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A SYSTEMATIC REVIEW OF PRACTICES UTILIZED BY
ADMINISTRATORS TO SUPPORT TEACHERS WITH CLASSROOM
MANAGEMENT

A Specialist Project submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the
degree Specialist in Education

Department of Psychology
Western Kentucky University
Bowling Green, Kentucky

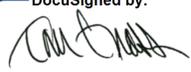
By
Ciara Waggoner

May, 2024

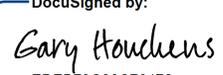
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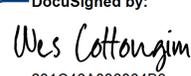
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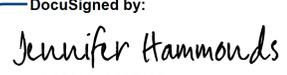
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Interim Director of the Graduate School

ABSTRACT

A SYSTEMATIC REVIEW OF PRACTICES UTILIZED BY ADMINISTRATORS TO SUPPORT TEACHERS WITH CLASSROOM MANAGEMENT

An administrator's role in supporting teachers has been a topic often discussed in literature. A less mentioned administrative function is their role in supporting teachers in classroom management strategies related to teaching and setting expectations. Problem behaviors in the classroom have a negative impact on student outcomes. Administrators can help address problem behaviors through the use of four effective administrator practice areas identified by Grissom et. al. (2021): (a) instructionally focused interactions (b) building a productive school climate (b) facilitating collaboration, and (c) managing personnel and resources. The purpose of this systematic review was to identify: (1) Which of the four effective administrator practice areas have been used to support teachers with classroom management? (2) What activities have been studied for administrative support of classroom expectations for the four effective administrator practice areas? Twelve peer-reviewed articles were found that address the use of administrator practices to support classroom management. Within those articles, it was found that administrators are using Instructionally Based Interactions through observation and feedback most often (67%), while Building a Productive School Climate (25%), Facilitating Collaboration and PLCs (25%), and Managing Personnel and Resources (8%) are seldom being used to address classroom management. Future research should examine whether the use of a broader range of practices would be effective in supporting teachers in the use of classroom management strategies.

Keywords: School Administrator Supporting Teachers, Principal Support in Classroom Management, Administrator Support in Classroom Management, Principals and Classroom Management

I dedicate this thesis to my Wife, Misty Smith, and my daughter, Kennedy Horton.

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Introduction

Classroom management strategies are used to decrease problem behaviors within the classroom. While teachers are taught about classroom management principles, many teachers struggle with developing and implementing these strategies within their classroom (Hirsh et al., 2019). Utilizing effective classroom management strategies helps students perform better academically and foster a classroom environment that both teachers and students can feel comfortable and secure in (Kopershoek et al., 2016). Administrators can help support teachers in creating this environment through the use of specific instructional practices. There are four administrative practices identified by Grissom et al. (2021) through a review of literature to be most effective for supporting teachers: (a) instructionally focused interactions with teachers; (b) building a productive school climate; (c) facilitating collaboration and professional learning communities; and (d) managing personnel and resources strategically.

Instructionally focused interactions with teachers involve creating interactions that are intended to improve specific instructional practices. Building a productive school climate consists of utilizing practices that foster a safe and trusting school environment amongst faculty, staff, and students. Facilitating collaboration and professional learning communities involves promoting an environment for teachers and other school professionals to work collaboratively towards improving instructional practices. Lastly, managing personnel and resources strategically includes making decisions regarding the use of personnel and resources in a way that benefits teaching and students' learning (Grissom et al., 2021).

Researchers have examined these practices in terms of how these strategies increase the effectiveness of classroom instruction; however, these four administrative practices may also be useful in supporting teachers in the use of classroom management strategies to help students meet

expectations. The purpose of this project is to systematically review the literature to identify what practices have been studied for administrators to support teachers in classroom management. The administrative practices examined will be the effective administrator practice areas, i.e., instructionally focused interactions, building a productive school climate, facilitating collaboration, and managing personnel and resources. The following research questions will be addressed: (1) Which of the four effective administrator practice areas have been used to support teachers with classroom management? (2) What activities have been studied for administrative support of classroom expectations for the four effective administrator practice areas?

