RESEARCH ARTICLE

A PHENOMENOLOGICAL STUDY ON TEACHERS' PERCEPTIONS OF CLASSROOM MANAGEMENT CHALLENGES IN SELECTED PRIMARY SCHOOLS IN JAMAICA

*Mervyn Sinclair

Department of Graduate Education and Leadership, College of Education and Leadership,
Northern Caribbean University, Jamaica

ARTICLE INFO

ABSTRACT

This phenomenological study explored teachers' perceptions of classroom management challenges in selected primary schools in Jamaica. The aim of this study was to understand the lived experiences of teachers as they navigated instructional, behavioural and emotional demands within the classroom context. Using a qualitative paradigm, semi-structured interviews were conducted with six primary school teachers from diverse educational settings. The data were analysed thematically to identify recurring patterns and meanings across participants experiences (essences). The findings indicated that teachers' experiences and their school environments slightly impact their perceptions and approaches to classroom management. Another interesting finding was that despite the teachers' varying years of teaching, class sizes and school locations, they all identified disruptive behaviour, physical environmental constraints, limited learning resources and lack of focus of students as major challenges to the teaching and learning process. The study recommends reducing class sizes in urban schools, provide enhanced professional development focused on differentiated instruction, gender-based instruction, emotional regulation and culturally relevant management strategies, consistent administrative supportand having parity in the distribution of resources to rural schools verses urban schools by the Ministry of Education. Additionally, strong collaboration between schools and families were identified as important to improving the classroom environments. These findings provide critical insights for educators, policymakers, and school administrators seeking to support teachers in managing classroom dynamics and improving teaching effectiveness.

INTRODUCTION

Classrooms are the heart of the teaching and learning process. The learning environment, where the minds of the youngers are shaped and moulded and futures are forged. Yet behind the enthusiastic chatter and vibrant posters lies the complex reality. The reality of teachers grappling with daily challenges of managing student behaviour, fostering positive learning environment, maintaining students interests and engagement. In Jamaican primary schools, where diverse student needs, resource constraints, cultural and SES dynamics intersect, classroom management is a skill that is critical for a daily balancing act. This study sought to explore the voices of those at the centre - the teachers- uncovering their perceptions, struggles and strategies as they navigated the ever -evolving challenges of classroom management.

The background to the Problem: Marzano R. J., & Marzano. J. S., (2003) stated that research has shown that teachers' actions in their classrooms have twice the impact on students' achievement as do school policies regarding curriculum, assessment, staff collegiality and community involvement. It therefore meant that if the teachers exercised good and effective actions within their classrooms the students within their classrooms would invariable produced excellent academic performance and the converse is also true; poor actions by teachers within their classrooms would lead to poor academic performance of their students. It is therefore of paramount importance that teachers understood the critical role their actions played in determining the extent of their students' achievement. Kunter, Baumert, Koller, (2007) postulated that actual time spent on doing meaningful tasks was fundamental to the students' learning gains. They further contended however that available time were not spent only on academic pursuits but oftentimes on non-academic tasks such as disciplinary problems or organizational issues. Teaching is a complex endeavour that requires teachers to not only be effective in delivering the curriculum but also maintaining order, motivation and effective classroom atmosphere so that students' engagement in lessons is maximized (Ronic, Lewis, & Roache, 2013). These classrooms are complex social and cultural system that allow for multiple events to occur

simultaneously (Poole, & Evertson, 2013). The onus is therefore on the teachers to manage effectively and efficiently all the many events within their classrooms. The more effective the teachers are at managing the events, resources and activities within the classroom the more likely the students will perform better academically. In essence the most effective teachers are the ones who generally have better organised classrooms and fewer behaviour problems. Managing the classroom is however no easy task for the teachers. In fact, according to Wubbels, (2011) classroom management is ranked as one of the major challenges that teachers face. It is therefore important to delve into and articulate the challenges and issues encountered by the practitioners themselves, the teachers. It is hoped that through the lens of the teachers we will be able to identify problems, issues, challenges and possible solutions in respect to classroom management.

Problem Statement: A phenomenological study on teachers' perceptions of Classroom Management challenges in selected primary schools in Jamaica

Purpose of the Study: The purpose of this research was to capture the perceptions of teachers in selected primary schools in Jamaica on classroom management challenges. To achieve this purpose, the researcher posed four research questions.

Research Questions

This research study was guided by five research questions:

- What are the perceptions of Primary school teachers about classroom management?
- What are the primary classroom management challenges that teachers encounter?
- What are the underlying reasons for classroom management challenges from the perceptions of the Primary school teachers?
- Which strategies do teachers consider most effective for overcoming classroom management challenges?
- How do teachers' views on classroom management challenges evolve over time?

The research questions provide the backdrop for the significance of the study.

Significance of the Study: This study held significance at multiple levels- professional, academic, practical and policy-related By exploring the lived experiences of primary school teachers' useful insight and information on the challenges faced by teachers as it relates to classroom management in the Jamaican context were provided. These insights could be important in informing professional development programs as they pinpoint the specific areas where teachers need additional support, training and resources. From the academic standpoint, the study added to the existing body of literature on classroom management by offering a phenomenological lens rooted in the Caribbean experience, and in particularly, the Jamaican context – an area underrepresented in the global research. It could provide guidance for future studies, including comparative research across the educational levels and or geographic regions. For school administrators and policymakers, the findings could guide the development of more context-sensitive strategies and interventions to improve the teaching and learning process and reduce teachers' stress level. Understandingthe challenges from the teachers' perspectives

could contributeinimproving student engagement, academic performance, social development by addressing the barriers that hinder effective classroom management, and the Ministry of Education could use the findings from this research to validate existing policies or provide guidance for future policies and programmes. These perceived benefits gave precedence to the Limitation and Delimitations of this study.

Limitation and Delimitations: Limitations of this study included possibility of dishonesty of participants, limited financial resources, researcher's biases and that the results from the study cannot be generalized; only suggestions can be made. Delimitations included focusing on primary education only, geography scope- that limits the selection of primary schools, phenomenological design that explore the lived experiences of selected teachers rather than testing theories or measuring variables, teacher-centric perspective, and language and cultural context.

Definition of Terms: The researcher was of the view that the following terms should be clearly defined as these terms would influence the readers' comprehensive and understanding of the study.

Classroom: A classroom is a social system in which students and teachers interact to promote learning and personal development (Eggen & Kauchak, 2016, p.6).

