

TEACHER PERCEPTIONS OF THEIR ABILITIES TO
TEACH COPING SKILLS TO STRUGGLING
STUDENTS: A CASE STUDY

By

KRISTY HERNANDEZ

Bachelor of Arts/Science Kinesiology
Angelo State University
San Angelo, TX
1990

Master of Education in School Counseling
University of Central Oklahoma
Edmond, OK
2003

Master of Education in Educational Leadership
University of Central Oklahoma
Edmond, OK
2014

Submitted to the Faculty of the
Graduate College of the
Oklahoma State University
in partial fulfillment of
the requirements for
the Degree of
DOCTOR OF EDUCATION
December 2019

TEACHER PERCEPTIONS OF THEIR ABILITIES TO
TEACH COPING SKILLS TO STRUGLING
STUDENTS: A CASE STUDY

Dissertation Approved:

Dr. Katherine Curry

Dissertation Adviser

Dr. Katherine Curry

Dissertation Chair

Dr. Ed. Harris

Committee Member

Dr. Jentre Olsen

Committee Member

Dr. Julie Koch

Outside Committee Member

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This has truly been a process; one that tested my grit and fortitude. Many days, I was ready to give up, but then I would remember that I had to keep climbing the hill until I reached the top. Sometimes, the hill became very steep, and other times, the grade of the hill was slight, but with each step, the top grew closer. I learned to dig deep and keep grinding until the process was complete.

Of course, none of this would have been possible without my Lord and Savior, Jesus and the undying support of my family, friends, and professors. Without Jesus and these people, I do believe it would have been easy to walk away. Above all, Jesus calmed the storms in me when times became intense and full of emotion.

To my husband. Thank you for your eternal love and support throughout the entire process. You dried my tears when they flowed, and you made me laugh when the stress became too much. You knew when to take me and make me have fun and when to make we get to work. I am so glad you challenged me to push myself further than I thought was possible. I know there are times when I had to continue to push myself instead of playing golf or working on our Corvette. You never diminished in your patience with me and love for me. I am forever grateful for you.

To my children. Thank you for your love and patience as I completed my goal. I know there are times when I had to turn down invites from you in order to complete my dissertation. As much as I wanted to spend my time with you, I really needed to finish this task. You were always so supportive through it all.

To my cohort partners. Thank you for always being there to push me and encourage me along the way. This truly is a journey I could not have made alone. I know we share an eternal bond.

To my professors. Thank you for the knowledge and wisdom you instilled in me throughout the entire degree program. Dr. Curry and Dr. Richardson, your investment in me has helped me realize my potential.

Name: KRISTY HERNANDEZ

Date of Degree: DECEMBER 2019

Title of Study: TEACHER PERCEPTIONS OF THEIR ABILITIES TO TEACH
COPING SKILLS TO STRUGLING STUDENTS: A CASE STUDY

Major Field: EDUCATIONAL LEADERSHIP

Abstract: The purpose of this qualitative study is to explore seventh and eighth grade teachers' perceptions of teaching coping skills in the classroom. This study used purposeful sampling to select nine teachers who taught at the junior high school for a minimum of five years. The teachers represented courses across the curriculum. Data were collected through nine interviews, seven classroom observations, and an informational brochure. Teacher self-efficacy as defined by Bandura's (1997) Self Efficacy Theory provided the lens through which to introduce and analyze the teachers' perceptions. Findings confirmed that teacher self-efficacy is tied to the comfortability of the teacher to incorporate coping skills into the classroom. Also, teachers understand the importance of teacher to student relationship before coping skills can be incorporated into the classroom. Findings all revealed that teachers of all self-efficacy levels prefer to have formal training on applying coping skills instruction to the daily classroom activities. Additional research could focus on providing teachers specific coping skill techniques, the connection of building a positive school culture to teacher self-efficacy of learning these new techniques, and what types of professional development will help teachers build the capacity to teach active coping skills.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Chapter	Page
I. INTRODUCTION.....	1
Statement of the Problem.....	3
Purpose of the Study.....	5
Research Questions.....	5
Epistemological Perspective.....	6
Theoretical Perspective.....	6
Procedures.....	8
Significance of Study.....	11
Definition of Terms.....	12
Summary.....	13
II. REVIEW OF LITERATURE.....	15
Coping Skills.....	15
Coping Skills in Current Research.....	22
Coping Skills in the Classroom.....	28
Theoretical Framework.....	34
Summary.....	37
III. METHODOLOGY.....	39
Purpose of the Study.....	39
Research Questions.....	39
Research Design.....	40
Methodological Procedures.....	41
Researcher Role.....	48
Trustworthiness of Findings.....	49
Limitations of Study.....	52
Summary.....	52

Chapter	Page
IV. PRESENTATION OF DATA	53
Jackson Public Schools.....	54
DeWitt Junior High School.....	56
District Initiatives.....	57
Data Collected.....	61
Emerging Themes	68
Summary	80
V. FINDINGS, CONCLUSION, AND IMPLICATIONS	81
Findings.....	82
Summary.....	112
Implications.....	114
Recommendations for Future Research	119
Conclusions.....	121
Researcher Comments	123
REFERENCES	124
APPENDICES	135

LIST OF TABLES

Table	Page
Table 1 Trustworthiness Criteria and Examples	49
Table 2 Participant Profiles.....	67
Table 3 Coping Skills.....	88
Table 4 Role in Teaching Coping Skills	94
Table 5 Past and Future Teacher Preparedness.....	100
Table 6 The Tenets of Bandura’s Self-Efficacy Theory	110

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure	Page
Figure 1 Self-Efficacy Theory	36

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Adolescence is a difficult time in a person's life with many physiological and physical changes taking place such as physical changes brought on by puberty, transition from parent-centered life to peer-centered life, and social-emotional growth (Bluth, Mullarkey, & Lathren, 2018; Kochenderfer-Ladd & Skinner, 2002; Swanson, Caliente, Lemery-Chalfant, & O'Brien, 2011). During this time in life, many adolescents do not recognize the source of the changes they are experiencing, nor do they understand how these changes affect their relationships as they begin to lean less on their parents and more on their peers (Caples & Barrera, 2006; DeCarlo Santiago & Wadsworth, 2009; Mota & Matos, 2013). As adolescents are faced with the stress of the changes taking place in their lives, they will increasingly rely on coping skills they have developed, either active or passive (Gagne & Melancon, 2013; Seiffge-Krenke, Aunola, & Nurmi, 2009) to help them navigate both internal and external changes they are experiencing. Active coping skills, such as seeking social support and problem-solving are also referred to as approach coping skills (Kochenderfer-Ladd & Skinner, 2002). Approach coping

skills include behaviors such as involvement, problem-solving, and social support (DeCarlo Santiago & Wadsworth, 2009). Clarke (2006) indicated “active coping skills are intended to achieve some degree of personal control over the stressful aspects of the environment and one’s emotions and are distinguished from efforts to adapt to or avoid stressful situations” (p. 11). Research also shows that the use of approach coping skills such as problem-solving and achieving social support are much more effective than avoidance strategies such as self-blame, and withdrawing (Coban, 2013). These approach coping skills may be used to help students overcome stress in the classroom.

When students use approach coping skills such as problem-solving, classroom behaviors are better than when they use avoidant coping skills such as acting out, which has a direct effect on the environment of the classroom (Lewis, Roache, & Romi, 2011). Avoidant coping skills can be defined as a lack of abilities to cope with stressful situations in life (Brady, Gorman-Smith, Henry, & Tolan, 2008; Chua, Milfont, & Jose, 2014). According to research, avoidant coping skills can lead to substance use, aggressive behaviors, and venting emotions (Brady, et.al, 2008). Therefore, approach coping skills lead to positive well-being while avoidant coping skills lead to a maladaptive well-being (Chua, Milfont, & Jose, 2014).

Classroom Management and Student Coping Skills

Classroom management can be defined as the teacher’s ability to create a positive learning environment by managing student behavior in the classroom. This environment includes an organization of activities, emotional, social, and physical safety, and daily learning (Ayebo & Assuah, 2017; Sieberer-Nagler, 2016, O’Neil & Stephenson, 2015). Research shows that positive classroom management is important for teacher self-efficacy; conversely, a negative classroom environment can be extremely stressful for teachers and

students (Lewis, Roache, & Romi, 2011; Sieberer-Nagler, 2016). Therefore, fewer classroom disruptions are a result of the creation of an effective educational atmosphere and developing teacher self-efficacy, which creates a better learning environment for students (Lewis, Roache, & Romi, 2011). Examples of student maladaptive behaviors that affect the classroom environment include disagreements with others, outbursts during class, and refusal to complete assignments, which creates an ineffective classroom management system by lowering the social/emotional competency and lowering the pedagogical foundation of the learning environment (Seiz, Voss, & Kunter, 2015; Tran, 2015; Tsouloupas, Carson, & Matthews, 2014). Teachers who understand the need for a strong foundation of coping skills in their students have a stronger self-efficacy and less burnout over the years due to chronic stress (Lewis, Roache, & Romi, 2011). The goal of this study is to portray teacher perception of their comfortability to teach healthy coping skills to students in their classroom in an effort to lead to better classroom management practices.

Problem Statement

Teaching coping skills in the adolescent years can have a positive effect on students, as these skills improve the student's ability to work through stressful situations (Swanson, et al., 2011). Effective coping skills can be a moderator between life stressors and maladaptive behaviors (Chagnon, 2007; Gagne & Melancon, 2013; Sun & Zhang, 2014). Adolescents who seek social support and learn to actively problem solve are more effective in handling the stressors associated with becoming young adults (Coban, 2013; Shatkin et al., 2016). These healthy coping skills are developed in human beings as they face adversity in their lives, which gives students the tools they need to actively deal with unplanned negative events (Chagnon, 2007; DeCarlo Santiago & Wasdsworth, 2008). Bandura (1997) states that

once resiliency or the ability to cope is developed in a person, that person is more likely to be able to constructively endure adversity without making poor behavior choices.

The research in current literature describes the use of coping skills in urban schools (Clettenberg et al., 2011; Coyle & Vera, 2013; Sanchez, Lambert, & Cooley-Strickland, 2013), the effects of coping skills on academics (Perry et al., 2018; Sakk, 2013), and the benefits of coping skills with college students (Earnest & Dwyer, 2010; Shatkin et al., 2016; Sun & Zhang, 2015). For example, according to Sanchez et al., (2012), children who reside in violent environments, such as those that commonly surround urban schools, develop different coping skills than children who reside in other areas. Many times, this dangerous environment can create coping skills that drive maladaptive behaviors such as yelling in the classroom, storming out of a classroom, or aggressive actions towards others (Coyle & Vera, 2012). In addition, coping skills can be an influence on a student's academic success by providing the student with the ability to self-regulate his or her behaviors (Perry, et al., 2018). Finally, the development of coping skills leads to resiliency during the transition of childhood to adulthood (Shatkin et al., 2016). Emerging research also indicates that teaching coping skills may impact classroom behaviors (Allen et al., 2016). By students learning how to apply coping skills in the classroom, student behavior choices can be affected with self-regulation (Allen et al., 2016). Despite the research on the benefits of students using coping skills to improve academics, create a smoother transition to college, and with students who live in urban areas, there is little research on how teachers use coping skills in the seventh and eighth grade classroom. Specifically, there is little research on how prepared seventh and eighth grade teachers feel to use coping skills as part of a classroom management strategy.

Therefore, a gap exists in the literature. One way to address this gap is to explore seventh and eighth grade teachers' perceptions of coping skills including how they teach coping skills as a strategy in the classroom and how prepared teachers feel in teaching coping skills. One reason seventh and eighth grade teachers may not use coping skills as a classroom management strategy is because they lack the self-efficacy to successfully teach the strategies. According to a Shillingford and Karlin (2014), teachers find it easier to incorporate classroom accommodations for children with visible disorders because teachers have a better understanding of these types of disorders, rather than invisible disorders such as the inability to self-regulate because of stress or anxiety. They go on to explain that teachers feel inadequate to deal with the invisible disorders (social emotional needs) in children due to a lack of training and understanding of how these disorders affect children (Chesnut & Burley, 2015; Shillingford & Karlin, 2014). Teachers are prone to reject students with these invisible disorders because they tend to create an increase in classroom management issues (Shillingford & Karlin, 2014). Since teachers' self-efficacy is defined as their own beliefs about their abilities to successfully reach children in the classroom, the focus then needs to be placed on how prepared they feel to teach coping skills to students (Chesnut & Burley, 2014).

Purpose Statement

The purpose of this qualitative case study is to explore selected seventh and eighth grade teachers' perceptions of teaching coping skills in the classroom.

Research Questions

1. How do select seventh and eighth grade teachers teach and encourage students to utilize coping skills in the classroom?

2. How do select seventh and eighth grade teachers describe their role in teaching coping skills?
3. How prepared do select seventh and eighth grade teachers feel in teaching coping skills to students?
 - a. What types of preparation did these seventh and eighth grade teachers receive to teach coping skills?
 - b. What preparation do teachers feel is most helpful?
4. What role do past experiences, modeling by others, social persuasion, and emotional state, key tenets of Bandura's (1997) Self-Efficacy Theory, have in teacher self-efficacy to teach coping skills?

Epistemological Perspective

Constructivism is the epistemological perspective driving this case study. According to Crotty (1998), "meanings are constructed by human beings as they engage with the world they are interpreting" (p. 43). In this study, life experiences mold people as they grow and develop, which also affects the progression of coping skills and the ability to maintain a healthy view of personal abilities as self-efficacy evolves. Teachers' self-efficacy is directly related to their abilities to manage their classroom, which is why the coping skills of students is an important factor in maintaining an educational setting in the classroom with minimal disruption (Delale-O'Connor et al., 2017).

Theoretical Framework

The theoretical framework for this study will be Albert Bandura's Self-Efficacy Theory. Bandura (1994) defined self-efficacy as "people's beliefs about their capabilities to produce designated levels of performance that exercise influence over events that affect their

lives” (p. 2). The foundation of this theory is constructed in the belief that people make daily decisions based on their personal belief of their own capabilities, and self-efficacy is the core of strengthening personal expectations and avoidant behaviors (Bandura, 1997). Bandura (1997) goes on to explain that a teacher’s efficacy plays an important role in their ability to structure activities within the classroom in a way that guides students towards achievement. Teachers who have a high self-efficacy tend to believe they can reach children who come from difficult places, while teachers who have lower self-efficacy struggle with strategies to work with these students (Bandura, 1997). Therefore, teachers who have a high self-efficacy in the classroom tend to create a classroom environment, which results in more time on academic tasks and less time on classroom management (Bandura, 1997).

For teachers, classroom management can be an obstacle that greatly affects the learning environment of their classroom, which many times makes teachers feel inadequate in their own abilities and causes teachers to leave the teaching field early (Cooper et al., 2018; Delale-O’Connor et al., 2017). Research draws a direct connection between a teacher’s ability to manage student behaviors and their own self-efficacy (Delale-O’ Connor et al., 2017). However, classroom management involves more than controlling student behavior. The capability to create a classroom environment that encapsulates educational development is at the core of classroom management (Delale-O’Connor, 2017). A teacher’s efficacy beliefs influence their resilience when things do not go as planned, which can be driven by the teacher’s belief of using coping skills in the classroom. (Bandura, 1997; Delale O’Connor et al., 2017). The efficacy of teachers regarding the use of coping skills as a classroom management strategy in the classroom can create opportunities for student self-regulation and compliance to classroom procedures.

Procedures

Qualitative research is defined as a personal inquiry that is not driven by a problem, but instead is an opportunity to research a problem to help “make sense of the world” (Merriam, 2001; Patton, 2015, p. 6). This type of research allows the researcher to evaluate the perceptions of others to explore a social problem (Creswell, 2014). Qualitative research also solicits the personal experiences of the researcher as the data are coded and evaluated (Patton, 2015; Saldana, 2016). Through the use of interviews, observations, and artifacts, the researcher will be able to build toward theory as he or she triangulates the collected data to answer the research questions of this study (Patton, 2015; Merriam, 2001). Since the nature of this study is to explore teacher perceptions of the effectiveness of teaching coping skills to students, social constructionism is the lens the researcher will use to discover the “truth” about what teachers believe about the application of coping skills (Patton, 2015). By using case study design, the researcher will be “the primary instrument for gathering and analyzing data and, as such, can respond to the situation by maximizing opportunities for collecting and producing meaningful information” (Merriam, 2001, p. 20). The research design and perspectives will provide the research with a better understanding of how teachers view the need or lack of coping skills in their students.

Setting and Participants

Creswell (2011) and Patton (2015) describe the importance of sampling as it pertains to the chosen research design. When conducting a qualitative case study, purposeful sampling offers an avenue to choose participants who can provide an understanding of the relevant event (Creswell, 2011). The goal in purposeful sampling is to choose those participants that focus on “alignment with the inquiry’s purpose, primary questions, and data

collection” (Patton, 2015, p. 264). For this study, the selected site is a suburban junior high school that houses grades seven and eight and has an enrollment of approximately 600 students made up of various ethnic backgrounds. This school began a coping skills program called Pathways to Peace three years ago. With this program, students were taught how to incorporate coping skills into daily exercises in an effort to help them self-regulate their choices. This program was developed by Save the Children for communities who have encountered trauma through natural disasters in recent years, and in 2014, Save the Children offered their program to this community after a natural disaster.

For this study, the researcher will choose nine teachers who have taught at the chosen junior high for at least five years. The teachers, who will make up the sample, work with a population of students who live in a community that suffers prolonged trauma, which in definition pertains to generational poverty, high crime rates, and single-parent homes. Many times, the students’ background is different from the teacher, so the researcher will take that into account in the data collection and analysis components.

Data Collection

According to Merriam (2001), the qualitative data collection process relies on hidden meanings which are discovered through the actual collection and interpreting practices. “Data collection in a case study is a recursive, interactive process in which engaging in one strategy incorporates or may lead to subsequent sources of data” (Merriam, 2001, p. 134). Therefore, data collection is ongoing throughout the study. To begin the participant process, I will start by choosing participants that fit the criteria. After the participants are selected, I will conduct and audio record face-to-face interviews with the teachers who will serve as the participants. After each interview, the researcher will transcribe the interview word for word. In addition,

the researcher will conduct on-site observations of teachers working with students in real-life scenarios and use artifacts such as an informational training brochure describing student use of coping skills to assist in the triangulation of the data process. Finally, the researcher will analyze a district provided informational brochure that explained the Pathways to Peace program. This process of using multiple sources of data will increase the reliability of this study.

Data Analysis

The data in this study will be analyzed through various coding and theming practices. Merriam (2001) suggest that the researcher begins the analysis process during the data collection stage, following a constant comparative approach, as this will help with the organization of themes and further follow up questions.

Data collection and analysis are a simultaneous activity in qualitative analysis begins with the first interview, the first observation, the first document read. Emerging insights, hunches, and tentative hypotheses direct the next phase of data collection, which in turn leads to refinement of reformulation of questions, and so on. It is an interactive process throughout that allows the investigator to produce believable and trustworthy findings. (Merriam, 2001, p. 151).

Since qualitative studies cannot be generalized, it is important to provide credibility and reliability in the study. Through the use of follow up interviews and member-checking, this researcher will narrow down the usable data to determine these patterns and themes. Merriam (2001) suggests that the involvement of the researcher as an active participant of the study allows for better triangulation of the data as well as developing a rich, thick description.

Significance of the Study

To Practice

The significance of this study is to provide data to fill a research gap of whether teachers perceive effective coping skills as a helpful practice for students in schools. This study will focus on teacher perception of teaching coping skills in an effort to influence student behavior choices and ultimately classroom management practices. Teachers will be able to use the data from this study to help students regulate their behaviors in class, which will lead to a change in classroom management techniques. Very little data exist on teacher perceptions of teaching coping skills to students and the use of these skills to aid students in making better behavior choices.

To Research

The research in this study will provide data to all levels of educators, as it will offer information to educators of all ages about teacher perceptions of whether coping skills of students are connected to behavior choices. With the use of this data, all educators will be able to apply the findings to classroom management procedures, which in turn will build teacher self-efficacy. Educators in seventh and eighth grade settings as well as higher education can learn to incorporate the use of coping skills into their normal daily classroom. This study will also provide data for K-12 districts to determine professional development needs for teachers in the area of teaching coping skills.

To Theory

Theories regarding teacher self-efficacy and classroom management are prevalent in education today. Results of this study could potentially add to existing research of improving

classroom management by teaching coping skills in the classroom in an effort to help teachers understand how to teach and incorporate these coping skills into their classroom.

Limitations

This study will be a case study; therefore, generalizability is not a goal with this study. However, there are limitations. All participants in this study will teach at the same junior high school, work with the same student population, and may or may not have formal training of teaching coping skills to students. Another limitation of this study is the fact that the lead researcher is employed by the same school district that houses this junior high school. However, the lead researcher does not specifically work in this school building, which will remove this researcher from an opportunity to influence the study and its results.

Definition of Terms

- Coping Skills – Actions taken to respond to challenging conditions to prevent stress caused by loss, threat or harm (Chua et al., 2015).
- Maladaptive Behaviors – Any exhibited behavior that shows aggression or violence towards another person (Brady et al., 2008).
- Approach Coping Skills - Problem-solving and seeking support (Kochenderfer-Ladd & Skinner, 2002).
- Avoidant Coping Skills – avoiding situations and resignation from the situation (Sun & Zhang, 2014).
- Self-efficacy – what people believe about their own abilities to produce at certain levels of performance (Bandura, 1986).

- Classroom Management – teacher’s arrangement of classroom activities to maximize student engagement and academic growth while proactively addressing student behaviors (Cooper, et al., 2017).

Summary

This study is organized into five chapters. Chapter I includes an introduction along with the main elements, which include the statement of the problem, the purpose of the study, and the research questions. Case study methodology is the design for the study to acquire a better understanding of the use of coping skills by teachers to improve classroom management and ultimately teacher self-efficacy. The theoretical framework guiding this study is Albert Bandura’s Self – Efficacy Theory.

Chapter II provides a relevant literature review that will provide insight into the research topic. More specifically the use of coping skills, classroom management, and teacher self-efficacy will be addressed. This lack of literature that addresses the teachers’ knowledge of teaching coping skills to students in the classroom provides a gap in understanding of how prepared teachers feel to teach these skills to students.

Chapter III presents a detailed explanation of research methods and procedures that will be used for selecting participants, collecting data, and analyzing the data. Ethical consideration will be presented regarding the researcher’s background and bias as well as securing entry into the school site. This chapter ends with sections addressing the trustworthiness of findings and limitations of the study.

Chapter IV presents the data along with robust descriptions of the district, site, and participants. All data collected through interviews, observations, and an artifact are presented and analyzed through the lens of Bandura's (1997) Self-Efficacy Theory.

Chapter V concludes the study with findings, conclusions, implications, and recommendations. The implications include significance of the study to practice, to research, and to theory. Finally, recommendations for future research are provided.

