STRENGTHENING TEACHER PREPARATION:
ADDRESSING PERCEPTIONS OF BEHAVIOR MANAGEMENT AND BILINGUAL LEARNERS DURING FIELD EXPERIENCES

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Abstract
A large body of literature recognizes the many challenges teachers experience in the classroom. The research and subsequent article bring to light the concerns identified by undergraduate teacher candidates during a day-long field experience. The intention of the experience was to focus on literacy instruction; however, that was often overshadowed by classroom and behavior management concerns and questions. Reflections and discussions after the experience were dominated by the identified behavior and classroom management issues and concerns the teacher candidates noticed. Their post-experience reflections were so focused on them that the candidates were unable to process the literacy behaviors, instruction, and resources.

Keywords: teacher preparation, behavior management, classroom management, bilingual learners, literacy instruction

Introduction

Teaching is by its nature a complex system that can befuddle even the most qualified educators at times. Behavior management surfaces as a concern of teacher candidates in multiple ways; they write about it in their reflections and coursework and, through discussion, teacher candidates speak to the challenges they are facing. Our initial research focused on candidates' responses to children, many of whom are bilingual learners, learning in a Title I school. However, a deeper analysis of artifacts collected for the research demonstrated candidates' focusing on classroom behaviors in the school setting.

The field experience for all elementary education and special education teacher candidates enrolled in specific courses—literacy and special education—consists of the candidates spending an

entire day in the setting. The candidates observed, taught in one classroom throughout the day, and participated in collaborative discussions with peers. Each teacher candidate worked with a small group of children in the school. The university supervisors required detailed reflections from each candidate about their individual observations focused on literacy learning. Those observations inevitably focused on behavior management rather than content area learning and instruction.

About the Study

Detailed Description of the Field Experience

The field experience attended by the teacher candidates takes place each semester at a K-5 elementary school in a very large, urban, diverse school district. The school setting has a high number of bilingual learners (Garcia, 2011; Chaparro et al., 2021), most of whom speak Spanish as their first language. The school district refers to these students as English learners. Most students attending the school live in the neighborhood surrounding the school. The field experience is required for all candidates enrolled in a literacy methods course from the main campus and remote campus settings, as well as candidates enrolled in a beginning special education methods course. Approximately 75-85 candidates attend the field experience each semester.

The candidates are immersed in the school setting for the entire day. They spend time observing the classroom teachers, teaching two sequential literacy lessons (morning and afternoon) with a small group of students, and collaborating with their special education peers. While teaching a morning lesson, the candidates identify a child who has not been successful in learning the content taught. They then collaborate with the special education majors and discuss simple strategies or modifications that could be made during the afternoon lesson to assist the child in learning the content. While in the school setting, the candidates are required to complete a classroom observation tool focused on literacy in the classroom. The graphic organizer asked candidates to observe the classroom setting, the classroom teacher, and a specific child through literacy-related questioning. During collaboration, the candidates completed another organizer designed to assist them in thinking about a student who was not succeeding during the lesson, the data supporting their thinking, and what strategy or modification will be implemented in the afternoon lesson. Finally, the candidates complete a reflection about the collaboration. The document drives post-experience discussions immediately following the experience and again back in the university setting.

The candidates from the remote campus were assigned to kindergarten classrooms. There were three sections of kindergarten in the school setting each having a skilled, experienced classroom teacher for candidates to observe. One of the classroom teachers identified as African American; the other two classroom teachers identified as White. Each candidate had four to five students in their small group during the literacy lessons.

There were 30 kindergarten students identifying as male and 18 kindergarten students identifying as female. At the time of the field experience, there were 351 students enrolled in the school setting, and 91.5% of the students were eligible for free/reduced lunches. The school had an 87.6% attendance rate. Ethnicity breakdown was 40.5% Latinx, 40.5% White, 10.8% Black, and 7.7% multiracial.