Classroom Management: Classroom management encompasses all the things teachers must do to foster student involvement and cooperation in classroom activities and establish a productive working environment. This includes developing and implementing classroom procedures, monitoring student behaviour, and creating opportunities for academic and social growth (Wong & Wong, 2018, p.84).

Phenomenology: A form of qualitative research in which the researcher attempts to understand how one or more individuals experience a phenomenon (Johnson, & Christensen, 2017, p. 596)

SUMMARY

This initial chapter presented the background of the study, outlined the problem statement, detailed the purpose of the study, listed the research questions, expressed the significance of the study and concludes with highlighting some of the limitations and delimitation and definition of terms. In Chapter 2, the Literature review will be presented; in Chapter 3 the methodology will be articulated; in Chapter 4 data analysis will be presented. The study will conclude with Chapter 5 providing the conclusions and recommendations of the study.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

The chapter detailed the theoretical framework and brought to the fore research perspective and approach that the researcher used to focus on classroom management and challenges associated with effectiveness. The researcher highlighted the proponents of classroom management and empirical studies on classroom management challenges conducted by Akin, Yildirim & Goodwin, (2016), Shakerhoshroudi, Beh-Afarin, & Nikoopour, (2016), Sun & Yee, (2024) and White, M.A (2021). The research questions were used to guide the process. The

chapter sought to provide insights into the factors that contribute to effectiveness or the lack thereof of classroom management. The chapter concluded with a summary.

Theoretical Framework: This phenomenological study on teachers' perceptions of classroom management challenges was guided by the theories of epistemological/ontological foundation, social cognitive, constructivist, ecological systems, teacher identity and emotional labour, sociocultural perspectives and stress and coping mechanisms. These theories as illustrated in figure 1 were used as the underpinning theoretical framework to position the study. The epistemology/ontological foundation theory speaks directly to the evolution of the phenomenological theory and its founder, Edmund Husserl and the essential principles. The focus of this theory is the structures of the experience as perceived by the first-person vantage point. Specifically, this research focused through the phenomenological lens to capture the lived experience of teachers as they provide their perspectives and information on the challenges encountered in relation to classroom management. Phenomenology blends what is present with what is imagined as present from the vantage point of possible meanings, thus causing the fusing of the real and the ideal. Permitting what is before one to enter consciousness and be understood in its meanings and essences in the light of intuition and self-reflection (Merriam, S. B., 1998). Johnson, & Christensen, (2008) further extend that the key element of phenomenological research study is based on the premise that people experience a phenomenon from their own perspectives but despite this uniqueness there will invariably be commonalities of experience with others who experienced the same phenomenon. This commonality of experience they referred to as essence, or invariant structure. They concluded that the search for the essences of a phenomenon is probably the defining characteristics of phenomenology (p.399).

Figure 1 showing the underpinning theories for this research.
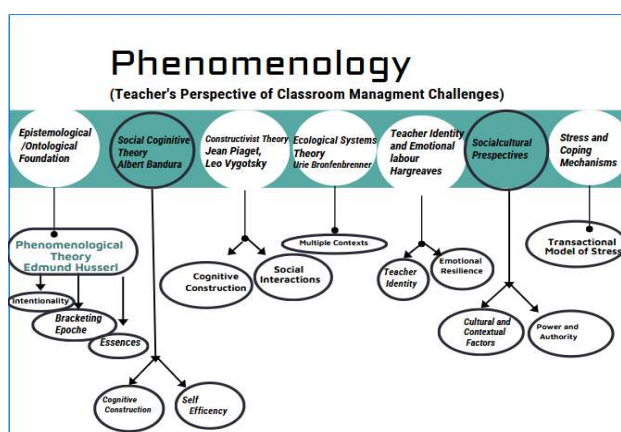
Theory of epistemology postulates that knowledge is subjectively constructed through individual experiences and interpretations. In the context of this study, knowledge about classroom room management challenges emerges from the personal, lived experiences of the teachers, rather than from objective quantitative measurement. The valued participants' voices illustrate and confirm that reality is not fixed but is shaped by our social and cultural contexts (Crotty, 1998). Relativist ontology theory previews the existence of multiple realities that are shaped by individual experiences and perspectives. In this lens there is no single truth about classroom management challenges in Jamaican primary schools; rather the teachers' perceptions reflect their valid realities. This foundation justifies the use of phenomenology to explore the how these challenges are experienced and interpreted by the different teacher participants of the study. The social cognitive theory by Bandura 1(977) emphasized the importance of observational learning, modelling and self-efficacy. Barone, Maddux, & Snyder, (2006) provide an overview of the applications of the social cognitive theory in the field of education. This theoretical framework can be used to explore the development of teachers' perceptions of classroom management through their own experience, professional development and observation of peers.

The constructivist theory highlights the function of social and cultural contexts in forming the individual's perceptions and behaviours (Vygotsky, 1978). The perceptions of teachers of classroom management challenges may be influenced by peers, students, administrators, professional development sessions and the wider educational environment. The framework is therefore useful in fostering the exploration of teachers' construction of their understanding of classroom management challenges based on their experiences and environments. The ecological systems theory founded by Urie Bronfenbrenner explores how various environmental systems influence persons behaviours and perceptions based on their interact with the systems. The five systems identified are the microsystem, mesosystem, exosystem, macrosystem and the chronosystem. The microsystem which is the basal system deals with interactions with the immediate environments for example teachers' interaction with classroom, colleagues, family, students. Mesosystem deals with interactions with microsystems for example communication between teacher and parent. Exosystem examines the influence of external factors on an individual for example the influence of school policies and directives on the teachers. Macrosystem looks at the influence of cultural practices, societal norms and economic on an individual. Chronosystem assesses how changes over time influence an individual (Bronfenbrenner, 1979).