CHAPTER II

LITERATURE REVIEW

Key topics discussed in this literature review include: (1) the importance of coping skills for students; (2) the importance of effective classroom management; and (3) the usefulness of coping skills as a part of classroom management. The goals for the review are: (1) to establish the need for effective coping skills; (2) to understand the teachers' perception of coping skills as a part of classroom management; and (3) to suggest the need for the present study.

Coping Skills

The emergence of adulthood has a great effect on adolescents as they begin to desire autonomy from their parents, experience physiological changes, and open their world to deeper, more meaningful relationships (Seiffge-Krenke et al., 2009; Shatkin et al., 2016). All of these changes are generally taking place simultaneously as teenagers gain more independence and responsibilities at school and at home. Alone, these changes can cause great stress in young people, but witnessing violent behaviors, experiencing trauma, and living in dysfunctional families, can magnify this stress exponentially (Brady et al., 2008; Caples & Barera, 2006; Coyle & Vera, 2013). In order to transition

smoothly into and out of adolescence, teens need effective coping skills (Chua et al., 2015). There are many avenues teenagers follow to cope with life's stressors, and while some are healthy and effective, others are ineffective and sometimes cause adolescents to make maladaptive behavior choices by acting out, exhibiting violence, or making self-destructive choices (Brady et al., 2008; Caples & Barrera, 2006; Coyle & Vera, 2013).

An essential component of effectively handling life stressors is knowing how and when to use healthy coping skills (Sun & Zhang, 2014). Research indicates that adolescents, particularly those raised in volatile or violent communities, struggle with the effective use of coping skills (Brady et al., 2008; Caples & Barera, 2006; Coyle & Vera, 2013).

The Development of Coping Skills

Children who are exposed to violence and trauma at an early age and throughout their lives tend to develop negative coping skills and respond to stress in an adversarial manner (Brady, et al., 2008; Coyle & Vera, 2013). Trauma and violence do not need to be experienced first-hand to have an adverse effect on people (Brady et al., 2008). Merely constantly hearing about violence can create damaging thoughts and feelings in people (Brady et al., 2008). As a result, adolescents tend to turn these experiences into maladaptive behaviors (Brady et al., 2008; Caples & Barrera, 2006; Coyle & Vera, 2013). Maladaptive behaviors and emotions in children are many times self-constructed as a result of experiencing stressful events (Brady et al., 2008; Coyle & Vera, 2013). For example, when an adolescent loses a parent, he or she may start to act out by drinking or disregarding curfew. This example shows how adolescents who do not cope well with stressors may create more stress in their own lives (Coyle & Vera, 2013).

Another common stressor that can create maladaptive behaviors and emotions in adolescents is growing up in a dysfunctional home (Caples & Barrera, 2006). Parent-adolescent conflict that arises from degrading parenting styles can be associated with maladaptive behaviors in adolescents (Caples & Barrera, 2013). Dysfunctional homes can include those with degrading parenting and can include “verbal abuse, name-calling, belittling, ridicule, hostility, sarcasm, unjustified criticism, and humiliation” (Caples & Barrera, 2013, p. 603). The foundation of love comes from the parent-child relationship, and when the child feels neglected or belittled, there is potential to create a foundation of mistrust, which can lead to these maladaptive behaviors (Caples & Barrera, 2013). Therefore, maternal support is very important in the development of children and helps to create self-respect and self-esteem (Caples & Barrera, 2013; Gagne & Melancon, 2013). When parents engage in actions that humiliate or demoralize their children, this might disrupt conflict resolution strategies from developing in the child (Caples & Barrera, 2013; Gagne & Melancon, 2013).

An additional factor associated with undeveloped coping skills is childhood bullying (Kochenderfer-Ladd & Skinner, 2002; Murray-Harvey, Skrzypiec, & Slee, 2012). Victims of childhood bullying who exhibit poor coping skills suffer from peer harassment more often than those who practice healthy coping skills (Kochenderfer-Ladd & Skinner, 2002). According to a study conducted by Murray-Harvey, Skrzypiec, and Slee (2012), effective coping strategies vary depending on differing types of bullying. With the addition of cyberbullying in society, adolescents face a whole different world of bullying opportunities, and these types of situations are handled completely differently than face to face bullying. Frequent student victimization may have a greater effect in the

creation of dysfunction for some adolescents than for others (Kochenderfer-Ladd & Skinner, 2002; Murray-Harvey et al., 2012). The risk factor that student harassment plays is, in part, dependent on the victim's ability to apply effective coping strategies (Kochenderfer-Ladd & Skinner, 2002).

Effective Coping Strategies for Adolescents

A major factor in the growth of adolescents is the development of effective coping skills. One positive factor is students who have future goals and plans because they tend to be more equipped to overcome stressors in life and make progress towards those plans and goals (Chua, Milfont, & Jose, 2015; Shatkin, et al., 2016). As found in a study conducted by Chua, Milfont, and Jose (2015), adolescents who created future goals and plans for themselves “led to subsequently predicted less substance use and less self-harm” (p. 2037). Constructing future goals has proven to be beneficial for adolescents. It brings focus to their world, and it aids in creating resilience in students (Shatkin, et al., 2016). According to research, the development of adaptive or approach coping skills directly correlates to the development of resilience as adolescents mature into adulthood (Shatkin et al., 2016). This resilience allows students to better handle the stress in their lives.

Another positive factor is those students who seek support and work through their stressors with others, especially friends or trusted adults because they exhibit fewer maladaptive behaviors (Gagne & Melancon, 2013; Coban, 2013). In Coban's study (2013), adolescents used strategies such as problem-solving and social support more than avoidance strategies, which included self-blame or venting of emotions. Research has revealed that the most effective coping skills adolescents use differs between boys and

girls (Coban, 2013; Gagne & Melancon, 2013). Gagne and Melancon (2013) stated that boys are more likely to react to stress by acting out or engaging in avoidance while girls are drawn to seeking social support. Overall, both boys and girls who practice approach coping skills and used problem-solving more often than avoidance strategies are more effective with handling life stressors (Coban, 2013; Gagne & Melancon, 2013).

Adolescents who use withdrawal and avoidance techniques demonstrate ineffectiveness in dealing with stressors (Murray-Harvey et al., 2012). Avoidance coping applied to stressful situations has been shown to lead to harmful behaviors in adolescents (Caples & Barrera, 2006; Clarke, 2005; Coyle & Vera, 2013). These harmful behaviors included actions such as conflict with parents, disruptive behaviors at school, and self-harm (Caples & Barrera, 2006; Coyle & Vera, 2013; Murray-Harvey et al., 2012). Research shows that avoidance coping skills are not sufficient in helping adolescents effectively work through stressful situations (Caples & Barrera, 2006; Clarke, 2005; Coyle & Vera, 2013; Murray-Harvey et al., 2012). Students who focus on healthy coping skills are more effective at controlling their behavior choices.

The Usefulness of Approach Coping Skills

Early use of approach coping skills by adolescents shows an awareness of a healthy means in dealing with stressors and results in healthy behavior choices (Seiffge-Krenke et al, 2009; Sun & Zhang, 2014; Swanson et al., 2011). Approach coping skills include the ability to regulate one's own emotions and discover problem-solving solutions (Clarke, 2006; Seiffge-Krenke et al, 2009; Swanson et al., 2011). For example, when adolescents reach out to others such as friends or a trusted adult, they are looking for a solution, which is a form of active coping and is a way of seeking social support

(Seiffge-Krenke et al, 2009; Swanson et al., 2011). This type of coping results in a decreased level of stress for adolescents (Seiffge-Krenke et al, 2009). Another helpful coping strategy is social support, which provides people with a way of sharing the struggles of life with others who understand or can show empathy (Gagne & Melancon, 2013). An example of using social support for a coping mechanism is illustrated through support groups, talking out the problem with a trusted listener, or through social circles. With this type of coping skills, it allows for problem-focused coping, which is “where the focus is on the reason for the problem” (Sakk, 2013, p.86) and the emotion attached to that problem. Approach coping skills allow adolescents to self-regulate their own behaviors by placing the attention on what is causing the issue and regulating the emotions attached to that issue.

Research has also shown that approach coping skills can be a moderator between life stressors and suicide in adolescents (Chagnon, 2007; Gagne & Melancon, 2013; Sun & Zhang, 2014). Although some research showed the use of avoidance coping skills as a temporary reduction of suicide ideation (Sun & Zhang, 2014), they are not effective with the long-term effects of stressors (Chagnon, 2007; Gagne & Melancon, 2013). When dealing with suicide ideation, coping skills can be a useful tool. Avoidance coping has proven to be a short-term solution while active coping has a lasting effect in helping adolescents regulate stressors before they feel helpless (Chagnon, 2007; Gagne & Melancon, 2013; Sun & Zhang, 2014).

Of the previously mentioned coping skills, one of the most effective for adolescents is when they seek social support and learn to actively problem solve (Coban, 2013). These skills are effective in handling the stressors associated with becoming

young adults (Coban, 2013; Shatkin et al., 2016). A major catalyst of developing effective coping skills can be discovered with the importance of building quality peer relationships, which could create a support system for all adolescents (Gagne & Melancon, 2013; Mota & Matos, 2013). With a firm support base such as friends, parents, or teachers, adolescents can focus their attention on their future goals. By using active coping skills and creating this support base, adolescents have the resilience to smoothly transition into adulthood with fewer feelings of hopelessness and stress (Gagne & Melancon, 2013; Shatkin et al., 2016).

Improved Student Behaviors. Students who do not exhibit coping skills in moments of stress may become caught in a negative cycle of self-generated stress and unhealthy academic and social/emotional practices, which many times include acting out in class, skipping class, refusing to cooperate, and failing academically (Coyle & Vera, 2013; Gagne & Melancon, 2013, Tran, 2016). This can lead to classroom management issues, which has become one of the main stressors for teachers (Clunies-Ross, Little, & Kienchuis, 2008). Since a teacher's attitude directly affects the attitudes of the students along with coping skills and academic success (Sakk, 2013), it is increasingly important that teachers understand coping skills and the effective ways of using them in the classroom (Tran, 2016). When students learn resilience, problem-solving, and the importance of social support, they feel safer, and behaviors improve (Chau, Milfont, & Jose, 2015; Lewis, Roache, & Romi, 2011). Acquiring these types of skills allows students to feel as if they can make mistakes and work through solutions without feeling personally attacked (Lewis, Roache, & Romi, 2011).

Coping Skills in Current Research

Current coping skills research focusses on the lack of coping skills of students in urban schools, the effects for coping skills on students' academic growth, and the need for coping skills in college students. All three of these areas present a different challenge for educators in kindergarten through college. Research shows that sometimes these barriers are external and are created by the culture or environment in which the child is raised (Clettenberg et al., 2011; Coyle & Vera, 2013; Sanchez, Lambert & Cooley-Strickland, 2013). Academics are a top priority for all educators regardless of the age of their students, and this forces educators to focus on barriers to students' academic success (Earnest & Dwyer, 2010; Sakk, 2013; Shatkin et al., 2016). Transitional periods in people's lives can also be very stressful, and colleges are seeing the results of a lack of coping in their freshman level students as they transition into a more autonomous phase of life with more responsibilities and decision-making opportunities (Earnest & Dwyer, 2010; Shatkin et al., 2016). Colleges focus on student retention, which concentrates on the first two years along with ways to keep students engaged in completing their degree plans (Earnest & Dwyer, 2010). Although these barriers are present with today's students, there is a gap in research that focuses on the use of coping skills as a classroom management strategy.

Coping Skills in Urban Students

Another area of study on coping skills focuses on those students raised in urban areas. According to the Victims of Crime Organization, crime rates are significantly higher in urban areas, and crime occurs at an earlier age and more often than those children who are raised in rural or suburban areas (Allen et al., 2016; Graves et al., 2017;

Sanchez, Lambert, & Cooley-Strickland, 2013). This exposure to traumatic acts such as poverty, gang activity, separation of parental figures, death in the family, and abuse can cause great psychological stress on children (Allen et al., 2016; Coyle & Vera, 2013; Graves et al., 2017). Life stressors for urban children are exacerbated by poverty, and negatively affects the development of coping skills (DeCarlo & Wadsworth, 2009; Sanchez, Lambert, & Cooley-Strickland, 2013). Poverty-related stressors can include financial strain, increased exposure to violence, family transitions such as eviction or relocations, and various types of discrimination (Allen et al., 2016; DeCarlo & Wadsworth, 2009). With these types of stressors, adolescents learn different coping strategies because they are subjected to different daily stressors than those from the suburbs or rural areas.

Stress of Natural Disasters. All of these stressors have a great effect on the development of healthy coping skills (Coyle & Vera, 2013; DeCarlo & Wadsworth, 2009; Sanchez, Lambert, & Cooley-Strickland, 2013). For example, the children who suffered Hurricane Katrina experienced many of these life-altering stressors in one event while many of these children already suffered from the effects of surviving in poverty. This combination played a major role in their ability to cope with the amount of stress brought on by such a catastrophe (Clettenberg, Gentry, Held, & Mock, 2011). Children from impoverished neighborhoods are more likely to experience violence in the home and on the streets, which has an effect on mental health development such as internalizing disorders (Allen et al., 2016; DeCarlo & Wadsworth, 2009; Gagne & Melancon, 2013; Graves et al., 2017). As these students encounter daily stress of not knowing what type of dangers they will face in their homes and in their neighborhoods,

this molds their ability to deal with constant instability of their world (Allen et al., 2016; Graves et al., 2017).

Stress from Urban Settings. Research shows the effects of uncontrollable stress such as poverty, mobility, and high crime rates have an impact on the development of children's coping skills and the barrier it places on the lives of these children (Clettenberg, et al., 2011; Coyle & Vera, 2013; Sanchez, Lambert, & Cooley-Strickland, 2013). These types of events play a role in the development of children and how they learn to cope, which transitions into the classroom. Research also discovered that children from socioeconomically disadvantaged areas are more likely to react to uncontrollable stressors through emotion-focused responses, which negatively affects their ability to master academically-challenging tasks (Chesmore, Winston, & Brady, 2017; Sanchez, Lambert & Cooley-Strickland, 2013). This type of coping can lead to feelings of helplessness and anger, which can cause academic disengagement and maladaptive classroom behaviors (Chesmore, Winston, & Brady, 2017).

According to research, the introduction of coping skills programs in urban schools can provide students with the ability to positively deal with life stressors (Graves et al., 2017). Teaching coping skills to children from urban settings looks very different than the teaching of coping skills to children in suburban or rural areas because the environments have completely different characteristics (Sanchez, Lambert, & Cooley-Strickland, 2013). Therefore, coping skills curriculum must be introduced in different ways for them to be effective.

Coping Skills and Academic Success

Two major components involved with classroom management are learning and creating a civil atmosphere (O'Neill & Stephenson, 2011). Much of the current research literature focusses on how classroom management practices affect student academic success (Carson & Matthews, 2013; Clunies-Ross, Little, & Kienhuis, 2008; Cooper, et al., 2018; Seiz, Voss, & Kunter, 2015). When the climate of the classroom creates a negative environment and discourages social interaction between students, it greatly affects student engagement and academic achievement (Carson & Matthews, 2014; Clunies-Ross, Little, & Kienhuis, 2008; Seiz, Voss, & Kunter, 2015). According to a study conducted by Bjorklund and Rehling (2010), students desire a positive classroom with civility and an optimistic atmosphere because it increases their desire to learn. In another study conducted by Carson and Matthews (2014), results showed that ineffective classroom management led to poor social interaction, poor student participation, and poor academic achievement. When teachers use a more positive or proactive approach to classroom management rather than an accusatory or reactive approach, students were more apt to exhibit more on-task behaviors, which increased student learning (Clunies-Ross, Little, & Kienhuis, 2008). Since one of the main purposes of effective classroom management is student achievement, it is imperative that a supportive classroom environment is established and consistently maintained throughout the school year.

In the history of education in the United States, student growth has always been a major focus; however, the stakes were dramatically raised by No Child Left Behind. More focus began to hone in on student growth from year to year. Teachers were now held accountable for this growth, and naturally, this caused greater concern for each

individual child and their academic success (Sakk, 2013). Recently, a greater focus has now been placed on the well-being of the student, which includes students' ability to cope with life situations and how that affects their academics (Chesmore, Winston, & Brady, 2016; Clunies-Ross, Little, & Kienhuis, 2008). Recent studies have shown that students who lack coping skills also suffer academically in school (Clunies-Ross, Little, & Kienhuis, 2008; Cooper et al., 2017; Seiz, Voss, & Kunter, 2015; Tsouloupas, Carson, & Matthews, 2014). According to Tsouloupas, Carson, and Matthews (2014), when students have poor coping skills, they tend to become more disengaged and participate less in the classroom, which results in poor academic success. These disengaged students many times distract other students and negatively affect their learning as well (Bjorklund & Rehling, 2010). Students' coping skills are connected to students' academic success for themselves and their classmates.

Coping Skills in College Students

Transitions from one stage of life to the next can cause great stress in a person's life, and the transition to college is no different. During this period of their lives, young adults become more autonomous in making their own decisions but still have not taken full responsibility for their own lives. With the transition to adulthood, many young people assume more financial responsibilities along with personal responsibilities as they realize there is no one there to make sure all the daily duties of life are taken care of automatically. College students are transitioning from a comfortable, well-known environment and entering a world of uncertainty of adult responsibilities and unknown social interactions. When all of these factors are added together along with lack of sleep,

social changes, and a change in eating habits, stress levels increase and many time academic success decreases (Shatkin, et al., 2016).

Financial Stress. Financial stress has become a reality for today's college students as the cost of tuition continues to rise annually. According to Britt et al. (2016), the cost of college tuition has increased "three times the rate of inflation" (p. 172). For many students, this continued increase forces them to work more hours or take out more student loans in order to pay for the cost of attending college. CNBC (2018) reports that the average student debt is \$37,172 in student loans, which continues to increase every year. This large amount of debt causes great stress on students while in college as well as after graduation (Britt, et al., 2016). As students are driven to work more hours, researchers feel it has a negative effect on the focus of academics and social involvement on college campuses (Britt et al., 2016; Welle & Graf, 2010). Research also shows that financial struggles in college contribute to lower college retention rates (Britt et al., 2016; Mofidi, El-Alayli & Brown, 2014). Financial stress is a common problem for many college students whether it be how to pay for the next semester or the next meal.

Environment Stress. Many other causes of stress are evident in the lives of college students including moving to a new location, diminishing contact with family, trying to make new friends, and joining new social circles (Bettis, et al., 2017; Shatkin et al., 2016; Welle & Graf, 2010). Many college students move away from home for the first time to a new location away from the familiar environment of their high schools where they are living with people they just met in a new town with unfamiliar surroundings (Bettis, et al., 2017; Shatkin et al., 2016; Welle & Graf, 2010). The transition can prove to be very difficult for young adults who are many times, for the first

time, an unfamiliar face to his or her classmates. According to Bettis, et al. (2017), “80% of college students frequently or sometimes experience ‘daily stress’ and a quarter of students report that stress has hurt their academic performance, including lower grades or dropped courses” (p. 313). This stress can be a result of many previously discussed environmental elements, but it can also be a result of a more difficult academic workload and faster pace than students are used to (Welle & Graf, 2010). All of these environmental stressors can have a great effect on a young adult who is just entering the college world as well as seniors in college.

Coping in College. College and universities have begun to see an increase in student-related stress and have added mental health professionals to their campuses; however, many times these services are underutilized by the students (Shatkin, et al., 2016; Welle & Graf, 2010). Colleges have begun to incorporate coping skills into the freshmen year for students through the use of specialized studies such as a Risk and Resilience Course (Shatkin et al., 2016). According to research, when young adults develop and incorporate coping skills into their daily lives, stress levels reportedly decline and success increases (Earnest & Dwyer, 2010; Shatkin et al., 2016; Sun & Zhang, 2014; Welle & Graf, 2010). The objective is to discover a way to help students acquire the skills to help themselves when life does become more stressful. Studies show that active coping skills such as seeking support and problem-solving are a mediator to these stressors (Earnest & Dwyer, 2010; Shatkin et al., 2016; Sun & Zhang, 2014).

Coping Skills in the Classroom

There is a lack of literature discussing teacher perception of the use of coping skills to change classroom management, but there is an extensive amount of research on

effective classroom management. Classroom management encompasses the skills a teacher uses to institute and cultivate an organized yet effective learning environment for students (Ayebo & Assauh, 2017; O'Neill & Stephenson, 2011). Some of the activities involved in classroom management include organizing activities, maintaining civility, and creating an instructional environment for all students. As an operational definition, classroom management is “specific directed activities by teachers that include maximizing time allocated for instruction, arranging instructional activities to maximize student engagement and academic achievement, and implementing proactive behavior management practices” (Cooper et al., 2018, p. 13). Although classroom management struggles are one of the top reasons teachers leave the field, there is very little training for classroom management in the teacher preparation college programs (Seiz, Voss, & Kunter, 2015).

Unfortunately, classroom management is a difficult element to incorporate into a teacher preparation program without using actual age-appropriate students during the college course work. Therefore, most college students who are training to be teachers receive little to no hands-on training in classroom management practice or how to “meet the needs of students who present daily challenges in the classroom” (Mitchell, Hirn, & Lewis, 2017, p. 140). One of the difficulties in teaching classroom management is the multidimensionality of a modern-day classroom when dealing with unexpected disruptions from students, school activities, and other teachers. This constant changing environment applies pressure to the teachers and the students within the classroom (Seiz, Voss, & Kunter, 2015). Additionally, with the ever-changing emotional needs of students, teachers are faced with more daily classroom management challenges, which

causes stress on the teachers and the students (Clunies-Ross, Little, & Kienhuis, 2008; Coyle & Vera, 2013). Lazarus (1993) defines stress as a level of anxiety that results when expectations or responsibilities surpass the level of coping skills. Teachers have the ability to change the environment of the classroom with the use of some helpful proactive approaches that help build coping skills such as praise and a positive attitude towards students and their expected behaviors (Clunies-Ross, Little, & Kienhuis, 2008). Classroom management is essential for teachers' and students' growth in relationship building.

Effective Classroom Management Practices

In order to create a positive classroom management plan, creating a positive learning environment with proper classroom instruction is a fundamental goal for teachers. A teacher's ability to create an effective classroom management plan with appropriate disciplinary procedures while maintaining a compelling learning environment is essential to a teacher's self-efficacy (Lewis, Roache, & Romi, 2011; Seiz, Voss, & Kunter, 2015). In an effort to regulate student behavior, it is imperative to establish procedures and rules that align with the school's policies (Seiz, Voss, & Kunter, 2015) while also creating an environment where students feel safe to express their opinions appropriately (Tran, 2016; Tsouloupas, Carson, & Matthews, 2014). Sieberer-Nager (2016) stated, "An optimal classroom climate for learning is one that generates a climate in which it is understood that it is okay to make mistakes because mistakes are the essence of learning" (p. 166). This is all part of relationship building, which is a needed element in effective classroom management practices (Beaty-O'Ferrall, Green & Hanna,

2018; Bjorklund & Rehling, 2010). When students feel physically and emotionally safe, learning can begin.