Literature Review

Problem behaviors in the classroom impact the quality of education for students who engage in those behaviors and for the students around them. For example, problem behaviors within the classroom are associated with lower reading scores and can have a long-term negative impact on future reading performance (Kremer et al., 2016). Problem behaviors can refer to any student behavior that impedes the learning other students, such as calling out, being out of their seat during inappropriate times, and talking amongst peers (Sun & Shek, 2012). Teachers are expected to manage these behaviors in the classroom; however, they are typically underprepared to address these issues on their own (Dudek et al., 2019). Administrators are in a position to support teachers in handling problem behaviors through classroom management strategies (Nooruddin & Baig, 2014). This can be accomplished through the use of specific administrative practices that identify and address teacher classroom management needs (Grissom et al., 2021). Administrators' impact on teachers greatly determines the effect on students. That is to say, administrators have an indirect influence on students through their direct influence on teachers (Grissom et al., 2021). Thus, a supportive administrator plays an instrumental role in addressing teacher needs that will improve classroom management.

Classroom management is the use of evidenced-based practices to establish a positive classroom environment most effective for fostering learning (Korpershoek et al., 2016). These practices include preventative strategies, such as setting expectations for classroom routines, procedures, and behaviors (Simenson et al., 2008). Classroom management practices also include consequence base procedures, such as rewarding met expectations and corrective practice for failing to meet expectations (Oliver & Reschly, 2017). Nonetheless, evidence shows that students function well in classrooms where specific expectations are established to guide their behavior

(Simonsen et al., 2008). This is because clear expectations and procedures reduce misunderstanding or confusion amongst students. Thus, an important part of classroom management is being able to establish expectations and effectively teach students what the expectations look like (Kopershoek et al., 2016). Administrators could support teachers in their implementation of classroom management through promoting effective instructional practices related to setting and teaching expectations.

Effective Administrator Practice Areas

When examining administrator practices, there are four areas that make administrator support effective: (a) Practice that is oriented toward instructionally focused interactions with teachers; (b) Building a productive school climate; (c) Facilitating collaboration and professional learning communities; and (d) Managing personnel and resources strategically (Grissom et al., 2021). These four practice areas were derived by Grissom et al. (2021) through a synthesis of the literature aimed to examine the connection between school leadership and school outcomes. These areas are interrelated and supported for predicting positive student outcomes. They are connected by having skills to develop relationships, support classroom instruction, and organizational management.

Practice that is oriented toward instructionally focused interactions with teachers means that administrator-teacher interactions are centered on specific instructional practices. These include teacher evaluation, instructional coaching, and the establishment of a data-driven, school-wide instructional program to facilitate such interactions. Teacher evaluation, for example, is a component that is shown to be effective in improving teacher performance and student achievement (Dee & Wyckoff, 2015; Steinberg & Sartain, 2015). Effective teacher evaluations involve securing teacher buy-in and ensuring valid information is collected regarding teacher

performance. Evidence shows that administrator feedback can also improve teacher and student outcomes. Similarly, time spent on coaching teachers is positively associated with increased student achievement (Grissom et al., 2013).

Building a productive school climate refers to specific practices that encourage a school environment marked by trust, efficacy, teamwork, engagement with data, organizational learning, and continuous improvement. A school climate can be described by a school's physical aspects; characteristics of faculty, staff, and students; social systems of relationships; and its overall culture (Grissom et al., 2021). A way of building a productive school climate is ensuring that everyone within the school system feels safe, supported, and valued (Jacobson et al., 2007). To do so, a needs assessment can be the first step in showing the school community that the administrator is committed to supporting and meeting the needs of their school. It could indicate that an administrator is committed to listening to educators' needs or points of view.

Facilitating productive collaboration and professional learning communities involves using strategies that foster positive relationships with teachers to promote teacher cooperation with systems of support to improve their practice and enhance student learning. One way to do so is creating specific protocols for collaboration to make meetings more systematic and effective (Saunders et al., 2009). One example of this is that administrators can also facilitate collaboration by supporting professional learning communities (PLCs). PLCs are designed for gathering data of student performance, developing strategies to improve student learning, and analyzing data to determine whether those strategies are working (DuFour et al., 2006). Administrator's support in PLCs helps create a sense of shared responsibility for student learning between teachers and administrators (Cravens et al., 2017).

