“Although the rules and procedures used by effective classroom managers vary from teacher to teacher, we do not find effectively managed classrooms operating without them” (Jones 173). Without an evidence based theoretical foundation, educators may fail in creating a positive, supportive, and learning focused classroom environment. As I study to become an educator, I will not only be prepared to be an effective teacher, but I will decide what classroom and behavior management theories I will use to build my theoretical foundation and lead my students through an enriched learning experience. In this foundation, I will gain knowledge on proactive approaches and what resources to use when prevention is not enough. This paper will explain my theoretical foundation as well as describe its importance and different theorists’ findings that will support my foundation. A theoretical foundation cannot be discussed without explaining what proactive approaches are, which ones I will implement, and what other resources for behavior management are available. This information will form my philosophy of classroom and behavior management that I will employ in my different classrooms as an educator.

Ultimately, it comes down to the student. The student is the most important aspect of education. In order to reach students in a meaningful, helpful, and productive way, teachers must build a theoretical foundation, but what does that really mean and how does it apply to classroom and behavior management? Jere Brophy explains that teachers must be knowledgeable and skillful in four specific areas in order to create a positive plan or foundation. These four areas include the teacher’s understanding of different theories and research regarding classroom management, creating a safe and supportive classroom environment, building strong and diverse instructional methods, and utilizing numerous behavior methods to maintain appropriate behavior in the classroom (Jones 16). All of these four areas focus on the student
and his or her specific and unique needs. This section of the paper focuses on the first item: a teacher must build a theoretical foundation.

Educators must know how and why different behaviors occur. This also means that the teacher must be aware of why certain problems exist in relation to student behavior and teacher behavior. Research from different theorists and other educators’ opinions and experiences with classroom and behavior management is something each teacher needs to know and understand. I also think that a majority of the time, teachers focus on the students’ behaviors and needs, but do not think about how their own behavior and responses to classroom actions impact the overall management of the classroom. It is necessary to keep in mind what your expectations are and how you are able to handle varying degrees of behavioral situations. Understanding the root of a behavior will help you to effectively handle, manage, and prevent negative behavior while promoting positive behavior simultaneously (Jones 16). Creating a strong and evidence based theoretical foundation will then assist the teacher in building and maintaining knowledge of how to run their classroom in accordance with the students’ varying needs.

Having a theoretical foundation for classroom and behavior management before teaching is very important because it allows me to be organized, prepared, and aware of what to observe in my classroom. It also hopefully reminds me that students are going to misbehave and there will not always be the desired behavior. This is something to accept and that is one of the reasons teachers, including myself, need knowledge about how to manage problems and increase good behavior. Along with classroom and behavior management norms, procedures, and routines that the students can easily follow, facilitate, monitor, and commit to, I will also have a good idea of what they can and cannot tolerate. Each person is different, so it is important to be aware of my responses to student behavior. Along with the importance of creating a foundation,
it is also necessary that I monitor and adjust the behavior and classroom plans so I meet and adhere to the ever changing needs of the students. A foundation, while supported and strong, needs to be flexible too. If I can find guidance from theories and research, I will also find guidance on how to manage a classroom with information from my students (Jones 19, 20). This goes back to the student being the main focus in education.

There are many different theorists that have contributed to the successes of numerous classrooms around the world and each theorist takes one of three different approaches. These include the personal needs theorists, social factors theorists, and students-at-risk writers. As a teacher who is interested in working at the high school level, I am comfortable with the ideas Joan Lipsitz advocates. She is considered a social needs theorist and writes that middle school and high school students have a strong need for diversity, self-exploration and definition, participation, physical activity, social interaction, competence, achievement, structure, and clear limits. Taking her ideas to the next level, she encourages teachers to live as a student for a day in order to understand how a student feels at particular parts of the school day (Jones 40, 41). I agree with Lipsitz’s points because I have seen these particular needs in my previous experiences working with older students. Specifically at my placement with Lighthouse Academy in Grand Rapids, the students are high school age and struggle with academics and utilizing the appropriate behaviors. I have noticed how my placement teacher reaches to meet the students on their level, which shows how my teacher has taken the opportunity to put herself in their shoes. Along with a teacher who is aware of her students’ needs, there are a particular few who need physical activity to wind down and prepare for the next activity. In other experiences, I have also realized how important participation and interaction is for educational and personal success. Many researchers have said the most effective means of instruction and meeting those needs is
through hands on activities, work with peers, and activities that relate to the students’ lives (Alton-Lee). I really value the many areas Joan covers in her theory from physical and emotional needs to mental and personal needs. A person as a whole is complex and there are many areas that encompass who we are and that we use to define ourselves. Lipsitz is definitely a theorist I will take into the classroom with me every day.

