classroom in order to maintain an orderly environment.	Three out of four	<p>Transitions occurred with minimum issues as students appeared to know what was expected and required of them. (Lilly)</p> <p>Students moved easily from station to station, staying at a station for approximately 3</p>
	Instructional focus on learning				

A priori Codes	Teacher Effectiveness Scale	Categories within A Priori Codes	Definition	Number of Participants Identifying with Categories within A Priori Codes	Examples from Data
	Classroom Management				minutes and a 30 second warning from Nora for groups to make one last notation before moving to the next station.
	Classroom Organization				Students entered the room and immediately found their seats and took out their homework. (Sylvia) Many shared experience of being bullied and how they handled it in the past. (Lilly)
Behavior Interventions	Classroom management	Safe environment	An environment that is devoid of either physical or emotional threats.	Two out of four	During whole and small group instruction, Lilly provided a safe, non-threatening environment for students to participate in discussion and share their thoughts.
Environmental Organization/ Parameters	Caring				
	Fairness and Respect				It appeared to be important for her that the students

A priori Codes	Teacher Effectiveness Scale	Categories within A Priori Codes	Definition	Number of Participants Identifying with Categories within A Priori Codes	Examples from Data
Establishing Personal Relationships	Enthusiasm				<p>understand they were able to talk freely about this subject. (Sylvia)</p> <p>Students were not to share what they learned with students outside of the grade level, do not judge each other or no put downs when answering questions or asking questions no personal questions, if there is something that is not able to be answered in class, students were directed to ask parents/guardians when they get home, take the topics seriously. (Sylvia)</p> <p>Presenting a set of ground rules that everyone would following during the discussion of the topics for the next few days communicated to the students she cared about them feeling comfortable</p>

A priori Codes	Teacher Effectiveness Scale	Categories within A Priori Codes	Definition	Number of Participants Identifying with Categories within A Priori Codes	Examples from Data
Novel and Engaging Instruction	Instructional differentiation	Student engagement	Students actively listening to instruction, participating in assignments/activities, maintaining topic specific conversation and provides students with the feeling of ownership in their learning.	Four out of four	<p>and the need for the environment to be non-threatening. (Lilly)</p> <p>During whole and small group instruction, Lilly provided a safe, non-threatening environment for students to participate in discussion and share their thoughts</p> <p>Students appeared to respond in a positive manner which resulted in sustained attention to the task at hand and the follow up discussion. (Nora)</p> <p>The activity required the students to actively listen to each other, discuss their view points and observations, and</p>
Clear and Concise Routines and Rules	Instructional focus on learning				
	Instructional clarity				
	Instructional complexity				
	Expectations for student learning				

A priori Codes	Teacher Effectiveness Scale	Categories within A Priori Codes	Definition	Number of Participants Identifying with Categories within A Priori Codes	Examples from Data
	Assessment for understanding				encourage each other. (Nora)
	Quality of verbal feedback to students				She spoke to each of the students; asking how their day was going. (Sylvia)
	Classroom management				For the computer designed avatar, the students actually were observed to direct her as to what she should do each step. (Viola)
	Caring				The purpose appeared to be to allow the student to provide additional clarification regarding the drawings with captions that were created. (Lilly)
	Fairness and respect				The Around the World multiplication activity required one student to race to answer a simple multiplication problem. (Viola)
	Positive relationships				

A priori Codes	Teacher Effectiveness Scale	Categories within A Priori Codes	Definition	Number of Participants Identifying with Categories within A Priori Codes	Examples from Data
	Encouragement of responsibility				She then placed a few problems on the board and had students come to the board to demonstrate how to solve using lattice. (Viola)
	Enthusiasm				
Establishing Personal Relationships	Instructional clarity	Student independence	Students navigating the educational environment as well as their own learning through practiced and implemented routines and procedures.	Two out of four	While Lilly was engaged in small group instruction, her students were independently obtaining necessary materials to complete assignments
Environmental Organization/Parameters	Instructional complexity				They did not come to the teacher to find out what to do. Instead, they went directly to their desks, looked at the activities on the board, and got to work on those assignments. (Sylvia)
Organized Environment	Assessment of understanding				
Behavioral Interventions	Classroom management				

A priori Codes	Teacher Effectiveness Scale	Categories within A Priori Codes	Definition	Number of Participants Identifying with Categories within A Priori Codes	Examples from Data
	<p>Fairness and respect</p> <p>Encouragement of responsibility</p>				<p>The drawing and caption activity required students to identify a problem and pose a solution. (Lilly)</p>
<p>Establish Personal Relationships</p> <p>Novel and Engaging Instruction</p>	<p>Encouragement of responsibility</p> <p>Enthusiasm</p>	<p>Teacher enthusiasm</p>	<p>Teachers who are engaged with their students in the learning experience.</p>	<p>Two out of four</p>	<p>Nora presented the activity with enthusiasm for she was excited about the different materials she viewed as relatable to the students (i.e. different snack foods, rocks, sand, etc.).</p> <p>Viola appeared to enjoy modeling the math activity for the students and sat amongst them as they</p>

A priori Codes	Teacher Effectiveness Scale	Categories within A Priori Codes	Definition	Number of Participants Identifying with Categories within A Priori Codes	Examples from Data
Novel and Engaging Instruction	Instructional differentiation Use of Technology	Technology	Equipment that allows a teacher to convey the curriculum to students such as a document camera, computer-based educational programs, and handheld devices.	Four out of four	<p>worked through how to get to 1000.</p> <p>Viola approached each aspect of the lesson with an infectious enthusiasm.</p> <p>When You couldn't find them because you couldn't see!" smiling. students move to more independent, hey were encouraged and observed to get on the classroom laptops and review skills on designated educational websites. (Lilly)</p> <p>During whole group reading, Sylvia utilized a microphone that projected her voice to the class as she read to the class.</p> <p>Nora utilized the document camera to present the</p>

A priori Codes	Teacher Effectiveness Scale	Categories within A Priori Codes	Definition	Number of Participants Identifying with Categories within A Priori Codes	Examples from Data
Environmental Organization/ Parameters	Instructional differentiation	Time management	The process of planning and implementing an	Two out of four	<p>directions the students were to follow.</p> <p>Although the students did not utilize technology, the teacher did use her document camera to demonstrate the math activity. (Viola)</p> <p>Lilly did use the document camera to project the difference scenarios on bullying that were discussed as whole group.</p> <p>Students were observed to be on laptops working on SOL pass looking at science topics or history topics and Achieve 3000 reading non-fiction text. (Sylvia)</p> <p>Nora provided students with a verbal prompt to let them know how much time</p>

A priori Codes	Teacher Effectiveness Scale	Categories within A Priori Codes	Definition	Number of Participants Identifying with Categories within A Priori Codes	Examples from Data
Organized Environment	Instructional focus on learning		activity or activities within the boundaries of a specified time.		remained before they would be transitioning to the next station. Time periods for each activity were closely followed. (Sylvia)
Novel and Engaging Instruction	Classroom organization				
Establishing Personal Relationships	Expectations for student learning	Use of humor	Providing relevant engaging stories or puns during a lesson or interaction which elicits laughter and/or enjoyment.	Two out of four	Used humor with a student who forgot her glasses saying, "You couldn't find them because you couldn't see!" smiling. (Sylvia) Viola used humor and sarcasm with her students which caused many of them to laugh.
	Encouragement of responsibility				
	Caring				

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