Classroom Management Training for Teachers in Urban Environments Serving Predominately African American Students: A Review of the Literature

Kristine E. Larson

Abstract The purpose of this paper was to review the literature in terms of professional development activities that researchers have enlisted to reduce student problem behaviors and improve classroom management competencies among teachers who work in urban environments serving predominately African American students. First, the author conducted a systematic literature review to collect articles that studied trainings intended to reduce student problem behaviors and improve classroom management competencies. Next, the author summarized the literature in terms of types of trainings, populations, designs, measures, intended outcomes, and results. Based on themes found in the literature, the author discussed implications and suggestions for future research.

Keywords Classroom management · African American · Urban · Teacher training · Professional development

Introduction

Despite decades of reform efforts, African American students are more likely to experience exclusionary discipline than their White counterparts (Burke and Nishioka 2014; Losen and Gillespie 2012). Specifically, African Americans are three times as likely to get suspended as Whites (Losen and Gillespie 2012). Since students are generally required to be present in school in order to learn and succeed, exclusionary discipline has been associated with poor academic outcomes, school dropout, entry into the juvenile justice system, future unemployment, and abject poverty (Skiba et al. 2011; Wald and Losen 2003). Discipline problems are
particularly challenging in schools that serve high percentages of minority students (Guin 2004; National Center for Education Statistics 2008) and student misbehavior is often cited as one factor to explain teacher burnout and attrition in urban environments (Abel and Sewell 1999).

Research suggests teachers’ use of evidence-based classroom management strategies is associated with student task engagement and achievement (Dunlap et al. 2010; Simonsen et al. 2008). Evidence-based classroom management strategies include clearly stating expectations, engaging students in lessons, and using a continuum of strategies for responding to appropriate and inappropriate behavior (Dunlap et al. 2010; MacSuga and Simonsen 2011; Pisacreta et al. 2011; Simonsen et al. 2008). Despite teachers’ knowledge of research-based practices in classroom management, however, there is a gap in their ability to deliver these practices consistently (Jeffrey et al. 2009). As such, providing classroom management training for teachers in urban environments may be one solution to improving fidelity of evidence-based practices to improve student behavior, increase teacher retention, and improve student outcomes in and out of school.

Scholars suggest, however, that traditional classroom management approaches fail to take into account the role of culture in classroom behavior and may therefore be ineffective for students from ethnic and racial minority backgrounds (Siwatu and Starker 2010). Consequently, some have recommended using culturally responsive classroom management (Bondy et al. 2007; Brown 2004; Weinstein et al. 2004). Components of culturally responsive classroom management include (a) recognition of one’s own ethnocentrism; (b) knowledge of students’ cultural backgrounds; (c) understanding of the broader social, economic, and political context; (d) ability and willingness to use culturally appropriate management strategies; and (e) commitment to building caring classrooms (Weinstein et al. 2004). Specific strategies of culturally responsive classroom management include (a) building strong relationships with students, (b) creating caring environments that focus on learning, (c) encouraging socialization and discussion, teaching with assertiveness, and (d) clearly stating expectations (Brown 2004; Bondy et al. 2007). These strategies are firmly rooted in the literature on culturally responsive teaching (Gay 2002; Ladson-Billings 1995a, b, 2001; Villegas and Lucas 2002). Unlike culturally responsive teaching which focuses mainly on pedagogy and content, culturally responsive classroom management focuses on how values and biases can influence teacher expectations for behavior as well as interactions with students (Weinstein et al. 2004).

Taken together, the purpose of this review is to identify professional development activities that help reduce student problem behaviors and improve classroom management competencies of teachers who work in urban environments with predominately African American students. By characterizing the literature in this manner, researchers and practitioners will have a comprehensive list of training activities that are successful with teachers in urban environments who teach predominately African American students. Additionally, this article will examine extent to which culturally responsive classroom management strategies are embedded in teacher training activities. Since traditional classroom management may not be effective for all learners, it is equally important to make researchers and
practitioners aware of strategies that align with culturally responsive classroom management. By adding to the knowledgebase around culturally responsive classroom management, disparities in exclusionary discipline are likely to decrease, thereby improving outcomes for African American students.

Methods

A five-step process was used to select articles for the review. First, appropriate databases were identified based on inclusion criteria. Second, a list of search terms to be entered into the databases was created. Third, a list of inclusion criteria were developed to compile a sample of articles related to the topic. Fourth, these search terms were used to find articles in the selected databases. Fifth, articles to be included into the sample were selected based on inclusion criteria. This process and results of the database and literature search are described in more detail below.

Identification of Sources

Three criteria were used to select databases for the systematic review. First, only studies that took place in the United States were included so the results could be generalized to teachers in the United States; therefore only domestic databases were used. Second, only databases to which the author’s educational institution subscribed were used. Third, databases from psychology and sociology were included since education is a social science. In sum, four databases met the inclusion criteria: Academic Search Complete, Education Full Text, ERIC, Social Sciences Full Text, and PsycINFO.

Search Terms

The current literature review examined teacher training in classroom management in urban environments that served high-percentages of African American students. As such, synonyms for the terms teacher training, classroom management, and African American were used. Synonyms related to teacher training included professional development, in-service, mentor, performance feedback, coach, technical support, technical assistance, and training. Synonyms related to African American included Black, urban, and metro. Synonyms related to classroom management included behavior management and discipline. These related search terms were joined using OR and combined the related concepts by using the word AND (Hammerstrøm et al. 2010).

Inclusion Criteria

The purpose of this review was to find articles that studied interventions to improve classroom management competencies or improve student behavior. As such, six inclusion criteria to obtain studies were developed. First, any articles that studied K-12 settings in the United States were included. Second, only articles that were
written in English were included. Third, only published, peer-reviewed articles that presented findings from random control trials, quasi-experimental, single-subject, qualitative, and correlational studies were included. Lastly, only included articles that specifically mentioned trainings for teachers to increase classroom management competencies and/or improve student behavior were included.