Joan Lipsitz’s theory includes two other areas that I want to discuss as two points of my theoretical foundation that will play a huge role in how my classroom is run. The first is the need for diversity. I have been taught and re-informed about the presence of students from different cultural backgrounds or with English as their second language in my classroom and the importance of including them in activities. These students have specific and varied needs, but most importantly provide a new and interesting mix to the flow of the classroom. I will need to meet the needs of acceptance, support, safety, and connection through the integrating of lessons about different cultures and creating activities that will allow the students to work together and get to know each other (Alton-Lee). Along with the need for diversity, I strongly believe how crucial it is to encourage and facilitate social interaction between peers and teachers. As people, we are naturally inclined to be in relation with each other so building social skills and relationships between students and teachers will happen through group work, conferences, and other activities constantly (Boynton). Even if my students do not feel the need to succeed academically, the most important thing I can teach them is how to establish and maintain interpersonal relationships. This will meet certain needs after school, in the home, and in society.

On another level, there are specific basic needs that need to be met with all students. Many issues arise when a student does not have a high self-esteem or view themselves as worthy
individuals who are capable of learning and growing. Success and achievement on academic and also social tasks declines, which pushes students further into their slump. As an educator who values students and their well-being the most, I find that Stanley Coopersmith as a personal needs theorist presents important points that will fit nicely into the creation of my theoretical foundation. Coopersmith’s fundamental theories focus on the need for a high self-esteem. Under this broad category are significance, competence, and power. Significance refers to the student believing that he or she is a valued member of the classroom and of society. Competence is the student’s belief that he or she is successful with completing certain tasks on or at a higher level than peers. Finally, power is the student’s capability to understand and control his or her own environment and surroundings (Jones 33). As someone who has slightly struggled with self-esteem issues and have witnessed friends suffer in academic and social settings because of a low self-esteem, Coopersmith’s theories are important and influential to carry into my classroom. I hated feeling unsure of my abilities and insignificant in a classroom of people who were smart, organized, and successful. It is intimidating and can start at a young age. Therefore, building the self-esteem and self-worth of my students will be a main priority. This will also meld into my classroom and behavior management plan through reinforcement, instruction, and classroom procedures that meet my students’ needs in a positive, up-lifting, and safe way. Each student is significant and has endless knowledge, character, and gifts to share with the world.

Along with building a theoretical foundation as a part of my philosophy for classroom and behavior management, I will need to utilize specific and beneficial proactive approaches that effectively assist students and teachers with the organization of the classroom and with behaviors. Proactive approaches refers to preventing problems from occurring and “the mutual influence of teachers and students in the learning process, their participation in social perspective
taking, and their efforts to positively structure the affective climate of their classrooms” (Powell). It is not simply enough to respond to classroom behaviors and functions internally, but the teacher, in collaboration with the students, must take action with an external response that is visible. Proactive approaches more importantly also refer to the idea of utilizing specific strategies to prevent undesired behavior from even occurring and causing disruption in the classroom. Examples of proactive approaches used to prevent problem behavior include creating positive teacher-student and peer relationships, working with parents, developing behavior standards, facilitating motivation to learn, responding to inappropriate behavior, using problem solving to correct behavior problems, and developing behavior plans that are individualized (Jones). While I plan to use all of these proactive approaches, there are a certain few that I find necessary and will be a central focus to my philosophy. These are establishing positive and supportive relationships with all people involved in the education process, outlining specific instructional methods, and creating behavior plans facilitating commitment and responsibility for all students.

