

Culturally Responsive Classroom Management Strategies in CDF Freedom Schools

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Introduction

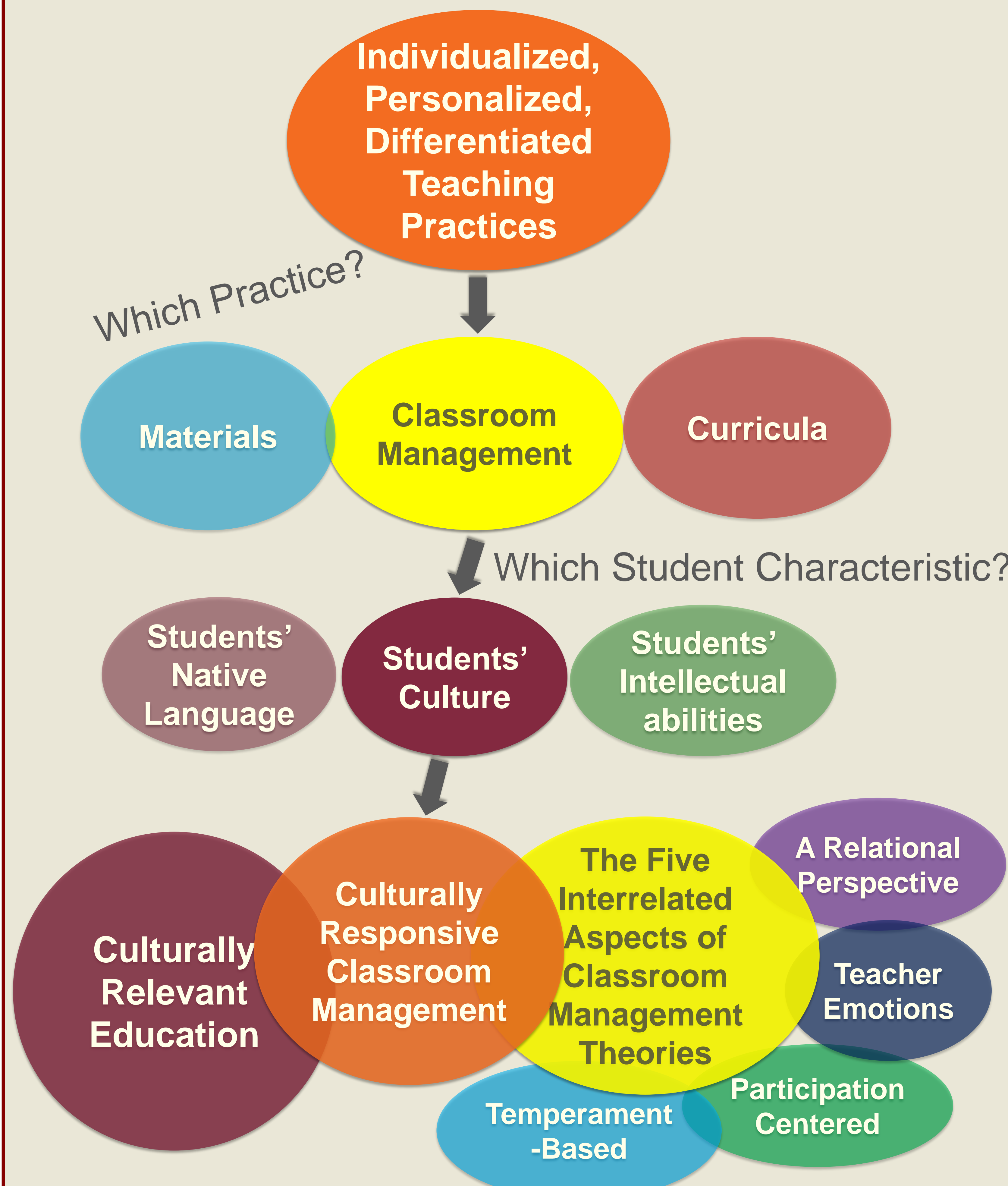
Teachers' classroom management approaches are struggling to meet the needs of the rapidly diversifying elementary and secondary student populations (Monroe, 2006; NCES, 2017). Evidence of this problem are discipline gaps, wherein African American children are being suspended and expelled more than their Anglo-American peers (Monroe, 2006).

Researchers have postulated that teachers who engage in the Culturally Responsive Classroom Management (CRCM) approach may, in theory, equitably manage their diverse classrooms (Weinstein, Curran, & Tomlinson-Clarke, 2003). However, observational studies of teachers engaging in CRCM practices are underrepresented in this area of research. Thus, the purpose of this study is to describe how CRCM is enacted, or not, in the context of a culturally relevant summer reading program, with the goal of adding empirical evidence to the CRCM literature.

What classroom management profiles emerged?

How was CRCM employed by SLIs?

Theoretical Framework



Banks, 2016; Gay, 2013; Ladson-Billings, 2014; Martin et al., 2016; Weinstein, Curran, & Tomlinson-Clarke, 2003

Methods

For this qualitative study we observed and identified teachers' (known as Servant Leader Interns, SLIs) classroom management practices enacted at one Children's Defense Fund (CDF) Freedom Schools (FS) six-week summer camp in a predominantly African American community serving students known as scholars (grades K-9) (Roehrig et al., 2017).