The Researchers

The first researcher was the professor for the literacy methods course and facilitator of the field experience for all teacher candidates that attended. Prior to the day of the field experience, the researcher assessed students' lesson plans and spent multiple class sessions preparing the teacher candidates for the experience. They observed all of the research participants in their assigned classrooms giving them feedback about their instruction throughout the day.

The second researcher was an instructor in the elementary education preparation program. They plan and facilitate field experiences for the teacher candidates. They are currently working on doctoral studies.

The two researchers frequently collaborate on research projects and on coursework related to the final year of preparation for teacher candidates.

The Research Participants

All of the research participants were teacher candidates in a cohort at a remote campus setting. This small campus is part of a larger university with a population of 6,000 students and is located approximately 88 miles away from the main campus setting in a large, metropolitan, Midwest city. The teacher candidates were all transfer students from a nearby community college and elementary education majors with the exception of one candidate double majoring in elementary education and special education. The study focuses on the 13 teacher candidates attending the remote campus. At the time of the field experience, the teacher candidates were in their first semester at the remote campus in a completion program to earn their elementary education degrees. Two of the candidates identified as male, and 11 of the candidates identified as female. Two candidates identified as Latinx, and one candidate identified as Filipino. Two teacher candidates were considered non-traditional students by university identification.

Case Study Design

A qualitative case study design was appropriate for and allowed an in-depth analysis of the data collected from the teacher candidates' responses to their classroom observations and reflections from their teaching small groups of students during the field experience. Both Creswell (2014) and Yin (1989) advocated for collection of artifacts in order to complete a detailed description of the participants' experiences and responses to those experiences.

Research Questions

As noted in the introduction, the research came about as a result of the reflections and discussions after the field experience that were dominated by the identified behavior and classroom management issues and concerns the teacher candidates noticed. Their post-experience reflections were focused on the issues and concerns; candidates were unable to process the literacy behaviors, instruction, and resources. A new set of research questions came to light including: 1) How do candidates perceive student behaviors when observing in the classroom? 2) What behavior management strategies are candidates focused on when observing in classrooms? 3) How are behaviors and behavior management interpreted by teacher candidates?

We also noted generalized statements about bilingual learners in the candidates' responses. They recognized that classrooms with bilingual learners can offer particular challenges. Communicating expectations, enforcing discipline, and even establishing simple classroom routines may pose special problems due to language barriers. These challenges prompted another question for us, namely: How are students learning English perceived by teacher candidates when a student may have limited English-speaking abilities but speak fluently in another language?

Literature Review

A review of the literature on classroom and behavior management having implications for teacher candidates revealed that management issues continue to be an ongoing concern for not only teacher candidates, but also early career teachers. Recent studies have indicated that challenging behavior is becoming an increasingly dominant issue in classrooms across all grade levels. Adverse behavior negatively impacts the learning environment and has a lasting impingement on students

and teachers. Challenging behavior also puts pressure on teacher-student relations, resulting in increasingly negative interactions, decreases in teacher praise statements and a decrease in instructional time (Butler & Monda-Amaya, 2016). Classroom management is often a major concern for beginning teachers as new teachers often worry about how they will uphold positive and engaging classroom management while also meeting the instructional needs of all the students. Because of this, classroom management strategies for teacher candidates can be useful and lead to more productive and successful learning experiences for students (Lavay, 2019).

It is critical that teacher candidates be adequately prepared to manage challenging behavior and use a variety of proactive strategies to prevent those behaviors from occurring. Studies have found that in coursework teacher candidates receive general information on behavior concepts such as antecedent, consequence, function, etc. but little if any strategies for the prevention and management of challenging behavior. Being prepared to manage behaviors requires effective interventions that are specific to the child and the behavior, an ability to analyze the behavior itself, and to have knowledge about a teacher's role in why the behavior occurred and how to de-escalate the behavior (Butler & Monda-Amaya, 2016). Children with tenacious or habitual behavior concerns are at greater risk for absolute discipline practices that interrupt their education leading to a pattern of falling behind, academically and socially.