Managing personnel and resources strategically focuses on the processes around strategic staffing and allocation of other resources. Administrators must be able to optimize the use of resources that may be limited in ways that benefit teaching and learning. One resource that is at scarce in schools is time. Optimizing time involves delegating responsibilities in a way that teachers have more time for teaching rather than fulfilling other duties. An example of this would be having the ability to help manage teacher time by scheduling planning or team meetings in ways that strategically use teacher time (Grissom et al., 2021).

These areas highlight an administrator's duty to provide teachers and staff with tools they need to support their students. An effective administrator does so by providing feedback, coaching, and using other instructional methods that help staff improve upon their own teaching and classroom management abilities (Grissom, 2021). Using ineffective strategies can have a negative impact on students. If teachers are not receiving sufficient support, then it is likely that problem behaviors will increase within the classroom. Thus, it is important to examine the practices that administrators are currently using to see if they align with the four areas of effective administrative support for teachers.

Administrator Supporting Classroom Expectations

Administrators can support teachers in setting and teaching expectations by addressing instructional interactions, creating a productive climate, supporting collaboration, and ensuring resources. As part of addressing instructional interactions, administrators can evaluate teachers' classroom management strategies via classroom observations or "walk throughs." They first observe student behavior to see if they are engaged, being respectful, and following expectations. Then, teacher behaviors would be observed for the use of rule reminders, behavior specific praise, display of rules and expectation, and other related practices. It is recommended that teachers are

told beforehand what administrators will be looking for, although the walk throughs will be at random (Sprick et al, 2007). Following the observation, administrators provide feedback regarding the specific student behaviors and teacher strategies that could be improved. It is important to approach this process as a collaboration with the teacher for it to be most effective. Based on this feedback, the administrator can help teachers through modeling, practicing, and goal setting to further develop their use of classroom management strategies (Oliver & Reschly, 2007).

Research indicates that a key component of creating a productive school climate is ensuring that teachers feel supported instructionally and emotionally (Louis & Murphy, 2017). When administrators familiarize themselves with the needs, strengths, and personalities of their staff, they are better able to tailor their approaches to develop the most functional working relationship (Hollingsworth et al., 2018). Conducting a needs assessment provides the opportunity for teachers to give their input on current conditions and performance gaps related to student conduct or interactions in their classroom. Administration can prioritize student behavior and teacher classroom management needs based on response to systematic needs assessments, where more pressing needs for student behavior are addressed first. Listening to teachers' concerns and taking steps to address those concerns cultivate a sense of trust and belonging (Grissom et al., 2021). From there, administrators gain teacher buy in, which could lead to teachers being more receptive of input and support towards instructional practices for classroom management or student behavioral support.

Regarding collaboration and PLCs, administrators work collaboratively with teachers to support instruction (Leithwood & Jantzi, 2008) related to student behavior to meet classroom expectations. To ensure PLCs are most effective, administrators should create a plan for meetings to be systematic, regularly scheduled, and centered on developing goals for specific areas of

improvement (Reynolds, 2016). During these meetings, data are used to determine current student performance, specifically how well students are meeting classroom expectations. The role of the administrator in this process would be to guide teachers through identifying and interpreting classroom behavioral data, and to help teachers develop strategies to improve students meeting classroom expectations. When administrators facilitate these PLCs, it allows the teaching team to be on the same page regarding what behavioral expectations to emphasize and teach in order to create consistency.

In reference to managing personnel and resources strategically, optimizing time management is an important administrative role, especially when considering behavioral support in the classroom. Administrators should create schedules that allow teachers to have planning periods or dedicated time that can be used for collaborating with others to address teaching students to meet classroom expectations. Administrators can broadly involve an array of school personnel and determine where they could be helpful in covering teacher duties or supporting teachers with routine tasks in the classroom when teachers are developing classroom management strategies. In doing so, teachers are not stretched as thin, and they are provided more time to prepare for the use of specific strategies that help manage behavior or teach to expectations.