Ms. Frizzle
Laid-Back & Structured
Level 1 (grades 2)



Mr. Garvey
Playful with Limits
Level 2 (grades 4-5)



Mr. Simmons
Strategically Passive
Level 2 (grades 4-5)



Mr. Feeny
Loose and Firm
Level 3 (grades 7-8)

Timeline

Action Items; Data Collection

Classroom/teacher observations (7 SLIs)

Week 1

1 debriefing meeting observation, Informal interviews
Preliminary SLI screening; Narrow down 4 SLI for inclusion in study

Weeks 2-4

Classroom observations (2 SLIs/week)
Informal interviews

Weeks 5-6

Classroom observations (2 SLIs/week 5, all 4 SLIs/week 6)
1 SLI debriefing meeting observation
Formal CRCM-based SLI interviews (1 interview/SLI)
Formal Freedom Schools general interviews with scholars (1 interview/SLI)

Weeks 7-9

Formal Freedom Schools general SLI interviews (1 interview/SLI)

Findings

CLB

Recognition of one's own ethnocentrism/lens and biases

Mr. Simmons "difference is nature... I don't necessarily care about like race, culture, whatever, like that, so long as it's not causing issues with people." **Mr. Garvey** "I'm from America.' I'm starting to realize.... Wherever my parents are from, that's my roots too. So... if somebody asks me where I'm from, 'I'm Caribbean just like my parents. I'm Black.'" **Ms. Frizzle** "it's nothing to be afraid of, to be honest. If you want to grow professionally you have to get into it. You have to touch some stuff that might get a little too touchy for you, but it'll help you. I actually did. When we got to the whole, my family part... I told them [the Scholars] about myself." **Mr. Feeny** "when we start to talk about slave culture, I start off by giving them [the Scholars] my family history...My great-great-grandfather... was born a slave... there are a lot of teachers that are uncomfortable talking about slavery in America. Obviously, I'm not."

KSC

Knowledge of students' cultural backgrounds

Mr. Simmons "I grew up with these kids, I grew up in this environment, I understand." **Mr. Garvey** "everything wasn't like, they're all black... They all probably are from America and... they're probably all African Americans but they all different in so many ways. They all do different things." **Ms. Frizzle** "culture-wise, all that stuff... You definitely want to know your students, know your scholars, know about their family, their background" **Mr. Feeny** "[my knowledge of the Scholars'] ethnic and cultural backgrounds, probably on a scale of one to ten, probably about a nine."

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Results

BSE

Awareness of the broader social, economic & political contexts

Mr. Simmons "If what's already there is spiteful ... the adults, the school systems, the teachers, the principals ... and they're just like negative impacts on these kids, they're going to grow up to be negative people" **Mr. Garvey** "I'm starting to realize... I'm surrounded by all of the social injustices... it's waking me up.... we're being attacked... I'm making sure they're [the Scholars] aware of the different things that are going on in this world." **Ms. Frizzle** "[k]ids they have to know the history, people who are making changes, what's going on in the world." **Mr. Feeny** "we've had a history in this country where we've been disenfranchised in every part of life.... Education and ability to read is freedom and liberation... What I want to do with education is to liberate kids".

ABC

Ability & willingness to use culturally appropriate management strategies

Mr. Simmons "my method for classroom management... was to be a little bit more on the passive... I wanted the scholars to draw themselves out... I didn't want to be this overbearing force ." **Mr. Garvey** "the signature... make(s) it feel like they owned it [the behavior contract] ... the last one... they wanted it to be 'Wakanda Forever'. Which meant to come together, basically we're one... whole in the classroom." **Ms. Frizzle** "I always go back to our cooperation contract... when there's a time to implement actual life lessons, I always try to incorporate that so that students are able to make connections." **Mr. Feeny** "if they get out of line where I have to change tones with them or if they're one of those kids that they pop off easily, I might go with a bit of a softer tone, but still firm."

BCC

Building caring classroom communities

Mr. Simmons "the reward system... I based it on two musical concepts... harmony and dissonance... Harmony is when we come together" **Mr. Garvey** "if I didn't love every single one of y'all, I would not bring y'all snacks... I wouldn't joke with you guys almost every single day." **Ms. Frizzle** "I love how the kids actually have a voice, and they know they have a voice, like you have to constantly remind them, 'Whatever you want to say, go ahead and use your one mic and say it.'" **Mr. Feeny** "many times because of the relationships that I develop with them [Scholars], they don't want to disappoint me."

Discussion

The preliminary analysis has revealed that SLIs in FS—despite their variance in educational and cultural backgrounds, teaching experiences, and general classroom management styles—engaged in eclectic classroom management strategies and in several of the CRCM dimensions. Further analysis may better explain why certain CRCM dimensions were favored over others. However, the results appear promising for providing empirical evidence of CRCM. Further, the researchers hope to use this research opportunity to develop CRCM observation and interview protocols for use in extensions of this study and in other contexts.