Effects of Classroom Management. Research shows that effective classroom management can have a lasting impact on both teachers and students (Cooper et al., 2018; Seiz, Voss, & Kunter, 2015; Tran, 2015). According to Tran (2015), the purpose of classroom management is to create an orderly environment that allows teachers the freedom to instruct students in a formal setting along with the purpose of teaching students to value the rights of others in the class. This is a daunting task as this environment is ever-changing within a class period and within transitions between classes. The students in the class create the culture of that classroom, and teachers try to maintain a basis of classroom rules and procedures in an effort to prepare students for the best environment for learning to take place (O'Neill & Stephenson, 2011; Seiz, Voss, & Kunter, 2015). However, the atmosphere of each class can be different with one little change of an unexpected disruption. When the two types of classroom management (coercion and relationship-based) are compared, research showed that teachers who use relationship-based techniques discovered that classroom management was a path of least resistance (O'Neill & Stephenson, 2011; Seiz, Voss, & Kunter, 2015; Tran, 2015). With proper classroom management techniques, students will be more engaged, exhibit responsible behaviors, and experience greater classroom success (Cooper et al., 2018).

Student Behavior Management and Coping Skills

A teacher's understanding and use of coping skills is relational to classroom management. Teachers work to create classroom environments that allow students to experience positive behavior choices alongside academic success (Öquist &

Malmoström, 2018). Research shows that students develop a strong self-efficacy and self-regulation of behaviors when they have teachers with strong self-efficacy as models in the classroom (Küçüktepe Akbağ, & Özmercan, 2017; Won, Lee, & Bong, 2017). Teachers who understand the importance of self-regulation and the use of approach coping skills such as problem-solving are more effective at understanding the need of coping skills in students while helping them work through stressors (Dicke, Parker, Marsh, & Kunter, 2014; Won, Lee, & Bong, 2017). According to Dicke, Parker, Marsh, and Kunter (2014), low self-efficacy in students “may lead to a higher vulnerability (and poorer quality of coping) to the negative effects of classroom disturbances” (p. 578), which can actually synthesize the negative reactions to classroom disruptions (Dicke, Parker, Marsh, & Kunter, 2014; Tran, 2016). As a result, teachers with a low self-efficacy in classroom management suffer more classroom disruptions during their activities as a result of inadequate classroom management skills to proactively create a better educational setting (Bandura, 1997; Dicke, Parker, Marsh, & Kunter, 2014; Zee, Jong, & Koomen, 2016). Teacher understanding of coping skills helps to create a positive learning environment for all students.

Effects on Students

From the student perspective, classroom management is a means of establishing a classroom in which learning can take place in a safe, orderly, and positive environment (Lewis, Roache, & Romi, 2011; Sieberer-Nagler, 2016). In some instances, students have indicated that misbehaving classmates take away from their education, and they long for classrooms with better behavior management (Bjorklund & Rehling, 2010; Tran, 2015). When teachers are forced to spend instructional time explaining proper behavior

expectations to those who misbehave, it takes time away from the educational process (Tran, 2016).

One method of molding student misbehaviors into proper actions is through teaching coping skills to students, which helps to connect a student to the school and feel more involved in their school life (Coyle & Vera, 2013; Sakk, 2013). Students who engage in chronic maladaptive behaviors are more inclined to continual and long-term disciplinary action, which greatly interrupts their own academic and social growth (Mitchell, Hirn, & Lewis, 2017). Per Sieberer-Nagler (2016), “deep learning takes place when students can make use of knowledge and skills as they negotiate life’s challenges” (p. 170). Therefore, when students learn approach coping skills, they tend to connect better to their educational setting and perform better academically and socially (Sieberer-Nagler, 2016 Swanson, Valiente, Lemery-Chalfant, & O’Brien, 2011).

Coping Skills and Classroom Management

Effective classroom management is one of the most important aspects of the learning process for students and the self-efficacy of teachers, as it mandates a high level of pedagogical expertise, the ability to react in critical moments, and maintains a high level of social and emotional proficiency (Seiz, Voss, & Kunter, 2015). Research has shown that coping skills assist students and teachers when stressful situations arise (Shatkin et al., 2016; Tran, 2016). Therefore, teachers who recognize approach coping skills in their students may exercise more effective classroom management (Ayebo & Assuah, 2017; Sieberer-Nagler, 2016). When students practice avoidant coping skills, the classroom environment becomes a negative classroom setting, which leads to emotional exhaustion, a cynical attitude, and chronic stress (Clunies-Ross, Little, & Kienchuis,

2008; Lewis, Roache, & Romi, 2011). When approach coping skills are in practice, students become engaged and much more interactive, which leads to a better learning environment for students (Ayebo & Assuah, 2017; Tran, 2016).

Theoretical Framework

Albert Bandura (1997) created the Self-Efficacy Theory and defined self-efficacy as a person's beliefs in their own ability to successfully perform a given task regardless of past experiences. A person's level of self-efficacy is molded by past success and failures as well as knowledge and skills (Bandura, 1997; Dicke et al., 2014). According to O'Neill & Stephenson (2015), self-efficacy is based on personal beliefs of abilities rather than competency level. O'Neill's and Stephenson's (2015) research reflects the earlier works of Bandura (1986) in which he stated, "people who cope poorly with stress expect that marred performances in intimidating situations will be determined by their self-debilitating thought patterns rather than how much effort they mount" (p. 371). In other words, a person's self-efficacy is directly linked to the individual's self-perceived notions of how successfully one can carry out a specific task (Hagenauer, Hascher, & Volet, 2015). As stated by O'Neill and Stephenson (2011), Bandura's Self-Efficacy Theory posits that "self-doubt can overrule knowledge and skills" (p. 262).

Therefore, teachers must believe they have the ability to maintain positive classroom control, or they will create a negative classroom setting. Bandura (1997) explains

In this mode of affective control, efficacy beliefs regulate stress and anxiety through their impact on coping behaviors. The stronger the sense of efficacy, the bolder people are in taking on the

problematic situations that breed stress and the greater success in shaping them more to their liking (p. 141).

This concept may help teachers feel more efficacious when it comes to teaching students the concept of using coping skills within the classroom. As students become more comfortable with the use of coping skills, according to Bandura (1997), they will experience less anxiety and better self-regulation. This will in turn lead to higher teacher self-efficacy in the use of these coping skills by the students.

This concept can be directly linked to the teaching practices that control student behavior and maintain classroom management (Dicke et al., 2014). According to Hagenauer, Hascher, and Volet (2015), “teaching is an emotional endeavor and that teachers’ emotions correlate with their well-being and the quality of their teaching” (p. 386). When teachers have an opportunity to teach in a classroom that is well-behaved and has a positive atmosphere, self-efficacy rises. A major contributor to poor teacher self-efficacy and increased teacher burnout is poor classroom management practices, which lead to maladaptive student behaviors (Hagenauer, Hascher, & Volet, 2015; Tsouloupas, Carson, & Matthews, 2013).

Framework of Self-Efficacy

Chapter one introduced the concept of self-efficacy, which involves the following components: past experiences, modeling by others, social persuasions, and emotional state (Bandura, 1997). All of these concepts mold a person’s self-efficacy, which drives the reaction a person has to a task or assignment. All four components play an equal role in the development of a person’s self-efficacy, and this process is continuous (Bandura,

1997). In order to effectively teach coping skills in the classroom, teachers will need to evaluate their own efficacy of teaching students how to self-regulate by using these skills. In other words, teachers will look at their past experiences of teaching something new, reflect on how the teaching of these skills has been modeled to them, the social persuasions of teaching these skills to students, and the emotional state once the teaching begins. All four of these components, shown in Figure 1 lead to the teacher's comfortability to teach these skills to their students. Figure 1 provides a visual representation of the formation of a person's self-efficacy.

Figure 1: Self-Efficacy Theory

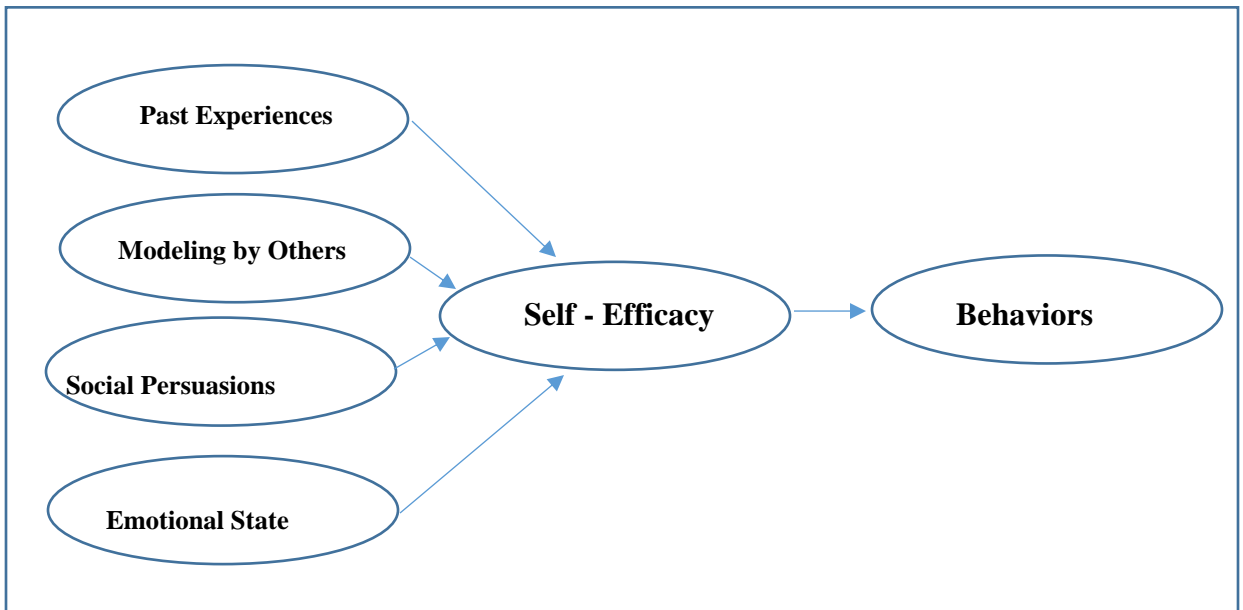


Figure 1. Adapted from Bandura, (1997) *Self-Efficacy: The Exercise of Control*

This model illustrates how each element plays an impactful role in the development of a person's self-efficacy, which in turn directly affects a person's behaviors. Past experiences, modeling by others, social persuasions, and emotional states are all equal partners in developing one's self-efficacy, and this leads to whether they believe they can complete a task or not (Bandura, 1997). Past experiences play a large

role in developing a person's belief system because people learn by doing. From the beginning of a person's life, one will learn from others modeling behaviors such as talking and walking. In an equal state, social persuasions are a means of learning what one can and cannot accomplish. Lastly, a person's emotional state plays an equal role in determining a person's self-efficacy because people can accomplish what they set their minds to accomplish (Bandura, 1997). All of these characteristics work together equally to develop self-efficacy about each skill as the individual works through past experiences, modeling by others, social persuasions, and emotional states. In turn, self-efficacy helps to determine a person's behaviors, as it allows a person to believe he/she can accomplish each task he/she attempts (Bandura, 1997).

Chapter Two Summary

Chapter Two constructed a detailed review of the literature to establish the need for the present study. First, the literature review discussed the formation or lack thereof of different coping mechanisms. These coping skills play a large role in the way students react to stressors in life. The literature defined two categories of coping skills: approach and avoidant and explained how these coping skills can help or hinder a person's ability to react in a positive, healthy way or a negative, unhealthy manner. Then, the research revealed the use of classroom management strategies and their connection to coping skills. Classroom management and teacher self-efficacy are strongly connected and have an impact on the behaviors of students. There is a lack of literature on teachers' perception of the use of coping skills in the classroom to modify classroom management practices. Bandura's Self-Efficacy Theory defined the need for self-efficacy as a way to understand a person's perceived confidence in completing a certain task, which can be

directly applied to a teacher's perception of classroom management with the use of approach coping skills.

CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

Conducting research is a means to uncover new information about a specific topic. Neil Armstrong (2005) said it best when he stated, “Research is creating new knowledge.” Studying teacher perceptions of teaching coping skills is not something that has been studied closely in literature. With this study, I focused on the teacher’s perceptions of teaching and using coping skills in the classroom

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this qualitative study was to explore select seventh and eighth grade teachers’ perceptions of teaching coping skills in the classroom.

Research Question

1. How do select seventh and eighth grade teachers teach and encourage students to utilize coping skills in the classroom?
2. How do select seventh and eighth grade teachers describe their role in teaching coping skills?

3. How prepared do select seventh and eighth grade teachers feel in teaching coping skills to students?
 - a. What types of preparation did these seventh and eighth grade teachers receive to teach coping skills?
 - b. What preparation do teachers feel is most helpful?
4. What role do past experiences, modeling by others, social persuasion, and emotional state, key tenets of Bandura's (1997) Self-Efficacy Theory, have in teacher self-efficacy to teach coping skills?

Research Design

This qualitative study followed a case study design. According to Merriam (2001), a case study is defined as a “single entity, a unit around which there are boundaries” (p. 27). This concept allowed the researcher to focus on one particular person, school, program, etc. Case study design is appropriate for this study as it focused on the desire to gain understanding of one school's use of coping skills as a classroom management strategy. Merriam (2001) also states that a case study may be used “for what it can reveal about a phenomenon, knowledge we would not otherwise have access to” (p. 33). Observing adolescent behaviors in their natural setting and interviewing teachers provided appropriate and relevant data about the use of coping skills in the classroom. Currently, there is little research in this area, and with the use of a case study, pertinent data will be provided to the “database for further comparison and theory building” (Merriam, 2001, p.38). This study took place in a junior high with real subjects, so no variables were manipulated.

The epistemological perspective for this study was constructivism. According to Crotty (1998), the constructivist perspective is one that searches for individual realities, not a cultural one. Patton (2015) provides the following central questions for social constructivism:

1. How have the people in the setting constructed their reality?
2. What is perceived as real?
3. What are the consequences of what is perceived as real? (p. 98)

Methodological Procedures

Several qualitative data collection methods were incorporated to collect data. I used purposeful sampling to determine which teachers fit the predetermined criteria for the study. This criterion was defined as teachers who have been teaching for a minimum of seven years with the last five of those years at the selected junior high school. I chose five years at the chosen school as a parameter to ensure all participants would have a firm understanding of the culture of the community as well as the school, and I wanted to ensure that all participants taught before and after the tornado tore through the community. This time frame would provide data from teachers who taught the students who had experienced the tornado and the district chosen program, Pathways to Peace. I also conducted classroom observations to gain a better understanding of how these teachers incorporated coping skills into classroom instruction.

I obtained permission from the district superintendent to conduct interviews and observations at the school. In addition, I gained approval from my committee and the Oklahoma State University Institutional Review Board (IRB).

I also used the practice of member checking to allow each participant to review his or her answers for accuracy. Each participant had the ability to withdraw from the study at any time without consequence.

Context of the Study

The school district chosen for this study was a large, suburban district in the midwestern portion of the United States. It was not an industrial area; instead, it is a “bed and breakfast” style district. In other words, the community is made up of homes and retail businesses such as restaurants and shopping facilities. The school district has high mobility due to a military presence, average poverty rates, and several natural disasters that had occurred over the past few years. The student population is diverse, and more than thirty languages are spoken in the school district. Several schools in the district began the Pathways to Peace curriculum in 2014 while the school in this study began the program in 2015.

Pathways to Peace was created by Save the Children, an organization that focuses on helping children in times of crisis (Save the Children, 2018). In most cases, Save the Children personnel are the first to arrive on the scene of a natural disaster, and they focus first on the children to help transform their lives (Save the Children, 2018). The Pathways to Peace program is a curriculum designed in 2009 for children who have suffered a crisis. The program helps to create coping skills and resiliency in children as they learn to work through traumatic experiences (Blanchet-Cohen & Nelems, 2009). Since these experiences shape people, the Pathways to Peace program is designed as an intervention to provide children the avenue to overcome such trauma (Blanchet-Cohen & Nelems, 2009).

Pathways to Peace had been used in this district on a voluntary basis since 2014, and the district is now ready to create a district-wide plan to help all staff and students understand the importance of coping skills and self-regulation. With this new plan, the district will be incorporating Positive Based Instructional Strategies, Trust Based Relational Intervention, and Trauma Informed Interventions as multi-layered support services. Not only will these new programs assist teachers with teaching coping skills, but the new programs will also give teachers the tools to work with students who are struggling with maladaptive behaviors in an effort to design a more positive classroom management style. Pathways to Peace had been used in the past four years to establish the base for all of these other strategies to build upon.

Participants

Choosing participants for this qualitative study is a means of investigating the how's and why's of what occurs in the study along with the possible relationships of occurrences (Merriam, 2001). Merriam (2001) also states, "Purposeful sampling is based on the assumption that the investigator wants to discover, understand, and gain insight and, therefore, must select a sample from which the most can be learned" (p. 61). For this study, I chose nine teachers to participate in the study. Because the participants had taught in the school for a minimum of five years, the chosen sample will have knowledge of the culture of the school and the use of Pathways to Peace to incorporate student use of coping skills in the classroom. However, none of the participants received any training on how to teach or incorporate coping skills. Pathways to Peace was only offered to the students.

Participant selection. As previously mentioned, I used purposeful sampling for this study. This type of sampling provided pertinent information about the use of coping skills inside the classroom. The teacher sample was made up of teachers who have taught for a minimum of seven years with the last five years at the chosen school. This amount of time in the teaching profession allowed me to interview teachers who have a true understanding of the students' behavior patterns and classroom management strategies. I focused on teachers of various levels of overall experience within the teaching field. Each participant was provided a district-created brochure of the benefit of student use of coping skills in the classroom. The brochure was designed with the assistance of Save the Children Organization to describe coping skills and resiliency. The brochure was used as a reference tool to not only define types of coping skills but also as a guide that provided teachers with tips on how to work with students who are struggling to cope in various situations. The use of coping skills by students did not necessarily have to be those taught through Pathways of Peace. Instead, teachers may have had previous experience that made them aware of the importance of student coping skills, and they may have learned how to teach students to use them through their own classroom practices.

Data Collection

Interviews. Each interview was a one-on-one interview. I retained the ability to conduct follow-up interviews if needed. Each interview lasted approximately one hour and was digitally recorded and transcribed word for word. After the transcriptions were complete, I asked each participant to check the transcription for accuracy.

During the interviews, I asked open-ended questions to the participants, following a semi-structured interview protocol. This direct contact with the participants

allowed for deeper interviews by permitting follow up questions and understanding the reality of each participant.

All interviews took place in the teacher's classroom at the school. On several occasions, I interviewed the teacher directly after the classroom observation, which allowed me to learn more about specific situations that arose during the class. I digitally recorded each interview and transcribed them word for word. Each participant had the opportunity to member check their interview for accuracy.

Observations. Classroom observations played an important role in this study. During the observations, I recorded field notes, which were later coded. During the observations, I focused my attention on the organization of the classroom to help me understand the climate of each classroom. This element was important to the study to show how inviting each teacher's classroom was to the students. I also focused my attention on the interaction of teachers and students during times of student distress. The details of the room arrangement, the wall décor, and student to teacher interaction provided data that set the tone of the classroom environment. Immediately after each observation, I used the notes to guide a descriptive narrative of the events inside that classroom as well as a detailed description of the classroom. These notes were used to determine patterns of the teacher's knowledge of the utility of coping skills as a classroom management practice.

Documents. Artifacts provided needed documentation that was relevant for this case study (Merriam, 2001). The artifact I used was a training brochure provided by Jackson Public Schools and Save the Children. This brochure was designed to explain and provide information regarding student use of coping skills in the classroom. With the

use of this training information, teachers were expected to be better able to understand practical ways to incorporate coping skills into the classroom. This information provided them with some guidance to effectively teach these skills to their students; however, there was no training on how to use the document. Therefore, most teachers reported that they had filed it away and never used it.

Data Analysis

One analytic strategy Merriam (2001) suggests using is to rely on theoretical propositions to lead the case study. This strategy is the most preferred, as it sets the stage for the data collection from the onset. By analyzing data through the lens of Bandura's (1997) Self-Efficacy Theory, it allowed me to form themes based on the four tenets of the theory. For example, data was coded and analyzed to discover themes based on personal experience, modeling by others, social persuasion, and emotional state. As I coded the interviews, observations, and the informational brochure, I was able to identify patterns of teachers' ability and comfort in teaching the coping skills in the classroom.

Organize data. All data from interviews and observations, was securely stored in a locked filing cabinet in my home as well as saved on my computer, which is password protected.

Code Data. According to Saldaña (2016), process coding is driven by the behaviors of the people being studied. I used process coding to identify particular student and teacher behaviors representing this use of or facilitation of coping skills throughout all interview data. This process allowed me to focus specifically on each situation to identify the interaction of both student and teacher when a student began to show evidence of struggling. I also used the practice of Merriam (2001) to continually code and

analyze data throughout the entire process, not just at the very end, following a constant comparative method of analysis. After each interview and/or observation, I immediately transcribed and coded the data. This allowed me to begin to see themes and patterns throughout the analysis process. The observation data was analyzed to locate patterns of observed behaviors from students and teachers and how they interacted as well as the environment of the classroom. By applying Bandura's (1997) Self-Efficacy Theory, I searched for emerging patterns regarding teacher efficacy of teaching students how to use coping skills in the classroom.

Generate Themes. Once the coding was complete, I used the data to locate patterns that create themes. These patterns found in the interview transcripts were analyzed along with the data from the classroom observations and the informational brochure to search for similarities in experiences in human interaction between the teachers and students. I analyzed the patterns to form themes in the data as the study progressed. At the completion of data collection, I classified and charted data by emerging themes. This practice provided clarity with each theme.

Use of Theory. Merriam (2001) suggested that the use of theory in a qualitative case study is essential, as theory is the “structure, the scaffolding, the frame of your study” (p.45). For this study, theory inspired the proposition statements, the research questions, and overall guidance of the study. Bandura's Self Efficacy Theory (1997) prompted the data design, data collection, and analysis for this study, as I searched for codes, patterns, and themes in the data. By applying the theory to the analyzed data, I began to discover the level of teacher self-efficacy in teaching coping skills to their students with the classroom.

Researcher Role

Researcher Bias

I have worked as a teacher and school counselor in the district that houses the junior high school in my study; however, I have never worked at this particular location or with any of the staff members. As a teacher and counselor, I was able to successfully work with students who exhibited maladaptive behaviors in the classroom. During my time as a district level administrator, I worked with school counselors for all grades, and in this role, I provide resources to assist teachers and counselors to help students learn coping skills they can use in the classroom. I believe coping skills are an essential tool for people of all ages to navigate through the struggles of daily life; however, I have no preconceived ideas of how teachers teacher students to use coping skills or if they do teach them at all. This study will allow me to gain insight from a teacher's perspective to help determine how they used coping skills as a self-regulation tool.