Purpose

The purpose of this project is to systematically review research literature to identify what practices have been studied for administrators to support teachers in classroom management. The administrative practices examined will be the four effective administrator practice areas identified by Grissom et al. 2021: (a) instructionally focused interactions (b) building a productive school climate (b) facilitating collaboration, and (c) managing personnel and resources. The following research questions will be addressed: (1) Which of the four effective administrator practice areas

have been used to support teachers in classroom management related to setting and teaching expectations? (2) What activities have been studied for administrative support of classroom expectations for the four effective administrator practice areas?

Methods

Article Selection Pool

To find articles related to administrators supporting teachers in classroom management, an electronic search was completed using Education Resource Information Center (ERIC), PsychInfo, and GoogleScholar, online research platforms. The following phrases were searched to find articles related to the subject matter: “school administrator supporting teacher,” “principal support in classroom management,” “administrator support in classroom management,” “principals and classroom management.” Articles that were themselves reviews and theoretical meta-analysis were excluded from the review. The included articles were those that were peer-reviewed and published between 2003-2024. Qualitative and quantitative studies were also included.

Administrator Support of Teachers

Instructionally Focused Interaction

The first area of instructionally focused interaction related practices included administrative behaviors related to teacher observation, informal feedback, and plan development. Classroom observations was defined as any time an administrator enters a classroom to watch the actions of a teacher related to classroom management or behavioral support. These were any practices where an administrator was documented to have provided an observation within the classroom that was followed up with informal feedback, meaning that the feedback was only meant to support teacher improvement rather than provide a metric to assess job performance.

Plan development was defined as any practices used to develop specific strategies towards improving classroom management. If an article that contained instructionally focused interaction practices, it was coded as 1. If instructionally focused interaction practices were absent, it was coded as 0.

Building a Productive School Climate

The second area, building a productive school climate was reviewed based on practices related to conducting needs assessment, actively mentoring teachers, and selecting meaningful professional development opportunities. Needs assessment was defined as any time teachers were asked their current perceptions of improvement areas surrounding student or school needs. Need assessments that focus on student behavior in the classroom were included. Needs assessments only related to academic performance, or school climate were excluded. Practices related to actively mentoring teachers was defined as any coaching or teaching of classroom management strategies between administrators and teachers. Selecting meaningful professional development was defined as any instance of teachers being offered professional development specific to classroom management. If an article contained behaviors related to building a productive school climate, it was coded as 1. If absent, it was coded as 0.

Facilitating Collaboration and PLCs

The third area, facilitating collaboration and PLCs, included practice related to planning and facilitating systematic meetings and leading effective data use. Systematic meetings was defined as regularly scheduled meetings between teachers and administrators with the purpose of reviewing and improving instructional practices. To be included in the review, these articles specified that the meetings included data-based decision making (DBDM) to determine and develop appropriate strategies for student classroom behavior. Studies that did not include

evidence of DBDM or address concerns unrelated to student classroom behavior were excluded. Articles that included Facilitating Collaboration and PLCs were coded as 1. If the article did not contain this practice area, it was coded as 0.

Managing Personnel and Resources

The final area, managing personnel and resources, was reviewed for behaviors related to time management, engaging with stakeholders, and faculty and staff placement. Time management was defined as specific actions taken by administrators to modify school schedules to instructional planning time. Engaging with stakeholders was defined as specific behaviors where administrators were interacting with external stakeholders, such as parents, businesses, and other stakeholders. Faculty and staff placement referred to administrative behaviors related to delegating duties of faculty and staff as a way to help with classroom behavior. Only articles that included these practices for appropriate classroom behavior were used. Articles that include these practices for promoting academic instruction only were excluded. If the article contained actions towards managing personnel and resources for improving classroom behavior, it was coded as 1. If it did not contain managing personnel and resources, it was coded as 0.