Hargreaves, (1998) theory of teacher identity and emotional labour was relevant to understanding how teachers perceive and navigate classroom management challenges, especially within the emotional and socially complex environment of primary education. Teacher identity which refers to how educators see themselves in their professional roles, shaped by personal beliefs, values, experiences and socio-cultural context is dynamic and is influenced interactions with colleagues, students, policies, and the emotional dimensions of the teaching. In managing the classroom, the teacher draws on his/her identity to make decisions, respond to student behaviour and establish authority under the conditions of stress, constraints and pressure. The emotional labour component of the theory involves regulation of emotions to meet the professional expectations of the teaching role. Teaching is an inherently emotional practice which require educators display certain emotions such as patience, enthusiasm, temperance and suppressing others such as frustration, anger and fear (Hargreaves, 1998). Classroom management requires significant emotional labour, especially in challenging situations and this can affect teachers' well-being and efficacy. The teacher identity and emotional labour theory is important to this study as it recognizes that teachers' perceptions are not only cognitive but also deeply emotional and identity driven. Teachers' experiences of managing behaviour, maintaining control and fostering positive classroom environments are tied

to how them cope with the emotional demands of the job. Rooted in the work of Lev Vygotsky (1978), sociocultural theory held that learning and development are inherently social and mediated by language, tools and cultural practices. In the context of classroom management, the sociocultural perspective focuses that teachers' perceptions and practices were not formed in isolation but were shaped by the cultural values, social, norms, community expectations and school policies. Lazarus and Folkman (1984) Stress and Coping Theory, provided a valuable lens for understanding how teachers perceived, interpreted and responded to classroom management challenges. According to the theory, stress arises when individuals assess a situation to have exceeded their personal, professional and environmental resources and thus threatening their well-being. The coping strategies of problem-focused coping, which is basically taking direct action to change the situation and emotional-focused coping which is managing emotional responses to stress for example seeking collegial support or self-regulation strategies. This framework helps explores how teachers make meaning of the emotional and psychological toll associated with classroom management. It supports the phenomenological approach by emphasizing the subjective experiences and coping responses of teachers as they navigate daily classroom stressors. The theoretical framework gave precedence to the conceptual mapping. It is through the conceptual mapping the researcher will explore and extend the concepts that are important to classroom management and its unique challenges based on documented evidence by renowned experts and authority on the subject

Conceptual Mapping: The conceptual mapping for classroom management, has six tenets as highlighted in figure 2. These tenets include physical environment, Psychosocial environment, behaviour management, motivation, planning and time management. The physical environment refers to the overall surroundings to include seating arrangement, floor space, learning corners, teaching aids/apparatus/ technology, traffic patterns, ambiance and cleanliness. Psychosocial environment refers to the emotions, values and attitudes that dictates the tone of the classroom. Behaviour management refers to the techniques and strategies by teachers to illicit appropriate behave of students within their classroom. Motivation refers to one's zeal and will to achieve an outcome. Planning has to do with all the teacher does to prepare for delivery of lesson(s) and Time Management is how well a teacher utilizes the time allotment for a lesson.

Figure 2 Showing the conceptual framework for classroom management
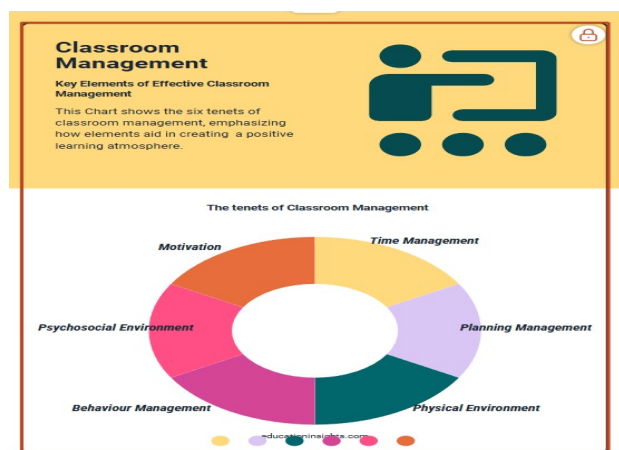
Physical Environment: Classrooms with good ventilation and air quality tend to lead to better academic performance and overall cognitive functioning by students (Mendell et al. 2015). The temperature of the classroom is also of paramount importance as highlighted by the study done by Wargocki &Wyon (2013). They found that every degree above 77 degrees Fahrenheit led to a decline in students' test scores. Benfield et al, (2015 highlighted that well-lit classrooms reduce eye strain and improve mood, which in turn increase attention and engagement. Tanner (2009) study discovered that students in classrooms with adequate natural lighting scored up to 20% higher on tests compared to those in poorly lit classrooms. Byers, Mahat, Liu, Knock, & Imms, (2018) found that seating arrangements and classroom layout do have a significant impact on the teaching and learning process. It was discovered that circular or U-shaped arrangements promote active participation and collaborative learning. Rands&Gansemer-Topf, (2016) extended by stating that when students are allowed to select their seats, there is greater engagement by students and ultimately improved focus and academic achievement. Cheryan, Ziegler, Plaut, & Meltzoff, (2014) study found that technology enhanced classrooms are supportive of collaborative and individual learning styles and thus in turn lead to higher students' satisfaction and engagement levels. Wong, (2020) stated that a classroom equipped with smartboards, projects, etc can enhance learning experiences. A study by Barrett, Zhang, Moffat, & Kobbacy, (2013) found that the colour in the classroom can influence the mood and motivation of both students and teacher. Colours such as blue and green may increase concentration and reduce anxiety. Warm colours such as yellow and orange can be welcoming and stimulating. A lot of Bright loud colours are not ideal for the classroom environment. Studies, including Martin, (2018) found that aesthetically appealing classrooms motivate students to learn. Ambiance has a profound effect on cognitive performance of students through its impact on concentration and mental clarity (Shield & Dockrell, 2008)

Planning / Time Management: Evertson & Weinstein, (2013) postulated that teachers who manage their time well can maintain seamless lesson flow, maximize learning time, create productive and disciplined classroom environment because of minimal downtime. Polluck, (2012) opined that effective time management enables teachers to improve on the teaching and learning process which in turn produce better student outcomes. Bianchi, (2020) when further by stating that effective planning reduces teachers' stress levels and inversely positively impact the classroom atmosphere and students' motivation to learn. In essence well planned lessons invariably result in effective classroom management.

Psychosocial Environment: Masten, (2018) contended that a positive psychosocial classroom environment can assist with students' academic performance, develop resilience and coping skills. He concluded that supportive relationships between students and teachers provide a "buffer" against discouragement when students experience academic failure. Jennings & Greenberg, (2009) further extended that positive psychosocial classroom environment cultivate responsibility, respect and cooperation within the classroom space. Jennings, (2015) and Emmer & Sabornie, (2015), Jones& Jones, (2016) postulated that classroom management is directly impacted by teachers' human relations skills. The impact is demonstrated through the promotion of trust, inclusivity and positive conflict resolution. The teachers who possess skills such as good

communication, empathy, active listening, conflict resolution, cultural sensitivity, patience and flexibility are more likely to have better classroom management since students feel more valued and appreciated for their diversity and uniqueness.

