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# Developing Classroom Management Strategies in Non-Native Culture: A Single Case Study


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## Developing Classroom Management Strategies in Non-Native Culture: A Single Case Study

### Abstract

This single case study explored the practicum and student teaching experience of a native Chinese pre-service language teacher in order to better understand her process of developing classroom management strategies and the difficulties and challenges emerged in that process. In a broader sense, the case study aims to inform teacher preparation programs in terms of preparing Chinese teachers for secondary public schools in the U.S. The longitudinal study employed semi-structured interviews, classroom observation notes, teaching reflections and documents. Six themes — instructional challenges, coping strategies, cultural difference, language frustration, attitudes and feelings, and improvement — emerged from constant comparative analysis. Compared with previous literature, the current research underscores the importance of accessibility of classroom management resources and the positive problem-solving attitude of the native Chinese pre-service teacher in her challenging experience of developing classroom management strategies in American public schools. The researchers discuss the needs for providing supporting accommodations for native Chinese pre-service teachers in teacher preparation programs.

### Keywords

Case Study, Native-Chinese Pre-Service Teacher, Classroom Management, Culture Differences, Language Barriers, Challenges

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## Developing Classroom Management Skills in Non-Native Culture: A Single Case Study

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*Keywords: Case Study, Native-Chinese Pre-Service Teacher, Classroom Management, Culture Differences, Language Barriers, Challenges*

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### Background

Classroom Management has been identified as one of the most challenging issues for native Chinese teachers in public schools during their process of integration into American educational system (Hustad, 2015; Xu, 2012; Zhou & Li, 2015) due to various reasons including language barriers, cultural differences, different perception of teaching and learning, major differences between their learning experience and the working environment. (Ding, Li, Li, & Kulm, 2008; Ho, 2004; Lu, 1997; Xu, 2012; Zhou & Li, 2015). Conversely, classroom management is much less important and less frequently addressed in the Chinese educational literature. Though Chinese teachers' struggles with classroom management in the U.S. has been the subject of several contemporary studies (Liao, Yuan, & Zhang, 2017; Xiang, 2017; Zhou & Li, 2015), most of this research has been conducted either from a cultural integration perspective or a cultural comparison perspective. Little research has been conducted from a teacher preparation perspective; therefore, the purpose of this case study is to explore a native Chinese pre-service teacher's field experience in terms of acquiring classroom management skill in order to understand the difficulties and challenges in the process. The findings provided valuable implications for teacher preparation programs in terms of preparing Chinese teachers for secondary public schools in the U.S.

Students enrolled in Chinese program increased from 609 in 1960 to 61,055 in 2013 (Goldberg, Looney, & Lusin, 2015). The enrollment almost tripled from 20,292 in 2004 to 59,860 in 2007 (Goldberg, Looney, & Lusin, 2015). With an increasing demand of Chinese language instructors for more and more newly established Chinese programs, native Chinese teachers have historically been preferred due to their language proficiency; however, the

language proficiency is not a panacea for Chinese language education. Native Chinese teachers are faced with many challenges in their acculturation into American public schools due to profound differences between the two cultures and the educational systems (Hanson, 2013; Hustad, 2015; Xu, 2012). Classroom management has been identified as one of the most challenging issues in native Chinese teachers' integration into U.S. public schools (Xu, 2012; Yue, 2017).

With China's increasingly active involvement in global economic and political stages, increasingly more people are interested in learning Chinese. Many Chinese language programs have been established in the past decades, with an increasing need for native Chinese teachers. However, the native language proficiency is not enough to provide effective Chinese language instruction to elicit productive learning. As mentioned, it is of great importance that native Chinese teachers be prepared in terms of classroom management skills based on their specific cultural background. Educators need to understand better what challenges native Chinese teachers have and how they can be dealt with in teacher preparation programs in order to make adequate adjustment for future native Chinese pre-service teachers.

### Literature Review

**Classroom management.** Novodvorsky and Weinstein (2014) defined classroom management as "the actions teachers take to establish and sustain a caring, orderly environment that fosters students' academic learning as well as their social and emotional growth" (p. 7). It is related to the complicated and dynamic interaction and relationship between students and teachers in the process of promoting academic, social and emotional development in the bounded context of classroom setting. The process of classroom management was further complicated by six features of classroom settings, including multidimensionality (accommodating all teaching learning activities), simultaneity (multiple occurrences at the same time), immediacy (rapid pace), unpredictability (impossible to prepare ahead of time), lack of privacy (shared space), and a joint history (class memories; Doyle, 2006, cited in Novodvorsky & Weinstein, 2014).

Research on *Classroom Management* has long been an important field of psychological study, and the negative effects of poor classroom management include: disrupting students' ability to learn, weakening students' motivation and energy, fostering fearfulness and stress, stimulating subsequent misbehavior, dissolving trust and relationship, and provoking school violence (Ding et al., 2008; Wubbels, 2011).