Ethical Considerations

In an effort to ensure professional and ethical considerations delineated by the Oklahoma State University IRB Board, all participants and collected data were treated with confidentiality and respect during the data collection, analysis, and interpretation process.

Data collection ethics. Prior to and during the data collection process, all ethical considerations were taken into account for this study. In accordance with Patton (2015) and Creswell (2011), I ensured that the anonymity of all participants was fully protected along with all of the data from the interviews, observations, and collected artifacts. I was cognizant throughout the data collection phase to protect influences by my own biases.

Data Analysis and Interpretation Ethics. I protected the identities of the district, school, and all participants by using pseudonyms according to ethical practices described in Creswell (2011). I collected agreements with all participants that the stories belonged to the researcher and not the participants as suggested by Patton (2015). All data were locked and stored in a filing cabinet in my home as well as on my computer that is password protected. This data will be protected for five years and then destroyed. During the analysis process, I conducted member's checks also to ensure the participant's data were portrayed correctly.

Trustworthiness of Findings

Triangulation of Data

To ensure the validity of the data I used triangulation, which is described by Creswell (2011) as “the process of corroborating evidence from different individuals (e.g., a principal and a student), types of data (e.g., observational field notes and interviews), or methods of data collection (e.g., documents and interviews) in descriptions and themes in qualitative research” (p. 259). Throughout the process of data collection, I interviewed several teachers, conducted field observations on several occasions, and collected artifacts related to this study in an effort to gain understanding from varying points of view.

Credibility was explained by Lincoln and Guba (1985) as “crucial and that cannot be well established without recourse to the data sources themselves” (p. 213). To ensure credibility in this study, I participated in the following activities: purposeful sampling, prolonged engagement, persistent observations, triangulation, and peer debriefing. The teachers interviewed were those who fit the predetermined criteria. Each data collection

activity (prolonged engagement and persistent observations) added to the development of trust between the participants and myself while debriefing and triangulation provided added strength to the credibility of the study.

Transferability

Transferability was possible through the use of a thick, rich description throughout the study including the setting, historical data when applicable, and the data collected. This will assist those who want to expand my research or try and repeat it. The description of all details will be found in Chapters IV and V.

Dependability and Confirmability

Dependability and confirmability mean that the data in this study can be examined and reapplied resulting in the same or similar results. All collected data and details of this study will be available for an audit upon request. Any changes in the design of this study that may occur during the study will be fully disclosed.

Table 1

Trustworthiness Table

<u>Credibility</u>		
<i>Technique</i>	<i>Result</i>	<i>Example</i>
Prolonged Engagement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Build trust • Learn the culture • Build relationships • Develop rapport 	In the field May 2019; initial communication emails and appointments; follow up via email in June
Persistent Observations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Obtain in-depth data • Obtain accurate data • Sort relevancies from irrelevancies 	Observations of classes during May 2019; main reason for observation was to view student to teacher relationship and use of coping skills

Triangulation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Verify data 	Multiple data sources: interviews, observations, informational brochure
Peer Debriefing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Add additional perspectives • Discover alternate explanations 	Worked with other doctoral students while writing this dissertation
Purposeful Sampling	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide data through the site selection and observations of the use coping skills in the classroom 	Purposeful in the selection of the site and the teachers to participate in this study
Member Checking	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Check of inaccuracies 	The participants received copies of their interview transcripts and the final paper to verify accuracy by checking conclusions and provide any missing information

Transferability

<i>Technique</i>	<i>Result</i>	<i>Example</i>
Thick Description	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide data for ease of transferability • Provide a vicarious experience for reader 	Supportive measures in place by district to assist teachers to teach coping skills to students

Dependability and Confirmability

<i>Technique</i>	<i>Result</i>	<i>Example</i>
Access to Audit Trail	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Allow auditor to assess trustworthiness of study 	Interview guide, notes, documents, posters, observational notes, and email communication with participants are available for an audit

Limitations of Study

Limitations are defined by Creswell (2011) as “potential weaknesses or problems with the study identified by the researcher” (p. 199). The purpose of this study was to identify a teacher’s perspective of the use of coping skills in classroom management practices. During this study, I did not attempt to solve all classroom management issues, but instead sought insight into teaching the use of coping skills. As with all qualitative research, these findings were largely dependent upon school context and are, therefore, not generalizable. It is possible that contextual conditions in this school that I was not aware of influenced the teaching of coping skills in these classrooms.

Summary

Chapter III provided an outline of the methods, procedures, and research design for this study. Through case study design, I gained an understanding of teachers’ perspectives on the use of coping skills in the use of classroom management practices. Additionally, this chapter provided information about the credibility, trustworthiness, dependability, and confirmability of this study along with my biases as the researcher.

CHAPTER IV

PRESENTATION OF DATA

Chapter Four presents the collection of data throughout this study. The purpose of this qualitative case study was to explore selected seventh and eighth grade teachers' perceptions of their abilities to teach coping skills to students. The pedagogy of teaching coping skills is not typically part of a teacher preparation program, nor is it an emphasis in professional development trainings. However, the state of Oklahoma has begun to explore the connection of Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) and the behaviors of students. Adverse Childhood Experiences are defined as those traumatic experiences children face before turning 18, which adversely affect their physical and mental health (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 2019). According to Killman (2019), Oklahoma children suffer physical and psychological issues which stem from ACEs because Oklahoma ranks in the top ten in several categories of traumatic experiences. At a recent trauma summit hosted by the Oklahoma State Department of Education, Gurwitch (2019) presented her research on ACEs to district and community leaders. According to Gurwitch (2019), data showed that students in Oklahoma face high

incarceration rates of parents and high levels of poverty. American's Health Rankings (2018) ranked Oklahoma number one in terms of people suffering from a high level of ACEs.

Purvis et al. (2006) indicated that when children suffer exposure to trauma throughout their lives, disruptive behavior often emerges. These types of behavior are the most challenging for teachers and caregivers (Purvis et al., 2006). The increase in disruptive behaviors increases the workload of teachers as they strive to ensure that all students meet the required academic standards while continuing classroom management practices to maintain classroom civility. Findings in previous studies have determined that student use of coping skills in the classroom has proven beneficial in improving academics (Perry et al., 2018), transition to college (Earnest & Dwyer, 2010), and in urban settings (Clettenberg et al., 2011). However, very little research focuses on the perceptions of teachers regarding their ability to teach coping skills within the seventh and eighth grade classroom. The research on coping skills concentrates on the perceptions of students instead of the perceptions of teachers. This chapter explains teachers' perceptions of how they teach coping skills in the classroom, how prepared the teachers feel to teach coping skills, and their role in teaching coping skills to students.

Jackson Public Schools

Jackson Profile

Jackson Public Schools (a pseudonym) is a 6A suburban school district in the Midwest that serves just under 25,000 students and employs approximately 2,600 staff members. As one of the largest districts in the state of Oklahoma, Jackson contains 25

elementary schools, six junior high schools, three high schools, and five alternative schools. Over the past several years, this community had shown steady and continuous growth, which is reflected in the increased enrollment of school age children. The diversity of the community is evidenced by the thirty-seven languages spoken by the students who are enrolled in school, with 3.6% of the students labeled as English Language Learners. According to state records, the racial composition of Jackson Public Schools is 46.7% White, 20.1% two or more races, 16.8% Hispanic, 6.7% Black, 5.4% Asian, and 4.3% Native American. Just under 50% of the students are classified as economically disadvantaged, and 17 schools are identified as Title I campuses.

Seventeen and a half percent of the student population is identified as special education with a growing number of students who qualify for Section 504. The Department of Education Section 504 regulation defines an "individual with handicaps" as any person who (i) has a physical or mental impairment which substantially limits one or more major life activities, (ii) has a record of such an impairment, or (iii) is regarded as having such an impairment (U.S. Department of Education, 2018). Students served under a Section 504 are those who suffer from a physical and/or mental medical condition (U.S. Department of Education, 2018). Although Section 504 identification does not qualify the student for special education services, it does provide students the ability to use accommodations in their classrooms and on their assignments. According to the Director of Special Services in Jackson Public Schools, students suffering from anxiety disorders and other emotional and mental distress are resulting in an increase in students who identify as having a

disability under Section 504 (Personal Communication, May 2019).

DeWitt Junior High School

DeWitt Junior High School Profile

DeWitt Junior High School (a pseudonym) has an enrollment of approximately 550 seventh and eighth grade students and a staff of 46 teachers, two principals, two school counselors, 13 para professionals, one Licensed Professional Counselor, and 25 support staff (Smith, , 2019). Of the 550 students, 46.2% are White, 20.3 % are Hispanic, 19.4% are two or more races, 6% are Black, 4.2% are Native American, and 3.8% are Asian. The special education population is 21.4%. DeWitt Junior High School is identified as a Title I school with 64.5% of the students labeled as economically disadvantaged. Four years ago, DeWitt Junior High hired a new team of principals, and the school began to rebrand itself by adopting new school colors and updating its mascot to better align with the high school it feeds. The school creed is “Empowering Students Through Innovative Instruction,” and small posters of this quote are hanging in every classroom.

I chose DeWitt Junior High School for this study because it sits in the middle of a neighborhood that has suffered two tornadoes in the past ten years, and the school is located in a high crime area (Police Department, 2019). These students live in what is known as “chronic trauma” (Martin, 2018) as they deal with poverty, broken homes, high crime rates, and gang activity. The State school report card for 2018 indicated that the school earned a “C” overall (oklaschools.com, 2019). DeWitt Junior High School’s school report card is based on academic achievement, academic growth, and chronic absenteeism. The school scored a C, C, and D, respectively,

which calculated to an overall C (oklaschools.com, 2019). Despite these conditions, staff turnover is low, and many teachers have taught there for seven plus years, which helps to create a stable environment for students.

DeWitt Junior High School participated in Pathways to Peace beginning in 2014. During that time, approximately 15% of their student body completed the program. An outside agency led Pathways to Peace in the schools, and teachers were provided with an informational brochure about the program. However, they did not receive additional, formal training regarding how to teach coping skills to students. Therefore, there was no follow up in the classroom with those students who completed Pathways to Peace and no follow up with teachers about how it impacted their classroom environment.

District Initiatives

Jackson Public Schools became progressive in providing additional services for students who have experienced trauma after a natural disaster adversely affected their community. In 2013, an F-5 strong, violent, and long-track tornado occurred just as school was being dismissed, which resulted in completely destroying two elementary schools and heavily damaging one junior high and two high schools in the district. The two elementary schools were left completely flattened, and in one building, seven students perished. Because the tornado hit the schools while students were still in attendance, strong feelings of emotional stress among students and teachers occurred.

In 2015, another tornado occurred in the evening and damaged several schools in the district, which led to the superintendent and his leadership team recognizing the need for mental health support (Personal Interview, 2019). After these storms, teachers

began to report an uprising in explosive student behaviors (Personal Interview, 2019). Along with these student behaviors, teachers also reported an increase in anxiety in students, which led to the district initiative to supply relief. DeWitt Junior High School did not receive any property damage with either tornado; however, the students who attended both of the destroyed elementary schools went on to attend DeWitt Junior High School.

Educational leaders in Jackson Public Schools recognized the impact of the tornado on students, so they implemented many different methods of support for students and teachers. All of these efforts combined to equip teachers with additional resources and information to provide a better learning environment for students. As a result, the superintendent dedicated resources to provide mental health professionals for each school campus at least one day a week, professional development for staff members, and development of a multi-tier system of support.

Behavioral Specialists and Mental Health Therapists

The superintendent of Jackson Public Schools recognized a need for assistance with mental health for his students. Teachers began to report how student anxiety had changed drastically, and they began to seek assistance for methods to help their students (Personal Interview, 2019). Therefore, Jackson Public Schools hired two behavior specialists to assist teachers who work with children who have violent outbursts at school. The behavior specialists focused on assisting teachers who work with the special education population on all campuses of Jackson Public Schools. These specialists assisted teachers to provide best practices of regulating positive student behavior in the classroom. Many of these students exhibited difficult behaviors, and

these specialists worked with teachers to teach them ways to positively interact with the student to prevent the outburst. Because the specialists cover the entire district, they float from campus to campus and stay with a teacher and/or student as long as needed to reach the behavior goals of the teacher and the student. This individual attention provides the opportunity to create a positive classroom environment, so all students can learn successfully.

In addition, the district hired mental health therapists to work with students who suffered severe anxiety, trauma-related disorders, and suicide ideation. The superintendent made the decision to hire specialists who could work in the schools and provide mental health care to students during the school day. The district started with three therapists who mainly focused on students at the secondary level. Recently, the district increased those numbers to 11, so that every school in the district could house a mental health therapist at least one day a week. DeWitt Junior High School worked with its therapist three days a week to assist with the students who needed assistance. Teachers, parents, or counselors made the referral of any identified student who was suffering from any type of anxiety or mental disorder. The therapist worked in the school in the same manner she would outside of school. She was present to provide individual or group counseling to any student who was in need. The number of students varied based on the needs of the student body; however, her count fluctuated between 15-25 students a week (Personal Interview, 2019). The participants of the study reported the improvement they are seeing in their classes due to the addition of the mental health therapist (Personal Interview, 2019).

Classroom Management Bootcamp

Another part of this initiative was to provide a classroom management toolbox to teachers and support for teachers who educate students with difficult behaviors. In an effort to assist teachers with classroom management, the district provided a two-day classroom management bootcamp to teach best practices that create a positive learning environment for all students. Novice and veteran teachers could attend; however, teachers new to the district were required to attend the bootcamp. The district felt that mandatory attendance for new teachers would be beneficial due to the number of emergency and alternatively certified teachers that had been employed. The classroom management bootcamp was taught by experienced teachers who can relate to both new teachers and those who struggle with classroom management techniques (Personal Interview, 2019). With this training, teachers learned to prevent student outbursts by providing a supportive culture in the classroom. The bootcamp covered various topics such as starting the year strong, setting and maintain a supportive environment, and open communication with parents and students (Thomas, Personal Interview, 2019). Another important theme of the bootcamp was to emphasize the importance of developing a relationship with the students (Thomas, Personal Interview, 2019). The bootcamp style workshop provided teachers an opportunity to practice useable, specific strategies to create a classroom environment that is trusting and supportive.

Pathways to Peace

Lastly, the district provided the opportunity for all students to participate in Pathways to Peace. With Pathways to Peace, students learned coping skills they could

incorporate into the classroom and at home. As a result of the tornado in 2013, Jackson Public Schools began to partner with Save the Children to offer students this program. Pathways to Peace is a coping skills curriculum developed by Save the Children. This program is offered to children who suffer from natural disasters to restore resilience and develop coping skills after a tragedy. The school district worked with a local youth services agency that provided licensed professional counselors to work alongside school counselors during the group sessions. Approximately 20% of the schools participated in the program, and within each of those schools, the number of participants varied. Although the district adopted the use of Pathways to Peace, the teachers did not receive training before or after the program was implemented. Therefore, there was no professional development regarding the use of coping skills or how to teach them in the classroom.

Data Collected for the Study

I collected, coded, and analyzed the data using constant comparative methodology outlined by Merriam (2001). Merriam described data collection and analysis as a “simultaneous activity” (p. 151). This method allows the researcher to collect data and analyze that data at the same time, producing more trustworthy findings (Merriam, 2001). I interviewed nine junior high school teachers, conducted observations of seven junior high classrooms, and analyzed a district-provided informational brochure that described the use of coping skills in the classroom. Nine teachers were initially contacted to participate in the study, and all nine agreed to participate. However, only seven agreed to host me as an observer of the interaction of students and teachers within the classroom. The observations were purposely

scheduled near the end of the school year. The timing was deliberate because teachers and students have spent several months together and have likely formed a relationship during that time. In addition, the end of the school year is, many times, a more stressful time, allowing for more opportunity to observe whether coping skills are being implemented in the classroom.

Participant Profiles

Interview participants for this study included nine teachers who have taught at DeWitt Junior High School for an average of 12.5 years. All but one of the nine teachers have a minimum of 13 years of teaching experience with six of the nine having at least 15 years of teaching experience. The majority of the staff at DeWitt Junior High School has ten or more years of teaching experience, with most of those years being spent on this campus. Table 2 provides information regarding the participants. All names used for participants are pseudonyms to protect the anonymity of these participants.

Brad. Brad is a career teacher who is in his thirteenth year of teaching, and his entire career has been spent at DeWitt Junior High School. He is the junior high band director and assistant band director at the high school level. Since he has spent his entire career at DeWitt Junior High School, he has a firm grasp on the culture and background of his students. However, early in his career, he had to learn how to work with students who came from a completely different background than the one in which he was raised. Brad described his home life as “average.” His parents are still married, there is no history of domestic abuse, and he reported that he has not suffered any major trauma in his life. Brad is teaching band, a course that is an

elective, which allows students to choose his course instead of it being a requirement. The fact that students voluntarily select this course possibly allows for a different type of student-to-teacher relationship and different classroom management practices.

Kevin. Kevin's path to education is not a traditional one. His dream was to be an attorney and politician. He tried both careers, and in his words, he "failed miserably" (Personal Interview, 2019). This path led him to teaching, and he explained that "now [he has] found his fit" (Personal Interview, 2019). He previously taught in three other districts before coming to Jackson Public Schools; however, he has spent his last nine years at DeWitt Junior High School. Since coming to DeWitt Junior High School, he has taught seventh and eighth grade social studies and coached football. Kevin explained that his favorite students are those who need extra help. This group of students includes students with special education needs, although his courses are not identified as special education classes. Kevin's other passion is coaching football because it allows him to work with students "through all types of struggles" (Personal Interview, 2019). His own three children also attend Jackson Public Schools.

Robin. Robin began her teaching career 30 years ago; however, she took a 15-year break in the middle of her career to raise her children. Since her return to education, she has taught the last 10 years at DeWitt Junior High School. Her teaching experience includes teaching grades third through eighth at multiple campuses within the Jackson Public Schools system. Subjects she has taught include math, science, English, and reading in both special and regular education classes. Currently, Robin is teaching eighth grade special education reading. Her passion for teaching is illustrated

by her desire to teach any subject and any level needed in her school. Her room is arranged in a manner that is inviting to students, and her varied activities provide for various learning styles. Robin has a corner in her classroom with multiple pillows of various shapes and colors. During independent assignments, her students are welcome to go to the pillow pile and work silently. Other students might choose to sit on the floor and work. Her goal is to offer chairs that also rock to accommodate those students who need movement. She tries to stay creative and allow her students to feel comfortable as they complete assignments.

Wendi. Wendi originally studied elementary education in college. Her teaching career began just over 20 years ago in a southeastern state. For the first three years, she taught elementary classrooms and thought she wanted to stay in the elementary grades. However, when she moved to Jackson 17 years ago, she accepted a position at DeWitt Junior High School. While teaching at DeWitt, Wendi has served as a literacy and language arts teacher for pre-AP and regular level classes. During the interview, Wendi stated that she never wants to leave this age of student or this particular school. She spoke very passionately about the culture of her classroom, and how she labels herself as “the mom” while her students are at school. She is very protective of her students, and she feels like they recognize that protectiveness. During a classroom observation, it was evident that she has a love for teaching junior high students. She has an ability to “joke around” with her students in a healthy manner, which contributes to building strong relationships.

Sunni. Sunni has a more varied background. She has taught in other states, another country, and in multiple private schools. Her total years of experience are 21

with the last nine teaching at DeWitt Junior High School. Her experience includes teaching children from pre-K through high school and every subject offered at the junior high level. She currently teaches Spanish to eighth grade students and career connections and art to seventh grade and special education students. Sunni reported that she has probably taught every subject at DeWitt Junior High School during her tenure. When she described her special education students, she exhibited excitement and a desire to serve them better. Her true interests lie in helping students who struggle academically and socially, but she explained that she also has “a heart for all levels of students with special needs” (Personal Interview, 2019). Sunni loves the challenge of working with any student on any level.

Terry. Terry grew up in a rural school and always wanted to be a teacher. She has taught her entire 13-year career at DeWitt Junior High School. Terry explained that she has a firm grasp on the culture of the community. She described the home lives of her students as “unpleasant.” Some of the examples she reported include: single parent homes where the parent works several jobs and is not home very often, the students who have a parent in prison, and students who live with their grandparents. During her time at DeWitt, she has only taught science to regular education and pre-AP students in seventh and eighth grades. She reported that her first year was difficult due to the differences between the community she grew up in and the community she now teaches in. Specifically, these students attend a large school in an urban neighborhood while she attended a small rural school. However, she quickly realized how to relate to the students at DeWitt Junior High School. Her connection to her students is driven by a desire to form a solid relationship with each student so that she can reach them

academically.

Tracy. Tracy is the youngest and least experienced teacher to take part in this study. She has been a teacher for seven years, and all seven years have been with DeWitt Junior High School. She grew up in Jackson and hopes to always be a teacher in this district. She had the opportunity to teach out of the state, but her desire was to work in her community. She teaches eighth grade United States History for all levels: special education, regular, and Pre-AP. She said she was originally hired because she could coach track, but she has grown to love her teaching job more than coaching. She states that her strength is in recognizing the needs of her students both academically and emotionally.

Becky. Becky is a career teacher with 30 years of teaching experience, and 20 of those years are with DeWitt Junior High School. Becky teaches reading, and although she does not have special education classes, she does teach the readers who have low reading levels. She has had the opportunity to teach Pre-AP classes, but she has turned those positions down because her passion lies with helping those who struggle with reading. Becky explained that she recognizes that her classroom management style is more liberal, and she allows students to “work through issues” while helping each other (Personal Interview, 2019). She strongly believes in peer helpers, and she utilizes this practice most days in her classroom. In addition, Becky is also the yearbook sponsor. She loves this position as well because it allows her time to connect with students outside of the regular classroom.

Lynn. Lynn is a math teacher who has 17 years of experience with four separate districts. Her last five years have been spent at DeWitt Junior High School.

She has relocated twice due to a reduction in force and has taught all levels of math from sixth grade math through Algebra II. Her classroom management style is very firm, and she engages with students to help them build their own self-efficacy in math. She tries to creatively connect her subject matter with students' extracurricular activities. However, Lynn's classroom is arranged in a very traditional style, lecture setting. She indicated that she feels pressure to meet the curriculum calendar by teaching all of the state required standards. She is dedicated to preparing her students for high school level math.