Study Characteristics

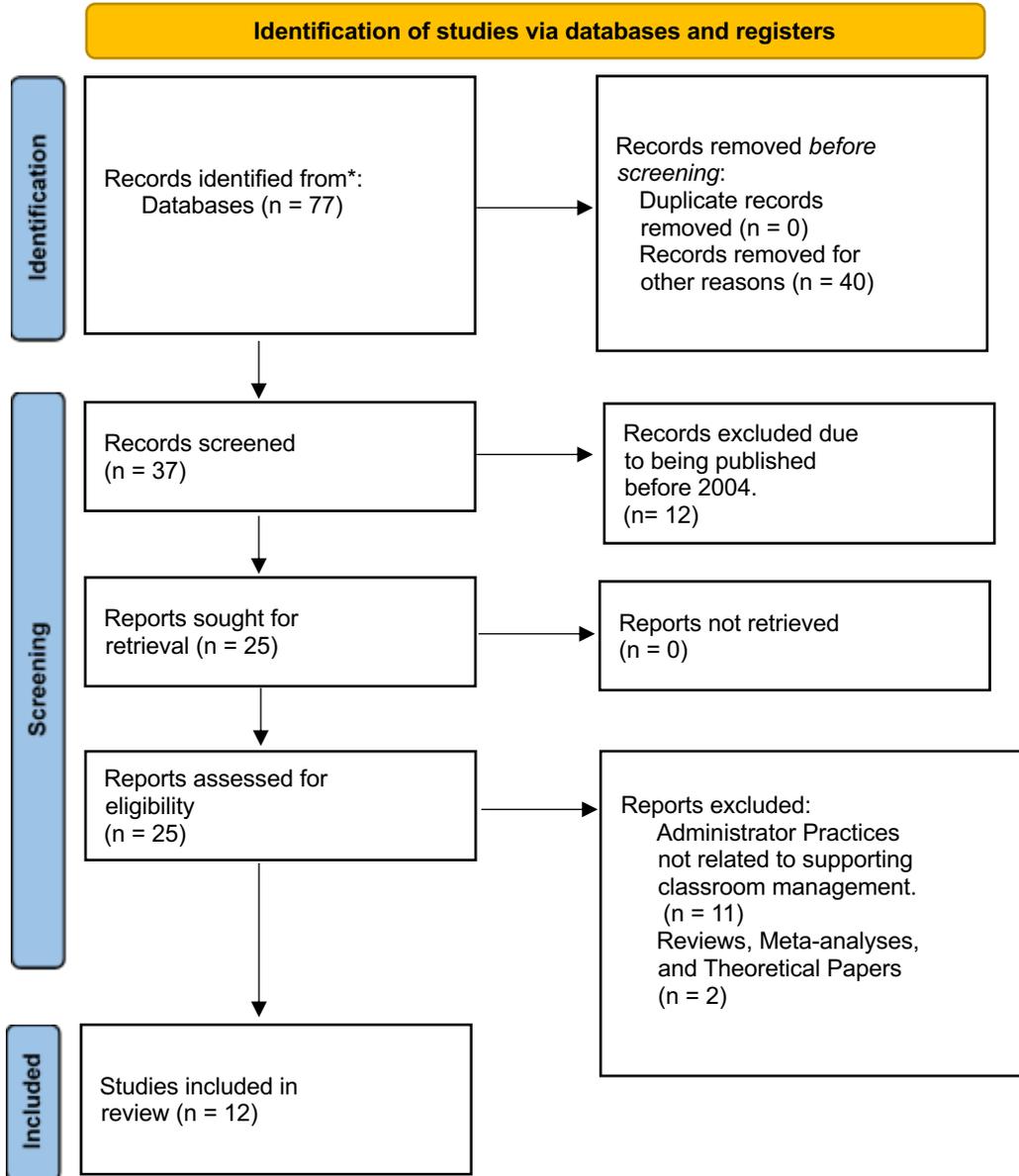
Race and ethnicity, gender, and research design was also analyzed for the articles reviewed. Race and ethnicity was coded for each participant with the following U.S. Census categories: White, Black, or African American, American Indian or Alaskan Native, Asian, and Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander. For ethnicity, Hispanic and non-Hispanic was coded. The research design was coded as experimental design, correlational design, and descriptive design.

Procedures

The flowchart presented in figure 1 was used to display an overview of the search process and the number of citations found and excluded. The cursory electronic search returned titles. The second step involved going through and finding academic journal articles and dissertations, and then screening titles and abstracts to determine if each study should need further screening for inclusion. The number of articles reviewed during this step was recorded. The third step of the process involved going through the articles that met criteria and identifying additional articles not found during the database search.