Novodvorsky and Weinstein (2014) provided six principles to guide classroom management practice in middle and public school classrooms in the U.S. These include:

1. Fostering self-discipline and personal responsibility;
2. Promoting positive relationship with students, implementing engaging instructions, and using preventative management strategies;
3. Prioritizing meaningful instruction instead of order in the classroom;
4. Responding culturally to student needs;
5. Utilizing social-cultural competence;
6. Improving classroom management via practice, reflection, hard work, and accumulation of knowledge.

In this research, we use these six principles as guidelines to analyze and interpret classroom management challenges and strategies as documented below.

*Classroom management in Chinese culture.* Though classroom management has long been an important topic in both educational research and practice in the U. S., it fails to gain the same importance in the Chinese context. In Ding's (2008) study of Chinese teachers' perception of students' classroom behavior, 65.6% percent of the participants (n=244) did not view classroom management as a great concern, and "daydreaming" was listed as most frequent and troublesome problematic behavior by teacher participants in the study. Lan, Ponitz, Miller, Li, Cortina, Perry, and Fang's (2009) comparative study of student behavioral problems in American classrooms (n=7) and Chinese classrooms (n=8) found a significant difference in terms of percentage of time of behavioral engagement (American 61% vs. Chinese 96%,  $F(1, 14) = 7.54, p < .05$ ). Both of the studies suggested that Chinese teachers have expectations of high participation and mental engagement, and they do not regard problematic behaviors as a major concern in the Chinese classroom (Ding et al., 2008; Lan et al., 2009). Classroom management in China is not a major focus in mentoring support or professional development due to the less classroom behavioral problems and comparatively uniform cultural and ethnic background (Lee & Feng, 2007). There is seldom explicit systematic classroom procedure and expectations advocated in Chinese classrooms in Chinese culture. The experience of learning in the Chinese educational system leads native Chinese teachers to cultivate an implicit framework of expectations, attitudes values, and beliefs about teaching and learning, which mapping on both teachers and students as cultural scripts concerning learning and teaching (Hustad, 2015). In addition, the hierarchical teacher-student relationship within a Confucianism-dominant educational context more often than not elicits sufficient order in classroom despite larger average classroom sizes (e.g., 50-60 students in secondary schools; approximately 50-60 students in secondary schools) (Zhou & Li, 2015).

*Challenges for Native Chinese Teachers in the U. S* Among all the challenged faced by Chinese teachers in American classrooms, classroom management has been identified as one of the biggest concerns due to different background, difference of culturally-embedded expectations, difference of management strategies, and language barriers. (Hanson, 2013; Hustad, 2015; Xu, 2012; Zhou & Li, 2015). Due to the severe lack of Chinese language teachers, many native Chinese entered the career without adequate orientation and preparation (Hustad, 2015). Teaching without being tutored about American pedagogy can lead to pronounced challenges as a result of profound difference in Chinese and American educational systems (Zhou & Li, 2015). First, most native Chinese teachers were born in China and educated in the Chinese education system, which means they have no access to the American educational system and pedagogy even as students, unless they are specially trained for this context. It is not surprising that they would transfer managing strategies and Chinese pedagogy they had experienced and learned from Chinese culture into American context (; Zhou & Li, 2015). Secondly, most native Chinese teachers have faced at least some form of language barrier which hinders not only their communication in and out of classroom but also classroom management practice (Hustad, 2015; Xu, 2012; Zhou & Li, 2015). Moreover, Chinese education is highly influenced by Confucianism, which emphasizes respect for teachers and following instructions in the learning environment. In the U.S., there is less concern about discipline, therefore, it is very common for native Chinese teachers to experience a classroom management "cultural shock" when they entered American classroom (Ding et al., 2008; Zhou & Li, 2015).

Native Chinese teachers feel challenged concerning classroom management even if they were trained as teachers or had teacher professional experience in China before they enter the U.S. First, the focus of teacher mentoring programs in China is teaching content rather than pedagogical techniques, students' needs, or classroom management. As a result, native language teachers were not prepared for the U. S. classroom in terms of classroom management

even if they had been trained as teachers in the Chinese culture before they came to the United States (Lee & Feng, 2007).