Table 2

Participant Profile Summary

Name	Position	Years Teaching	Years at DeWitt JH	Passion for Teaching
Brad	Band Director	13	13	To help students find themselves through learning to play an instrument
Kevin	Social Studies Teacher/ Football Coach	12	9	To help students learn to work through adversity in life
Robin	Special Ed Reading	15	10	To help students reach their potential in everything they do
Wendi	Language Arts/Literacy Teacher	20	17	To create a supportive relationship with her students
Sunni	Spanish/Art Teacher	21	9	To help students who struggle academically and socially

Terry	Science Teacher	13	13	To provide students with a trusting adult in their lives
Tracy	Social Studies Teacher/Track Coach	7	7	To prepare her students for life after 8 th grade
Becky	Reading Teacher/ Yearbook Sponsor	30	20	To teach students how to create positivity out of any situation
Lynn	Math Teacher	17	5	To assist her students to gain confidence in learning math

Emerging Themes

As I worked through the data collection and analysis processes, five themes emerged within the shared experiences of the teachers who worked with junior high students on a daily basis. Throughout the analysis portion of this study, I began to identify commonalities among the teachers' stories from their interviews as well as the data collected during the observations. I sorted the coded data based on the emerging themes, which led to the findings of the study. Each of these themes leads to a better understanding of teaching coping skills in the classroom and the need for professional development for teachers to assist in the improvement of their self-efficacy to teach coping skills to students.

Theme One: Student Regulation Skills

The first theme identified is that teachers are teaching their students coping skills throughout the day without always recognizing it. When I asked the participants

to define “coping skills,” every participant provided an answer rather quickly. Most teachers defined coping skills as an action they witness when a student is facing an obstacle in his/her life whether it be emotional or physical. This definition of coping skills illustrates the participants’ ability to recognize a student’s use of coping skills in the classroom.

During classroom observations, I witnessed teachers guiding students through several difficult situations. For example, I observed Sunni work with a student who had suffered a hand injury in his athletic sport, which affected his ability to perform his academic assignment. The student seemed to be very upset about it, but when Sunni spoke with him, he calmed down enough to complete his work. The teacher talked with him quietly about his options to modify the assignment. She helped him work through this stressor in the classroom. When I asked her about it, she had not recognized that she was helping him with coping. She said, “Helping students in trouble is what I do. I don’t think about it. I saw that he was struggling, and I wanted to offer him options, so he could feel good about completing his work today” (Personal Interview, 2019). In another incident, Terry quietly worked with a student during a time when students were independently working on their assignment. During our interview, I asked Terry about this incident, she explained, “I can sense when my students are beginning to feel overwhelmed, so I will work with them individually to make sure they can work through their issues” (Personal Interview, 2019). Sometimes, this can be handled with a quiet conversation, which includes simplified instructions, and sometimes, she explained that she will allow the student will step outside to work with her on a deeper level. She assisted her student with learning coping skills, but to the teacher, she was

caring for her student and his needs.

All nine participants were able to provide an example of a time when they helped a student deal with an unexpected action that caused the student to become distressed. Each of the participants described both negative and positive coping skills. Examples of negative coping skills included screaming at someone, students putting their head down, and students trying to pick a fight with another person. Several teachers described situations in which their students would show up for class unprepared by not bringing their materials to class. During the observation with the band class, I witnessed a student sit silently and pull his hoodie over his head during the time his section was playing the assigned song. When Brad asked the student why he was “hiding out” and not playing, the student told Brad that he left his music book at home. The teacher helped the student problem solve and find an extra song book, so the student did not miss out on valuable practice time. When Brad and I spoke about this incident, he said, “I know this student’s home situation, and I don’t want to add any more stress to him. So, instead, I help teach him how to problem solve in the classroom on his own. I want to show all of my students that it is okay to have things go wrong and still work to solve the problem” (Personal Interview, 2019). Brad was able to turn a negative coping skill into a positive solution by teaching his student how to overcome leaving his book at home.

Positive coping skills examples included “walk and talks,” “brain breaks,” and modeling positive behaviors. When I asked the participants for examples of ways they helped a student deescalate while in distress, all participants provided multiple examples of positive coping skills. Tracy and Becky have para professionals in their

classes and both described how they use the additional adult in the room to help with “walk and talks.” Specifically, when a student becomes upset and needs an opportunity to calm down outside the classroom, either the teacher or the para professional will take the student for a walk down the hall or outside. This provides an opportunity for emotionally disrupted students to safely calm down outside of the classroom. Tracy explained, “I try to sneak in little coping skills without the students really knowing what it is. It is less disruptive to my class that way” (Personal Interview, 2019). Both teachers reported that students will now ask for this time to cool down, which allows the student to come back into the classroom ready to learn.

During observations, I also witnessed several examples of students using coping skills in the classroom. As a part of this study, I observed seven classrooms: band, art, math, English, reading, social studies, and science classes. The variety of courses was important to this study because it gave me an opportunity to witness the interaction of the teachers and students in an organic environment. These observations provided me the opportunity to study the manner in which teachers interfaced with students as they experienced stress in academic and extracurricular classes. Each observation was for a single class period at various times of the day. Again, it was important to watch the behaviors of both teachers and students throughout the timeline of the school day.

As a result of the classroom observations and the interviews, findings emerged that teachers were teaching coping skills to the students as a part of their natural pedagogy. With each class I visited, I witnessed teachers working with students to overcome stress in the classroom while assisting the students to regulate their behaviors. Each interview was filled with examples of how important it is to teachers that students

learn to work through difficult situations in and out of the classroom. There seemed to be no real conscious effort to teach coping skills to students; it seemed to be a natural occurrence in the classroom.

Theme Two: Relationship Building

The second theme that emerged from the data is the importance of teachers building relationships with their students. This study was conducted at the end of the spring semester, and the timing of the study appeared to facilitate identification of this theme. My goal was to observe students in the spring to ensure teachers had time to connect with their students. Teachers indicated that they had worked all year to build these relationships with their students. All participants spoke at length about the importance of the student-to-teacher relationship component in their ability to reach their students on an academic level and an emotional level.

During the seven observations, I witnessed evidence of how impactful the teacher-to-student relationship is in a classroom. In Terry's interview, she stated, "The most important thing for a teacher is to have a relationship with their students" (Personal Interview, 2019). She described how hard she worked from the first day of school to build a connection with each of her students. In the course of her classroom observation, it was evident that she had formed this connection. The students did not seem to be afraid when asking for help with the assignment. At one point, a student realized he had missed detention the day before, and he worked out a plan with the teacher to make up the detention. Again, the students and the teacher worked seamlessly together through each situation.

Another example is when Brad spoke at length about how important it is for his

students to feel as if they can trust him as their teacher. He described their teacher-to-student relationship as pivotal for him to teach his lessons on a daily basis. He described that he is willing to lose a few minutes a day to talk to his students if that is what they need from him. I witnessed this firsthand when in the middle of teaching, he stopped and commented on a student's shoes. During his interview, I questioned him about this practice, and he explained that it was his way of bringing his class back to focus. He said that when he stops class to joke with a student, the other students redirect their attention on to that moment, and he has them refocused.

Although all participants described the importance of relationship building, one teacher really stood out during her classroom observation. Tracy seemed to have a real connection with her students both in and out of the classroom. Tracy stated, "I really do try to build a relationship because I feel like, especially with our kids we teach here, the relationship really determines the atmosphere of your school year" (Personal Interview, 2019). Tracy went on to explain that because she spends time cultivating this relationship from day one, she feels like her students respond better. She also had a para professional with several of her classes throughout the day. Together, they worked out a system that allowed one of them to be available for any one-on-one time her students might need. When a student entered the classroom in a state of emotional unrest, she and the para professional would allow the student to choose whom to work with in an effort to calm down and regulate his or her stress level. Tracy explained that this practice gave the students some control and allowed that student to get back into an academic mindset. The driving premise behind this was allowing the student to decide with whom they had formed a stronger relationship.

This finding supports the intention of the Pathways to Peace program in that the brochure defined relationships as a key component to developing coping skills. Before students learn to trust the teacher with their emotional well-being, the relationship piece must be present.

Theme Three: Professional Development Needs

The next theme to unfold from the data is the need for applicable examples of how to teach coping skills within the context of the classroom. None of the nine participants could recall any formal professional development, training, or college coursework that could be classified as “how to teach coping skills to students.” This finding is important because all participants were teaching at DeWitt Junior High School when the district offered Pathways to Peace to their students, yet none of the teachers received any training prior to the program or after their students completed the program.

Each participant struggled when answering questions pertaining to formal training on how to teach coping skills to students. Two teachers referred to the annual mandated child abuse training, while another mentioned Ruby Payne, which is training on how to work with students from poverty. Another teacher referred to classroom management professional development training offered by Jackson Public Schools. None of the mentioned formal trainings solely focus on teaching coping skills to students. When I asked the participants about training prior to teaching, none of the nine teachers reported that they had attended any type of formal training as a part of their teacher preparation program.

The participants reported the coping skills they teach students often came from

their own life experiences, practices modeled by other teachers, or techniques they had researched on their own. During the interview, several teachers described how their own life experiences led them to be able to effectively work with students during stressful times. For example, Kevin spoke about how he struggled through various failures in life and how that led him to teaching, where he finally feels at home. During the interview, Kevin stated, “I have learned coping skills from the school of hard knocks, and this has prepared me to teach these types of skills to my students who are having a hard time” (Personal Interview, 2019). Terry described her path to education as indirect and how this path fueled her passion to want to help her students when they are struggling.

In addition, Sunni stated, “I have taught in many schools in various countries. This experience has taught me a lot about how to help students from all backgrounds. This experience has prepared me to handle almost any situation with my students” (Personal Interview, 2019). Sunni also spoke about how her background and all of her life experiences added to her ability to form connections with her students. Tracy and Lynn have worked with a colleague to create ways to help students find comfort in learning to relax when they feel themselves becoming anxious or stressed. Finally, Wendi discovered various breathing techniques to teach to her students, so they can use them as a classroom exercise or on an individual basis. All of the participants expressed a desire to learn ways to better help students who are in the middle of a crisis, especially when the teacher recognizes a potential emotional meltdown by a student.

Each participant described ways in which he/she feels inadequate to reach that

student who is really struggling emotionally. However, each participant was passionate about learning new techniques to teach to students when they see students struggling emotionally. The request of the teachers was to learn practical way to teach coping skills, so that when the situation arose in class, the student could learn to self-regulate.

Theme Four: Growing Up Differently

All participants, when addressing the context in which their students are growing up, described the way they grew up and how different it is from the way their students are currently growing up. Each participant explained their middle-class upbringing with no real identified tragedy, domestic issues, or chronic trauma. Yet, they all described the difficulties included in the student's living situations. For example, they described their students' home lives as being damaged by broken homes, parents in prison, poverty, and a general lack of parenting.

The participants were all quick to talk about "how hard the students have it at home," yet none of the participants blamed the parents (Personal Interview, 2019). Brad, Tracy, and Kevin discussed the difficulties their students face due to broken homes or having parents who are not very involved in the student's education. Each of these teachers also teaches extra-curricular activities, and the students involved in these activities face additional responsibilities and obstacles. For example, the students who participate in band and athletics must bring their equipment to practice each day. However, some students spend one week at mom's house and one week at dad's house. The students would forget a band or athletic item at the alternate parent's house and show up for practice ill-prepared. This caused some difficulties for the students and the teacher/coach. With each of these situations, the students and teachers have

devised a plan to overcome the obstacle. Throughout the year, Brad works with students who forget their music books at home. He does not want the students to miss out of practicing their musical part of a song. Kevin and Tracy both teach sports and have devised alternate workouts for students who might forget their athletic equipment.

Robin and Wendi described their student's homelives as "troubled" (Personal Interview, 2019). By troubled, they went on to explain certain incidents where the students go home to an empty house and spend several hours alone or with siblings until their single parent returned home from work. According to the teachers, this pattern repeats itself on the weekends. In another incident, Robin spoke about one of her students whose father is in prison, while Lynn described an incident when a student's step-father destroyed all of her belongings. Even though the teachers had not shared in these experiences, they still hold a desire to work with these students and teach them ways to overcome their experiences. Once the teachers discovered the needs of their students based on their home situation, they began to form a stronger bond with the students to support learning.

In addition, each participant spoke about the difficulty of empathizing with their students since they do not share those experiences. However, all of the participants described that once they examined their students experiences, they were able to build relationships with the students and help provide for the students in ways their parents cannot. For example, Terry describes a situation in which a student forgot to bring her supplies to school, yet that morning, the student had to help get her siblings ready for school and act like the adult in the home. She said, "When the student arrives to

school, he/she just wants to be a student and needs an adult who can help take care of things” (Personal Interview, 2019). In this situation, the student might need someone who can help her take care of minor things at school.

Lastly, Becky shared a story about one of her students who had experienced severe trauma in his life. The student had grown up in foster care and had experienced several foster home placements. Her class was reading a book about a boy who grew up in foster care in Oklahoma. Becky explained, “During the reading of the book, I noticed he was silently crying, so I needed to find out why” (Personal Interview, 2019). She quietly spoke to the young man and asked him if he needed to be excused from class. He replied that he didn’t want to leave, and he wanted to continue to read the book. Becky reported, “He was crying because he had recently been adopted, and the book reminded him of his life and how good it became once he was adopted” (Personal Interview, 2019). Becky recognized how comfortable he felt to tell her his personal history even though she had no personal connection to his past.

In each of these examples, the teachers and students do not have shared experiences, yet they are able to form a strong connection in spite of their differences. By creating a connection to their students and having the desire to help them, these teachers have learned different ways to teach their students to cope.

Theme Five: Classroom Management Benefits

Finally, the last theme to develop was the benefits of a positive classroom management style. Each classroom observation and interview provided evidence of the importance of consistent classroom management practices. The participants described how important it is to build honest and genuine relationships with students, which led

to the development of coping skills. This connection leads to better classroom management. That is not to say that there are no classroom disruptions and management issues; however, those teachers who have previously learned the use of coping skills reported a decline in classroom disruptions by the students who struggle the most.

During a classroom observation, I witnessed a student who refused to follow Sunni's directions. In fact, the student seemed to be disagreeing with every aspect of the classroom assignment in an effort to cause a disruption. Instead of the Sunni becoming upset and engaging in a conflict with the student, she explained, "I patiently attempted to side step the issue by calmly explaining each step of the assignment using different vocabulary" (Personal Interview, 2019). She was trying to negotiate his needs, so he would re-engage in the activity. Once she realized that would not work, she calmly asked him to step into the hall where they could quietly discuss the origin of this disruption. When they returned, he did not seem agitated, and he quietly worked on his assignment. Later, she explained in her interview that when she spoke to the student, they were able to discover the issue and come to an agreement that he would complete his assignment without disruption. Her class continued that day without incident. The teacher explained that before she learned how to work with agitated students, she would have allowed herself to engage in an argument with her, which would negatively affect her classroom management procedures.

Another teacher, Wendi, described how her classroom management practices changed once she began to focus on helping students regulate their behaviors through coping. She described a student she taught last year who stormed out of her room on

several occasions. She came up with a plan that provided the student with a signal that alerted her when the student was struggling and did not want to be called on in class to participate in a group activity. The student began to regulate his behavior and when he needed a break, he would place his pencil on the corner of his desk. None of the other students recognized this signal, so only the student and the teacher knew that the student needed time to calm himself. With this activity, the teacher began to see improvement, and the student did not disrupt class for the remainder of the year.

Once the teachers recognized those students who are quick to escalate emotionally, they learned to navigate around anything that would be a catalyst in that student's emotional outburst. Each participant recognized ways to equip the students with coping skills that are appropriate for the students.

Summary

Data presented and analyzed in this chapter were gathered through interviews, observations, and document review. Descriptive information about Jackson Public Schools and DeWitt Junior High School was presented including current district initiatives. Through the interviews, observations, and document review, data were collected and organized by theme. The data were then analyzed and organized by emerging themes. Each theme was explained through a rich description using data from the study. Chapter V will present findings, conclusions, implications for further research, theory, and practice, and conclusion.

CHAPTER V

FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS, IMPLICATIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The purpose of this study was to explore select seventh and eighth grade teachers perceptions of teaching coping skills in the classroom. The study focused on one junior high school in a large suburban school district. This location of the chosen school is in an economically disadvantaged section of the community, and many of the students who live there come from chronic trauma, which can lead to maladaptive behaviors in children (Chesnut & Burley, 2015; Shillingford & Karlin, 2014). Nine teachers participated in the interview process, and seven of those nine volunteered to allow observations in their classrooms. Four years ago, an outside agency introduced a program at this school called Pathways to Peace, which teaches coping skills to students. An informational brochure from this program provided additional details regarding any district initiated, prior knowledge the staff members had of coping skills. According to the participants, there was never any formal training before, during, or after their students completed the program.

The state of Oklahoma recognizes the needs teachers have in helping students

deal with the trauma students face whether it is a single traumatic event or chronic trauma. The Oklahoma State Department of Health found that Oklahoma children are at high risk for suffering Adverse Childhood Experiences, which can have a severe negative impact in the development of a child's brain (Oklahoma State Department of Health, 2016). This information is now being shared with state officials and school districts across the state. The information provided in the 2016 study described the need for additional support for teachers in the classroom.

Chapter V provides significant findings of the study through answering the study's research questions. This chapter will also present conclusions and implications for research, theory, and practice as well as recommendations for future research. In the conclusion, I will provide a summary of the study.

Findings

The purpose of this qualitative case study was to explore select seventh and eighth grade teachers perceptions of teaching coping skills in the classroom. The following research questions led the study:

1. How do select seventh and eighth grade teachers teach and encourage students to utilize coping skills in the classroom?
2. How do select seventh and eighth grade teachers describe their role in teaching coping skills in the classroom?
3. How prepared do select seventh and eighth grade teachers feel in teaching coping skills to students?
 - a. What type of preparation do these seventh and eighth grade teachers receive to teach coping skills?

- b. What preparation do teachers feel is most helpful?
4. What role do past experiences, modeling by others, social persuasion, and emotional state, key tenets of Bandura's (1997) Self-Efficacy Theory, have in teacher self-efficacy to teach coping skills?

Based on the data presented and analyzed in Chapter IV, these research questions are answered below.

Research Question One: How do select seventh and eighth grade teachers teach and encourage students to utilize coping skills in the classroom?

As students' needs have changed over time, so has the atmosphere of today's classroom. Teachers reported that they are seeing more severe behaviors with their students such as yelling out in class, verbally attacking others, physically attacking others, or quitting the required task.

These types of behaviors fall into the category of negative coping skills. These exhibited behaviors can be very disruptive to an otherwise calm classroom environment. Therefore, the participants developed creative ways to de-escalate negative behaviors in an effort to maintain student engagement in the classroom and provide students with skills they can use inside and outside of the classroom.

Curriculum or integration. Through my observations and interviews, I learned that teachers are teaching coping skills through practical application. It is not a set curriculum, which is what some of the teachers requested. During several interviews, some teachers indicated they preferred a "boxed curriculum" that provided specific lessons on the teaching of coping skills, while other teachers felt it was best to integrate it into daily classroom activities. This data led to the conclusion that the teachers in the

study feel they need more formal training and specific practices to work with students when teaching coping skills. However, in the interviews, Robin emphatically stated (Sunni agreed), “Aside from the required standards we must teach, there is no time for additional social emotional curriculum for coping skills” (Personal Interview 2019).

Relationships. Several teachers described situations in which they taught coping skills in the context of their daily activities, and in each of these situations, the teachers insisted that there must be a relationship with the student first. Each of these teachers explained that without first building a relationship with a student, this type of coping skill instruction would not be effective. Brad, Kevin, and Tracy reported their concern for helping kids learn how to handle life’s tough situations, and that knowledge is sometimes more important than the small minutia of their classrooms. Terry described how her interaction with students during times of escalation are pivotal to the climate of the classroom. In other words, she will use her time to help a student through a situation because, in the long run, the student will re-engage sooner allowing her to continue teaching the other students.

De-escalation examples. I observed several situations in which the classroom teacher worked with individual students to practice coping skills. In one classroom, a student was unable to continue with an assignment due to an injured hand. He was very upset because it affected his ability to play football. The teacher quietly and calmly discussed his options with him. She modified his assignment, and he was able to continue. This was handled without drawing attention to the student or disrupting the flow of the activity. The interaction between the student and teacher was evidence of the teacher’s ability to teach the student a coping skill. She taught him that communication

about the problem may lead to a successful resolution.

Another example is when a student struggled with the technology of her class presentation. The teacher realized the student was beginning to feel anxiety over the error, so she diverted the class's attention to another activity. This provided time for the student to correct the technology situation and continue with her presentation. In this situation, the action of the teacher allowed the student to stay calm and diverted the classmates' attention to another activity. The teacher was able to model a positive coping skill to the class and allow the presenter time to collect her thoughts.

During an interview with Lynn, she explained how she works with students to overcome their stress associated with solving math problems. She described several examples of how she used a student's skills in their extra-curricular activity to help with skills in math class. When students felt incapable of completing mathematical problems in class, Lynn related it to taking a shot in basketball. She asked students if they are afraid to take their shot in basketball. When the student says, "No, of course not," Lynn will turn that around and build their self-efficacy in math. She challenged the student to apply that same mindset to her class. This example is illustrative of teaching students to self-regulate their fear of completing the tasks in the classroom without becoming obstinate and acting out in class.

Coping skills techniques. Throughout this study, I observed situations in which teachers stopped their instruction and worked with students to practice coping skills. In one incidence, Wendi's class was working on a group project. During the activity, one group became agitated over the assignment. Without hesitation, Wendi approached the group, and they practiced a breathing technique she had previously taught them. The

students seemed very comfortable with the breathing exercise and were able to easily continue with the assignment. The emotions of the group were calmer, and there was no more arguing amongst the group members.

During another observation, a student forgot an important piece of equipment at his mother's home. The teacher knew the student spends one week with Mom and one week with Dad. So, when the student was ill-prepared, the teacher was able to work with the student to teach him how to communicate his needs to his teacher. During the process, the teacher taught the students how to problem solve in order to be able to continue with the daily activity.

Coping skills can appear in multiple forms, and in each of these situations, the teacher successfully guided the students through a difficult situation. In each of these cases, the students learned to positively cope with the negative situation in their lives. All of these situations emphasized an opportunity in which teachers incorporated coping skills with their students in normal situations.

Teaching Student Coping Skills

Although teachers were aware of the Pathways to Peace program that many of their students attended, they were not formally trained on the teaching or implementation of coping skills in the classroom. However, each teacher described coping skills he or she either witnessed students using or ways in which the teacher helped students cope with daily struggles. Each teacher recalled specific examples of when students exhibited negative and positive coping skills in the classroom. During classroom observations, I witnessed a few incidents in which teachers assisted a student coping with a struggle. In one class I observed, a student was attempting to present her

end of year project. She was in front of a class of eighth graders who were all watching her, which seemed to cause her stress. The technology would not work, so after several attempts with her Power Point, the teacher recognized the distress in the student and switched to a different activity while the presenter worked on her Power Point. Later that hour, the student was able to present without an issue, and her classmates were very kind to her. There did not seem to be any more stress in the student's voice during her presentation. This was an example of the use of a positive coping skill in a classroom where it appeared that the teacher had previously established trusting relationships with students.