Emmer& Sabornie (2015), Evertson& Weinstein (2006), Marzono et. al (2003) and Sugai & Horner (2002) all agree that effective ruling-making that is inclusive plays a significant role in ensuring that maladaptive issues and disruptive behaviours are reduce, respect and responsibility are promoted, the learning environment is conducive to positive academic growth and ultimately good classroom management.

Behaviour Management: Behaviour management plays a pivotal role in classroom management. It prevents and treats with interruptions and all other maladaptive issues. How teachers address, guide, shape and mould students' behaviours using token economy and the Premack principle of reinforcement directly influence classroom management and the overall learning environment (Marzano, Marzano & Pickering, 2003). Matalon, (1996) posits that behaviour management is one of the most critical tenets to effective classroom management. She highlighted positive and negative reinforcements as effective procedures to improve positive behaviours and reduce undesirable ones. She also purported shaping, chaining, prompting, fading and modelling as effective procedures to teach new behaviours. She cautioned that for behaviour to be lasting the teachers should be consistent and must observe and utilize the schedules of reinforcement.

Motivation: Abraham Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs identifies three levels of motivation. The first and most basal level comprises of physiological and safety needs. People will always be motivated to satisfy these survival needs. The second level up include the psychological needs of love, belong, and self-esteem. Most people are motivated to satisfy these needs as these speak to the well-being and self-concept of the person. The third level, which is the highest apex level speaks to self-actualization needs. These are needs that speak to the fulfilment of one's potential (Matalon, 1996). Oakes & Lipton, (1999) stated that there are two types of motivations, extrinsic and intrinsic. Extrinsic motivation comes from someone or somewhere else, and intrinsic motivation is generated from within oneself. They expressed that rewards and punishments are connected with extrinsic motivation, and that they are effective in starting or stopping a behaviour.

SUMMARY

The Literature review highlighted the philosophical underpinnings and theoretical framework that may be considered when positioning and conducting a phenomenological study. It also posited some of the concepts and factors to be cogitated when dissecting and capturing teachers' perceptions of classroom management challenges.

The next chapter, the methodology, established how the study was performed.

METHODOLOGY

Ary et al, (2006) postulated that a phenological study is designed to describe and interpret an experience by determining the meaning of the experience as perceived by the people who have participated in it (p.461). The minimal

volume of study on classroom management and its challenges in the Jamaican context indicated that it was not viewed as important and so technocrats and policymakers don't see it as a critical issue that must be addressed for better students' outcomes and teacher retention and satisfaction. The phenomenological approachallowed the researcher to collect deep and rich information about classroom management and its challenges based on the uncovering of the perceived lived experiences of the teachers. Capturing of the voice of the participants is described as 'obtaining "grasp of the very nature of thing (Van Manen, 1990, p.177).

Ary (2006) concluded that from an analysis of the interview data, the researcher writes descriptions of the participants experiences and how those experiences are perceived (p.462). In writing the descriptions of the participants experiences the researchercaptured the voice of the participants and their lived experience, which is the essence of the phenomenological approach. Through this approach rich and diverse data was unearthed and discovered. This chapter provided information on the research design, sources of data collection and analysis of data. It also provided the sampling procedures and legal and ethical considerations. In addition, concerns about issues of trustworthiness and triangulation matrix were highlighted.

Research Design: The researcher intended to capture the essence and commonalities of the teachers' perceptions of classroom management and its challenges through their lived experience. His goal therefore was to extrapolate rich and detail descriptions from the respondents and to illicit this type of discourse he positioned the study as a phenomenological qualitative inquiry research design. Employing this design allowed for the capturing of the essences from the perceptions of teachers of classroom management challenges (Marshall & Rossman, 2006).

Sources of Data Collection: The researcher captured data utilizing in-depth individual interviewing, focus group, follow-up interviewing, members check and researcher's fieldnotes. In-depth interviews were essential to the phenomenological orientation as it allowed the exploration of lived experience, provided content, clarified meanings, generated rich and detailed information and it could lead to the generation of theoretical development (Bogdan & Biklen, 2007). Focus group interview involved the researcher locating or developing a survey instrument, convening a small group of people who could answer the questions asked on the instrument, and recording their comments about the questions on the instrument (Creswell, 2008, p.640). Cheng (2007) stated that there is an association between the of individuals used in a focus group and the amount and quality of the data collected. There is no standardized unanimity among researchers on the prescribe number of participants for a focus group. The number of participants for this study was six (6). Biklen (2007) supported by opining that focus groups are useful to foster talk among the participants about a particular phenomenon (p.109). focus group interviews are the most common methods used to collect data (Cheng, 2007).

Member checking, a qualitative process during which the researcher asked one or more of the participants in the study to check the accuracy of the account (Creswell, 2008, p.642). Member checking helped to ensure that the participants voices were reflected and that no significant meanings were overlooked or misinterpreted. The process involved returning the interpreted data or themes to participants to verify whether

the researcher's analysis accurately represented their lived experiences. In this study selected transcripts and thematic summaries were shared with participants, allowing them to confirm, clarify or elaborate on their statements. It is hoped that this iterative feedback wouldstrengthen the integrity of the data and empowers the participants as co-constructors of meaning. Fieldnotes are text (or words) recorded by the researcher during on observation in a qualitative study (Creswell, 2008, p.640). The fieldnotes were used to help document non-verbal cues, environmental settings, and emotional tones. These notes served as a supplement to the recorded interviews and as a reflexive journal for personal biases throughout the data collection process.

Analysis of Data: It was expected that each in-depth interview would have taken between 45 - 60 minutes. Permission was sought and given by participants for the audio- recording of the interviews. The focus group interview was also audio recorded. The data collected was dissected and synthesized to seek for patterns and commonalities. The concepts from the literature review and the research questions guided the concept analysis process. All recordings were transcribed to words so that themes could be generated and categorized. Reporting of the findings and interpretations was done.