Among all the classroom management challenges, working with students with special needs was identified as a big concern for native Chinese teachers (Xu, 2012) because students with special needs are not included in regular classrooms or even public schools in Chinese culture. Most teachers in regular classrooms do not have experience working with students with special needs in China. Moreover, native Chinese teachers have different expectations when they came into the classroom, which is closely related to their native cultural background. Zhou and Li (2015) found in their qualitative case study on expectations and perceptions of six native Chinese teachers in American context that respect, proper physical behavior, study attitude, and learning habit were the major expectations the participants had for classrooms, which were deeply culturally rooted. Other challenges Zhou and Li (2015) reported were lack of coping strategies and inaccessibility of adequate support in classroom management. Finally, Zhou and Li also revealed native Chinese teachers' struggle of navigating between Chinese classroom management skills and American strategies they learned from peers (2015). Hustad's (2015) phenomenological study of seven native Chinese teachers' integration experience into the U.S. reported similar findings related to classroom management. His participants indicated "a persistent struggle" with classroom management due to the discrepancies in teacher-student relationship, inadequate preparation, and education philosophy between Chinese culture and American culture. Lack of preparation when unexpectedly entered the teaching career led to even more struggles with classroom management for more than half of the participants (Hustad, 2015)

In sum, native Chinese teachers face various challenges in managing class in American context. With inadequate preparation, Chinese teachers' culturally embedded expectations for respect, quietness, readiness to learn, self-discipline, and behaviors, which are opposite from what they encountered in American classroom. In order to promote teaching competence in native Chinese teachers in American schools, it is important to investigate into how native Chinese pre-service teacher are trained in terms of classroom management strategies in teacher preparation programs. However, there has been little qualitative research conducted on how native Chinese teachers navigate through the process of acquiring classroom management skills; so therefore, this study aimed to understand such experience. This qualitative single case study looked into the practicum and student teaching experience of a native Chinese pre-service language teacher in order to understand the challenges she encountered, how she addressed the challenges, and how she developed classroom management skills throughout that process. In a broader sense, the case study aims to inform teacher preparation programs in terms of preparing Chinese teachers for public schools in the U.S. The central question of the research was: *What challenges do native Chinese pre-service teachers face in the process of developing classroom management skills in practicum and student teaching? How do they approach those challenges?*

Sub research questions include:

RQ1: How does the native Chinese pre-service teacher define good classroom management?

RQ2: How does she deal with classroom behavioral problems?

RQ3: How does she describe her progress in terms of managing classes?

RQ4: What challenges does she face in that process?

RQ5: What strategies did she employ to address these challenges?

**Definition of terms.** For the purpose of this study, *Classroom Management Skills* is defined based on Novodvorsky and Weinstein's (2014) definition of classroom management, the researchers defined classroom management skills as the ability to:

- a. Create engaging and orderly environment with preventive plans to minimize disruptive behaviors,
- b. Address the classroom problematic behaviors by making adequate responsive actions to restore order to foster academic, social, and emotional development in classroom context.

## Methodology

**Researcher reflexivity.** The lead researcher was interested in this topic due to her professional and academic background and personal experience. As a doctoral student majoring in language teacher education, she was supervising two student teachers enrolled in a world language teacher preparation program while conducting this research. The supervising responsibility provided access to connect to student teachers enrolled in the program. Secondly, she had taught college English at a mid-western Chinese university for 12 years, and she also had 10 years of experience of teaching English part-timely to learners, ranging from kindergartener to high school students in China. She had taught Chinese two and half years in an American High School with minimum support before she enrolled in her current program. She was overwhelmed by the dramatic difference between Chinese education and American education, and all these differences added to the tremendous acculturation challenges she experienced when she first started teaching in an inner city High School. The most challenging part for her was classroom management and she learned it the hard way without adequate support. Therefore, she felt obliged to conduct research related to this topic in order to provide trustworthy research-based information for both native Chinese pre-service teachers and teacher preparation programs in hope for better preparing future native Chinese teachers for the increasing Chinese programs in the U. S.

With first-hand experience in both Chinese educational system and American educational system and insightful understanding of differences between the two, she was well positioned for conducting research related to native Chinese's navigation into American education system. As mentioned above, she was responsible for supervising the potential participants for their field experience. As a teaching assistant, she was only responsible for conducting class observations to provide clinical support without making evaluations. In addition, she had previously been a classmate with the potential participants. In this way, the relationship between the lead researcher and potential participants were more like colleagues than supervisor and supervisees. This does not conflict with the ethical concerns that researchers are not recommended to recruit participants with potential power imbalance (Creswell, 2014).

We used the following strategies for reflexivity purposes: on the one hand, separate the evaluating observations for supervising responsibility from classroom observation for data collection purposes. An observation form was created in order to help the researchers to focus on students' behavior and ST's classroom management to avoid interference from the evaluation criterion. On the other hand, the lead researcher bracketed her own ideas before each data collection trip by revisiting the research purpose, research question, interview questions and purpose of classroom observations.

We believe that reality is multiple and viewed or constructed from different socio-historical backgrounds and contexts, and is most accessible through personal experience and interpretation. (Creswell & Poth, 2018). We collected multiple sources of data and spent



prolonged amount of time observing participants closely in order to understand the participants' beliefs and their "truth," which reveals an epistemological tendency in the inquiry process (Creswell & Poth, 2018).