Approaching problematic behavior needs to be intentional, practiced, and specific to the function of the behavior. Identifying the function of the behaviors makes preparing teachers for these types of challenges even more critical. In many cases when faced with a crisis, it is common to revert back to old habits or strategies that one has been exposed to in their own educational experiences (for example, counting down to give the student time to control the behavior). The teachers found to engage in effective teaching and management practices had drastically fewer disruptions in their classrooms. In contrast, educators are faced with mounting pressure of accountability for academic achievement of all students, especially subgroups of children who are considered at-risk for poor school outcomes (e.g., bilingual learners, ethnically diverse students, recipients of free or reduced lunch, students with disabilities) (Mitchell et al., 2017). Although academic achievement indicators, such as improved proficiency scores and increased graduation rates, often are at the forefront of public attention, educators are keenly aware of the relationship between academic and social behavioral success. That is, students who consistently demonstrate appropriate social skills in school are better positioned to benefit from academic instruction (Mitchell et al, 2017).

Up to two-thirds of U.S. children have experienced at least one type of serious childhood trauma, such as abuse, neglect, natural disaster, or experiencing or witnessing violence and trauma; and these traumas are considered to possibly be the largest public health issue facing our children today (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2020). Sometimes these issues go unattended, and specific unpleasant behaviors surface. Traumatized students are especially vulnerable and often have difficulty in self-regulation, negative thinking, being on high alert, difficulty trusting adults, and unseemly social interactions (Minahan, 2019). These children have yet to learn to regulate their emotions and their distrust surfaces as shutting down, avoidance, and aggression. In these instances, classroom teachers are faced with a critical balance of self-regulating, processing the situation, continuing to provide a positive environment for the other students, and addressing the crisis. Balancing each of these can be a demanding and insurmountable undertaking even for the most experienced teachers and needs to be a priority in preparation programs to ensure teacher candidates have access to trauma-informed professional development that will in turn help them manage behaviors appropriately. Minahan (2019) suggests well established classroom guidelines, classroom organization and design, as well as physical proximity as just a few integral factors in building trust and establishing a safe learning environment conducive for all learners. Preparing teacher candidates

for this type of human interaction seems pertinent as Minahan (2019) notes, "When teachers are proactive and responsive to the needs of students suffering from traumatic stress and make small changes in the classroom that foster a feeling of safety, it makes a huge difference in their ability to learn" (p. 31).

Waiting to convey such cognitively demanding and vital information and practice can leave a new teacher feeling overwhelmed. A teacher's behavior and responses are also communication and by changing the way one responds to adverse behavior or providing positive direction we can reduce the problematic behavior, adding to the number of reasons teacher candidates need additional support in with behaviors and responses to them. As the literature indicates, effective classroom management is one of the most necessary skills for a productive learning environment and practices matter. As noted by Mitchell, et al (2017), "when teachers see evidence of improved student outcomes resulting from a new or changed practice, then their attitudes and beliefs about the practice, and their perceptions of their ability to improve behavior, shift" (p. 142). Teachers adopt individual classroom management styles while implementing their classroom activities but their style takes time and personal reflection.