Sampling Procedures: The purposive sampling technique was utilized for this study. Johnson and Christensen, (2008) stated that with purposive sampling the researcher specifies the characteristics of the population of interest and locates individuals with those characteristics (p.239). In this research, the researcher wanted to capture the perceptions of six (6) teachers at selected rural primary schools in Jamaica. He interviewed teachers based on grade levels, age, teacher qualification and teaching experience. The participants ages ranged from twenty-two years of age to 55 years of age. The majority of participants were holders of a bachelor's degree in education and one with a master's degree. The teaching experience of the participants varies from one year to twenty-four years. The teachers provided information using an in-depth interview instrument and focus group. The in-depth interview schedule was developed by the researcher based on the literature review and the research questions. It was comprised of open-ended questions to illicit information for the purpose of the study. Bogdan & Biklen (2007) suggested that qualitative researchers depend primarily on in-depth interviewing due to the advantage of allowing the focus on the deep and detail meanings that can be derived from the lens of the persons who have experienced the phenomenon. Focus group interviewing of a small number of participants (6) provided an opportunity for extension of information already shared through the in-depth interviewing process. Creswell (2008) stated that focus groups are advantageous when the interviewees are similar and cooperative with each other, when time is limited and when individuals are hesitant to provide information (p.226).

Legal and Ethical Considerations: The researcher sought permission to access the research sites by writing formally to the Chairman C/o principal of the schools. The letters stated the nature and purpose of the study. It also stated explicitly that the integrity of the schools will be vigorously maintained in that the researcher will ensure that the schools remain anonymous by the creation of fictitious name for the schools. The teachers were required to sign a consent form prior to their inclusion in the study to eliminate any litigating issues.

Theparticipants were informed that their participation should be seen as voluntary and as such they could withdraw at any time if they were not comfortable being part of the study. The researcher applied to the Institutional Review Board of the Northern Caribbean University to get approval. Approval wassought and given by the selected primary schools.

Issues of Trustworthiness: The researcher ensured trustworthiness of the findings of the study by highlighting the research design, the sources of data collection, the sampling procedures, triangulation matrix and the data analysis. The in-depth schedule was derived from the literature review and the research questions. The schedule was piloted before usage in the actual data collection process. Members checking and audit trail were utilized to ensure accuracy, consistency and objectivity.

Triangulation Matrix: Creswell (2008) contended that triangulation is the process of corroborating evidence from different individuals, types of data or methods of data collection in descriptions and themes (p.266). This study utilized multiple data sources to ensure that the data is both accurate and creditable. The data sources that were utilized included data from the in-depth interviews, researchers' fieldnotes and member checking.

Analysis

This chapter presented the analysis of the collected that were collected through in-depth interview, written responses from participants and from the field notes of the researcher. Member-check of the data was done after the data was refined so as to ensure veracity and accuracy of the data. The demographic data was presented first, then the data pertinent to research questions in ascending order. All participants in this study are holders of a bachelor's degree in education, and one had an additional master's degree.

Demographic data: The demographic data as presented in table 1 illustrated pertinent information for the study.

Table 1. Demographic information of the participants as it relates to years of teaching, locale of school, class size and gender

ID Number	Years of teaching experience	Locale of school	Average class size	Gender
Teacher001	3 years	rural	25 students	Female
Teacher002	30 years	Suburban	31 students	Female
Teacher003	1 year	Rural	20 students	Female
Teacher004	12 years	Urban	30 students	Female
Teacher005	21 years	Suburban	32 students	Female
Teacher006	15 years	Urban	37 students	Female

This demographic table provided a snapshot of the diverse teaching landscape, emphasizing variations in experience, school location, class size and gender. The table illustrated that there weresix female teachers with varying years of experience, teaching in different school settings (rural, suburban, and urban) with distinct class sizes. The data revealed key insights into the distribution of experience, school location, and classroom dynamics. The teachers' experience ranged from 1 to 30 years, indicating a mix of novice and highly experienced educators. This distribution suggested a balance of perceptions of by teachers on classroom management challenges, where fresh perspectives from newer teachers complemented the

seasoned expertise of veteran educators. The presence of a teacher with 30 years of experience highlighted long-term dedication to the profession, while the inclusion of a teacher with only one year of experience reflects ongoing recruitment and potential mentorship opportunities within schools. The table highlighted the distribution of teachers based on the location of their schools. Two teachers worked in rural primary schools, with class sizes of 20 and 25 students. The smaller class sizes in rural areas could indicate lower population density and hence their perceptions about classroom management challenges might be different from those presented by the other teachers. The two suburban teachers managed larger classes of 31 and 32 students respectively. Suburban schools often experience moderate population density, leading to slightly bigger class sizes than rural schools but not as overcrowded as urban institutions. These teachers could benefit from better infrastructure and resources compared to rural schools, but the increased student numbers could pose classroom management challenges, requiring effective pedagogical strategies to maintain engagement and discipline and hence their perceptions were instrumental for the study. The two urban teachers handled class sizes of 30 and 37 students respectively, reflecting the high student-to-teacher ratios common in cities. Urban schools often faced overcrowding due to migration and higher birth rates, placing additional demands on teachers. The teacher with 37 students experienced significant workload pressure, including grading, individualized instruction, and behavioural management. However, urban settings offered more professional development opportunities and access to technology and therefore the perceptions of these teachers were important to this study.

All six teachers were female, reinforcing the global trend of female dominance in primary education. This raises questions about male representation in early teaching roles and whether gender dynamics could influence classroom management challenges at this level of education.

Research Questions: As it relates to the research questions the researcher collected the data using different media. The researcher collected data using interviews, through written responses by participants and the use of the researchers' notes. Table 2 presented data to satisfy research question 1 from the three different data sources. Research question 1 which asked the question, "What are the perceptions of primary school teachers about is classroom management was answered by the six teachers who volunteered and consented to be a part of this phenomenological study. As shown in table 2 the teachers emphasized the importance of creating a structured and supportive classroom environment. Key strategies included:- Establishing routines and clear expectations, maintaining order and discipline through positive reinforcement and building a positive classroom culture to enhance engagement and learning.These strategies underscored a proactive approach to classroom management, aiming to foster a conducive learning environment where students can thrive academically and behaviourally. Table 3 highlighted the teachers' perceptions about research question 2 which asked the question. "What are the primary classroom management challenges that teachers encounter?/ As shown in table 3 the six teachers identified several challenges. These challenges included engagement,

disruptive behaviour, environmental factors and student motivation.