The lead researcher has a linguistic and pedagogical background with unavoidable socio-cultural constructive lens related to that background. Social-Cultural Constructivism is based on Vygotsky's ideas, and it includes three ontologies: the subjective (internal) reality, the objective reality (external) and the contextual reality (inter-subjective), which means learners make meaning in three corresponding ways, empirically based on their senses, rationally with their thinking and collaboratively through interactions with others (Porcaro, 2011). The corresponding pedagogical strategies emphasize both creation of individual and group meaning through variety of collaborative hands-on tasks in authentic context (Porcaro, 2011). With a socio-cultural constructive lens, the researchers believe a qualitative approach will help elucidate both (a) individual meaning making of the student teacher navigating through her exploration and (b) the interactive meaning negotiation between cooperating teacher and pre-service teacher within bounded social context of Chinese language during a year of practicum and student teaching. This design choice fits well in definition of case study defined by Creswell and Poth (2018), Merriam and Tisdell (2016), and Yin (2014) involving study of a "bounded system."

**Study Design.** The present study is a single case study due to its nature of in-depth empirical inquiry of contemporary phenomenon in its bounded real-world context, relying on multiple data resources converged for triangulation Creswell and Poth (2018), Merriam and Tisdell (2016), and (Yin, 2014). Case study is favored for research questions of "what" and "how" (Yin, 2014), and this is the central concern of making the choice for case study. The current study seeks to answer "What challenges do native Chinese pre-service teachers face in the process of developing classroom management skills in practicum and student teaching? How do they approach those challenges?" The research questions are either exploratory, dealing with "operational links needing to be traced over time" (Yin, 2014, p. 10), and such questions make case study a good choice for this study.

In addition, there are few accessible participants that meet the selection criteria for the research for the research (i.e., native Chinese pre-service teacher enrolled in a teacher preparation program and assigned to practicum and student teaching in 2015 to 2016 academic year) in the district where the lead investigator was able to access. Due to limited resources and candidates for participation, the study used a holistic single case study design.

The bounded system for the current case study is defined in two ways. First, the time is bounded, and the study period was the whole period of field experience for pre-service teachers, which includes practicum and student teaching. Secondly, the place is bounded. The research site was the native Chinese pre-service teacher's classroom in a public school. Both the cooperating teacher and the student teacher were the participants in order to gain information from different sources for triangulation.

**Sampling.** Criterion purposeful sampling was employed in this study. Since the target population for the research is native Chinese pre-service teachers, the criteria for sampling are as following (a) native Chinese, born either in Mainland China, or in Taiwan, (b) pre-service teacher and his/ her cooperating teacher, (c) the candidates must be enrolled in practicum and student teaching in the research time frame.

We obtained permission from the Institutional Review Board to conduct the research. The investigators approached the teacher preparation program in a midwestern university and gained access to 2015 fall student practicum course. With permission from the professor, the researchers were able to approach the student teacher participant. Once the participant agreed to participate, she was asked to introduce her cooperating teacher to the researcher. The cooperating teacher agreed to participate in the research since she was responsible for

mentoring the student teacher's field experience. Informed consents were obtained after the investigators confirmed the participants' interest in participation in the research. All the interviews were kept in a password-protected personal computer owned by the lead researcher. The investigator did all the transcriptions and translation, and all the electronic data was kept in the personal computer mentioned above, and all the hard copy data were kept in a locked drawer only accessible to the investigator. "ST" was used to refer to student teacher and "CT" was used to refer to cooperating teacher in all data files with no identifiable information recorded.

**Participants.** The student teacher (ST) participant was 30-year-old native Chinese from Mainland China in world language teacher preparation program to get certified to teach Chinese in 7-12 grades in public school. The cooperating teacher (CT) was a 40-year old native Chinese teacher from Taiwan with more than 5 years of Chinese teaching experience in public school.