“Students will resist rules and procedures along with the consequent disciplinary actions if the foundation of a good relationship is lacking” (Boynton). “The foundation of a good relationship”. Those words are impactful and powerful because a lot of what we do as people and expect from people, whether it be teaching or interacting with neighbors, depends on the type of relationship built. What is considered a good relationship between students and teachers? It can be defined by words such as supportive, intentional, honest, encouraging, fun, respectful, and trusting. Currently, there is a math class I assist with that is co-taught by the special education teacher and general education math teacher. When the special education teacher leaves the room, the students immediately act inappropriately. I think the main reason for this is
because the general education teacher has not built that connection with the students like the other teacher. The students resist the rules because there is a lack of trust and respect between the teacher and the students. Through this experience and many more, I am continuously reminded of the importance of creating supportive relationships with the students.

To build supportive relationships with my students, I plan to get to know them as people with potential, surprises, and gifts to offer. Through the use of acquaintance activities, letters and conferences, enjoying time playing with them at recess, and encouragement on classroom and behavioral activities, I hope to build positive relationships that will facilitate the growth of my students academically and socially. My main wish is that by showing and offering my love, support, and care, that I would be imitating God’s love. Thus, my students can use this relationship as a model for how they should treat all people they meet in school and in society. The relationships established in the classroom should extend into all areas of life. Also, a lot of students come from broken and challenging homes, so as another influential figure in their lives, I need to show that I am someone they can trust and come to with any questions or help. I plan to show they are valuable and worthy to receive praise for their hard work and also to receive constructive guidance for behaviors and academic areas that need growth and adjustment. In my opinion, the quote stated earlier can be broken down into one word: respect. Good relationships have mutual respect and when that is evident and understood, students will respond to disciplinary actions for behavior and specific instructional techniques for academics in a responsible, productive, and positive way evident through change in behavior and growth in learning (Boynton).

The second proactive approach I find necessary to effective classroom and behavior management is the use of instructional methods that facilitate learning and promote active
involvement in one’s education. Learning has to be fun, engaging, interesting, and related to the students’ lives. Connections are necessary for learning and help with remembering information. All of my education classes thus far have emphasized activating prior knowledge or building a knowledge base that students can carry into other areas and lessons. When the students have an interest and idea about educational information in all subject areas, they are more likely to participate and find meaning in the activities, especially those students who are from different cultural backgrounds. Students love learning about other cultures and it is evident that it also makes those students from the other culture find a motivation to learn and a connection to their lives (Alton-Lee). One study showed, “the most frequently used and successful methods were (1) hands on activities, (2) group work, (3) personalizing the content by connecting it to students’ life experiences and interest, and (4) involving students in sharing their ideas, planning and making choices” (Jones 236). It is all about connections and because of this evidence, I am going to use all four of these methods in my classroom! As a learner myself, I love finding connections to course material in other classes or in my everyday life. It allows me to utilize the knowledge I have gained in meaningful and important ways. Therefore, information learned is not wasted, but shared with others and students grow into worldly, resourceful, and independent thinkers and workers.

Research discusses proactive approaches for instructional design that I will use to guide my instructional methods in the classroom. The first is to develop goals for instruction, which will be based on the GLCEs or other state content expectations, students’ specific IEP goals, and finally other needs of the students in my classroom. This will be goals for myself as the teacher, for example, what I want my students to accomplish, how I approach teaching the information, and how I will adapt the instruction to my students’ needs. These goals will also be shared with
my students and I will have them create goals for instruction and learning that will allow them to take responsibility for their learning. Students will need to create goals and provide feedback on what they want to learn in each subject area, how they want to learn the information, and how they will apply the information (Bos 21). This will relate to how I structure classroom activities in accordance with Bloom’s Taxonomy and the different levels of thinking. The use of different groupings is an excellent proactive approach for instruction. Whether it is individual work, partner work, small group, or the whole class, learning will happen at different levels and students will find where they are most comfortable and capable of learning (Bos 22). I can group students at the same level together or use peer teaching where students can take the role of teacher. Giving responsibilities to students is a great method as well. All of this goes back to students taking initiative and ownership of their learning. Therefore, through the use of hands on activities, group work, personalizing the instruction to make connections, and allowing the students to plan their education, these will promote a healthy and effective classroom and behavior management plan that is flexible and adaptable to my students’ needs.