In addition to effective classroom management competencies there also exists a critical need for teachers to be well prepared for the diversity their students contribute to the learning environment. To provide equitable learning opportunities requires more than considering accommodations and modifications for students for whom English is not their first language. Teacher candidates must also support the level of learning that must take place for bilingual learners to be successful. There are also steps institutions preparing teachers could also consider, "ideally, Faculties of Education should take on the larger task of studying the divide between the teaching of MSRE (multicultural social reconstructionist education) and the response it receives in the schools" (Levine-Rasky, 2001, p. 316). These ideas are lined with challenges much harder to overcome, and "understanding young children's different processes in developing language and emergent literacies will help you see where your students have been, where they are now, and where they are going in their academic language and literacy development" (Wang, 2017, p. 77). Wang (2017) continues to explain that it is critical to have knowledge about your students' early linguistic development discrepancies which will help you anticipate potential advantages and challenges your students may have and reach them. For teacher candidates to reach all students, practices must change in their training first and foremost. Further, Kolano and King (2015) argue "as cultural mismatch increases in public school, teachers play an integral role in the school's success or failure of immigrant and minority students. Thus, higher education is tasked with the challenge of moving beyond pedagogy and methodology to mediating belief systems" (p. 4). Additionally, it is important to express, English learners are, in fact, emergent bilinguals (García, 2011). Chaparro, Green, Thompson and Batz (2021) discuss English learners as being bilingual because of the language and learning at home in addition to the language and learning at school in English. These children should be identified as bilingual as a function of equitable practices by educators (Chaparro, et al, 2021). It is important for such nuances to be tackled in teacher preparation programs to support all students.

Research Methods

We collected, analyzed, and coded all data, separately, in order to extract themes in the data (Creswell, 2014). We used axial coding, as proposed by Merriam and Tisdell (2015), to further confirm the themes that were initially found and capture the voices of the research participants. It was critical to us to present the voices of the teacher candidates in authentic ways by using direct quotations as often as possible.

Results and Findings

When asked to observe for literacy attributes during teaching, student learning, and within the environment, teacher candidates consistently observed and wrote about student behaviors and the management strategies used by the classroom teachers. While the instructors experienced disappointment in the candidates' lack of response about literacy, the quality and quantity of the responses were rich and ripe for analysis for different purposes—those related to behavior management and the candidates' perceptions of what was occurring in the classrooms. Themes in the responses focused on student engagement (recognizing that engagement is also important for literacy learning), how classroom teachers used proximity and redirection to refocus a single student or multiple students during the observed lesson, and analyzing the level of diversity in students' abilities and skills. There is little recognition of *why* the behaviors are occurring or what might have led to the behaviors. We have also noted assumptions that were made about the students either because they were bilingual learners or because they attended a school that is diverse and in a low socio-economic attendance area.

During the field experience, in addition to observing the classroom teachers while they taught lessons, the candidates taught morning and afternoon literacy lessons. The two lessons were connected through the use of children's literature and focused on vocabulary and comprehension strategies and skills. In between the two lessons, they had opportunities to debrief with the classroom teacher and collaborate with special education teacher candidates about how they could make modifications, accommodations or adaptations to their lessons from morning to afternoon. They were asked to identify a student in their group who could benefit from an accommodation or modification to succeed in learning the content of the afternoon literacy lesson. During these collaboration meetings, the focus on behaviors was striking. While the intent of the collaboration is for literacy-related concerns, nearly all of the conversations were about behaviors. The candidates were good at identifying the behaviors, but not what might be causing the behaviors to occur.

Identified themes that surfaced in responses by the candidates were 1) identifying engagement behaviors, 2) beginning understanding antecedents to behaviors, 3) identifying strategies the classroom teachers used to refocus/engage students, 4) the critical nature of relationship-building with students, and 5) misconceptions and generalizations about bilingual learners. Each theme is discussed next.

Identifying Behaviors

We understand that identified behaviors can impinge on a student's ability to learn the literacy-related aspects of the lessons, however there was little recognition by the candidates of a student's difficulty with content vocabulary or knowing letter sounds, for example. During one small group reading lesson, the teacher candidate, Leslie[1], noted that [s1] "had a hard time keeping his hands to himself," while also noting that he had strengths by being "super patient, never talked over people." Her strategies for working with [s1] later in the day were to assist him with "space bubbles" so that he could understand personal space and involve him in hands-on activities so that he would not bother other students. Leslie noted about another student, [s2], "talked over students often"; a strength for [s2] she notes is that he is "super knowledgeable on topic." In her afternoon lesson, she has all of the students in the small group practice raising their hands to model the behavior she desires in the student. Note that hand-raising is not a method of having students respond that would have been encouraged by instructors. There is no evidence in her written responses about why [s1] and [s2] are displaying the behaviors. For example, both students likely needed movement during the lesson and quite possibly already knew the content.