In some incidences, teachers described students using negative coping skills such a "hiding under his hoodie" (Personal Interview, 2019). Four of the teachers mentioned this coping skill as a very common example of students negatively reacting to stress. In each case, the teachers described how they would engage the student in a conversation to explore the reason for the behavior and would attempt to teach the student how to practice a positive coping skill. Two teachers provided examples of teaching students positive coping skills through the use of humor. Brad recounted his use of humor to liven up a student's dark mood on multiple occasions. Brad preferred this method of teaching coping skills to students because in his words, "It doesn't embarrass the child" (Personal Interview, 2019). Becky also stated that she uses humor as a means of teaching kids to "not take things so seriously" (Personal Interview, 2019). When a negative behavior was witnessed, the teachers made every effort to "talk the student down" and reengage the students in the classroom activity. Teachers handled this type of situation in a variety of ways, but they all strived for the same result: re-

engagement of the student in the academic activity of the classroom. Sometimes the teacher used humor, rearranged the activities in the class, or had a quiet conversation with the student to determine the needs of that student. However, in each incident, all teachers emphasized the importance of building a relationship with the student. The teachers' responses about teaching coping skills are presented in Table 3.

Table 3

Coping Skills Currently Taught by Teachers

Teacher	Tactic Used	Coping Skill Example
Brad	Humor/Social Interaction (Relationship)	So, to me, humor and that social interaction I was trying to get at is probably number one. Some of that is facilitated by me. So, I don't know if that is a coping skill or if that is me handing them a coping skill. They may not realize they need a good laugh until I ask, "Why are you so frowny today? Did someone steel your pop tarts this morning?" And I chuckle, so I think social aspect and humor are the biggest coping skills I would use in my room.
Robin	Varied Activities	I break my instruction up into sections. I like games, so I keep them moving. I think it defuses or redirects them, and that manages any emotion that may arise. I try to, at some point in the hour, hit everyone's learning style. My goal is for everyone to get some sort of positive outcome.
Wendi	Breathing	Well, one thing I teach my students is yoga breathing, and I let them know that everybody gets nervous or frustrated or mad about something, and I teach them a real quick yoga breathing strategy. Sometimes, if they need something, I say, "breath in through the nose. Breath out." This really seems to help my students.
Kevin	Life lessons	Find ways to overcome when things are going bad, and sometimes, maybe that is doodling, humor, or reflecting. Sometimes, maybe that is taking a step back. I think a teacher should be able to teach while incorporating those things because I am going to be honest. How much geography are they going to remember ten years from now? Twenty years from now? If we are not teaching them about life, we are not really helping them for their future.

Sunni	Brain Break (breathing, social interaction)	It just doesn't happen often, but if lessons are going poorly, kids aren't engaged, we stop and do a quick brain break activity. We play a game. I get them involved again and then, usually things go well for me. Brain breaks include variations of rock, paper, scissors or inhale/exhale exercises, anything just to get our brain off the lesson for a moment because that's research driven. I'm trying to double the primacy and recency factors, and if you do brain breaks, you reset the triggering, and you have two primacy effects and two recency effects in a lesson instead of one. So, I'm getting four bangs in one hour instead of two. That's another technique I use.
Terry	Down Time	Well, if I know that they're having like a complete breakdown, I might let them get out of the classroom, take a minute and go to the bathroom. Don't say, "What's wrong?" or "Can you tell me what's going on?" because they don't want to in that minute. But if you let them go get a drink or go to the bathroom, or maybe splash water on their face, then a lot of times they will come back, and they will be okay. Sometimes, they don't want to talk when they get back. They just want to get busy without talking. Sometimes, they will be better and then, they want to talk to you a little bit about what's going on. Then, we can work through it, and then they go back to being busy. If you just start off with, "What's wrong?" they can't answer you because they don't always know how to verbalize their feelings.
Tracy	Down Time/ Walk and Talk	The coping skill I try to encourage mostly, especially in my team-taught class, if they're upset just removing themselves from the situation, cooling down for a second, and then coming back with a calmer mind. If I have my para professional in here, whichever one of us has the best relationship with a student, we will ask if they want to go on a "walk and talk" with us, so they can kind of process through it. If they're not comfortable in that relationship, I allow them to get a drink, calm down, and come back. If my students come in upset, I don't push them to work right away. I will allow them to sit quietly, read a little, and calm down. I am a slow processor, so just giving them time to process. I try to understand what they're doing and why they're doing it. A lot of adults don't understand how they process and cope. These students are only 13 and 14 years old.

Becky	Humor/Social Interaction (Relationship)	We laugh a lot over stuff. They get over things by laughing, but they also get very mad sometimes. They get outrageously mad, and you have to talk them down to show them this person wasn't trying to upset them. It is not usually about someone in this classroom. It is about something outside the classroom. We have to talk about it or else it boils up and they end up in a fight. So, we talk about it all the time. We kind of work on, "Ok, tell me exactly what the problem is," and when they can't and start screaming, you say, "No, no you have to get exactly to the problem. "What is it?" I also tease them a lot. I tease them a lot, and we do have to cool off, so I tell them, "Go walk around and come back, and we'll talk about it." It works real well for my kids.
Lynn	Social Interaction (Relationship)	Young man from the last class, he knows how to do the math problem. Almost every time I ask him how to do the problem he says, "I don't know." So, we walk through the process together. I tell him, "You've got this. You've got to learn to push past that fear of failure. When you are in basketball, and you are afraid to take the shot, do you just stop and not take the shot?" He said, "No, I take the shot." So, I tell him, "Do the same thing in math, same concept." And he says, "Interesting. That's an awesome mindset." My students have to learn that they do understand math and push through it.

Research Questions Two: How do select seventh and eighth grade teachers describe their role in teaching coping skills?

As student behaviors have changed overtime, teachers' classroom management strategies have changed as well. However, they are all not confident that they are teaching coping skills correctly to students. The teachers who were not as comfortable with their role in teaching coping skills felt they were not trained and wanted more instruction on how to actually teach these skills to their students. These teachers expressed a desire to learn how to assist their students in self-regulation strategies, yet they were not sure how to incorporate that into their classroom. Some of the teachers described their role of teaching coping skills as a component of their daily classroom activities. Those teachers would integrate them daily and described it as a part of the

teachers' responsibilities to prepare their students for life. They wanted to ensure their students could handle any type of disappointment, frustration, or stress.

Unnatural. Two teachers indicated that they are not comfortable with teaching coping skills as a curriculum, but during observations of their classrooms, I observed each teacher working with individual students as well as students in a group to teach coping skills. In Robin's classroom, a student seemed to become agitated during an individual activity. Robin quietly approached the student, kneeled down so they were eye level, and softly spoke to the student. Once the student was able to vocalize his concerns, he became calm and was able to continue the assignment. While Sunni was teaching, I observed a student become boisterous during a group activity. Sunni distracted the student with a humorous response, and the student quickly re-engaged in the activity. When I asked Sunni about this tactic, she stated that she has learned with this particular student, that once he becomes disengaged with the activity, she must react quickly and in a positive way or the student will become very disruptive. She saw this as a way to teach him to calm down before she lost his attention completely.

Natural. Some participants in this study described their role in teaching coping skills as a natural one. Two thirds, or six of the nine participants, indicated that they feel their role in teaching skills is an important part of teaching. Brad, Terry, Tracy, and Becky all used the word "natural" to describe their role in teaching coping skills to their students. They all described multiple situations where they incorporated coping skills into their daily classroom practices. In observations, I noticed very smooth transitions from whole class instruction to group work to independent assignments. During the observations, I recognized the teachers' ability to identify a potential crisis with a student

and defuse it rather quickly. In the majority of these situations, students were involved in the decision-making process. For example, Brad recognized a student did not have his music for the song they were learning, and Brad helped him work through options to replace his music book. In this incident, Brad provided the student with options, and the student made the decision to solve the problem.

Many of the participants described their role in natural ways, much like the parent of the child while he or she is attending school. Teachers felt responsible to prepare their students with skills to cope with stressors in life. All nine of the participants indicated it is their role to help students learn how to work through the struggles of life. Kevin stated, “Kids do not know how to positively handle adversity, so it is my job to teach them how to do that” (Personal Interview, 2019). Tracy said, “They may not remember the history I teach them, but they will remember the life lessons of working out issues and staying positive. That is what I try to focus on in my classroom” (Personal Interview, 2019). These are just two examples of how the teachers described their role in teaching their students how to learn coping skills.

Teacher’s Role in Teaching Coping Skills

When asked about their role in teaching coping skills, teachers answered emphatically that they feel it is part of their job to prepare their students for the real world after students leave the seventh and eighth grade system. Some of the participants felt that a major part of that preparation is to teach coping skills to their students. However, not all teachers feel a natural comfort level to teach coping skills to their students. Those teachers who felt unsure or uncomfortable about teaching coping skills in the classroom described their uncertainty in relation to a lack of formal

training on how to teach coping skills. This uncertainty is a strong description of their lack of efficacy to effectively teach their students how to cope or overcome the stress in their lives. However, during classroom observations, these teachers worked with students to perform breathing and relaxation exercises. Wendi and Sunni had learned breathing techniques through outside sources and felt comfortable using them in their own lives. Therefore, they would try to incorporate those exercises into the classroom on an individual basis.

A common theme from each interview and observation was the importance of building a strong relationship with the students. Several teachers went as far as to describe themselves as the parent of their students during the school day. These relationships empower them to help students through tough situations. Sunni (2019) stated, “Rules without relationships equal rebellion” (Personal Interview, 2019). The participants provided examples of the teacher-to-student relationship as the foundation of reaching the child on a social emotional level. Kevin presented concrete examples of times he was able to correct students because he had first formed a trust bond with the student. This allowed him the opportunity to deescalate a student because the student trusted the teacher. In addition, Tracy described how the negative home lives of some of her students affect their ability to positively handle difficulty at school. Therefore, in her classroom, she aims to provide the students with a positive setting built on trust, so students will learn to positively cope with the daily struggles of school. All nine participants discussed the importance of the student-to-teacher relationship. They explained that without that relationship, many of the coping skills strategies would be fruitless.

All of the participants took great responsibility in their role to prepare their students for the struggles all people will likely face in high school and in life. While observing classrooms, I witnessed a natural application of teacher led coping skills for students. Although they expressed that they may not feel completely comfortable in teaching various coping skills in the classroom, each participant felt it is necessary to teach students to cope using the strategies teachers are most comfortable teaching. Teachers expressed how important their role is in working with students on a daily basis to teach them how to cope with negative situations. They spoke about this role in their interview and exhibited it in the classroom observations. Table 4 represents the data teachers provided about their own self-efficacy with teaching coping skills in the classroom.

Table 4

Role in Teaching Coping Skills

Teacher Name	Comfort Level	Example
Brad	Natural	Personally, for me it feels very natural because I think just the idea of being able to function as adults, even though my students are not adults, but it is like the simple things of teaching them how to fix obvious things. For example, we went to contest Saturday, and we went in the warm up room. It was just another band room, and the chairs were set up, but they weren't set up the way we sit. When I turn around to start the warm up, my kids are all sitting weird. I say, "Why are y'all sitting like this?" They say, "Because there are only three rows." I say, "The chairs aren't bolted to the floor. We can move the chairs to fit our needs." So, I think, I try to make kids aware of the things that are obvious to us as adults.

Robin	Positive	I would be all for teaching coping skills. We are bound by our state standards, and we don't have much time to veer, truthfully. Unfortunately, we don't. But I would be willing to try anything to help a kid defuse before it becomes problematic.
Wendi	Unsure	I feel great about teaching coping skills, but I don't feel adequate. I would love to have a workshop over coping skills because I just read a book about yoga breathing one time, and it was a children's book.
Kevin	Natural	I feel like I teach coping skills all the time. We should be teaching them all the time. I mean, maybe not like specific coping skills, but more like how to handle adversity. These kids don't know how to positively handle adversity.
Sunni	Uncomfortable	I must not be very good at it because I really don't know what I'm doing. I think, I go with my gut. Just like with the guy in my class you observed with the hurt finger this morning. That's just my gut. I don't know if that is coping or not, but I was like, "Hey, I need you to still do the work, but you don't have to use your left hand (his dominant hand). You can use your right hand. I'm going to grade it based on the fact you are drawing with your right hand instead of your left hand. You can still get through this. If it's really bad, we can send you home." I focus on coping skills when the individual needs it. It is hard to find time to teach kids how to cope because we expect them to cope already.
Terry	Natural	I don't think about teaching coping skills. I mean, I do think about teaching them how to deal with things, but I don't really think about is as coping skills. I just think, "Ok, you take a breath." I think probably most teachers teach them, but they just don't realize that is what they are doing.
Tracy	Natural	I think of coping skills as life skills, and they are going to stick with my kids. They might not always remember the things in history I taught them, but I feel like the things in their lives are important. I always try to reach them to be positive like creating a growth mindset and positive thinking. I think all of those things are

important because not all of my students have a home life where people teach them about positivity. So, if I can sneak those types of things in or help my students through a situation, I feel that those are just as rewarding. The other day a student was upset, and another student said, “We can’t talk bad about this. We just need to calm down and talk about this.” I thought, “Yes!”

Becky	Natural	I think teaching coping skills is just a part of teaching. I mean, you are not going to let them continue to escalate. If my students are in a bad mood or agitated, I am going to help them cope through it, or they are not going to be able to move forward.
-------	---------	---

Lynn	Natural	If you want kids to be successful, which there is no way around that, you have to help them push through. Whenever things are down, what do I want my students to do? Earlier this year, I had a young lady whose grade took a nose dive. I pulled her aside and asked what was going on. She said, “My mom’s boyfriend walked out on them and took my stuff with him.” I almost cried with her. I talked her through the situation and tried to teach her how to control her own emotions because she can’t control anyone else’s. I continue to check on her.
------	---------	--

Research Question Three: How prepared do select seventh and eighth grade teachers feel in teaching coping skills to students? A) What types of preparation do these seventh and eighth grade teachers receive to teach coping skills? B) What preparation do they feel is most helpful?

Teacher preparation programs cover many topics such as classroom management, curriculum requirements, and lesson planning. However, all nine participants reported no formal coping skills training in their teacher preparation programs nor in professional development in their professional development programs. Therefore, many of the

teachers feel unprepared to adequately teach effective coping skills.

Professional development. When asked about professional development for teachers, the coping skills training the participants reported, if any, were child abuse training, Ruby Payne, and classroom management practices. None of these concentrate on the teaching of coping skills in the classroom. Child abuse training is a state mandated training that focuses on child abuse reporting. The theme of Ruby Payne training is poverty and its effects on education. Classroom management is an ongoing effort to assist teachers with techniques to maintain student engagement to lessen classroom disruptions. Two of the participants had attended the classroom management bootcamp and spoke positively about it. However, it is a new addition to Jackson Public Schools, and the participants have been with the district for at least seven years, At least half of the participants reported that they have had no formal training in the techniques of teaching coping skills. However, all nine participants expressed a desire to attend professional development activities that provide hands-on training of coping skills that would be useful for their students.

Practical application. When asked about coping skills trainings they would like to have, there were various answers. Robin, Wendi, and Sunni asked for specific and practical coping skills that they could immediately bring back to their classroom and teach certain students. It was as if they all had a specific student in mind that they really wanted to reach and help. Terry, Tracy, and Becky wanted to know more about teaching their students breathing and relaxation techniques that could be used in an overall classroom setting prior to stressful events such as exams or presentations. Each of these participants talked about what coping skill techniques they had researched on their own

and tried to incorporate these skills into their classrooms. Wendi and Terry both spoke of books they had read to learn more about calming techniques for students. Some practiced specific breathing techniques, some practiced a cool down technique, and some practiced communication techniques with the students. This is evidence of the teachers ability to notice when their students are in stressful situations, and their desire to teach students how to cope positively with that stress.

Prepared curriculum. Although, there was little to no formal training for each of the participants in either teacher preparation programs or in professional development, they all voiced a desire to learn anything that would help their students be more successful emotionally and academically. Some teachers preferred a boxed set of curricula they could use when an incident arose, some participants indicated they would rather learn many practical techniques, and some voiced a concern about lack of time to teach additional skills outside of their curriculum standards. However, they all spoke of the desire to assist their students in troubling situations.

Preparation in Teaching Coping Skills

When asked about preparation that the participants have had in learning how to teach coping skills in the classroom or in learning how to better teach coping skills, the answers varied quite a bit. Many of the participants struggled with aligning any professional development with true coping skills training even though they spoke of mandated child abuse training and classroom management strategies. Although child abuse training, classroom management bootcamps, and college preparation classes help teachers recognize negative behaviors in students and adults in their lives, these trainings do not usually focus on coping skills of students or how to teach them in the

classroom. Several participants could not recall any type of training that would fall into the coping skills category.

Although the participants mentioned their own frustration with the multiple tasks that accompany classroom teaching, the participants were all very positive about receiving training regarding how to connect with their students and assist them through a crisis. All of the teachers but one did not view coping skills training as an additional task required in the classroom. Sunni stated that she felt very “bombarded” in the classroom already and views this as an additional requirement for teachers, yet she constantly searches for innovative ways to help her students who struggle on an emotional level (Personal Interview, 2019). The most common element mentioned during the interviews was the need for practical ways to teach students how to cope in daily situations in and out of the classroom. The participants specifically mentioned how helpful it would be to learn multiple useful coping skills that they could easily teach to their students. Their hope is that the students would learn several strategies and be able to choose the ones that work best for them in stressful times. Robin and Terry stated the importance for them to understand which student behaviors respond best to certain coping skills. This is evidence of their lack of understanding of the individual nature of coping skills. Therefore, it is evidence of the need for formal training on the teaching and utilization of coping skills in the classroom. During the interviews, most of the participants were not as confident with their answers to this particular question. Table 5 provides information about the preparedness of teachers to teach coping skills in the classroom.

Table 5

Past and Future Teacher Preparedness

Teacher Name	Past Preparation	Desired Future Preparation
Brad	We have to attend the child abuse training every year. It gets redundant because it's the same thing every year. I think it's important as is all professional development. When I student taught we had a student advisory period. I am not a fan because my advisory students were not the kids I had in class. I had 30 random kids for 22 minutes, and we had no relationship, and we weren't going to build one seeing each other once a week.	Learning how to interact with kids in a healthy manner. It doesn't need to be about the materials we present to kids like curriculum. I don't think any of that is beneficial in the first week of school to say, "ok, let's talk about our feelings." Teachers have to be able to establish a rapport with the kids first.
Robin	I attended a classroom management bootcamp a couple of years ago, and I would have to look at my notes to see what I drew from that, that I still use. One summer the curriculum department offered a summer program. I learned some really great writing projects that also had art embedded in them. And I think those can help kids deal with stress. You know, my kids cannot express themselves easily, so I try to do a lot of art, so they can express themselves.	I need some scientific data about what works, and then, I need to be taught what works. I need some deeper knowledge about what truly can help and how to present it to my kids. I need some strategies on what to present and how to present. I think someone needs to show me what to do, and then, I need to bring it back to my kids. The type of workshop I look for are ones where I get something tangible that I can take back to my classroom and use the next day. The beauty of it would be to teach students all coping skills, and then, they can pick the ones that work for them.

Wendi	None	Well, like the yoga breathing, a workshop that really teaches techniques that you could go to school the next day and teach your kids. I think it would be really important for our students because of their background and home life. You know a lot of our kids' parents are in prison, so we have some anger issues, and they could really use some coping skills. We could really use some techniques to teach them coping skills.
Kevin	No formal training, just the school of hard knocks.	I am not sure what kinds of training are out there. If there is anything, just teach basic how to handle adversity. I know we always have a motivational speaker at the beginning of the year. I would like to get maybe one that focusses on "How do we get our kids to cope?" When things go badly, how do we get our kids to respond and come back instead of cowering down and quitting. I feel bombarded as a teacher with everything I have to do. I always feel like the thing I want most is how to reach that kid who is unreachable. I definitely want help with the oppositional defiant kid also. How do I help an autistic kid in my classroom when he or she is losing it? That is the training I would really find beneficial.
Sunni	None	

Terry	I have read some books. I have been to therapy for my own panic attacks. I try and apply those things I have learned.	I think it would be very helpful if first year teachers were given more help. First, second, and third year teachers were given more help in how to interact with their students, especially with how different our kids are now that what we were when we were young.
Tracy	I don't know if I have ever had anything on coping. I would totally be open to it because I feel like if they are not emotionally ready to learn, they are not going to learn.	I would love to know how to deal with kids who exhibit behaviors that are not developmentally appropriate such as screaming out at others. I would be open to skills I could use in the classroom because I know some skills. I would like to know more.
Becky	I am sure in classroom management things I have taken, I am sure there was some coping, but I don't remember specifically.	My first reaction to that question is that I would like some group skills where you work with groups. Probably just talking with other teachers and how they cope would help. It is so much a part of everything we do in the classroom because of who these kids are.
Lynn	There is a little bit of Ruby Payne in there, and it is more classroom management. I think that was during student teaching that I learned that. I didn't realize how important it was at the time. Mostly, it has been on the job training.	I can't really think of anything right now.

Research Question Four: What role do past experiences, modeling by others, social persuasion, and emotional state, key tenets of Bandura's (1997) Self-Efficacy Theory, have in teacher self-efficacy to teach coping skills?

Bandura's (1997) Self-Efficacy Theory is constructed in the belief that people make daily decisions based on their personal belief of their own capabilities, and self-efficacy is the core of strengthening personal expectations and avoidant behaviors (Bandura, 1997). Bandura (1997) explained that a teacher's self-efficacy plays an important role on his or her ability to structure the classroom activities in a way that ushers students towards emotional and academic success. Teachers who have a high self-efficacy tend to believe they can reach children who come from difficult places, while teachers who have lower self-efficacy struggle with strategies to work with these students (Bandura, 1997). Therefore, teachers who have a high self-efficacy in the classroom tend to create a classroom environment which results in more time on academic tasks and less time on classroom management (Bandura, 1997). The four tenets of Bandura's (1977) Self-Efficacy Theory are past experiences, modeling by others, social persuasion, and emotional state. Self-efficacy can be built through a combination of any of these or just one.

Past experiences. Two thirds of the participants described parts of their own background and personal lives and how that helped them to connect and build relationships with their students. All nine participants defined a good classroom teacher as one who developed a strong relationship with his or her students. However, some teachers showed strong evidence during the classroom observations, and others did not. Those who showed a stronger trusting relationship with their students were able to

redirect the student in crisis more quickly than those who tended to remain more distant with their students. I observed a strong use of teacher led coping skills with those participants who gave more personal details in their interview and explained how that past experience helped them to connect to their students. These participants showed examples of empathy to their students instead of speculating how the students' emotions affected students' behaviors.