**Procedure of Article Search**

In the following section, a description of how articles were searched for and selected based on sources, search terms, and inclusion criteria is presented. First, the terms were searched for electronically within the full text of electronic journals within the four selected databases. Each search generated a total number of hits. Second, the population of articles was subjected to a five-level inclusion process based on the criteria described in the previous section: Level 1 electronic database search where full-text of the article mentions terms related to the search terms; Level 2 abstract mentions search terms related to classroom management and training; full-text mentions synonyms of term African American; Level 3 abstracts mentions search terms related to classroom management, teacher training, and African American. Level 4 abstract mentions search terms related to teacher training, author provided the subject key word related to classroom management, and the full-text of the article includes terms related to African American. Level 5 article describes an empirical study that describes a training intervention to improve teacher competencies and/or student behavior for African American students in urban environments.

### Table 1  Database search and sampling procedure

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Database search</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Level 1</td>
<td>86,969</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Level 2</td>
<td>804</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Level 3</td>
<td>271</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Level 4</td>
<td>241</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Level 5</td>
<td>10(^a)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The population of articles was subjected to a five-level inclusion process based on the criteria described in the previous section: Level 1 electronic database search where full-text of the article mentions terms related to the search terms; Level 2 abstract mentions search terms related to classroom management and training; full-text mentions synonyms of term African American; Level 3 abstracts mentions search terms related to classroom management, teacher training, and African American. Level 4 abstract mentions search terms related to teacher training, author provided the subject key word related to classroom management, and the full-text of the article includes terms related to African American. Level 5 article describes an empirical study that describes a training intervention to improve teacher competencies or student behavior for African American students in urban environments.

\(^a\) Represents the total number of articles from the database search. One additional article was found from previous scholarship and one article was found by speaking to an expert in the field of comprehensive behavior management in urban environments yielding a total number of articles in the sample to 12.
Database Search Results

The initial database search (Level 1) using Academic Search Complete, Education Full Text, ERIC, Psych Info, and Social Sciences Full-Text yielded 86,969 results (see Table 1). The Level 2 search that called upon articles whose full-text mention African American and whose article abstracts mentioned search terms related to classroom management training yielded 804 articles. The Level 3 search included articles that met the Level 2 criteria, but further pared the sample of articles by including search terms related to African Americans in the abstract instead of the entire text. This search yielded 271 articles, six of which met the search criteria (Bohanon et al. 2012; Burke et al. 2011; Moore and Ratchford 2007; Netzel and Eber 2003; Sawka et al. 2002; Shernoff et al. 2011). The Level 4 search included articles that mentioned terms related to African American and teacher training activities in the abstract, but the subject of the article included synonyms related to classroom management. This search yielded 241 articles, four of which met inclusion criteria (Gottlieb and Polirstok 2005; Pisacreta et al. 2011; MacSuga and Simonsen 2011; Reglin et al. 2009). In sum, the electronic database search yielded a total of 10 articles. The author then examined her previous scholarship and found one article she had cited that met inclusion criteria (Hough 2011). To ensure that all relevant articles were included, the author spoke with an expert in comprehensive behavior management who conducts research in urban environments. From this conversation, one more article met inclusion criteria and was included in the sample (Becker et al. 2013). In sum, a total of twelve articles met Level 5 search criteria because they described an empirical study that researched a training intervention to improve teacher classroom management competencies or student behavior for African American students in urban environments (Becker et al. 2013; Bohanon et al. 2012; Burke et al. 2011; Gottlieb and Polirstok 2005; Hough 2011; MacSuga and Simonsen 2011; Moore and Ratchford 2007; Netzel and Eber 2003; Pisacreta et al. 2011; Reglin et al. 2009; Sawka et al. 2002; Shernoff et al. 2011).

Results

The purpose of this literature review was to identify training activities that help reduce student problem behaviors and improve classroom management competencies of teachers who work in urban environments serving predominately African American students. The following sections describe each study in terms of design, population, training types, intended outcomes, measures, and results. Studies were first organized by the research designs employed (e.g. case study, single-subject experimental design, quasi-experimental, and correlational) and then in chronological order within each section.

Case Studies

Five case studies were identified in the sample (Bohanon et al. 2012; MacSuga and Simonsen 2011; Moore and Ratchford 2007; Netzel and Eber 2003; Shernoff et al.
The authors of the earliest case study, Netzel and Eber (2003) described implementing PBIS training and technical assistance to help teachers work more effectively with at-risk students and reduce suspension and office disciplinary referrals (ODRs) in an urban school in Illinois. The technical assistance team used data to identify referral patterns (e.g., type of infraction and time of day/location infraction occurred). The data revealed that most office referrals were written in the classroom and on the playground. As such, the district’s behavior intervention coordinator held a voluntary seven 45-min workshop for classroom management before school. The workshop topics focused on encouraging teachers to teach students appropriate behavior, understanding the function of students’ behavior, and formulating a plan for responding to both appropriate and inappropriate student behavior. The technical assistance team also helped teachers develop pre-referral strategies for students who were experiencing academic and/or behavioral difficulties. After 1 year, the school experienced a 22% reduction in suspensions as well as a decrease in ODRs.

Netzel and Eber (2003) were not specific about the number of suspensions or ODRs that were recorded previously, so it is difficult to determine the meaning of a “22%” reduction in suspensions or a “decrease” in ODRs. Additionally, the authors posited that the overall school climate became more positive, staff turnover decreased, and staff and student attitudes increased; however these variables were not measured. In sum, Netzel and Eber (2003) described changes in student behavior following training and coaching; they did not, however, specifically measure whether the training activities increased teachers’ competence with classroom management. Moreover, only one of the five strategies related to culturally responsive classroom management (e.g., teaching students expectations regarding behavior) were mentioned in the article by Netzel and Eber (2003) in terms of the intervention. The article does not mention culture in terms of recognition of ethnocentrism, knowledge of students’ cultural backgrounds. Nor does the article mention creating caring classrooms or building strong relationships with students.