Table 2. Teachers' perception about Classroom Management

Transcription from Interview of teachers	Written responses from participants	Fieldnotes of researcher
•Creation of a structured, supportive environment •Building positive classroom culture •Establishment of routines •Setting of clear expectations •Maintaining order •Using positive reinforcement to reduce bad behaviour and accelerate academic achievement	•Creation of a structured, supportive classroom environment •Building of a positive classroom culture •Teachers' setting of routines •Teacher's setting of clear expectations •Maintaining of order •Use of positive reinforcement to recognize good behaviour and academic progress	•Structured, supportive environment •Positive classroom culture •Routine establishment •Setting of clear expectations •Maintenance of order •Positive reinforcement usage to improve behaviour and academic achievement

Difficulty with engagement is primarily the inability of teachers in maintaining students' interest and engagement and this was a recurring theme from all the participants. Disruptive Behavior according to the teachers had to do with issues with off-task activities and disruptions were prominent, particularly in larger classes. Environmental Factors had to do withchallenges related to classroom space, ventilation, and temperature and these were noted by most teachers, indicating that physical conditions can significantly affect learning. The issue of Student Motivation- A lack of interest and motivation among students, coupled with issues like excessive sugar consumption affecting behaviour, reflects broader socio-emotional challenges. Table 4 presented the perceptions of the six participants as it relates to research question 3: What are the underlying reasons for classroom management challenges from the perceptions of the Primary school teachers? According to the participants the key underlying factors contributing to classroom management issues include attention deficits, peer pressure and Socio-emotional influences, parental involvement and resource availability. The teachers noted the impact of conditions like ADHD on students' focus and attention within the classroom setting. Students, especially boys have the tendency to be inattentive to their lessons and the need to move about the classroom and disturbing the class. Peer Pressure and Socio-emotional Influences are seen to be prevalent within the classrooms from the different school locations and these external pressures have adversely impacted student behaviour and academic performance. The lack of parental involvement and the lack of support from parents could be cited as significant barriers to students' academic success.Resource Availability as highlighted by the participants could alter students' academic progress and as shared by teachers that insufficient learning resources hinder effective teaching and learning. The teachers highlighted some of the strategies that they utilized to overcome the most critical classroom management challenges and to answer research question 4: Which strategies do teachers consider most effective for overcoming classroom management challenges.

Table 5 showed the strategies that the teachers proposed and used to combat some of the myriad classroom management challenges.

Table 3. Classroom Management Challenges that Primary School Teachers would have experienced

Transcription from Interview of teachers	Written responses from participants	Fieldnotes of researcher
- Difficulty in maintaining students' engagement - Disruptive students who do off task activities - Challenging class space, class size, ventilation and high temperature - Trying to motivate and encourage students who lack interest and motivation - Failure to do academic assignments in - class and for homework - Excess consumption of sugar is causing behavioural issues and retarded academic performance	- Maintaining students' engagement - Disruptions and off task behaviour - Classroom space, class size, ventilation and high temperature - Dealing with students who lack interest and motivation - Failure to complete class assignment - Students are consuming too much sugar and hence their behaviour and academic performance is poor	- Sustaining students' involvement and engagement - Disruptive students - Classroom physical environment not conducive to the teaching and learning process - Lack of interest by students - Non completion of academic assignments - Nutrition

Table 4. Primary School Teachers' perceptions of the underlying reasons for Classroom Management Challenges

Transcription from interview of teachers	Written responses from participants	Fieldnotes of researcher
- Maintaining students' focus, especially those whose seem to be affected by ADHD - Students are negatively influenced by peer pressure - Students are negatively influenced by psycho-social, socio-emotional and external pressures - Lack of parental support and involvement results in poor behaviours and low academic achievement - Lack of learning resources - There is inconsistency by the leadership of the school when addressing behavioural and academic issues	- Maintaining the focus of students with ADHD - The effects of Peer pressure - Students' actions and behaviours are influenced by psycho-social, socio-emotional and external pressures - Students are displaying poor behaviours and low academic performance because of lack of parental support and involvement - Lack of learning resources by students and the school - Administration is inconsistent in dealing with behavioural and academic issues	- Students with ADHD - Peer dynamics - Psycho-social and socio-emotional pressures - Lack of parental support and involvement - Lack of adequate learning resources - Inconsistent policies/school culture

Table 5. Strategies that are most effective in overcoming Classroom Management Challenges

Transcription from interview of teachers	Written responses from participants	Fieldnotes of researcher
- The most effective strategies to deal with classroom management challenges are building relationship with students and parents, ensuring that the lessons are engaging, teachers using non-verbal cues and proximity control mechanisms, creating a structured class routine and ensure rules are consistently enforced. - I created a positive environment where praise and rewards were given to encourage good behaviours and academic progress. Building relationships with students and parents and providing interactive and fun lessons along with providing students with duties are essential ingredients in overcoming classroom management challenges - The effective classroom management strategies that I found useful are setting clear expectations and consistent routines to create a structured learning environment, building positive of positive relationship with students and parents and using proactive behaviour management techniques - Setting clear expectations and having consistent routines, creating engaging and relevant lessons and building relationship with parents and students are strategies that I found useful in overcoming some of the classroom Management challenges that I had over the years - I create a positive environment by providing praise and rewards for good behaviours, set and enforced rules, build positive relationship with parents and students, make lessons interactive and fun and provide students with duties - I ensured that lessons provide practical and hands-on activities that allows for movement, establish rules and routines and build relationship with parents and students	- Effective classroom management hinges on a combination of clear expectations, proactive strategies and strong relationship with students and parents. Lessons should be engaging, and teachers should use non-verbal cues and proximity closeness to mitigate against disruptive and off-task behaviours - Creating a positive environment where praise and rewards are given for good behaviours and academic progress. Building a strong relationship with students are parents are also important. The use of rules and routines along with interactive and fun lessons can be very useful in overcoming classroom management challenges - I found that: setting clear expectations and consistent routines to create a structured learning environment, building positive relationship with students and parents, and using proactive behaviour management techniques are useful in overcoming classroom management challenges - Setting clear expectations and having consistent routines, creating engaging and relevant lessons, and building a strong relationship with parents and students are essential ingredients in mitigating against class management challenges - Create a positive environment by providing praise and rewards for appropriate behaviours and academic progress, setting and enforcement of rules , building of positive relationship with students and parents, provide students with duties, and making lessons interactive and fun where movement is encouraged Ensure that lessons provide practical and hands-on activities that allow for movements, establishment of rules and routines, and build positive relationship with parents and students	- Building strong relationship with the home and the use of non-verbal and proximity control - Use of positive reinforcement, creating positive relationship the home, and ensuring lessons are interactive and fun - Building positive relationship with students and parents, setting of clear expectations and consistent routines - Setting clear expectations, having routines and building relationship with students and parents - Enforcement of rules, provide praise and rewards, build relationship with parents and students, create interactive and engaging lessons and give students duties - practical and Hands-on lessons, establish rules and routines and build relationship with parents and students

These strategies includebuilding strong relationships with students and parents to foster a supportive learning environment, creating engaging lesson plans that are interactive and relevant to students' lives, implementing clear expectations and consistent routines to manage classroom dynamics effectively and utilizing proactive behavior management techniques to pre-emptively address potential disruptions.