Social persuasion. There was a variance in teacher self-efficacy in teaching coping skills to students. Brad, Kevin, Tracy, and Becky sponsored or taught extra-curricular activities and reported a higher self-efficacy than those who solely work with students in the classroom. The four participants described techniques they learned in their extra-curricular activities and how they incorporated those techniques into the classroom. For example, when a teacher coaches, leads, or sponsors a group of students, it allows for an opportunity to develop a stronger relationship with students because the students have a desire to play an instrument, participate in a sport or fine arts field, or be a part of the organization. Additionally, those teachers who sponsored or coached spend more time with students outside the classroom, which allows them an opportunity to develop a stronger relationship with the students. Many times, this carries over to the classroom as well. This strong connection is evident in the classroom observations and in the interviews when the teachers describe the positive results of the teacher-to-student relationship. In each of the classrooms of the teacher who was a coach or sponsor, the students seemed to have a more open relationship with the teacher than those who did not work with students in extra-curricular activities.

Emotional state. Some of the participants described situations that relate more

closely to their own emotional state. After an observation with Sunni's classroom, she was apologetic because her classroom is not managed in a "traditional" way, meaning her students were not sitting in perfect rows while she lectured for an hour in complete silence. Instead, the class period was filled with several noisy activities, and the students transitioned without any negative behaviors. At one point, one student dealt with a stressful technology failure, and Sunni deflected the attention to a separate activity. When the technology was corrected, the student presented, and there was no down time or disruptive behaviors. The students in the class had learned to be supportive of each other in any situation. During the interview and after the observation, Sunni explained that she feels like other teachers frown upon her teaching style because her classroom is not quiet most of the time. She described her classroom activities as group work, peer helpers, and teacher led activities. However, her office referrals have diminished, and her students have shown great growth on their benchmark exams. She feels judged by her coworkers, which can lower her self-efficacy, but she focused on her students instead. Sunni felt it is more important to connect to her students and provide a positive, supportive environment instead of a structured, silent classroom.

Modeling by others. Modeling by others was the one tenet least discussed by the participants. Of the nine teachers, only two reported how they have worked with other teachers to learn how to help their students cope in the classroom. Tracy and Lynn have both sought out a coworker to help them learn how to incorporate coping skills into their daily practices. Tracy played a part in a relaxation exercise with another teacher, and since then, she has integrated some of the practices with her students who have emotional outbursts. She reported that she and her coworker share best practices about working with

students who struggle with life. In addition, Lynn reached out to a coworker to learn ways to assist her students in her math class. She recognized that students tend to struggle with math at a high rate, and she needed to learn techniques to assist them. She used those techniques this year and has seen improvement with her students. Most of the teachers work more closely with teachers in their departments who share common curriculum, and that is the main focus of their discussions, not teaching student how to use coping skills.

Bandura's Self-Efficacy Theory

According to Bandura's (1997) Self-Efficacy Theory, a person's self-efficacy develops through the application of past experiences, modeling by others, social persuasion, and emotional state. All four of these tenets combine to form one's belief that he/she can perform certain tasks. In this study, self-efficacy of the participants varied from somewhat low to very high. With the difference in their own past experiences, what they have witnessed others do, the persuasion of their own social circles, and their own emotional state in a particular situation, self-efficacy fluctuates from participant to participant. Additionally, levels of teacher self-efficacy fluctuate as new skills are introduced. Through classroom observations, I witnessed teachers teaching their students how to cope with different situations without the teacher recognizing it as coping. Terry reported, "I do think about teaching them maybe how to deal with things, but I don't really think about it as coping skills" (Personal Interview, 2019).

Past experiences. The participants in this study were raised in a completely different environment than their students. Additionally, the teachers backgrounds were

different from each other. Some were raised in a rural community, some were raised in the city, and one was raised traveling around the world. The past experiences of the participants have helped them develop various levels of comfort in teaching coping skills. For example, Kevin experienced some difficulties in his own past. Therefore, he has developed a strong efficacy in helping others work through stressful situations. Kevin described several obstacles he has overcome in his own life, and how he applied that knowledge to help his students also overcome difficult situations. On the other hand, Brad explained that he is an only child and did not have a sibling to lean on when he struggled in life, so when he witnesses his students struggling, he reaches out to them, so they do not feel alone. In both of these examples, the teacher is using his own past experience to help develop coping skills in his students. Other participants described how they learned yoga breathing or knowledge they gained from books they have read while in therapy. Because these teachers had experienced a multitude of struggles in their own lives, those experiences helped them to develop various levels of self-efficacy to teach coping skills to others.

Modeling by others. Modeling by others is another tenet of Bandura's (1997) Self-Efficacy Theory. In this study, two of the participants depicted examples of what they learned from watching others use and teach coping skills to students. Tracy recounted a time when her coworker used her to practice coping skills. Tracy practiced the coping skills and recorded if they helped her and described how it helped her in her own life. In her words, "It really opened my eyes to coping skills" (Personal Interview, 2019). After her experience with the use of coping skills and the benefits she received, Tracy began to incorporate these skills into her own classroom. Although she is the

least experienced teacher in the study, she has developed a high self-efficacy to teach coping skills to her students. Another example is Lynn's development of efficacy to use coping skills in the classroom. Lynn described how her experience of watching and talking to other teachers and how the modeling by others has helped her learn how to teach her own students a certain coping skill: the use of words. Lynn has learned how to engage her students into conversations, so they can learn how to use their own words to work through their struggles. Because Lynn is a math teacher, she described multiple situations where she would talk students through their own lack of self-efficacy in terms of math assignments. Not all participants mentioned examples of modeling by others; however, these participants indicated this is how they would prefer to learn the skills of teaching coping skills in the classroom. In other words, teachers stated they preferred to participate in hands-on professional development to learn how to teach various coping skills, so they will feel more comfortable in learning the correct way to work with struggling students.

Social persuasion. The next tenet of Bandura's (1997) Self-Efficacy Theory is social persuasion. With the increase in accountability inside the classroom, social persuasion can cause additional stress on teachers. One participant reported the pressure she feels to operate a structured, quiet classroom. However, she feels her students learn best in an open, helpful environment. Therefore, Tracy created an environment in which students are allowed to work together on most assignments. The students also openly discuss their learning during the majority of classroom activities. Many times, these discussions create the opposite of a structured, quiet environment for her students. Tracy expressed her belief in the importance of her students working

through the stress of classroom activities instead of the students sitting quietly working individually. Tracy was adamant about her decision to work with students to cope every day, even though she also expressed concern about how she is perceived as a teacher. She felt the social pressures of her classroom neighbors, yet she felt her students' wellbeing was more important. The mention of social persuasion was absent from the other interviews and classroom observations.

Another aspect of social persuasion seemed to occur among the students. During the observations, I noticed students watching as the teacher worked with individual students who were struggling emotionally. It appeared that the students were observing how the struggling student reacted to the teacher's assistance and direction. When asked about the response of other students, teachers reported that the positive reinforcement seemed to positively affect the other students in the classroom. For example, Tracy recalled a situation in her classroom where a student actually helped another student cope with a difficult situation. Tracy overheard the first student use the same techniques Tracy had taught the class to practice self-calming. This confirmed to Tracy that her practices were effective even if she was not leading them herself.

Emotional state. Finally, emotional state is also a key tenet of Bandura's (1997) Self- Efficacy Theory. The participants' emotional state is an important element of their self-efficacy to teach coping skills to students because it can help create the emotional connection the participants all described in their interview. Although all nine participants mentioned their emotional state, five of the participants described their actual feelings in relation to teaching coping skills to students. Robin, Wendi, and Kevin provided examples of how the use of coping skills in their lives allowed them to

better understand how to teach students coping skills. Robin stated, “I know what makes me feel better and calm down, so I assume it works for other people as well” (Personal Interview, 2019). Wendi and Kevin echoed that same mindset when they described how their emotional state allowed them to better work with the students struggling with a similar situation or condition. Sunni and Terry expressed that they believe in creating a positive classroom where no negative comments are allowed to be made to each other; instead, students must edify each other. The self-efficacy of teachers in teaching coping skills seemed to be linked to their own abilities for self-regulation. When teachers approached disruptive situations in a calm, controlled manner, the student typically responded positively. Additionally, teachers who were able to remain calm during the classroom disruptions also expressed enhanced self-efficacy in handling future incidents where coping skills would be needed.

During the interviews and observations, not all participants provided examples of all four tenets, but through the data analysis process, the tenets did appear. Examples of all four tenets provided necessary data to illustrate the various levels of the development of a teachers’ self-efficacy to teach coping skills to students in the classroom. Table 6 provides data about the four tenets of Bandura’s (1997) Theory of Self-Efficacy.

Table 6

The Tenet’s of Bandura’s (1997) Self-Efficacy Theory

Teacher Name	Tenet(s)	Example
--------------	----------	---------

Brad	Past Experiences	<p>You can play students a video. You can tell them not to bully, but until you hear a kid call another kid retarded and you say, “Hey, let me tell you why you shouldn’t say that. The day is coming, because I remember when it happened to me in like the seventh grade. When you call someone that (acting all tough), and then all of a sudden somebody has a brother or an uncle who is intellectually disabled. Then you feel like you’re about a quarter of an inch tall. That’s why you need to not say it. I know you are going to keep saying it, but I’m just letting you know.” I think that’s one of the biggest coping skills of all is being empathetic.</p>
Robin	Emotional State	<p>I know what makes me feel good, what makes me calm down, and I assume it might help others. These kids are bringing bigger problems that I can solve. So, I need some help knowing what to teach coping, and then I would be willing to teach it.</p>
Wendi	Emotional State Past Experience	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I tell my kids, “I know you get mad at your parents because I was in junior high once, and your siblings. I know you get mad at them, and that is normal.” • So, I teach them yoga breathing. I would love to have a workshop over coping skills because I just read about (breathing) in a book one time, and it was a children’s book. I just thought, “Oh, that would work.” Yoga breathing, I teach it because I want them to do it before a big test they have to take. I say, “Use it because I use it if I get mad at my own kids or my parents or whatever. I have to use it.” It is so cute to see them close their eyes and breath. I am impressed.

Kevin	Past Experience/ Emotional State	I would just say real life; school of hard knocks. Before I taught, I didn't start teaching until I was 30, and the eight years previous from when I graduated until now was when I was trying to get into politics and law school. You know, get a job in a different profession. First of all, it was politics, and I failed there. Then I went to law school, and tried to push through, and I failed there. I could have just given up. From there, I came into teaching and found that was my calling, you know, just kept pushing. That is how I feel with education and coping skills. At 26, I was diagnosed with ADHD, and so, I have something with the kids I can relate to.
Sunni	Emotional State	I work more off of a gut instinct. I don't know if this is coping or not. I don't allow put-downs in my room because it's just so harmful at this age. They are so self-conscious to begin with, and they're going to laugh about anything when someone says something about them. I decided to edify everyone, and I spend a lot of time in the beginning of the year showing the kids just what that looks like. "Instead of that put-down, what could we have said instead?" I mean you're still voicing something in that put-down, but how do we change it and lift them up, so we get the correction that we're looking for?
Terry	Emotional State Past Experience	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Once I figured out that the biggest thing is, is that kids are not out to get you. They don't do things against you when they're doing something wrong, and I had to learn that, and I think once I did, it was better. • I have read some books about coping. I have actually, I used to have panic attacks really bad. So, I had therapy for that. So, I mean, I can apply that.

Tracy	Modeling by Others	I thought about what worked for me, and I know I'm not the only one, but I do try to keep them in a calm situation. I have one teacher who really helped me open my eyes to coping skills whenever she was going through the counseling program, and she needed a helper, so I did a meditation exercise with her. It was one to those web site things. It was called Head Space. Now, when I feel stressed out, my Alexa machine will do a little ten-minute exercise, and that's how I sleep. While I am not comfortable pushing that with my students, I just try to do little relaxation things with them.
Becky	Social Persuasion	If someone walks into my room, they are not going to understand what is going on because my students help each other out, and it is never perfectly quiet in here, never. Not all teachers feel okay about a non-traditional room, but I have decided that sometimes it gets too noisy, and I have to quiet them down. If they can help each other, it saves me time. I can't help all of them all of the time. I love them so much, and you just have to help them get through it.
Lynn	Modeling by Others	Little things I have picked over the years by watching other teachers are things like 'teaching them to put into words what is going on.' That's something I picked up about five years ago. Putting it into words; that's the difficult part, but finding those motivational styles is important. Another thing I learned from a co-worker is to relate their classroom struggles to the sports of other activities.

Summary of Findings

The findings from this study indicate that the participants are keenly aware that their students struggle with daily issues that cause anxiety and stress. Although the teachers may not be able to relate to the specific struggle, they are able to determine when a student is applying a negative or positive coping skill to handle the situation. These participants have developed ways to communicate with their students during these

emotional times and work to deescalate situations that arise. Teachers felt comfortable helping most students deal with their daily crises, but they were open to the idea of learning new ways to help their students. The areas where teachers are requesting the most help are with those students who exhibit extreme outbursts. These types of outbursts can be the most disruptive and take the most time away from academics. Overall, teachers feel somewhat comfortable with learning new ways to teach coping skills; even though, they do not always recognize they are already teaching coping skills to their students.

After analyzing the data from the interviews and observations, I discovered a common element from all teachers: the importance of relationships. The teachers stated on multiple occasions how important the relationship is between students and teachers. Many of the teachers described how this relationship forms the foundation needed to connect to their students, especially in times of high emotional need. This relationship must be founded on trust, which allowed the student to “open up” to the teacher. This openness and trust created an opportunity for the teacher to work with the student to deescalate the emotional state of the student. Teachers helped students by teaching coping skills throughout daily lessons; even though, they did not realize what they taught was coping skills.

According to the data collected in this study, a lack of formal training is evident in the teacher preparation programs that these teachers experienced and in professional development during their careers. The participants in the study could not recall any type of training on teaching coping skills in their teacher preparation programs; although, some teachers had been teaching for 20 or more years. More notably, there is a lack of

training on teaching coping skills provided in the school's professional development plan; even though, this particular school partnered with an outside agency to provide coping skills curriculum to their students. The teachers had been given a brochure to use as a reference, but neither the organization nor the district provided training to accompany it. However, teachers reported their desire to learn more about how to assist their students with learning new coping skills.

Despite this lack of training, the teachers in this study demonstrated the ability to teach coping skills to their students. These coping skills became an effective form of classroom management as each teacher worked to facilitate growth in student outcomes. Teachers expressed efficacy to meet the needs of their students even though they did not often recognize their efforts as "teaching coping skills." Teachers in this study were motivated to facilitate student success by their commitment to the students and the relationships they had developed. These relationships became the platform for student use of coping skills in these classrooms.

Implications

The findings from this study provide implications for research, theory, and practice.

Implications for Research

The idea of teachers teaching coping skills in the classroom has not been a common topic in teacher preparation programs or professional development plans. However, many teachers reported that students need coping skills, and without these skills, students' behaviors have worsened over the years. Sunni reported that some student behaviors have become so extreme, teachers do not feel like they can teach

because they are spending too much time correcting the behavior. This loss of teaching time creates a conundrum for educators because teachers usually focus mostly on the state standards and required district curriculum, yet they are using valuable time correcting student behaviors. This loss of teaching time likely adds to the stress that teachers feel when working to achieve educational outcome goals. Additionally, teacher retention is of concern in the State where this study was conducted. Research indicates a number of reasons that teachers leave the profession including the emotional stress of dealing with students who are difficult to manage (Mulvahill, 2019). Findings in this study may have implications for reducing teacher stress as these teachers were able to reduce discipline problems through encouraging student self-regulation. Additional research is needed to understand the influence of enhanced classroom management through the teaching of coping skills.

Past research has focused on the use of coping skills for student success in academics, transition into college, and survival of urban communities. Finding research dedicated to a teacher's perception of teaching student coping skills proves to be sparse. However, teachers tend to struggle with the ever-changing behaviors of students today. Robin and Sunni described their desire to learn research-based practices to use in the classroom to help kids regulate their emotions. Therefore, more research is needed to fully comprehend the need for understanding and incorporating student coping skills into every classroom in an effort to help students regulate their behaviors. Additionally, further investigation into teacher actions and attitudes that facilitate student use of coping skills is needed. For example, it was beyond the scope of this study to gain a better understanding of exactly what teachers did to alleviate student stress. Additional research

could yield important insight into this topic. Another finding that has implications for research is the efficacy that these teachers displayed for helping students cope with stress despite little training or professional development to learn to do so. Additional research could help to identify the mental representations or experiences that support teacher success in teaching coping skills.

Implications for Theory

Bandura's (1997) Self-Efficacy Theory explained that "teachers with a high sense of instructional efficacy operate on the belief that difficult students are teachable through extra effort and appropriate techniques and that they can enlist family supports and overcome negating community influences through effective teaching" (p. 240). All teachers can ultimately reach the most difficult student as long as they have constructed a high self-efficacy in their own abilities to teach these students (Bandura, 1997).

According to this study, the gap in efficacy to teach coping skills occurred due to two identified elements: 1) allowable time in the curriculum calendars and 2) a lack of complete understanding of the application of student coping skills. Both of these elements led to these teachers' level of self-efficacy in teaching coping skills to students in the classroom. What this study adds to theory is that these teachers, in the absence of formal training, pulled from their past experiences and care and concern for students as a source of efficacy to facilitate students' ability to cope with stressful situations. Bandura (1997) suggests that self-efficacy is enhanced through mastery experiences. It is likely that teacher efficacy was enhanced as students responded positively to coping strategies. Additional research is needed to gain a better understanding of how these mastery experiences influenced teacher efficacy to handle these, sometimes, very difficult

situations.

Another element of research that needs further exploration are the areas of this study which were not covered by Bandura's (1997) Self Efficacy Theory. For example, the lack of teacher training and professional development did not fall under the four tenets of Bandura's Theory. This theory focused mainly on what develops the self-efficacy in teachers, yet it does not focus on the sustainability of the efficacy. This is cause for further studies in the theoretical frameworks that might apply to teaching coping skills in the classroom. Another area of further research might be in the application of theory to teachers as a collective group instead of individual teachers, as this study was conducted. A theory that might serve this type of study is Mary Douglas's (1982) Typology of Grid and Group. According to Harris (2015), this theory "helps educators meet conceptual and methodological challenges inherent in cultural inquiry and educational practice" (p. 135). With the use of this theory, a study could be conducted to explore teachers as a group instead of individually and their efficacy of teaching coping skills in connection with school culture. Both of these areas are open to further exploration.

Implications for Practice

Students of all ages must learn coping skills, so they can navigate the unpredictable events of life. Previous research states that high levels of coping skills in students provides students with the skills to overcome stressors and regulate their own reactions to adversity, allowing them to find equilibrium during stressful situations (Sanchez et al., 2013; Swanson et al., 2011). These teachers were incorporating coping skills in the classroom even though they did not always recognize this practice. These

educators helped students regulate their feelings, ultimately leading to a change in student behavior. Findings from this study suggest that these teachers were able to enhance instructional time by encouraging these students to cope with anxiety and stress and then return to classroom learning activities. Though not generalizable, these findings indicate also that these teachers could identify potential stressors before they escalated, and they were able to navigate the environment to help students self-regulate through coping skills. This ability may, ultimately, influence student learning outcomes. Additional research is needed to gain a better understanding of how teacher facilitation of coping skills actually supports student learning.

This study illuminated the need for professional development in the area of teaching coping skills to students. The district provided Pathways to Peace as a coping skills curriculum for the students without providing the professional development for the teachers. This was a disconnect and kept the program from reaching its potential. These findings indicated that, if teacher support had been added, teachers could have had a higher self-efficacy to teach coping skills within the classroom. Teachers reported the behaviors they see students exhibit along with the negative and positive coping skills they witness students using. Brad (2019) said, “I think students may cope with the cruddy home situation by coming up here (school) and trying to pick a fight with somebody.” To Brad, this is an example of how his students are coping with their home lives. Many other examples similar to this were reported during data collection for this study. This is evidence that the teachers recognize their students need to develop appropriate coping skills. The missing element is the formal training for these teachers either in the teacher preparation program or in the school’s professional development plan. These findings

also indicate that coping skills do not necessarily need to be taught through a particular curriculum, which is what teachers expect when they are incorporating new skills. Because student stressors vary vastly across students and because students respond to stressful situations in a variety of ways, teacher preparation and/or professional development component designed to teach coping skills to students will likely be, ultimately, incomplete. Therefore, providing a foundation for teachers to prepare them to recognize the need for coping skills and encouraging them to facilitate coping skills in the classroom may provide a platform for learning. Additionally, while not evident in this study, Bandura's (1997) concept of modeling suggests that it is likely that teachers may learn from each other as they share their experiences of facilitating student coping skills. Additional research is needed to understand how teachers can learn from each other to address this very important need.

Recommendations for Future Research

In addition to the recommendations for further research made above, the following recommendations for future research are discussed as possible expansions of this study. Limited research exists on teachers' perceptions of teaching coping skills to students in a seventh and eighth grade classroom. This study was applied to one junior high school housed in a community characterized by high trauma rates. However, coping skills are applicable to all seventh and eighth grade students. Therefore, this study could be applied to other schools with different demographics to determine the self-efficacy of teachers to teach these skills. DeWitt Junior High has a culture of teachers trying to decipher what their students need whether it be emotional or physical.

Data from this study was drawn from nine interviews and seven classroom

observations. All participants have seven or more years of teaching experience, and that selection was purposeful because I drew from the experiences of these career teachers. The study was conducted purposefully in the spring semester because of the stress level during that time of the school year. This same study could be administered with a sample of teachers with all levels of experience to discover the needs of teachers of various levels of experience. In addition, this study could be conducted any time of the school year, as there are stressful times throughout a school year. To collect more data, future research could include survey data from the entire staff to determine the levels of self-efficacy of the teaching staff.

One component of future research could be in the area of providing teachers techniques to de-escalate students before the student's behavior becomes disruptive to the classroom. One major component of this study was the importance of the student-to-teacher relationship. Without this relationship as a foundation, students may not react positively to learning how to handle their own stress through self-regulation. Future research could focus on the connection of this relationship to the teaching of de-escalation for students.

Another topic for future research could focus on how building a positive school culture could lead to a willingness of teachers to learn new techniques to help their students who are dealing with the negative stressors of adolescent years. One finding of this study was the discovery of each teacher's desire to learn new coping skills techniques that he or she can take back to the classroom and teach to students. The culture of DeWitt Junior High is one of support and positive relationships, which creates an environment of focusing on the needs of the students. Future research could focus on the connection of

such an environment to the teachers' willingness to learn these new techniques.

Finally, future research could be conducted to determine the professional development needs of teachers to build their self-efficacy, which will provide teachers with the needed supports for teaching students coping skills. Some teachers in the study have a high self-efficacy in teaching coping skills while others do not. Specific professional development could be created to meet the needs of the teachers in any building and with specific student needs in mind.

Conclusions

Jackson Public Schools has begun to focus on the mental health needs of its students and the professional development needs of its teachers. They have recently hired additional school counselors, mental health professionals, and behavior specialists to assist with student coping skills and provide specialized professional development for its staff members. Oklahoma has discovered that many of its students come from chronic trauma, and students are struggling with coping. Teachers need to be equipped with the skill set to help students deal with their struggles.