Moore and Ratchford (2007) implemented a “Boys to Men Mentoring Program” and conducted cultural diversity trainings for their staff at a middle school located in North Carolina. The school consisted of 550 students (21% Caucasian; 59% African American, 17% Hispanic, and 3% other). The teaching staff was 56% African American, 33% Caucasian, and 11% other. The principal solicited support of fraternity brothers who met with students, provided assistance with homework, served as motivational speakers, and became study buddies for 10 eighth grade students who had the most frequent discipline referrals. In seventh grade, these students comprised of 2% of the population, but received 32% of all discipline referrals. Results indicated a 60% reduction in discipline referrals for the 10 students during their eighth grade year. In addition to the mentoring program and cultural diversity training for the staff, the authors maintained that parental involvement was a critical component to students’ success in the program.

This descriptive case study by Moore and Ratchford (2007), while not rigorous or experimental in nature, suggested that using role models, participating in cultural diversity training, and supporting family engagement can improve student
behavior. On one hand, the strategies implemented by the mentors in this case study are aligned with three of the strategies for culturally responsive classroom management (e.g., building strong relationships with students, creating caring environments that focus on learning, and encouraging socialization and discussion). On the other hand, it is unclear the extent to which the teachers used these techniques with the students.

MacSuga and Simonsen (2011) used an AB case study design to explore the effects of a classroom management model on two teachers’ use of evidence-based classroom management practices and student on-task behavior in an urban New England middle school. Teachers in the study either requested assistance for classroom management or were requested to receive assistance by administrators. First, the authors collected baseline data related to student on-task behavior using momentary time-sampling techniques. The observations lasted 15 min wherein the authors identified whether a student was on- or off-task at the end of 1-min intervals. Second, the authors trained teachers in effective classroom management strategies using discussions, explanations, and role-play activities. Researchers discussed the percentage of on-task student behavior with teachers and then asked teachers to complete a checklist assessing classroom management. Based on the information provided in the checklist, the teachers created goals to improve classroom management. The authors and the teachers continued to collect data about student on-task behavior and met to discuss the checklist and the data until an improvement in evidence-based practice use and on-task student behavior were noted. Both teachers in the study increased use of evidence-based classroom management practices when the checklist and consultation were provided. Additionally, student on-task behavior also improved.

It should be noted that while teacher and student behaviors improved, this study focused solely on the traditional classroom management strategies suggested by Simonsen et al. (2008; e.g., clearly stating expectations, engaging students in lessons, and a continuum of strategies for responding to appropriate and inappropriate behavior). Traditional classroom management and culturally responsive classroom agree that clear expectations are important. As such, the study by MacSuga and Simonsen (2011) implemented one of the components of culturally responsive classroom management because it addressed clearly stating expectations. However, this training did not ask teachers to explore their own or their students’ culture as it relates to behavior. Because this article focused on traditional classroom management strategies, it is understood that there is essentially an absence of culture in the training that teachers received. It is also important to note that while the results are promising, the lack of a rigorous single-subject experimental design limits the ability to make causal statements about the effect of the classroom management model. Furthermore, the researchers did not collect inter-rater reliability which weakens the study’s internal validity. Overall, however, using an evidence-based classroom management checklist coupled with consultation may likely improve student behavior and teacher fidelity using effective classroom management strategies.

Shernoff et al. (2011) described Teachers Supporting Teachers in Urban Schools (TST), a comprehensive professional development model piloted in one Chicago
K-8 school. The intervention included monthly group seminars, coaching (real-time modeling, demonstration, and co-teaching of the evidence-based strategies introduced during the group seminars and tailored to teachers’ needs), and monthly professional learning communities (PLCs) led by key opinion leader (KOL) mentors. While the group seminars and PLCs were open to all staff at the school \( (n = 22) \), the coaching was designed specifically for early career teachers \( (n = 5) \) who had taught for five or fewer years. Teachers participated in 10 group seminars, 4 PLC meetings, and 21 weeks of coaching. Shernoff et al. examined (1) the extent to which the core components of TST were delivered, (2) teacher satisfaction with the model, and (3) key adaptations to enhance the contextual fit of the model. Attendance records, fidelity tools, and coaching logs were examined to measure implementation fidelity of coaches delivering the model. Kappa coefficients for the implementation fidelity ranged from 0.67 to 1.0 (Kappa = 0.81). The completion rates for the fidelity checklists were 92% for group seminars, 88% for PLCs, and 59% for coaching. Focus group data and fidelity checklists were used to measure consumer satisfaction and also to find themes regarding the model to make adaptations. Overall, teachers reported positive reactions to the professional development model. In particular, teachers felt that they were treated as professionals with expertise to share (rather than passive recipients of information), that the model created opportunities for collaboration, and that the researchers demonstrated respect and professional treatment of teachers’ time. Additionally, teachers reported that the PLCs and group seminars created opportunities for collaboration and alleviated feelings of isolation. While the purpose of the TST model was to increase teachers’ effectiveness in classroom management, this variable was not studied directly. Furthermore, the fidelity of the group seminars and PLCs were generally high, however, the fidelity of the coaching component was fairly low (59%), suggesting that the coaches did not follow-through with the expectations of the coaching component of the model thereby limiting conclusions about coaching the authors may want to report in future studies.