SUMMARY

This chapter on the analysis of the data highlighted the complex landscape of classroom management as experienced by a diverse group of female teachers across different educational settings. The varied experiences, challenges, and strategies employed by these educators provided valuable insights into the dynamics of the teaching and learning process within the Jamaican setting. The emphasis on proactive management strategies, recognition of significant challenges, and identification of underlying factors all contribute to a deeper understanding of the classroom environment. The final chapter provided a discussion and interpretation of the findings and was terminate with conclusion and recommendations for future research

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

This chapter interpreted the results, discussed the implications and compared them to previous research. The chapter also summarised the key findings, provided a conclusion. Additionally, the chapter terminated with recommendations and implications for future research

Interpretation of Results: The data provided a comprehensive overview of the perceptions of six female primary school teachers regarding classroom management challenges, factors that cause these challenges and strategies to mitigate against these challenges. The demographic diversity, covering a range of teaching experiences, school locales, and class sizes, sets the stage for understanding how these factors influence classroom management strategies and challenges.The teachers' thoughtful responses to the interview and their written responses provided critical answers to the research questions.

Implications of Findings: The findings suggested that teachers' experiences and their school environments slightly impacted their perceptions and approaches to classroom management. For instance, the variance in class sizes across rural, suburban, and urban settings indicated that teachers in urban areas face unique challenges, such as higher student-to-teacher ratios, which may necessitate different management strategies compared to their rural counterparts. It is however important to note that despite the teachers' varying years of teaching, class sizes and locales when asked to identify the most critical challenges they encountered, they were almost in unison with their listings. They all identified disruptive behaviour, physical environmental constraints, limited learning resources and lack of focus of students as major challenges to the teaching and learning process. In resolving the myriad challenges the teachers' proffered strategies that they have used or will use. Some of these strategies included non-verbal cues, proximity

control mechanism, positive reinforcement, building positive relationships with students and parents, creating routines and structures, make physical and psycho-social environment conducive to learning. Those above findings could inform professional development initiatives, tailoring support based on specific environmental challenges.

Comparison with Previous Research: Previous research has underscored the correlation between classroom size and management efficacy (Shireen et al, 2020, Blatchford & Russell, 2019 and Breit-Brown, 2023). This study aligns with those findings, demonstrating that larger classes are linked to increase disruption and engagement challenges. Additionally, the dominance of female teachers in primary education reflects ongoing trends in the field of education, echoing findings from broader educational studies that highlight gender dynamics in teaching roles and their potential influence on classroom atmospheres (Florack, A. 2012 and Muhammad et al, 2025).

Summary of Key Findings

- There is no major difference in classroom management challenges based on Diversity in Experience: The teachers' years of experience range from 1 to 30 years, highlighting a mix of novice and veteran educators.
- Environmental Factors made a slight difference in the type and uniqueness of classroom management challenges encountered: The locale of schools (rural, suburban, urban) impacts class sizes and management strategies, with urban teachers facing more significant challenges due to overcrowding.
- Classroom Management Strategies: Key strategies identified include creating structured environments, establishing routines, and using positive reinforcement.
- Classroom Management Challenges: Common challenges include maintaining student engagement, dealing with disruptive behaviours, and addressing environmental conditions like classroom space and temperature.
- Underlying Reasons for Challenges: Factors such as ADHD, peer pressure, lack of parental support, and inadequate resources are noted as significant contributors to classroom management difficulties.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Reduce class size in urban schools
- The Ministry of Education could seek to improve the resource allocation for school, especially rural schools. Having parity in the distribution of resources to rural schools verses urban schools by the Ministry of Education is critical.
- Provide targeted professional development to deal with differentiated instruction, gender-based instruction, emotional regulation and culturally relevant management strategies.
- Consistent administrative support.
- Strong collaboration between schools and families.

Future research could expand on this study by:

- Incorporating a Larger Sample: Including a broader range of teachers, including male educators, to explore gender dynamics further.

- Exploring Interventions: Investigating specific interventions that address identified challenges, such as student engagement and disruptive behaviours, and their effectiveness across different school settings.
- Parental Involvement: Examining strategies to enhance parental involvement and support, and its impact on student behaviour and academic performance.

By addressing these areas, future research can contribute to a deeper understanding of classroom management in primary education and inform practices that foster better learning environments.

Concluding Remarks

The results of this study highlighted the multifaceted nature of classroom management and the varying factors that influence teachers' perceptions and strategies. As the teaching landscape evolves, understanding these dynamics is essential for developing effective interventions and support systems.

REFERENCES

Akin, S., Yildirim, A., & Goodwin, A. L. (2016). Classroom Management through the Eyes of Elementary Teachers in Turkey: A Phenomenological Study. *Educational Sciences-Theory & Practice*, 771-797. http://hdl.handle.net/11511/57912

Bandura, A. (1977). *Social learning theory*, Prentice-Hall

Barone, D. F., Maddux, J. E., & Snyder, C. R, (2006). *Social Cognitive Psychology: History and Current Domains*. Springer. https://doi.org/10.1007/0-387-28274-6

Barrett, P., Zhang, Y., Moffat, J., & Kobbacy, K. (2013). A holistic, multi-level analysis identifying the impact of classroom design and pupils' learning." Building and Environment, 59, 678-689

Benfield, J. R., Szostak, R. L., & Adams, R. J. (2015). "Classroom environments and student learning: A review of the research literature.**"***Learning Environments Research*, 18(1), 1-29

Bianchi, R. (2020). "Teacher stress and classroom management." *Journal of Educational Psychology*, 57(2), 134-146

Bronfenbrenner, U. (1979). *The Ecology of Human Development: Experiments by Nature and Design*. Cambridge, M. A: Harvard University Press

Byers, T., Mahat. M., Liu, K., Knock, A., & Imms, W. (2018). *A systematic review of the effects of learning environments on student learning outcomes*. Melbourne: University of Melbourne, LEaRN

Cheryan, S., Ziegler, S.A., Plaut, V.C., & Meltzoff, A. N. (2014). "Designing classrooms to maximize student achievement." *Policy Insights from the Behavioral and Brain Sciences*, 1(1) 4-12.