Finally, my third proactive approach is creating individualized and specific behavior plans. Very much like instructional methods, I will establish behavioral goals as a part of the positive behavioral supports model (PBS) used widely in schools and proven to be effective in managing and changing inappropriate behaviors and maintaining positive behaviors. Through the use of observations and behavioral data from my students, I will implement goals that the students and I create as a class and individually for those students who need specific guidance and support in order to enhance quality of life and learning. With specific and targeted goals focusing on specific target behaviors, students will also be able to take responsibility for monitoring and adapting their behavior to be appropriate, productive and as a model for other
students (Bos 106). Also, as a special education teacher, I need to be aware of causes of behavior and how to alter the environment to be more conducive to the students’ learning and behavioral needs. I will look to limit distractions, change seating arrangements, post a set of specific and measurable classroom procedures and norms the students are capable of committing to in the room, and arrange a time to conference with students to create specific plans when needed (Boynton). Thus, through the use of specific behavioral and instructional methods proven to be effective in the classroom and by building supportive relationships with my students, they will find the classroom a safe and inviting place to learn, interact, and grow as individuals capable of anything. This in turn will provide me with a strong classroom and behavior management philosophy that will be applied into an exciting, effective, and smoothly run classroom system.

In every classroom throughout the world, student conflict is inevitable. While effort is put into establishing effective proactive measures like the ones mentioned above, not every measure is guaranteed because every student is different. This is a concept that I accept as an educator because nothing is going to go perfectly and conflict, if handled properly, can be used as an excellent learning tool to teach appropriate and desired behavior. As a recently declared special education emotional impairments major, I am starting to understand the significance of corrective approaches or what to do when prevention is not enough. Specifically in the school I am observing at currently, the students need a steady form of intervention for behavior from poor language choices to physical aggression. This involves the work and effort of the teachers and other staff at the school. As a special education teacher, I possibly will teach in a high school or special day school for students who are emotionally impaired or have conduct disorder. I need to be prepared to use my proactive approaches to handle my classroom, but I also need to be
knowledgeable of the strategies and interventions I will use to stop problem behavior that is persistent and distracting.

One corrective approach I would resort to first, which I feel is least punitive and most beneficial to the student in the sense that he or she will take responsibility for his or her own actions, is conflict resolution. Glasser discusses seven steps to problem solving and conflict resolution. It begins with positive student-teacher relationships and is followed by the student or students describing their behavior, determining if the behavior is desirable, developing a workable plan to change the behavior, making a commitment to the plan, evaluating and following up with the effectiveness of the plan, and deciding what to do when the plan does not work (Jones 339). I think these steps will allow my students and I to solve behavior problems that are persistent and long-lasting, which in turn will give the students self-control, responsibility, and power in changing their own behavior with my support. When my students are in control, they will feel more empowered to work towards the appropriate goals created through the problem solving plan. I will be sure to monitor student progress in changing the target behavior to the more desirable behavior. Overall, conflict resolution and problem solving is an appropriate corrective approach because it involves cooperation, collaboration, and a focus on the students’ specific behaviors.

Another corrective method I want to be knowledgeable in is Crisis Prevention Intervention (CPI) and Life Space Crisis Intervention (LSCI). These are two excellent programs and strategies that will teach me how to deescalate crisis situations and promote problem situations as opportunities for growth, learning, and change. Corrective approaches and discipline when prevention fails does not need to be a time where I yell, reprimand, or punish to the extent that my students feels frustrated, worthless, and hear the same information he or she
may get from other teachers or family members. This is an opportunity for me to be a role
model, a supporter, and someone who holds my students accountable for their potential
academically and behaviorally. Gaining knowledge on how to effectively and appropriately
handle crisis situations with specific communication skills, actions, and procedures that are
focused on the student, will allow me to assist my students with taking their negative feelings
and turning them towards positive statements that build self-esteem and help the students
understand how to react responsibly. Life Space Crisis Intervention specifically takes the
students through a six step non-physical intervention that involves the students in understanding
their perception of their behavior, determining if the behavior is self-defeating, seeing a pattern
with the behavior, teaching the student new coping skills, and implementing those new skills into
the setting of the original behavior occurrence (Life). To be honest, it breaks my hearts when
students who are full of potential and full of life make the decisions they do and use the
behaviors that seem right because they have little self-worth and low self-esteem. It is my hope
that being trained and using the methods and philosophies of LSCI and CPI will help me to
promote my students’ abilities and qualities in a meaningful way. I know that with these
corrective approaches skills, I will be able to help my students build their self-worth and learn
from their experiences so as to use behavior that will not be self-defeating, but instead will build
them up and increase their “poker chips” (When the Chips). I firmly believe that LSCI and CPI in
combination with the rest of my classroom and behavior management philosophy will allow me
to do just that.