Reports of changes in student behavior were not measured since the focus of this article was on implementation fidelity in the Shernoff et al. (2011) study. Moreover, strategies related to culturally responsive classroom management were not mentioned. The authors did, however, report that teachers suggested adapting the model and strategies to better reflect the realities of their environment. Teachers remarked that the videos shown during the training were not relevant to their situation because the students in the videos were very compliant. Instead, teachers wanted access to training materials that reflected students served in urban schools and concrete examples for how to adapt strategies to fit the needs of their school.

Bohanon et al. (2012) provided a case study example regarding the regarding preparation, implementation, and outcomes of implementing Positive Behavior Support (PBS) training and coaching in one urban high school to address student office referrals. The research team provided 45-min training sessions to teachers in small-group, rotational meetings for 8 weeks. The trainings included a PBS topic, modeling, guided practice, and homework. The authors measured staff perception of PBS implementation, level of implementation fidelity of PBS, and student office disciplinary referrals (ODRs) over 3 years. Researchers found increases in school-
wide components perceived to be in place by staff, reductions total number and daily rate of ODRs, and an increase in implementation fidelity. Findings suggest that implementing PBS in large urban high schools can be done with fidelity.

The study by Bohanon et al. (2012) did not specifically address increasing teacher classroom management competencies, but improvements in student behaviors were noted. It is important to consider, however, that changes in student behavior may be a reflection of administrator pressure to reduce the number of referrals rather than evidence of improved student behavior. It should also be noted, too, that one of the focuses of PBIS is clearly stating expectations, thus one of the five strategies related to culturally responsive classroom management was specifically noted in the article. Other strategies specifically related to culture however (e.g., recognition of one’s own ethnocentrism and knowledge of students’ cultural backgrounds, understanding broader social, economic, and political context, commitment to building caring classrooms) were not mentioned.

**Single Subject Experimental Studies**

One single subject experimental study was identified in the sample of articles (Pisacreta et al. 2011). Pisacreta and colleagues evaluated the effects of modeling and performance feedback on three general education teachers’ praise-to behavior correction ratio using a multiple-baseline across participants design. The study took place in a low socioeconomic, mid-Atlantic, urban middle school that served 1200 students in grades 6–8. The authors collected baseline data using a partial-interval recording system (20 min in duration, divided into 15 s intervals for a total of 80 intervals) to record the occurrence of student disruptive behavior and ratio of teacher praise to behavior correction. Next, the researchers met with teachers to review baseline ratio with bar graph visual. In a separate condition, the author also modeled for teachers when and how to implement 1:1 ratio of praise-to-behavior correction during instruction. Researchers also examined student behaviors in another classroom to see if the intervention would generalize across settings. Data collection continued using 20 min observation sessions and inter-observer agreement was calculated for 22 % of observation sessions across all conditions. Each teacher demonstrated substantial increases in the ratio of praise-to-behavior correction in the modeling and performance feedback condition. While not as strong, all teachers maintained higher levels of praise-to-behavior correction in the feedback-only condition in comparison with baseline. Additionally, student disruptive behavior decreased in all three general education teachers’ classrooms.

These results were not as strong with regards to reductions in student disruptive behaviors in the generalization setting (one teacher’s students actually showed increases), indicating that the training may be effective for specific contexts. Moreover, it is unclear whether it was the modeling and feedback or feedback only that caused change in behavior in the “Modeling Plus Feedback” group since both interventions were used. The study by Pisacreta et al. (2011) reinforces previous research that suggests that training teachers to increase praise is effective in reducing disruptive behavior. The researchers responsible for the study addressed increasing praise and while not directly related to culture, it is possible
that praise promotes a positive learning environment (Brown 2004) and may also promote teacher-student relationships which are highly prized in the African American community (Black et al. 2003). As such, the study by Pisacreta et al. (2011) meets, if only distally, two of the criteria for culturally responsive classroom management (building strong relationships with students and clearly stating expectations).

Quasi-Experimental Studies

Three studies in the sample used a quasi-experimental design (Becker et al. 2013; Gottlieb and Polirstok 2005; Hough 2011). Gottlieb and Polirstok (2005) used a quasi-experimental design to compare three inner-city elementary schools that received a professional development program to 12 inner-city elementary schools that did not receive the intervention on three outcomes: academic achievement, disciplinary infractions, and special education referrals. Professional development training sought to increase level of praise and reinforcement and reduce the use of punishment and negative teacher comments. Dosage varied; School A received seven, 150-min sessions while schools B and C received five, 150-min sessions of professional development. To begin, the teachers asked questions about problems they encountered in their classes and trainers encouraged group discussions to address these problems. Only School A reported data on disciplinary infractions. All three schools reported data on special education referrals and student achievement in reading. The authors combined Schools B and C during analysis. Researchers examined the percent change between the 2 years before and after the intervention. Results suggested that behavioral infractions decreased by 61% between year one and year two. Moreover, special education referrals decreased in School A from 30 to 11. Special education referral rates dropped 31% in Schools B and C after training. Reading scores also increased in the three experimental schools about 4% points while scores for the other 12 schools declined approximately 1% despite receiving the same literacy program, indicating a 5% difference between schools. The authors also provided qualitative information about improvements in school climate including less teacher stress and more respect towards children. The implications are clear: when teachers received training in classroom management (a) disciplinary infractions decreased, (b) special education referrals decreased, (c) reading achievement increased, and (d) school climate improved. The article by Gottlieb and Polirstok (2005) does not, however, provide enough contextual information about improvements in school climate including less teacher stress and more respect towards children. The implications are clear: when teachers received training in classroom management (a) disciplinary infractions decreased, (b) special education referrals decreased, (c) reading achievement increased, and (d) school climate improved. The article by Gottlieb and Polirstok (2005) does not, however, provide enough contextual information about the 12 comparison schools to determine whether these schools were comparable at baseline—a point that almost entirely negates these positive findings. In relation to the current review, the study by Gottlieb and Polirstok demonstrated some evidence showing student improvement in behavior, but did not mention increases in teacher classroom management competencies. Moreover, the intervention focused on increasing the level of praise and reinforcement, which, similar to Pisacreta et al. (2011), indirectly meets two criteria related to culturally responsive classroom management strategies. The study does not, however, specifically mention culture.
Hough (2011) evaluated the Developmental Designs (DD) classroom management model on teacher competence, confidence, and implementation of classroom management strategies in 22 middle schools in a large, Midwestern school district. Developmental Designs is a professional development model that offers 5 day-long professional development workshops on 14 classroom management strategies over 1 week and support via coaching and site-based follow-up. Following the five professional development summer trainings, questionnaires were distributed to teachers. The surveys asked teachers about the quality of the professional development, confidence in utilizing strategies, and levels of classroom implementation. A similar survey was sent to participants 6 months later to determine the extent to which teachers had been implementing the strategies addressed in the summer workshops and the degree of confidence teachers had with regard to implementing these strategies. Of a total of 360 educators, 317 were new to training (DD1 group) and 43 were returning for a second year (DD2). Overall, teachers rated the professional development with a high degree of satisfaction. Using a table of random numbers, two groups were created: 30 DD1 teachers and 30 DD2 teachers. An independent samples t test was used to examine differences between the two groups with regard to their levels of confidence in implementing the 14 DD1 practices and strategies. Analyses revealed significant differences between DD1 group and DD2 group in terms of levels of confidence in implementing the classroom management practices. Additionally, levels of implementation were high for DD1 and DD2, but noticeably more so for the DD2 participants suggesting that a second year’s implementation is necessary to increase both confidence and implementation.