Figure 1

The PRISMA Diagram for the Current Review (Page et al., 2021)



Inter-rater Reliability

Inter-rater reliability was computed for the final article pool. A second rater was trained on the coding process, and an 80% agreement was required across each code. The secondary coder was trained by going over each code, what each code means, and how to find the code in the article. If 80% agreement was not met, the primary investigator and secondary coder convened to figure out inconsistencies, then recoded until 80% agreement was met.

Analysis Plan

Which of the four effective administrator practice areas have been used to support teachers in classroom management related to setting and teaching expectations?

Each article was reviewed to determine the presence of classroom observations, needs assessment, planned meetings, and time management. The total number of articles was summed for each practice area, then divided by the total number of articles, and converted into a percent.

What activities have been studied for administrative support of classroom expectations for the four effective administrator practice areas?

The procedures used were summarized to determine common practices amongst articles. The practices used were grouped into themes with concrete examples provided for each theme. This was completed for actions related to Instructionally Focused Interactions, Building a Productive School Climate, Facilitating Collaboration and PLCs, and Managing Personnel and Resources.

Results

Study Characteristics

There were 12 studies that met criteria for inclusion. Of those 12 studies, five were qualitative and seven were quantitative. Grade levels were reported for all articles: eight elementary, middle, and high schools were found. Sample racial data was reported for five articles, and gender was reported for seven articles. On average, the samples had 93% white and 70% female participants.

Which of the four effective administrator practice areas have been used to support teachers in classroom management related to setting and teaching expectations?

A total of 12 articles were found that included the use of one or more of the four administrative practice areas to support teachers in classroom management. The most identified practice area was Instructionally Focused Interactions which was present in 8 articles (67%). Building a Productive School Climate and Facilitating Collaboration and PLCs were both identified in three articles (25%). Managing Personnel and Resources was present in one article (8%).

Table 1*Administrator Practices Identified in the Articles*

Article	Instructionally Focused Interactions	Productive School Climate	Facilitating Collaboration and PLCs	Managing Personnel and Resources
Mitchell et al. (2017)	1	0	1	0
Keesor (2005)	1	0	0	0
Baker (2005)	0	0	0	0
Nooruddin & Baig (2014)	1	0	0	1
Poulou et al. (2023)	1	0	0	0
Dudek et al. (2019)	1	1	0	0
Bellibas (2022)	1	0	0	0
Oxley (2018)	0	0	0	0
Day et al. (2016)	1	1	1	0
Day et al. (2009)	1	1	1	0
Manangan (2022)	0	0	0	0
Richter et al. (2012)	0	0	0	0
Total	8	3	3	1
Percent of Articles	67%	25%	25%	8%

What activities have been studied for administrative support of classroom expectations for the four effective administrator practice areas?

In the area of Instructionally Focused Interaction, the practice used most often was observations. Feedback was used in conjunction with observations for seven of eight instances. No practices related to plan development were found. For Building a Productive School Climate, administrative actions towards mentoring teachers were the only activity found related to the area. In the area of Facilitating Collaboration and PLCs, practices related to reviewing data systematically was used across articles. Regarding Managing Personnel, engaging with stakeholders was the only practice found.

Table 2

Administrative Support Activities Found in the Articles.

	Total	Percent
Instructionally Focused Interactions		
Observation	8	67%
Informal Feedback	7	42%
Plan Development	0	0%
Productive School Climate		
Needs Assessment	0	0%
Actively Mentoring Teachers	3	25%
Professional Development Opportunities	0	0%
Facilitating Collaboration and PLCS		
Systematic Meetings	0	0%
Data Based Decision Making	3	25%
Managing Personnel and Resources		
Time Management	0	0%
Engaging with Stakeholders	1	8%
Faculty and Staff Placement	0	0%

Inter-rater reliability

A total of three articles were checked for inter-rater reliability (IRR). Initial IRR was at 75% overall for the first round of coding. The primary instigator and secondary investigator discussed differences in coding for the areas of Instructionally Focused Interactions and Building a

Productive School Climate. Procedures related to observations, feedback and actively mentoring were reviewed on how they should be coded. The secondary coder, then recoded the articles and IRR was at 100% overall.