The last corrective approach I find to be helpful because of previous field placement
experiences is the time-out. When people think of the word time-out, the term punishment
comes to mind. Richard Lavoie from the video lecture “When the Chips are Down” discussed
the idea of the time-out. He wondered why this term and action was considered to be a punishment when a couple of decades ago it was a time for there to be no reinforcement and it was the student’s decision to come out when he or she was ready (*When the Chips*). This can still be followed and I think is important to have as a means for the students to problem solve and understand their behavior. I will use time-outs in my classroom for students particularly with emotional impairments, although it could work with any student, because sometimes that is what they exactly need. My time-outs will not be punishment or a way for me to not handle to situation, but they will be an allotted time for the student to take a walk, cool down, and reflect on his or her behavior.

I feel comfortable using how one author describes steps of a time-out. First a student can be asked to “take two” and stop working at their desks and relax. Then if the student is still upset, he or she can move to a different part of the classroom to create a behavior plan and begin to take control of their own feelings and behaviors. This is an excellent time for the students to problem solve by learning the appropriate behavior and even practicing it while understanding and perceiving how they are feeling during that particular situation. When this does not work, the students may take a walk or move to another section of the school to complete work, calm down, and reflect (Jones 316). Time-outs are important because they can be used for processing and learning new behavior that will give the students control and responsibility of how they respond next time to the same situation. I will use the time-out as a last resort and when extremely necessary with serious problem behavior. At Lighthouse Academy, there is the response to thinking room where students are sent when they need to cool down and process behavior through writing a behavior plan. I think this is effective for the students who need time to relax, but it is also an incentive for students to remain on-task and behave respectfully and
appropriately in the school setting. Ultimately, with the use of problem solving and conflict resolution, CPI and LSCI, and time-outs, my students will know that I care first and foremost about their success and they will also be able to modify their behavior through a positive character building process. Corrective approaches do not need to be punishment, but as stated, they are times for the students to grow, learn, reflect, and stand up for their own behaviors.

I have carefully selected my theoretical foundation with the help of many thorough and supported strategies and because of the support I have received, I will be able to implement my beliefs on classroom and behavior management into my own classroom. Understanding research and methods has given me confidence and real life application with behavior management and so incorporating my philosophy will be done with ease. I am organized and have thought out what I think will work best for who I am as an educator and for who my students are as learners. Joan Lipsitz and Stanley Coopersmith are two theorists whose ideas and philosophies I will take into my classroom to establish a meaningful and beneficial classroom and behavior management plan with my students as the focus. Along with the theorists in my storage bin, I will have multiple proactive approaches to use to prevent behavior from occurring. This will include a focus on building and maintaining supportive and God–loving relationships with my students, using varied and exciting instructional methods that focus on making connections in real life, and finally behavioral goals and plans that promote self-responsibility for one’s behavior in and outside of school. My theoretical foundation would not be complete without the specific corrective approaches I will implement to meet my students’ needs. This will involve me using problem solving and conflict resolution skills, specific methods from LSCI and CPI, and using the time-out as an alternative method to stopping problem behavior. With this knowledge and understanding of classroom and behavior management that covers a wide range of material, I
feel fully prepared to step into my future classrooms and build a place that is engaging, inviting, supportive, and controlled with some room for spontaneity in which learning and pro-social behavior is facilitated. Again, it comes down to the students; to the lives I am influencing and guiding to be significant, driven, and loved individuals who will be leaders in the future. My philosophy of classroom and behavior management is complete, but there will always be room for adjustment with the varying needs of my students.
Works Cited


<http://www.eric.ed.gov/ERICWebPortal/search/detailmini.jsp?_nfpb=true&_&ERICExtSearch_SearchValue_0=ED241983&ERICExtSearch_SearchType_0=no&accno=ED241983>.