One limitation to the study by Hough (2011) is that the data is all self-reported; without observational data, it is difficult to determine if the levels of confidence and indicators of implementation are accurate. Nonetheless, teachers reported that Developmental Designs professional development increased teacher confidence and implementation of research-based classroom management practices. Offering two types of professional development based on the level of need of participants is an important contribution to the field. With regards to this study, it is difficult to determine whether teacher competence in classroom management increased or if only the perception of competence increased. Additionally, no student data about discipline was reported thereby limiting the ability to show distal outcomes about the effectiveness of training on student behavior. Lastly, it is unclear whether the trainings addressed components of culturally responsive classroom management since the description of the professional development training only alluded to providing teachers with positive, proactive student behavior management techniques. The article does not specifically mention culture.

Becker et al. (2013) examined how three coaches differentiated their practices according to teacher implementation quality of the Good Behavior Game (GBG) and whether coaching was associated with improved implementation quality for 129 teachers in 12 urban schools. The intervention included a 1-day workshop and 31 weeks of individual coaching on the PAX Good Behavior Game and Promoting Alternative Thinking Strategies (PATHS). The PAX GBG encourages student on-task behavior by using a group-based token economy and verbal and visual cues.
PATHS is a socio-emotional learning curriculum designed to promote pro-social student behavior. There were two types of coaching that occurred during this study: universal and tailored. Universal coaching lasted for approximately 6 weeks and was provided to all teachers. At the end of 6 weeks, teachers were categorized as implementing PAX GBG with either high or low fidelity. The tailored coaching was differentiated based on teacher needs. Three measures were used to evaluate the implementation fidelity. First, coaching activities were recorded using a Coach Visit Log (Bradshaw and Domitrovich 2008), whereby the coach identified the type and duration of each coaching activity employed. Second, teachers completed a weekly log of the number of GBG games played and the duration of each game played to record GBG dosage. Third, GBG quality was evaluated using the PAX GBG Implementation Rubric (Schaffer et al. 2006). Inter-rater reliability for the Implementation Rubric was high (ICC = .93). Researchers used multivariate analyses to examine differences in total time spent coaching and the number of coaching sessions based on teachers’ implementation quality. Results indicated that coaches spent more time with teachers who had low levels of implementation fidelity during the tailored coaching phase. Results also indicated that teachers’ implementation fidelity, particularly for teachers rated as low fidelity implementers, was significantly higher at the end of the universal training to the end of the tailored coaching. These results suggest a relationship between GBG coaching and implementation fidelity. Furthermore, the findings identify patterns in coaching behaviors over time and suggest that coaches vary their activities and time based on teacher implementation quality.

The study by Becker et al. examined teachers’ ability to implement the Good Behavior Game (GBG). If the GBG is an effective practice and coaching can increase implementation fidelity, then it can be assumed that coaching teachers in the GBG can reduce student disruptive behavior. More research is needed, however, to definitively draw this conclusion. Lastly, although the intervention of this study is based on group-based token economy and a variety of cues regarding appropriate, it is not clear the extent to which these strategies can be considered culturally responsive. Arguably, this intervention may help to create environments that focus on learning and accomplishes this goal is by focusing on clearly stating expectations. As such, this intervention loosely meets two culturally responsive classroom management strategies suggested by Brown (2004) and Bondy et al. (2007). There is, however, no mention of culture in this article thereby not meeting any of the criteria for culturally responsive classroom management set forth by Weinstein et al. (2004).