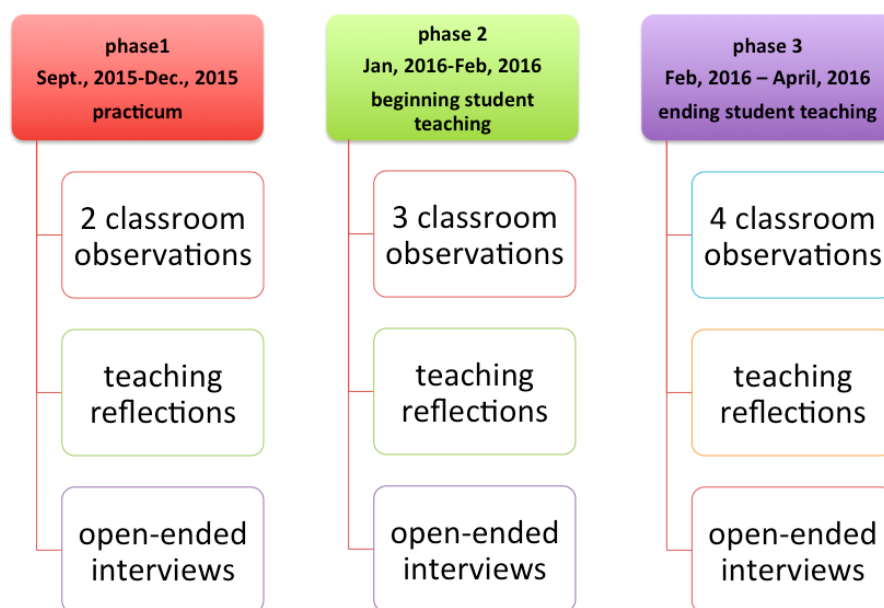


Figure 1 Data collection Phase

**Data collection procedures.** Data collection consisted of three phases (see Figure 1): the first phase of data collection was in the early weeks of student practicum. An approximately 30-minute open-ended interview was conducted with both ST and cooperating teacher CT respectively, and two 50-minute classroom observations were done in the early phase of practicum (at the beginning and end of October). Classroom observations focused on classroom management, including students' behaviors and ST's responses to address such behaviors. The second phase of data collection was at the end of student practicum and at the beginning of student teaching. An approximately 30-minute interview was done with both the student teacher and cooperating teacher respectively, three 50-minute classroom observations were done focusing on classroom management and an approximately 15-minute reflection was done on teaching practice after each classroom observation. The reflection was done in a semi-structured interview format with three guiding questions: (a) What did you do well this class concerning classroom management? (b) What could be done differently about classroom management? (c) What do you plan to improve classroom management in the future? The last phase was at the end of student teaching. An approximately 30-minute interview was done with both student teacher and cooperating teacher respectively, four 50-minute classroom

observations were done in two days focusing on classroom management, and an approximately 15-minute reflection was done on teaching practice after each day of classroom observation.

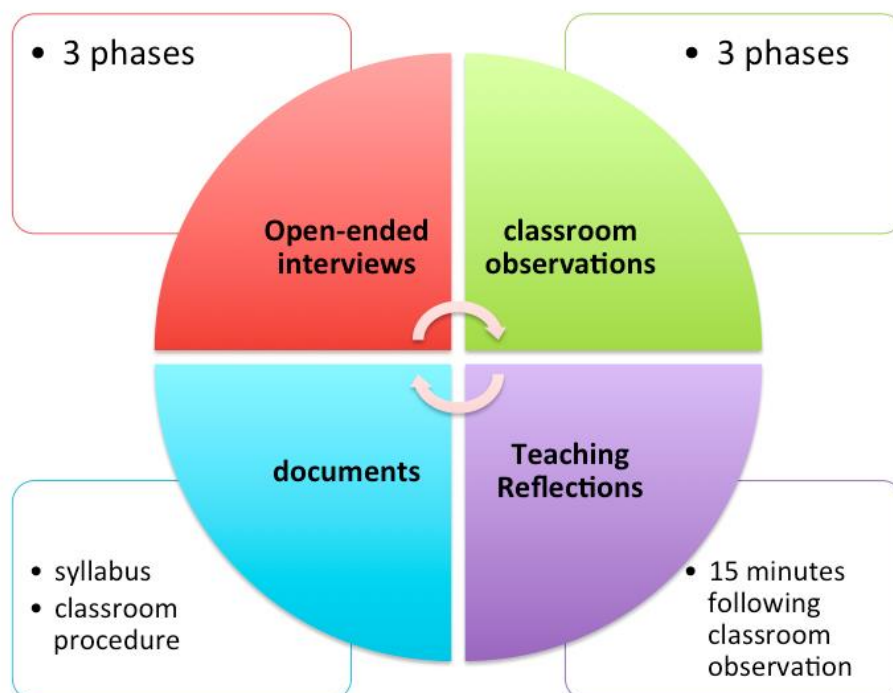


Figure 2 Forms of data collected

Multiple sources of data were collected (see Figure 2), including audiotaped interviews with both ST and CT, the researchers' classroom observation notes, the researchers' notes, ST reflection after classroom observation, and classroom management procedure documents. Different interview protocols were prepared for ST and CT, and all the interviews were audio-recorded for data analysis. The researchers created a classroom observation checklist to guide the note-taking process. For example, all incidents were recorded from both the teacher's perspective and student's perspective objectively side by side with specific time noted and researcher's notes. Classroom notes were reviewed and crosschecked against the ST's reflection after observation to ensure consistency. Documents were obtained with permission from the instructor at the beginning of the first phase, and they included syllabus and classroom expectations.