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[1] All names are pseudonyms.

Beginning Recognition of Behavioral Antecedents

The teacher candidates in the literacy course began to understand their lack of knowledge about how to handle behaviors and that there are deeper reasons when students do not attend during a lesson. When discussing a student during collaboration time, a teacher candidate noted that the special education teacher candidate helped with understanding, noting, "Behavior problems and how to deal with them is something I know little about. The SPED students know a lot more. They put a 'why' to what things were happening." This candidate has a beginning understanding of what Lavay (2019) noted about taking a "humanistic approach [which] involves asking, 'Why?' or determining the underlying psychosocial causes of an individual's behavior. Humanistic methods focus on qualities of good character, personal and social responsibility, and cooperative-based development" (p. 7).

Recognition of Strategies Addressing Behaviors

The teacher candidates were also making connections between behaviors and strategies that address them. They recognized that strategies must be in place to minimize behaviors so that learning can occur for all students. When observing the classroom teacher during a phonics lesson, a teacher candidate identified that a student needed a visual tool in order to attend to the content of the lesson: "Student is an ELL. He is slow to participate with his peers in phonics activities. Very distractable [sic], but pays more attention when there is a visual aid." Another teacher candidate noted a student was motivated when music was incorporated into the phonics lesson: "Seems uninterested or least is not engaged. Very fidgety. Does seem to try to sing along with the class."

There is also recognition that small, subtle teacher moves can easily address a student's need and result in the student reengaging in the lesson. Even something as simple as proximity is noticed: "He moves closer to Ms. S. when she sees his need," resulting in increased participation. Shauna discusses "redirecting disruptive behavior without making a big deal" by using the student's name and asking the student a question about what was happening in the lesson "to regain focus."

Building knowledge about having strategies to address learner needs is critical and is further demonstrated during the candidates' own lessons. Leslie, for example, saw the need for active learning during lessons saying, "The main issue was difficulties with behavior when they were not physically doing something." She ends this particular part of her reflection by saying, "We will have to address needs beyond academics," clearly understanding that a lesson is only effective when other student needs are addressed.

Hadley described a concern for one of her students saying that the student had difficulty "staying focused on task at hand." She attempted to redirect the student back to the lesson but indicated that redirecting the student, referring back to classroom rules, and asking him questions directly was easy, "but didn't last." She noted her concerns for the student's ability to verbalize his thoughts and lack of confidence in "showing what he knows." The collaboration time with a special education candidate helped Hadley understand that this student needed a different kind of opportunity to respond, one that would allow the student think time and an opportunity to talk before he is pressed to answer the question that has been posed.

A caveat to note about what teacher candidates were able to identify as strategies addressing behaviors is that there is little recognition for what classroom and behavior management has entailed as far as what the classroom teacher has put into place at this point in the academic year. Hal noted that the students were compliant in following the directions and expectations of Mrs. C. He does not, however, demonstrate in his reflection acknowledgement of what Mrs. C. has taught her kindergarten students in the way of routines, transitions, and overall expectations for teaching in a structured, safe environment thus far in the year.

The Importance of Building Connections with Students

One particular teacher candidate, Bart, had a difficult time being positive about the overall field experience. Nearly all of his reflections focus on a student that impacted his ability to deliver his lessons smoothly. He was clearly frustrated, but also had difficulty seeking additional ways he might have managed the student. In fairness, the student also demonstrated behavior management issues for the classroom teacher. Bart does understand that time building connections with students impacts behaviors. "It was very hard for me to not be able to connect with [s3]. I tried everything I could, but nothing seemed to work. I can't help but take this somewhat personally." His reflection, clearly holding notes of exasperation, also demonstrated the need for expanding the tool box for teacher candidates' behavior management strategies. Bart has a working knowledge of how "working to connect with your students will help you in all aspects of your teaching. Building relationships with students takes time and effort" (Lavay, 2019, p. 5).