**Correlational Studies**

Three studies in the sample used correlational analyses (Burke et al. 2011; Reglin et al. 2009; Sawka et al. 2002). Sawka et al. (2002), described implementing Strengthening Emotional Support Services (SESS) with 64 special educators of a large northeastern urban school district. One full-day of training was followed by 12 weeks of consultation that lasted between 30 and 40 min per week. Coaches observed, provided performance feedback, modeled classroom management
strategies, and provided additional instruction when necessary. Additionally, five modules on various classroom management topics were presented every 3 weeks while coaching occurred. Researchers evaluated effectiveness of the project on four variables: (1) staff knowledge, (2) consumer satisfaction, (3) teacher implementation of skills trained, and (4) student classroom behavior. To test staff knowledge, teachers received a 15–20 question pre and post-test regarding components of the SESS model. Consumer satisfaction was measured with a 10-point Likert-scale survey. To assess implementation fidelity, consultants asked teachers to model five strategies of the SESS model. Lastly, researchers used a modified form of the Systematic Observation of Students in Schools code (Shapiro 1994) to assess student academic engagement and disruptive behavior. The observers were trained until 90 % inter-observer agreement was reached; this process took 4 days. Results suggested that participation in the project was associated with increased staff knowledge of effective instructional and classroom management strategies (46 % average increase from pre to post-test), high levels of consumer satisfaction with the project (9 or above on Likert-scale), high implementation fidelity (from 43 % average prior to training to 87 % after training), increased academic engagement, and decreased disruptive behavior as measured through observation. Thirty percent of all observations were scored for inter-rater reliability. High average levels (>90 %) of inter-observer agreement for academic engagement and disruptions were reached. The kappa coefficient average (reliability beyond chance levels) were greater than .88, indicating high levels of inter-observer agreement for on-task and disruptive behavior. Results suggested that training in empirically-based strategies in behavior management and instructional skills and subsequent follow-up coaching were effective in improving teaching competencies and the behavior of students with emotional/behavioral disabilities (EBD) in urban schools.

The authors note that teachers of students with EBD and those who teach students in urban environments are more likely to be presented with high levels of behavioral challenges, however, the authors make no mention of culture with regards to the intervention. Moreover, while the intervention addresses ecological behavior management, it is unclear whether this meets the culturally responsive classroom management strategies (e.g., building strong relationships, creating caring environments, encouraging socialization, teaching with assertiveness, and clearly stating expectations).

Reglin et al. (2009) used a mixed-methods design (descriptive statistics and inferential two-sided z-test) to investigate the effect of a professional development classroom management model for 11 teachers who sought to reduce disruptive behaviors for at-risk elementary school students. The 18-week intervention included readings and coaching. First, teachers were requested to read an article that described a classroom management strategy. Second, the teachers received an additional 50-min coaching session to discuss questions about the strategy. Third, the coach modeled the strategy for the teacher. Pre- and post-test data were collected on the number of discipline referrals and suspensions 90 days before and 90 days during the intervention implementation. Results demonstrated that the mean number of discipline referrals decreased by 11 referrals during the 90-day period and the number of suspensions decreased by 26. According to the two-sided z-test, the
number of students’ suspensions from pre-implementation to the day after the end of the intervention period professional development was significantly reduced ($p < .05$). Moreover, the number of referrals pre- and post-intervention was statistically different ($p < .0001$).

While the results reported by Reglin et al. (2009) suggested that student behavior improved as evidenced by decreases in disciplinary referrals and suspensions, it is possible that teachers stopped writing referrals during the intervention phase. In the future, the researchers may want to collect observational data and count the number of disruptive behaviors. The study by Reglin and colleagues answers an important research question of this current review: the training teachers received specifically addressed culture. The authors write, “Teachers tried to understand a student’s behavior by asking themselves, ‘Could the behavior reflect a cultural difference (e.g. persistent lack of eye contact, unwillingness to compete against peers)” (p. 7). The authors also state in their intervention description that, “Teachers should account for differences in cultural background when assessing the severity of students’ behavior problems” (p. 7). Finally, the authors recommended that teachers develop cultural competence to reduce student misbehaviors. It is important to note that this is one of the few articles that mention culture in terms of supporting student behavior.

Burke et al. (2011) used a post-test only correlational design to investigate the relationship between the use of a school-wide classroom management program by 56 elementary school teachers and their students’ behavior and academic outcomes. The intervention included 14 h of training and opportunities to practice four critical aspects of classroom management: (a) expectations, (b) using prompts, (c) verbal reinforcement, and (d) effective methods for correcting student misbehaviors. A sample of teachers who were having the most difficulty with classroom management or student disruptions received on-site coaching on five occasions during the school year. Researchers measured student engagement, out-of school suspension rates, and report card grades to test the efficacy of the classroom management program. Engagement and implementation fidelity were measured through direct observation using the Structured Classroom Observation (Burke et al. 2001). Each classroom was observed for 16 min and included 12 min of structured data collection (four 3 min intervals with 1 additional minute at start and 1 min breaks between 3 min intervals). A second evaluator was present in 16 of 56 participating classrooms (29 %) to establish inter-rater reliability. Agreement with regards to program fidelity was calculated at 81 %. To check for validity, both teacher and administrators completed surveys that included 23 items. A Pearson product-moment correlation coefficient revealed mild evidence of convergent validity between the observed fidelity and the self and administrator rating measures of program fidelity. A linear regression analysis was run to determine whether a relationship existed between fidelity of classroom management strategies and student academic engagement. Hierarchical Linear Modeling (HLM) was conducted to analyze the relationship between the model, suspension rates, and academic performance. Results suggested that high program fidelity was significantly related to fewer suspensions and greater academic engagement, but not higher report card
grades. Teacher fidelity of implementation was a significant predictor of student academic engagement accounting for 57% of the variance.

Assignment bias in the Burke et al. (2011) study could explain the positive relationships between the model and outcomes whereby more skilled teachers taught fewer students with challenging behaviors. Additionally, observations only lasted for 16 min which provided only a snapshot of data. With regards to this literature review, it should be noted that the study by Burke and colleagues measured both teacher competency related to classroom management and student behavior; the training did not, however, specifically address culture. Like many of the previous articles, Burke et al. (2011) did focus on clear expectations, which is a culturally responsive classroom management strategy. Similar to other articles, however, the solution to improving teachers’ ability to manage student behavior was behaviorist in that it supported teachers using prompts, verbal reinforcement, and various methods for correcting student misbehaviors.