The interviews and reflections after each classroom observation involved discussion of classroom management theories, pedagogical theories, and other terminologies for classroom teachers, which both the CT and the ST had learned in English. Both CT and ST are native Chinese speakers, and they expressed that they needed to switch between English and Chinese to best express themselves. Therefore, the interviews were conducted in a mixture of Chinese and English, allowing the interviewees to code-switching as often as they needed.

**Data analysis procedures.** Since there are four sources of data collected from three data phases, it is important to develop a framework to arrange the data to check the possibilities for data integration (See Figure 3). Different sources of data were coded separately before being compared. All the data were coded twice manually using open and axial coding based on procedures outlined by Strauss and Corbin (1990). Constant comparative data analysis (Glaser & Strauss, 1967) was used for data analysis. Newly collected data were compared with previously collected data, and different types of data were compared to generate themes and categories. Both chronological comparisons and different data source comparison were done

in order to understand the student teacher's improvement in classroom management practice from different data source. Classroom observation notes and teaching reflections were matched in order to gain a more complete and synchronized picture of the dynamic of classroom interactions and the student teacher's response to students' behaviors. Both classroom observation notes and teaching reflections were compared with interviews in order to gain a holistic understanding of ST's Classroom Management development process. Chronological comparisons were aimed at understanding how the student teacher develops classroom management over time course. Data from CT's and ST's interviews were coded separately, compared, and triangulated.

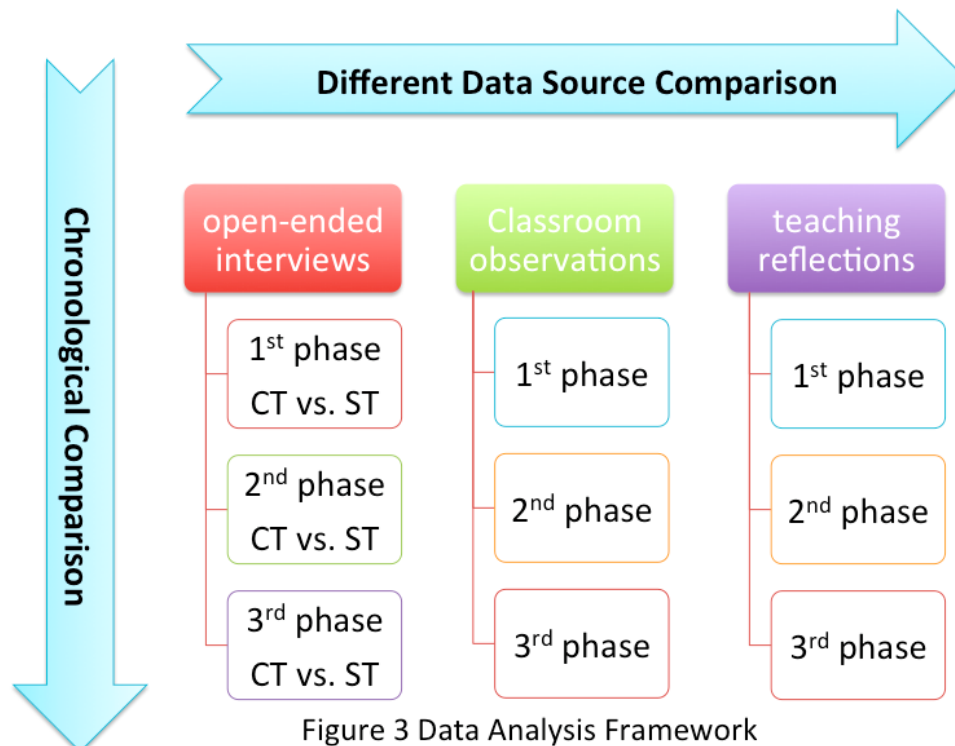


Figure 3 Data Analysis Framework

The lead investigator did data analysis manually. The interviews involved application of classroom management theories, pedagogical theories and other terminologies for classroom teachers, which both the CT and the ST had learned in English. All the interviews were transcribed and translated into English for data analysis.

**Validation strategies.** Triangulation, debriefing and member checking were used as validation strategies in this research. First, multiple and different data sources were used for the purpose of triangulation (Creswell, 2012). Data used in the research were interviews with both CT and ST, classroom observations, teaching reflections and documents obtained from both ST and CT. Secondly, the researcher met with a research consultant (peer review) at the Nebraska Evaluation and Research Center four times for not only guidance for data collection and data analysis but also debriefing purpose. All the feedback and suggestions were carefully considered before being applied to the research process. Finally, the findings of the data were shared with the participants as a form of member checking.

## Findings

After constant comparative analysis with all types of data collected from three phases, six themes emerged as following:

1. Instructional challenges
2. Strategies
3. Language frustration
4. Cultural difference
5. Attitudes and feelings
6. Improvement

**Instructional challenges.** Challenges faced by the ST were the most frequently mentioned theme in all types of data throughout three phases of the study, and it was mentioned in each interview. There were three major types of challenges coded through constant comparative analysis, including classroom management challenges, balancing between lesson planning and classroom discipline, and anxiety of the ST.