Crotty, M. (1998). *The foundations of social research: Meaning and perspective in the research process*. Sage

Eggen, P., & Kauchak, D. (2016*). Educational psychology: Windows on classrooms*(10ᵗʰ ed.). Pearson

Emmer, E. T., & Sabornie, E. J. (2015*). Handbook of classroom management*. Routledge

Evertson, C. M., & Weinstein, C. S. (2013). "Classroom management as a field of inquiry.*" Handbook of Classroom Management* (pp.3-15). Routledge

Guba, E. G., & Lincoln, Y. S. (1994*). Competing paradigms in qualitative research*. Denzin, N. K., & Lincoln, Y. S (eds.), *Handbook of qualitative research*, 105-117. Sage

Hargreaves, A. (1998). The emotional practice of teaching. Teaching and Teacher Education, 14(8), 835-854. https://doi.org/10.1016/s0742-051X(98)00025-0

Jennings, P. A. (2015). *Mindfulness for teachers: Simple skills for peace and productivity in the classroom*. W. W. Norton & Company.

Jennings, P. A., & Greenberg, M. T. (2009). The prosocial classroom: Teacher social and emotional competence in relation to student and classroom outcomes. Review of Educational Research, 79(1), 491-525, https://doi.org/10.3102/0034654308325693

Johnson, B., & Christensen, L. (2008). *Educational Research: Quantitative, qualitative, and mixed approaches* (3rd ed.) SAGE Publications.

Johnson, B., & Christensen, L. (2017). *Educational Research: Quantitative, qualitative, and mixed approaches* (6ᵗʰ ed.). SAGE Publications

Jones, V., & Jones, L. (2016). *Comprehensive classroom management: Creating communities of support and solving problems* (11ᵗʰ ed.). Pearson

Kunter, M., Baumert, J., & Koller, U. (2007). "Fostering students' cognitive and motivational development: The role of teacher behavior.**"***Journal of Educational Psychology*, 99(3), 482-494

Lazarus, R. S., & Folkman, S. (1984). *Stress, appraisal, and coping*. Springer Publishing Company

Marshall, C., & Rossman, G. B. (2006). *Designing qualitative research*, Thousand Oaks, C. A: Sage

Martin, A. J. (2018). "Academic buoyancy and resilience: Exploring 'everyday' and 'classic' resilience in the face of academic adversity." *School Psychology International*, 29(5), 510-528.

Marzano, R. J., & Marzano, J. S. (2003). "The Key to classroom management." *Educational Leadership*, 61 (1), 6-13

Marzano, R. J., Marzano, J. S., & Pickering, D. J. (2003). *Classroom management that works*. VA: Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development.

Masten, A. S. (2018). Resilience theory and research on children and families: Past, present, and promise. Journal of Family Theory & Review, 10(1), 12-31, https://doi.org/10.1111/jftr.12255

Matalon, B. (1996). *Classroom and Behaviour Management*. Chalkboard Press

Mendell, R. M., Reddy, K. V., & Wolff, M. (2015). "The impact of classroom environment on student achievement." *Journal of Educational Psychology*, 107(4)1115-1125.

Merriam, S. B. (1998). *Qualitative Research and case study applications in education*. Jossey-Bass.

Oakes, J., & Lipton, M, (1999). *Teaching to Change the World*. The McGraw-Hill Companies

Polluck, J. E. (2012). *Feedback: the hinge that joins teaching and learning*. Corwin Press

Rands. M. L., & Gansemer-Topf, A. M. (2017). The room itself is active: How classroom design impacts student engagement. Journal of Learning Spaces, 6(1), 26-33. Retrieved from https://libjournal.uncg.edu/jls/article/view/1286

Ronic, B., Lewis, R., & Roache, J. (2013). "Teacher-student relationships in the classroom: A review of the literature." *Australian Journal of Teacher Education*, 38(7), 69-84.

Shakerkhoshroudi, M., Beh-Afarin, S. R., & Nikoopour, J. (2020). Exploring Effective Classroom Management Constraints in EFL Context: A Phenomenological Inquiry. *Iranian Journal of Applied Language Studies*, *12*(2), 185-224. http://doi.org/10.22111/ijals.2020.5952

Shield, B., & Dockrell, J. (2008). "The effects of noise on children at school: A review." *Building Acoustics*, 15(2)119-129

Sugai, G., & Horner, R. H. (2002). The evolution of discipline practices: School-wide positive behavior supports. *Child & Family Behavior Therapy*, 24(1-2), 23-50, https://doi.org/10.1300/J019v24n01_03

Sun, H., & Yee, C. M. (2024). A Phenomenological Study on Teachers' Perception of Classroom Management Challenges in Higher Vocational Colleges in China. *Academic Journal of Management and Social Sciences*, *8*(2), 61-67. https://doi.org/10.54097/qt1hkh43

Tanner, C. K. (2009). "Effects of school design on student outcomes." *Journal of Educational Administration*, 47(3)381-399.

Wargocki, P., & Wyon, D. P. (2013). "The effects of classroom air quality on the performance of schoolwork." *Indoor Air,* 23(1), 1-10.

White, M.A (2021). Teachers' Lived Classroom Experiences: A Qualitative Phenomenological Study of Classroom Management and disruptive Behaviors in Mississippi Schools. North Central University. ProQuest Dissertations &Theses 202128316840. https://www.proquest.com/openview/ cc1a8f15161b3aa71fe5d1c85d1c7a59/1?pq-origsite=gscholar&cbl=18750&diss=y

Wong, H, K., & Wong, R. T. (2018). *The first days of school: How to be an effective teacher* (5th ed.). Harry K. Wong Publications

Wong, M. M. W. (2020). Mobilizing knowledge processes and Lifeworld practices across learning spaces: exploring grade 6 English language learners' inquiry-based learning experiences in a technology-enhanced classroom (T). University of British Columbia. Retrieved from https://open.library.ubc.ca/collections/ubctheses/24/items/1.0395371

Wubbels, T. (2011). "The influence of teacher-student relationships on classroom dynamics." In C. M. Evertson & C. S. Weinstein (Eds.)., *Handbook of classroom management* (pp.423-444). Routledge.

****

Vygotsky, L., (1978). Mind in Society: *The Development of Higher Psychological Processes* (M. Cole, V. John-Steiner, S. Scribner, & E. Souberman, Eds.). Harvard University Press.