Shauna worked with a student who was easily distracted by others in the classroom. This is problematic for this student during this particular field experience because of the numbers of teacher candidates and supervising faculty that are in and out of the classroom during the day. While Shauna noted that this is difficult for the student, she worked at "keeping him focused by assigning him a 'teacher role'," which made the student "feel important and made him want to do a good job." Shauna figured out a way to make a connection with the student that also addressed his ability to focus during the lessons she was delivering.

Misconceptions about Bilingual Learners

In the school setting for the field experience, about one-third of the students are from homes where English is not the primary spoken language. Most students that fall into the bilingual learner's category speak Spanish at home. Many of these students and their families have recently arrived in the United States. Not surprisingly, the candidates have difficulty distinguishing between behaviors that might be surfacing because a student simply does not understand the lesson in English versus a student who is displaying issues not related to language. Part of the problem here is that the teacher candidates do not know which students are learning to speak English prior to teaching their lessons.

Hadley and Brenda both made assumptions about multilingual students and their knowledge of English words or their English-speaking skills. Brenda wrote, "there was one student who was ell [sic] and he coulden't [sic] hardly understand anything only certain words." Hadley wrote, "ELL learner [sic] has really developed English skills." Jessica noted that the collaboration process was useful for her: "Collaboration assisted in getting the student more involved and emerged [immersed] despite [sic] the language barrier. Focusing on vocabulary and illustrations to decode the story helped." Shauna makes some generalizing statements about diverse learners noting, "...I learned students from diverse populations need different attention, different focuses and different ways of learning."

Discussion

Blurring of Classroom and Behavior Management

Behavior management and classroom management in teacher preparation programs are usually the focus of a single course often taught in the early stages of preparation. Classroom management techniques are often focused on cooperative learning strategies that are modeled throughout teacher preparation programs depending on each instructors' abilities to incorporate and use these strategies while teaching. The principles of behavior management may also be woven into

multiple courses over a several semester period of time. Candidates often blur classroom management versus behavior management. We can assume that distinguishing between the two is not emphasized enough or concepts for the two are woven together leaving candidates with undeveloped definitions of both. Perhaps a first step for educator preparation programs is to clearly define what is meant by classroom management and behavior management as well as how classroom management may or may not assist with behavior management.

The Value of Field Experiences

During field experiences, teacher candidates are in an influential stage considering, prior to these experiences, their interactions are theoretical. However, identifying the best strategies for providing support and feedback to help candidates make connections between research and practice remains a challenge in the field. Students often leave a teacher preparation program equipped with content knowledge about what to teach and ideas about curriculum and activities, but are perhaps less skilled in actually providing opportunities for children to learn and how to foster positive interactions with children (Laparo et al., 2012). Although teacher candidates take coursework that is structured to provide them background on theory, teaching, research, and practice, many programs do not include courses dedicated specifically to prepare teachers to handle behavior challenges. Even when such courses are included, there is a lack of research on how best to prepare preservice teachers to teach students with diverse behavioral needs (Freeman & Freeman, 2014). Observing and assessing the guidance strategies of preservice teachers is particularly important given their unfamiliarity and continued training and learning. Time still remains for others to positively influence the behaviors and methods of these preservice teachers so that, as they transition to student teaching and first years of teaching, their guidance strategies will be more refined and positively impact classroom quality.

Novice teachers are challenged with balancing theory with student instruction. Since skill improves with experience, emotional competency of new teachers may not develop at the same time as intellectual competency. The transition from learning about teaching strategies to a brief teaching internship only prepares individuals to teach content, whereas teaching expertise and the effectiveness of good pedagogy happens several years into the teaching experience (Romano, 2008).