*Classroom Management challenges.* Both ST and CT identified classroom management as their constant challenge in all interviews they were involved, and this concern resonated with multiple classroom observations and revealed repeatedly in ST's teaching reflections. Here are some excerpts from interviews conducted individually with CT and ST.

I think like classroom management, I think I am still struggling, even now, ...I think I always struggling, you know, manage the students at the beginning. (CT, interview #1)

I think the most challenging thing is classroom management. (ST, interview #1)

These experts showed that both CT and ST struggled with classroom management. In other words, CT was not strong enough to mentor ST concerning classroom management. There were ten major classroom management challenges repeatedly discussed by the participants concerning Classroom Management in CT's teaching practice, and they are listed with example excerpts as following:

Table 1. Major Classroom Management Challenges Identified

Classroom Management Challenges	Quotes, description & source
1. Explicit expectations	<p>"I think at the very beginning of the year, you know, we don't really have a discipline plan or classroom rules set up for students, maybe we do have it, but maybe we didn't make it clear to students, maybe we don't talk it through with the students..." (ST, interview #1).</p> <p>"Secondly, I don't have very concrete classroom procedures written on paper...May I use the one created by XXX Laoshi (ST)? She has one created for the class this semester and I like it a lot" (CT, email response to request of classroom expectations).</p>

2. Consistency	<p>“I would wonder whether to take their phones away or not, sometimes I did, sometimes, I didn’t. Sometimes, I neglected” (ST, interview #2).</p> <p>“We do have consequence posted, but we don’t follow through, and then we had a negative cycle, students will do it again tomorrow” (ST interview # 3).</p> <p>Playing on cellphone addressed and not addressed (observation #1, #4, #6).</p>
3. Consequence	<p>“We kind of give the warning to them, but we didn’t really like have a following consequence for them...” (ST, interview #1).</p>
4. Problematic behaviors	<p>“Cell phone,” “talking,” “moving around” (all interviews and all observations except for observation #7 and #9).</p>
5. Diversity and differentiation	<p>“My major concern for her...diversified students ... you know...” (CT, interview #1).</p> <p>“Some students finished very fast, and some students did very slowly, ... it is very challenging for me...” (ST, interview #2).</p>
6. Special Education	<p>“Especially when you have more than one sped, you have two or three more, that’s become more difficult...” (CT, interview #2).</p> <p>“he has autism, and he needs to be checked on and reminded constantly...I could stick with him while teaching the whole class” (ST, interview #3).</p> <p>No. 10 stood up and walked around the classroom without permission and talked cross the classroom multiple times (Observation #1, #2, #4).</p>
7. Clear instruction	<p>“I think I improved my instructions, and students might understand me better, and decrease confusions” (ST, interview #3).</p>
8. Repetitiousness	<p>“Sometimes students behave themselves, and sometimes they don’t. Sometimes, whether they behave or not would depend on their mood” (ST, interview #2).</p> <p>“3-minute magic” (The student teacher developed a 3-minute routine: a. stop and get students’ attention”; b. ask students to reflect on their behavior; c. review the expectations, d. resume instruction) (ST interview #1, #2, CT interviews #2, #3).</p>
9. Relationship	<p>“Build positive relationship with students ... students would follow you better, if you are very strict, they might rebel...” (ST interview #3).</p>
10. Manage class alone	<p>“Sometimes, when I was teaching, and students get really noisy, and I really hope there was someone who could watch those few students for me ... I was by myself, and there was nobody to do that for me at that very moment” (ST, interview #2).</p> <p>CT addressed behavioral problems 7 times (Observation #1 Phase 1).</p>

As shown in Table 1, the excerpts demonstrated ST's struggles dealing with the ten types of challenges in her field experience. The observed classroom management challenges throughout the study occurred repeatedly with improvements: same types of challenges decrease in both severity and frequency. There were many behavioral problems in the classroom since the very beginning of practicum, and the problems gradually decreased in occurrence, frequency and severity (from responses to interview questions #3, #4 and #5). However, talking, cellphones and moving around remained to be the most challenging behavioral problems due to repetitiousness, and ST was able to address them or minimize them by well-structured engaging activities but not to eliminate them (CT and ST interview #2, #3, coded as "three-minute magic") at the end of the third phase of data collection. Next, lack of consistency and consequence transcended all ST interviews, observations and teaching reflections from all three phases. ST was aware of the challenges, and was working on those with gradual progress (revealed in both in ST interviews #1, #2, #3, and teaching reflection). Importantly, analysis of data also revealed ST's concerns about managing the whole class (interview #2, beginning of student teaching) without cooperating teacher. During practicum, ST was either occasional teaching or facilitating as teaching assistant, and CT was always in the classroom. CT took part of the responsibility of classroom management, and she gradually shifted the responsibility to ST.