Discussion

Summary

The twelve articles described in this review varied in terms of design, population, interventions, measures, outcomes, and results (see Table 2). In sum, there were five case studies (Bohanon et al. 2012; MacSuga and Simonsen 2011; Moore and Ratchford 2007; Netzel and Eber 2003; Shernoff et al. 2011), three correlational studies (Burke et al. 2011; Reglin et al. 2009; Sawka et al. 2002), one single-subject design (Pisacreta et al. 2011) and three quasi-experimental studies (Becker et al. 2013; Gottlieb and Polirstok 2005; Hough 2011). Four researchers used experimental designs (single-subject or quasi-experimental); no true experimental studies examined the relationship between teacher training and classroom management or student behavior in urban environments serving African American students.

Three studies’ population focused on the effects of professional development and training programs on schools (Bohanon et al. 2012; Gottlieb and Polirstok 2005; Netzel and Eber 2003), six focused on teachers (Burke et al. 2011; Hough 2011; MacSuga and Simonsen 2011; Pisacreta et al. 2011; Sawka et al. 2002), one focused on both teachers and students (Reglin et al. 2009), one focused on students (Moore and Ratchford 2007); and two focused on teachers and coaches (Becker et al. 2013; Shernoff et al. 2011).

Studies also varied in terms of the types of training interventions. One study used only whole-group professional development sessions or trainings (Gottlieb and Polirstok 2005), while seven of the twelve studies combined whole-group professional development with coaching (Becker et al. 2013; Bohanon et al. 2012; Burke et al. 2011; Hough 2011; Netzel and Eber 2003; Sawka et al. 2002; Shernoff et al. 2011). The total length or dosage of professional development sessions varied between 6 (Bohanon et al. 2012) and 40 h (Hough 2011). Ten of the studies used some form of coaching or performance feedback (Becker et al. 2013; Bohanon et al. 2012; Burke et al. 2011; Hough 2011; MacSuga and Simonsen 2011;
### Table 2: Summary of articles

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source</th>
<th>Research design</th>
<th>Sample</th>
<th>Training activity types</th>
<th>Outcome variables</th>
<th>Scoring procedures</th>
<th>Measures classroom management competencies?</th>
<th>Measures student behavior?</th>
<th>Culture is addressed in training?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Becker et al. (2013)</td>
<td>Quasi-experimental</td>
<td>3 coaches; 129 K-5 teachers in 12 schools</td>
<td>1-Day workshop; individual coaching for 31 weeks</td>
<td>Implementation fidelity (coach and teacher)</td>
<td>Coach visit log; frequency and duration of PAX GBG; observation using teacher fidelity Rubric</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bohanon et al. (2012)</td>
<td>Case study</td>
<td>1 HS</td>
<td>Eight 45-min PD + coaching</td>
<td>ODRs; staff perception; PBIS implementation fidelity</td>
<td>Observation; survey; frequency count</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Burke et al. (2011)</td>
<td>Correlational</td>
<td>56 ES teachers</td>
<td>14 h PD + coaching</td>
<td>Student engagement; suspension rates, and grades</td>
<td>Observation; frequency count</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gottlieb and Polirstok (2005)</td>
<td>Quasi-experimental</td>
<td>15 ES; 3 treatment and 12 control</td>
<td>5–7 PD (150 min sessions)</td>
<td>ODRs; SPED referrals, reading achievement</td>
<td>Frequency count</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hough (2011)</td>
<td>Quasi-experimental</td>
<td>360 educators, mostly MS teachers (317 in DD1 and 43 in DD2)</td>
<td>Five day-long PD + coaching</td>
<td>Competence, confidence, &amp; implementation of CM</td>
<td>Survey</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 2 continued

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source</th>
<th>Research design</th>
<th>Sample</th>
<th>Training activity types</th>
<th>Outcome variables</th>
<th>Scoring procedures</th>
<th>Measures classroom management competencies?</th>
<th>Measures student behavior?</th>
<th>Culture is addressed in training?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>MacSuga and Simonsen (2011)</td>
<td>Case study</td>
<td>2 MS teachers</td>
<td>Coaching</td>
<td>Use of EBP; students’ on-task behavior</td>
<td>Observation</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moore and Ratchford (2007)</td>
<td>Case study</td>
<td>10 aa ms males</td>
<td>Student mentoring + PD</td>
<td>ODRs and academic performance</td>
<td>Frequency count</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Netzel and Eber (2003)</td>
<td>Case study</td>
<td>1 ES</td>
<td>2 day training; coaching; workshop for classroom management (seven 45-min before school meetings)</td>
<td>Suspension and ODRs</td>
<td>Frequency count</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pisacreta et al. (2011)</td>
<td>Single subject</td>
<td>3 MS teachers</td>
<td>Modeling + coaching</td>
<td>Student disruptive behavior; teacher ratio of praise to behavior correction</td>
<td>Observation</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reglin et al. (2009)</td>
<td>Correlational</td>
<td>11 ES teachers; 224 students</td>
<td>Reading + coaching + modeling</td>
<td>ODRs</td>
<td>Frequency count</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Source</td>
<td>Research design</td>
<td>Sample</td>
<td>Training activity types</td>
<td>Outcome variables</td>
<td>Scoring procedures</td>
<td>Measures classroom management competencies?</td>
<td>Measures student behavior?</td>
<td>Culture is addressed in training?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------------------</td>
<td>-----------------</td>
<td>---------------------------------------------</td>
<td>----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>-------------------</td>
<td>-----------------------------------------------</td>
<td>--------------------------------------------</td>
<td>-------------------------------</td>
<td>-----------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sawka et al. (2002)</td>
<td>Correlational</td>
<td>64 school staff members (mostly SETs)</td>
<td>Training (4 days) and coaching (once a week for approximately 12 weeks for 30–40 min); coaching included observing skills, providing performance feedback, modeling in the natural setting, and providing additional instruction when necessary</td>
<td>Knowledge; satisfaction; teacher implementation fidelity; student behavior</td>
<td>Pre-test/post test for knowledge (15–20 questions); survey for satisfaction; observation of teacher fidelity and student behavior</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shernoff et al. (2011)</td>
<td>Case study</td>
<td>1 ES school; 22 teachers; 2 mentors; 2 external coaches; 5 early career teachers</td>
<td>10 group seminars and 4 PLC meetings; 21 weeks of coaching (modeling, demonstration, and co-teaching) that averaged 960 min/16 h of coaching</td>
<td>Coaching implementation fidelity; teacher satisfaction</td>
<td>Attendance records; coaching fidelity checklists; coaching logs; focus group data</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