Discussion

The purpose of this project was to systematically review the research literature to identify what practices have been studied for administrators to support teachers in classroom management. For the first research question, it was found that administrators are using practices related to Instructionally Focused Interactions most often compared to any of the other practice areas. Productive School Climate, Facilitating Collaboration and PLCs, and Managing Personnel and Resources practices occurred at a low rate. Regarding the second research question, it was found that Instructionally Focused Interactions actions of observations and feedback were the most prevalent activities specific to supporting teachers in classroom management. For Building a Productive School Climate, actions towards building trust and mentoring were used by administrators to support teachers. Regarding Facilitating Collaboration and PLCs, the only activity used by administrators specific to support in classroom management was the use of data. Lastly, Managing Personnel and Resources was found in only one instance with activities related to engaging with stakeholders through increasing parent involvement.

Administrative Practices Previously Used

Examining the administrative practices used to support teachers in classroom management is important for understanding what has been effective or ineffective for improving student behavior. There is literature that examines these practices related to improving instruction (Crum et al., 2010; Dhuey & Smith, 2018; Leithwood et al., 2006). However, if these practices can be used to improving classroom management strategies, administrators could have a more

dynamic impact on teachers. The results of this review suggest that the literature related to administrator practices towards support in classroom management is limited. However, the most common practice across articles was Instructionally Focused Interactions. Perhaps it is worth investigating whether the use of more activities or combinations of activities across the four practices areas to examine their effectiveness for supporting teachers in classroom management practices.

Administrative Support Activities

The use of observations and feedback in supporting teachers was common in this article pool. This is expected since there is evidence that indicates using observations and feedback jointly is effective for improvement in teacher practices (Bellibas, 2022; Grissom et al., 2013; Myung & Martinez, 2013). Building a Productive School Climate and Managing Personnel and Resources were addressed less throughout the literature. Further investigating the use of these practices could help determine how to generalize them across various teacher and student outcomes. Regarding Facilitating Collaboration and PLCs, the use of data-based decision making (DBDM) was emphasized in articles, but there was no mention of systematic meetings. It may be beneficial to examine the efficacy of administrators promoting the use of DBDM through regularly scheduled meetings to support teachers in classroom management,

Limitations

A limitation to this review is the lack of literature that specifically targets administrator practices towards supporting teachers in classroom management strategies. The low number of articles produced make it difficult to determine what administrator practices provide consistent results. Many articles discussed administrator behaviors for supporting teachers in improving instruction but did not include administrator actions towards supporting teachers in classroom

management. Researchers could target this limitation by further examining administrator practices towards supporting teachers in classroom management to provide insight of which practices are being used within schools.

Another limitation to note is this review is based on one conceptualization of the four most effective administrator practices. The codes used for this review were limited to administrator behaviors mentioned by Grissom et al. (2021). This limitation could be addressed by investigating a broader range of administrator practices being used to support teachers in classroom management strategies, or alternative ways of conceptualizing the four areas.

Lastly, this review only examines what practices are being used by administrators thus there were no interpretations of what practices may or may not be effective in improving teacher and student outcomes. Future reviews could target effectiveness of administrator practices used to support teachers in classroom management. Specifically, they could examine teacher and student outcomes after administrative actions. This would provide a better understanding of whether these practices should be used or if there are better practices to support teachers in classroom management strategies.

Implications

The literature available related to the four administrator practices areas and supporting teachers in classroom management was limited. This might indicate that further investigations are needed to understand what practices are being used within schools. Moreover, if there are limited administrator practices specifically for supporting classroom management, then research is needed to determine which practices might be effective for supporting teachers. The lack of emphasis in the area of managing personnel and resources was unexpected considering the shortage and turnover for teacher employment. Further research into this practice area in terms of

supporting classroom management could be beneficial in relieving teachers of extra pressure related to time and duty expectations.

Conclusion

This systematic review found that administrators are using practices related to Instructionally Focused Interaction regularly to support teachers in classroom management. There was limited literature specific to supporting teachers in classroom management that demonstrated the use of Building a Productive School Climate, Facilitating Collaboration and PLCs, and Managing Personnel and Resources. While administrative behaviors such as observations and feedback are effective practices, there may be need to explore the use of other administrator practices that can be used to support teachers in classroom management.

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