Prevention before Intervention

Helping candidates understand antecedents to behaviors prior to field experiences and then allowing time in the field to observe for behaviors prior to content teaching could be valuable in filling the behavior management toolbox for education majors. We prefer the use of high-quality teaching videos *before* going to a field experience to assist candidates in identifying antecedents, even subtle ones, with facilitation by a university instructor. Modeling the identification of the antecedents, then asking candidates to work in small groups to identify and discuss them, then assigning candidates the work independently is a scaffolded way to approach what is expected once in the field. Debriefing is critical immediately following the field experiences so that candidates can demonstrate their thinking about what the antecedents were, but also how the classroom teacher either succeeded or was unsuccessful in diffusing a situation with a student.

Tapping into The Expertise of Classroom Teachers

When teacher candidates observe skilled classroom teachers in action, it is common for the classroom teacher to narrate what they are doing during a lesson including why they are doing it. Experiences tell us that they are also good at sharing what behaviors candidates may see in the classroom. But, could they also narrate the subtler ways that they may redirect and intervene when they recognize a small behavior that could escalate into a bigger one? During observations for

behavior management, this kind of narration could assist candidates in understanding an antecedent that they lack the expertise to note. Lavay (2019) discusses how observing master teachers could help candidates develop behavior management skills writing, "this would help future teachers to enter the teaching profession with the confidence to help their students take responsibility for their own behavior, empower student learning, cooperate effectively with others, and contribute positively to their school and their society" (p. 8).

Implications

The field experiences for the teacher education program at the university where the research was conducted have increased in quality and quantity over the past ten years. They begin earlier in the program, occur in many districts, and are scaffolded from observations at entry to the program to small group teaching at mid-level, and to larger group/whole class instruction during the final year of preparation. As a result, candidates indicate they feel better prepared for their first year of teaching. Our research has demonstrated that specific improvements can occur to facilitate more meaningful field experiences that address candidates' concerns, especially for learning literacy methods. It is common in teacher preparation programs for one course to be devoted to literacy methods, and it is valuable for multiple field experiences to occur during such a course. Assisting candidates in understanding very specific literacy instruction skills prior to time in the field assists them in observing carefully. These teaching skills should be modeled in the university classroom prior to those experiences, allowing candidates low-risk opportunities to observe their instructor or their peers prior to observing in a classroom full of students. Teacher candidates report needing more specific knowledge about literacy skills including phonemic awareness, phonics, building vocabulary, and teaching all of those skills to students learning English and students with special needs. While student teaching, they also indicate they need additional knowledge about teaching from specific literacy curriculums and how to navigate what they have been taught in the university classroom and what is expected of them in their first teaching position.

Conclusion

A number of questions regarding teacher preparation for classroom management remain to be addressed. However, through direct, confidential communication with newly graduated teachers it is discernible to focus more on preparing new teachers for times when a student is in crisis. Novice teachers must be able to identify emblematic behaviors and practice strategies for responding when a student is in distress; all while learning and maintaining their own emotional boundaries. It is true, when teachers know content, maintain organization, and have clear expectations and routines, students will know what to expect, resulting in a dependable ebb and flow of classroom life. A first-year preschool teacher noted this in an assignment recently,

> A problem I had at the beginning of the school year was using methods of cognitive engagement. I focused so heavily on classroom management that I don't feel that I gave them the freedom to connect with each other and achieve higher level thinking. Since identifying this problem I've implemented strategies such as turn and talks, drawing pictures, and making anchor charts which list student responses (Carman, personal communication, January 18, 2021).

The unfortunate reality is there are much harder conflicts and challenges that occur for reasons beyond a teacher's control. These variables include students' lack of access to food, bullying, physical or psychological abuse, toxic stress, neglect, mental health, and learning abilities, to name a few. In most cases, these interactions are feeble and leave very little time for processing. This is an inefficient time for recalling and practicing management strategies. Although many behaviorally-

based instructional practices have been shown empirically to promote student achievement, it is unknown to what extent teachers receive adequate training in these methods.

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