ES Elementary Schoo, MS Middle School, HS High Schoo, AA African American, ODRs Office Discipline Referrals, CM Classroom Management, SETs Special Education Teachers
Pisacreta et al. 2011, Netzel and Eber 2003; Reglin et al. 2009; Sawka et al. 2002; Shernoff et al. 2011). Five of the studies that included coaching also included modeling (Becker et al. 2013; Pisacreta et al. 2011; Reglin et al. 2009; Sawka et al. 2002; Shernoff et al. 2011). One study’s intervention included a reading component (Reglin et al. 2009) and one study also included a student mentoring component (Moore and Ratchford 2007).

Six of the studies used suspensions or ODRs to measure changes in student behavior (Bohanon et al. 2012; Burke et al. 2011; Gottlieb and Polirstok 2005; Moore and Ratchford 2007; Netzel and Eber 2003; Reglin et al. 2009). Four studies looked at implementation fidelity of the teacher training intervention (Becker et al. 2013; Bohanon et al. 2012; Hough 2011; MacSuga and Simonsen 2011; Sawka et al. 2002). Two of these studies measured staff perceptions of implementation fidelity using surveys (Bohanon et al. 2012; Hough 2011), while three studies measured teacher implementation fidelity using observation (Becker et al. 2013; MacSuga and Simonsen 2011; Sawka et al. 2002). Two studies measured implementation fidelity of the coaches (Becker et al. 2013; Shernoff et al. 2011). Three studies measured students’ academic performance (Burke et al. 2011; Gottlieb and Polirstok 2005; Moore and Ratchford 2007). Finally, four studies used observations to measure student and staff behaviors (Burke et al. 2011; Bohanon et al. 2012; MacSuga and Simonsen 2011; Pisacreta et al. 2011; Sawka et al. 2002; Shernoff et al. 2011).

Limitations

Although precautions were taken to minimize threats to validity, it is important to note several limitations. First, this review included only peer-reviewed journals from the aforementioned databases (e.g., Academic Search Complete, Education Full Text, ERIC, Psych Info, and Social Sciences Full-Text). Though these are relevant to educational research, it is possible that there are relevant articles that met search criteria, but were not contained within these databases. Similarly, only peer-reviewed articles were considered for inclusion, thereby possibly excluding articles that were otherwise relevant. Additionally, though the author did not limit the search in terms of specific dates, the search was conducted in January 2014. As such, there may be relevant articles that have since been published. Lastly, while the list of search terms was comprehensive, there may be additional terms that may have yielded additional articles. Despite these limitations, it is likely that these findings have relevant implications for research and practice.

Implications and Conclusion

Based on the summary of results, several themes are clear. First, more rigorous research designs are needed to measure the impact of teacher training on improving classroom management competencies and student behavior. Correlational and case studies are weakest in terms of study design because they do not allow researchers to make any statements about causality, yet the majority of the studies identified in this review used these types of designs. Second, nine of the twelve studies measured whether students’ behavior improved, but only three of the studies observed both
changes in student and teacher behavior. As such, many of these researchers cannot be certain that student behavior improved as a result of teacher training since a large factor in the equation is missing (changes in teacher behavior). Third, many of the trainings for teachers focused on traditional classroom management strategies such as clearly stating expectations and praise for appropriate behavior, while only a few alluded to culturally responsive classroom management strategies (e.g., relationship building, creating caring environments that focus on learning, encouraging socialization and discussion, and teaching with assertiveness). Moreover, none of the articles addressed the components laid out by Weinstein et al. (2004) such as recognizing one’s own ethnocentrism and having knowledge of students’ cultural backgrounds. As a matter of fact, only two of the twelve studies even acknowledged culture with regards to training teachers to improve classroom management competencies (Moore and Ratchford 2007; Reglin et al. 2009).

If the vast majority of trainings in classroom management for teachers who work with predominately African American students focus on traditional styles of classroom management and if scholars suggest that traditional classroom management strategies may not be effective for students from racial/ethnic minority backgrounds, then this review highlights a research-to-practice gap that needs to be addressed in future research. Undoubtedly, stating clear expectations, engaging students in lessons, and using strategies to respond to appropriate and inappropriate behavior are important in managing student behavior. Equally important, however, is that students are “valued as human beings to be honored rather than objects to be controlled” (Morrison and Vaandering 2012, p. 145). With this said, future research should consider comparing outcomes of using traditional classroom management strategies and frameworks to using culturally responsive classroom management strategies and frameworks. This research should use rigorous research methods and should collect information on student, staff, and school outcomes. Until research of this caliber is conducted, the effectiveness of culturally responsive classroom management remains largely theoretical.

References

Note: * indicates studies included in the systematic review


Shapiro, E. S. (1994). *Behavioral observation of students in schools*. Bethlehem, PA: Lehigh University, College of Education.