The literature reviewed in Chapter II discussed the development or lack of coping skills. Research exists that describes the connection of student coping skills to academic success and improved behaviors, the transition of college students, and the survival skills of those students who live in urban settings. Most of this research is explored through the lens of the student, which limits the research data because it is only explored from the student's point of view instead of the teacher's point of view. This limits the amount of research available for this type of study.

Chapter III described the methodology for this qualitative case study. Jackson

Public Schools has six junior high schools, and DeWitt Junior High School was chosen because of its community culture and socioeconomics of the students in the school. I collected the data during the spring semester of the 2018-2019 school year because I wanted to explore the teachers' perceptions in the spring semester when students and teachers are ready for the school year to end, and the risk of severe weather is greater in the spring. This study included teacher interviews, classroom observations, and an informational brochure. I interviewed teachers who are career and teach a variety of core subjects and electives. Four of the teachers also coach or sponsor extra-curricular activities, which provides a different perspective. Data was collected and analyzed simultaneously as described by Merriam (2001). The entire study was viewed through the lens of teacher self-efficacy.

The epistemological perspective guiding this study is constructivism. The self-efficacy of teachers is built through their ability to interact successfully with their students in the classroom. By providing teachers with a skill set to effectively teach coping skills to their students, the teachers will develop stronger relationships with their students resulting in a well-managed classroom. The data in Chapter IV helps illustrate the perceptions of teachers in their abilities to incorporate the teaching of coping skills in the classroom and their need for focused professional development.

Chapter V focused on the findings of this study. Because this study is different from previous studies regarding student use of coping skills, the findings revealed new information. Teachers perceptions of teaching coping skills to seventh and eighth grade students are exposed through the presentation and analysis of the data collected from interviews and observations. This study applied the tenets of Bandura's (1997) Self-

Efficacy Theory: past experiences, modeling by others, social persuasion, and emotional state. The tenets of the theory helped to explain the teachers and their comfort level of teaching coping skills to students in the classroom. Due to the limited amount of previous research, the research presented in this study provides school districts with knowledge regarding teacher self-efficacy in teaching coping skills to their students as well as the professional development needs of teachers.

Researcher Comments

When this study began, I had no preconceived notions about the results I would discover. I have heard many teachers say, “My students have no concept of coping skills.” Oklahoma has begun to recognize the levels of trauma our students face and how that negatively affects their behavior choices. However, with the lack of school funding Oklahoma schools have endured, school districts do not have the resources to provide additional support to teachers in regard to social emotional learning. Teachers feel frustrated because they are required to teach their students the state standards and expect high test scores. Therefore, there is little room to add in another requirement. My desire is not to add to teachers’ required tasks, but to provide the training they need to equip the students with effective coping skills before they need them in the classroom.

REFERENCES

- Allen, S. F., Pfefferbaum, B., Nitiema, P., Pfefferbaum, R. L., Houston, J. B., McCarter, G. S., Gray, S, R. (2016). Resilience and coping intervention with children and adolescents in at-risk neighborhoods. *Journal of Loss and Trauma* 21(2), 85-98, doi: 10.1080/15325024.2015.1072014
- Armstrong, N. (2005). A long overdue tribute. In *Drayden Flight Research Center* (NASA). Retrieved from https://www.nasa.gov/centers/dryden/news/X-Press/stories/2005/102105_Wings.html
- Ayebo, A. & Assuah, C. (2017). Exploring teachers' knowledge of classroom management and control. *Malaysian Journal of Learning and Instruction*, 14(1), 169-185.
- Bandura, A. (1994). Self-efficacy. In V.S. Ramachandran (Ed.), *Encyclopedia of human behavior* 4, 71-81. New York: Academic Press.
- Bandura, A. (1997). *Self-efficacy. The exercise of control*. New York: W. H. Freeman.
- Bandura, A. (1986). The explanatory and predictive scope of self-efficacy theory. *Journal of Clinical and Psychology*, 4, 359-373.

- Beatty-O'Farrell M.E., Green, A., & Hanna, F. (2010). Classroom management strategies for difficult students: Promoting change through relationships. *Middle School Journal, 41*(4), 4-11.
- Bettis, A. H., Coiro, M. J., England, J., Murphy, L. K., Zelkowitz, R. L., Dejardins, L., Eskridge, R., Adery, L. H., Yarboi, J., Pardo, D. & Compas, B. E. (2017). Comparison of two approaches to prevention of mental health problems in college students: Enhancing coping and executive function skills. *Journal of American College Health. 65*(5), 313-322. doi: 10:1080/07448481.2017.1312411
- Bjorklund, A. L. & Rehling, D. L. (2010). Student perspective of classroom incivility. *College Teaching, 58*, 15-18. doi: 10.1080/87567550903252801
- Blanchet-Cohen, N., & Nelems, R. (2009). *Journey of hope (JOH) curriculum: Building children's and communities' resilience* (Evaluation of Save Children's Journey of Hope Program). Retrieved from Save the Children website:
<http://uscenter.savethechildren.org/SiteAssets/SitePages/Journey%20of%20Hope/IICRD-JOH%20Final%20Report.pdf>
- Bluth, K., Mullarkey, M., & Lathren, C. (2018). Self-compassion: A potential path to adolescent resilience and positive exploration. *Journal of Child and Family Studies, 27*, 3037-3047. doi: 10.1007/s10826-018-1125-1
- Brady, S. S., Gorman-Smith, D., Henry, D. B., & Tolan, P. H. (2008). Adaptive coping reduces the impact of community violence exposure on violent behavior among African American and Latino male adolescents. *Journal of Abnormal Child Psychology, 105*-115.

- Britt, S. L., Mendiola, M. R., Schink, G. H., Tibbetts, R. H., & Jones, S. H. (2016). Financial stress, coping strategy, and academic achievement of college students. *Journal of Financial Counseling and Planning* 27(2), 172-183. doi: 10:1891/1052-3073.27.2.172
- Caples, H. S., & Barrera, Jr., M. (2006). Conflict, support, and coping as mediators of the relation between degrading parenting and adolescent adjustment. *Journal of Youth and Adolescence*, 35(4), 603-615. doi: 10.1007/s10964-006-9057-2
- Chagnon, F. (2007). Coping mechanisms, stressful events, and suicidal behavior among youth admitted to juvenile justice and child welfare services. *Suicide and Life-Threatening Behavior*, 37(4), 439-452.
- Chesmore, A. A., Winston, W., & Brady, S. S. (2015). Academic behavior and performance among African American youth: Association with resources for resilience. *Urban Review* 48, 1-14. doi: 10.1007/s1126-0515-0342-9
- Chesnut, S. R. & Burley, H. (2015). Self-efficacy as a predictor of commitment to the teaching profession: A meta-analysis. *Educational Research Review*, 15, 1-16. doi: 10.106/j.edurev.2015.02.001
- Chua, L. W., Milfont, T. L., & Jose, P.E. (2015). Coping skills help explain how future-oriented adolescents accrue greater well-being over time. *Journal of Youth Adolescence*, 44, 2028-2041. doi: 10.1007/s10964-014-0238-8
- Clarke, A. T., (2006). Coping and interpersonal stress and psychosocial health among children and adolescent: A meta-analysis. *Journal of Youth and Adolescence*, 35(1), 11-24. doi: 10.1007/s10964-005-9001-x

- Clettenberg, S., Gentry, J., Held, M., & Mock, L. A. (2011). Traumatic loss and natural disaster: A case study of a school of a school-based response to Hurricanes Katrina and Rita. *School Psychology International*, 32(5), 553-566. doi: 10.1177/0143034311402928
- Clunies-Ross, E. L., Little, E., & Kienhuis, M. (2008). Self-reported and actual use of proactive and reactive classroom management strategies and their relationship with teacher stress and student behaviour. *Educational Psychology*, 28(6), 693-710. doi: 10.1080/01443410802206700
- Coban, A. E. (2013). Interpersonal cognitive distortions and stress coping strategies of late adolescents. *Egitim Arastirmalari-Eurasian Journal of Educational Research*, 51, 65-84.
- Cohn, S. (2011). The debt that won't go away. *CNBC*. Retrieved March 1, 2019 from <http://www.cnbc.com/id/41511601>
- Cook, C. R., Grady, E. A., Long, A. C., Renshaw, T., Coddington, R. S., Fiat, A., Larson, M. (2017). Evaluating the impact of increasing general education teachers' ratio of positive-to-negative interactions on students' classroom behavior. *Journal of Positive Behavior Interventions* 19(2), 67-77. doi: 10.1177/1098300716679137
- Cooper, J. T., Gage, N. A., Alter, P. J., LaPolla, S., MacSuga-Gage, A. S., Scott, T. M. (2017). *Educators' self-reported training, use, and perceived effectiveness of evidence-based classroom management practices*, 62(1), 13-24. doi: 10.1080/1045988X.2017.1298562
- Coyle, L. D., & Vera, E. M. (2012). Uncontrollable stress, coping, and subject well-being in urban adolescents. *Journal of Youth Studies*, 391-403.

- Crotty, M. (1998). *The foundations of social research: Meaning and perspective in the research process*. London, England: Sage.
- Creswell, J. W. (2011). *Educational research: Planning, conducting, and evaluating quantitative and qualitative research*. New York: Pearson.
- Decarlo Santiago, C. & Wadsworth, M. E., (2009). Coping with family conflict: What's helpful and what's not for low-income adolescents. *Journal of Child and Family Studies* 18, 192-202. doi: 10.1007/s10826-008-9219-9
- Delale-O'Connor, L. A., Alvarez, A. J., Murray, I. E., & Milner, H. R. (2017). Self-efficacy beliefs, classroom management, and the cradle-to-prison pipeline. *Journal of Theory Into Practice* 56(3), 178-186. doi: 10.1080/00405841.2017.1336038
- Dicke, T., Parker, P. D., Marsh, H. W., Kunter, M., Schmeck, A., & Leutner, D. (2014). Self-efficacy in classroom management, classroom disturbances, and emotional exhaustion: A moderated mediation analysis of teacher candidates. *Journal of Educational Psychology* 106(2), 569-583. doi: 10.1037/a0035504
- Earnest, D. R., Dwyer, W. O. (2010). In their own words: An online strategy for increasing stress-coping skills among college freshmen. *College Student Journal* 44(4), 888-990.
- Gagne, M.-H., & Melancon, C. (2013). Parental psychological violence and adolescent behavioral adjustment: The role of coping and social support. *Journal of Interpersonal Violence*, 176-200. doi: 10.1177/0886260512448842
- Graves, S. L., Herndon-Sobalvarro, A., Nichols, K., Aston, C., Ryan, Alison, Blefari, A., Schutte, K., Schachner, A., Vicoria, L., & Preir, D. (2017). Examining the

- effectiveness of a culturally adapted social-emotional intervention for African American males in an urban setting. *School Psychology Quarterly*, 32(1), 62-74. doi: 10.1037/spq0000145
- Hagenauer, G., Hascher, T., & Volet, S. E. (2015). Teacher emotions in the classroom: associations with student engagement, classroom discipline and the interpersonal teacher-student relationship. *European Journal of Psychology Education* 30, 385-403. doi: 10.1007/s10212-015-0250-0
- Killman, C. (2019). Children who suffer rough childhoods have a greater likelihood of being adversely affected later in life. *Tulsa World* Retrieved from <https://www.tulsaworld.com/news/specialreports-databases/waht-people-are-saying-about-the-tulsa-world-s-series/collection-f02406e4-2603-afba-092bb80f829b.html#13>
- Kochenderfer-Ladd, B., & Skinner, K. (2002). Children's coping strategies: Moderators of the effects of peer victimization. *Developmental Psychology*, 38(2), 267-278. doi:10.1037//0012-1649.38.2.267
- Küçüktepe, S. E., Akbağ, M., & Özmercan, E. E. (2017). An investigation regarding the preservice teachers' emotional literacy levels and self-efficacy beliefs. *Journal of Education and Learning*, 6(4), 267-275.
- Lazarus, R.S. (1998). *Fifty years of the research of R.S. Lazarus: Analysis of historical and perennial issues*, Mahwah: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, Inc.
- Lewis, R., Roache, J., & Romi, S. (2011). Coping styles as mediators of teachers' classroom management techniques. *Research in Education*, 85(1), 53-68.
- Lincoln, Y. S., & Guba, E. G. (1985). *Naturalistic inquiry*. Beverly Hills: Sage.

- Martin, B. *ACEs in Oklahoma* [PowerPoint slides]. Retrieved from http://www.oksenate.gov/publications/senate_studies/Interim%20Studies%20-%202018/18-17,18-26/ACE%20Interim%20Study%20September%202018.pdf
- Merriam, S. B., (2001). *Qualitative Research and Case Study Applications in Education*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- Mitchell, B. S., Hirn, R. G., & Lewis, T. J. (2017). Enhancing effective classroom management in schools: Structures for changing teacher behavior. *Teacher Education and Special Education, 40*(2), 140-153. doi: 10.1177/0888406417700961
- Mofidi, T., El-Alayli, A., & Brown, A. A. (2014). Trait gratitude and grateful coping as they relate to college student persistence, success, and integration in school. *Journal of College Student Retention 16*(3), 325-349.
- Mota, C. P., & Matos, P. M. (2013). Peer attachment, coping, and self-esteem in institutionalized adolescents: The mediating role of social skills. *European Journal of Psychology Education, 28*, 87-100. doi:10.1007/s10212-012-0103-z
- Mulvahill, E. (2019). Why teachers quit. *We Are Teachers*. Retrieved October 14, 2019, from <https://www.weareteachers.com/why-teachers-quit/>.
- Murray-Harvey, R., Skrzypiec, G., & Slee, P. T. (2012). Effective and ineffective coping with bullying strategies as assessed by informed professionals and their use by victimised students. *Australian Journal of Guidance and Counseling, 22*(1), 122-138. doi:10.1017/jgc.2012.5
- National Center for Victims of Crime. (2015). Urban and rural crime. *Engaging Communities, Empowering Victims*. Retrieved from

http://victimsofcrime.org/docs/default-source/ncvrw2015/2015ncvrw_stats_urbanrural.pdf?sfvrsn=2

Oklahoma School Report Cards. (2019). Retrieved from oklaschools.com

Öqvist, A. & Malmström. (2018). What motivates students? A study on the effects of teacher leadership and students' self-efficacy. *International Journal of Leadership in Education*, 21(2), 155-175. doi: 10.1080/13603124.2017.1355480

O'Neill, S. C. & Stephenson, J. (2011). The measurement of classroom management self-efficacy: A review of measurement instrument development and influences. *Educational Psychology*, 31(3), 261-299. doi: 10.1080/01443410.2010.545344

Patton, M. Q. (2015). *Qualitative research and evaluation methods*. Los Angeles: Sage.

Perry, J. C., Fisher, A. L., Caemmerer, J. M., Keith, T. Z., Poklar, A. E. (2018). The role of social support and coping skills in promoting self-regulated learning among urban youth. *Youth and Society*, 50(4), 551-570, doi: 10.1177/0044118X15618318

Sakk, M. (2013). Coping at school - academic success and/or sustainable coping in the future? *Journal of Teacher Education for Sustainability*, 15(1), 84-106. doi: 10.2478/jtes-2013-0006

Saldaña, J. (2016). *The coding manual for qualitative researchers*. Los Angeles: Sage.

Sanchez, Y. M., Lambert, S. F., & Cooley-Strickland, M. (2013). Adverse life events, coping and internalizing and externalizing behaviors in urban African American youth. *Journal of Child and Family Studies*, 22, 38-47. doi: 10.1007/s10826-012-9590-4

- Save the Children. (2018). *Why Save the Children*. Retrieved from <https://www.savethechildren.org/us/about-us/why-save-the-children>
- Seiffge-Krenke, I., Aunola, K., & Nurmi, J.-E. (2009). Changes in stress perception and coping during adolescence: The role of situational and personal factors. *Child Development, 80*(1), 259-279. doi:10.1111/j.1467-8624.2008.01258.x.
- Seiz, J., Voss, T., & Kunter, M. (2015). When knowing is not enough - the relevance of teachers' cognitive and emotional resources for classroom management. *Frontline Learning Research, 3*(1), 55-77. doi: 10.14786/flr.v3i1.141
- Shatkin, J. P., Ursula, D., Zhao, Y., DiMeglio, J., Chodaczek, M., & Bruzzese, J.-M. (2016). Effects of a risk and resilience course on stress, coping skills, and cognitive strategies in college students. *Teaching of Psychology, 43*(3), 204-210. doi: 10.1177/0098628316649457
- Shillingford, S. & Karlin, N. (2014). Preservice teachers' self-efficacy and knowledge of emotional and behavioural disorders. *Emotional and Behavioural Difficulties, 19*(2), 176-194. doi: 10.1080/13632752.2013.840958
- Sieberer-Nagler, K. & Tirol, P. (2016). Effective classroom-management & positive thinking. *English Language Teaching, 9*(1), 163-172. doi: 10.5539/elt.v9n1p163
- Sun, L., & Zhang, J. (2015). Coping skills as a moderator between negative life events and suicide among young people in rural China. *Journal of Clinical Psychology, 71*(3), 258-266. doi:10.1002/jclp.22140
- Swanson, J., Valiente, C., Lemery-Chalfant, K., & O'Brien, T. C. (2011). Predicting early adolescents' academic achievement, social competence, and physical health from

- parenting, ego resilience, and engagement coping. *Journal of Early Adolescents*, 31(4), 548-576. doi:10.1177/0272431610366249
- Tran, V.D. (2015). Predicting student misbehavior, responsibility and distraction from schoolwork from classroom management techniques: The students' views. *International Journal of Higher Education*, 4(4). doi: 10.5430/ijhe.v4n4p178
- Tran, V. D. (2016). Coping styles with student misbehavior as mediators of teachers' classroom management strategies. *International Journal of Higher Education*, 5(1), 1-10. doi: 10.5430/ijhe.v5n1p1
- Tsouloupas, C. N., Carson, R. L., & Matthews, R. A. (2013). Personal and school cultural factors associated with the perceptions of teachers' efficacy in handling student misbehavior. *Psychology in Schools*, 51(2), 164-180. doi: 10.1002/pits.21739
- U.S. Department of Health & Human Services (2019). *Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACES)*. Retrieved from <https://www.childwelfare.gov/topics/preventing/preventionmonth/resources/ace/>
- Wang, H, Hall, N. C., & Rahimi, Sonia. (2015). Self-efficacy and casual attributions in teachers: Effects on burnout, job satisfaction, illness, and quitting intentions. *Teaching and Teacher Education*, 47, 120-130. doi: 10.1016/j.tate.2014.12/005
- Welle, P. D. & Graf, H. M. (2011). Effective lifestyle habits and coping strategies for stress tolerance among college students. *American Journal of Health Education*, 42(2), 96-105.
- Won, S., Lee. S. Y., & Bong, M. (2017). Social persuasions by teachers as a source of student self-efficacy: The moderating role of perceived teacher credibility. *Psychology in the schools*, 54(5), 532-547. doi: 10.1002/pits.22009

Zee, M., de Jong, P. F., & Koomen, H. M. Y. (2016). Teachers' self-efficacy in relation to individual students with a variety of social-emotional behaviors: A multilevel investigation. *Journal of Educational Psychology, 108*(7), 1013-1027. doi: 10.1037/edu0000106

APPENDIX A

Interview Questions

1. Tell me about your experience in education? How long have you been teaching?
What is your career history in education?
2. How do you define coping skills?
3. What coping skills would you say students currently use most in the classroom, positive or negative?
4. How do you use coping skills in your classroom?
5. How do you feel about teaching students coping skills in your classroom?
6. How prepared do you feel in teaching coping skills to students?
7. What type of preparation or training have you received/attended related to teaching coping skills?
8. (If training has been received) What preparation or training have you had that you feel is most helpful in teaching coping skills?
9. What types of preparation or training do you feel you need to teach or better teach coping skills in the classroom?

Appendix B

IRB APPLICATION

Oklahoma State University Institutional Review Board

Date: 04/15/2019 Application Number: ED-19-46 Proposal Title: Teacher Perceptions of Teaching Coping Skills in the Classroom: A Case Study

**Principal Investigator: Kristy Hernandez Co-Investigator(s): Jackie Mania-Singer
Faculty Adviser: Jackie Mania-Singer Project Coordinator: Research Assistant(s):**

Processed as: Exempt Exempt Category:

Status Recommended by Reviewer(s): Approved

The IRB application referenced above has been approved. It is the judgment of the reviewers that the rights and welfare of individuals who may be asked to participate in this study will be respected, and that the research will be conducted in a manner consistent with the IRB requirements as outlined in 45CFR46. This study meets criteria in the Revised Common Rule, as well as, one or more of the circumstances for which continuing review is not required. As Principal Investigator of this research, you will be required to submit a status report to the IRB triennially.

The final versions of any recruitment, consent and assent documents bearing the IRB approval stamp are available for download from IRBManager. These are the versions that must be used during the study.

As Principal Investigator, it is your responsibility to do the following: 1. Conduct this study exactly as it has been approved. Any modifications to the research protocol must be approved by the IRB. Protocol modifications requiring approval may include changes to the title, PI, adviser, other research personnel, funding status or sponsor, subject population composition or size, recruitment, inclusion/exclusion criteria, research site, research procedures and consent/assent process or forms. 2. Submit a request for continuation if the study extends beyond the approval period. This continuation must receive IRB review and approval before the research can continue. 3. Report any unanticipated and/or adverse events to the IRB Office promptly. 4. Notify the IRB office when your research project is complete or when you are no longer affiliated with Oklahoma State University.

Please note that approved protocols are subject to monitoring by the IRB and that the IRB office has the authority to inspect research records associated with this protocol at any time. If you have questions about the IRB procedures or need any assistance from the Board, please contact the IRB Office at 405-7443377 or irb@okstate.edu.

Sincerely, Oklahoma State University IRB

VITA

Kristy Hernandez

Candidate for the Degree of

Doctor of Education

Thesis: TEACHER PERCEPTIONS OF THEIR ABILITIES TO TEACH COPING SKILLS TO STRUGLING STUDENTS: A CASE STUDY

Major Field: Educational Leadership

Biographical:

Education:

Completed the requirements for the Doctor of Education in your major at Oklahoma State University, Stillwater, Oklahoma in December 2019.

Completed the requirements for the Master of Science in Educational Leadership at University of Central Oklahoma, Edmond, OK in 2014.

Completed the requirements for the Master of Science in School Counseling at University of Central Oklahoma, Edmond, OK in 2003.

Completed the requirements for the Bachelor of Science in Kinesiology at Angelo State University, San Angelo, TX in 1990.

Experience:

Moore Public Schools: Director of Student Services: July 2015 to present

Westmoore High School (Moore): August 2001-July 2015

Hallsville Junior High School: 1999-2001

Brink Junior High School (Moore): 1992-1999

Water Valley ISD: 1990-1992

Professional Memberships:

ACT State Council

American School Counselor Association

Oklahoma School Counselor Association