*Balancing between Lesson Planning and Classroom Discipline.* Creating lesson plans and related materials on daily basis while acquiring classroom management skills became a constant challenge for ST, since she preferred to follow backward design she learned from methods class and tried her best to put the pedagogical theories into practice (in response to interview question #2 and #3 in ST interview #1 and #2, and in all observations and lesson plans). Her persistence in lesson planning aligned with the second principle guiding classroom management of minimizing classroom disorder by promoting engaging instruction, fostering positive relationship and good preventive management strategies (Novodvorsky & Weinstein, 2014).

...There are so many things you have to think about, you have to create. I feel like I just walked into a new school with nothing available, how are you going to teach? It won't be difficult, if you are teaching just one day, if you are teaching just one day, but it would be very difficult if you have to continue to teach new things day after day. What do you teach? It is pretty difficult. In addition, sometimes students behave themselves, and sometimes they don't. Sometimes, whether they behave or not would depend on their mood. I am trying my best. (ST, interview #2)

In this quote, the participant revealed her daily struggle balancing classroom management and lesson planning, and her attitude of "trying my best," and that remained strong through the whole research timeline.

*Anxiety of ST.* The ST's major concerns and hesitation in enforcing consequence and consistence mainly related to her worries about confrontation with students or families, worries about unanticipated results and uncertainty about appropriateness with ST status (ST interviews #1, #2, #3, coded as "worry," "concern," and "uncertainty").

I didn't ask Coral before; we've never tried this before. And I think I shouldn't cross the line. You know, it is not my own class, and haven't done it before. Including the students might be like this before, and there is no such a requirement before, If you add this requirement I don't know, and I am not going to teaching them from now on (not my students). I am not a faculty

member either, if anything goes wrong, I think the responsibility would be huge. That was my major concern. If I really do detention and something goes wrong with the students, but I am only a student teacher, there are no rules about what the school will do if it happens, you know, you are not a faculty member. You are just a student teacher, you know, that's it. (ST, interview #2)

Although she was aware of the important of following through by enforcing consequence like “detention” (in response to interview question #3, 4, ST interview #1, #2 and #3), and she was not able to do it till the third phase of data collection.

...need something more serious, follow-up, the first two times, they were rebellious, after school detention ... then you can talk to him and build the positive relationship, let him know that I am not against him. (ST, interview #3)

ST was able to manage detention as consequence in the last phase of data collection, and she was also able to handle the results of consequence, which was one of the major improvements in classroom management strategies.

**Coping strategies.** As mentioned above, ST was well informed about classroom management principles and strategies, and she was able to make connections between practice and theories.

I planned many activities, I feel that when have many activities, and my students will be engaged, and they will be interested, and they will do the work, and they will not be disruptive....(ST interview #1, engaging activities observed in each classroom observation)

She always have very solid, well-prepared lesson plan....(CT interview #3, matches with the content of lesson plans)

...and autonomy, and give them options, and build positive relationship, and I greeted them at the door, and asked how they were doing, try to build the relationship.... (ST interview #1, greetings observed in each classroom observation)

ST's strategy of engaging students with activities to decrease students behavioral problems aligned well with principles #1 and #2 (Novodvorsky & Weinstein, 2014) about engaging instructions and positive relationships.

Longitudinal analysis of data revealed improvements in number, variety, appropriateness, and reflective application of strategies. She gradually aligned her strategies with the guiding principles #1, #3 and #5 (Novodvorsky & Weinstein, 2014).

ST was teaching asking students “*nǐ xǐhuan hóng sè ma?* (do you like red?)”

Student A: I like Trump, and he is much better than the others.

Student B, C, D: I like him, too. Student E: I don't care.

Student A: You have to care, I mean politics would influence you life. Who don't like politics? XX Laoshi, do you like politics?

ST: *wǒ yě xǐhuan zhèngzhì, wǒ yě xǐhuan Trump* (I like politics, and I like Trump, too). ...let's go back to learn Chinese. (Classroom Observation #6)



ST was not only able to respond to students' off topic discussion, and he was also able to use the content to bring students back to learn Chinese. --- Much more skillful than she did at the beginning by verbally stopping students' conversation or voicing over students.

ST gradually came to understand the complexity of classroom management, and she was able to manage classroom dynamics based on analysis of real classroom situations. The following scenario demonstrates her ability to address adequately problematic behaviors after weighing classroom management contradictions.

I put a desk aside with a seat facing away, and asked him to sit there till he was ready. But at the same time, I had to include him and make sure that he was doing the work. I would ask him when he was reading and turning the pages, "Kǎdélā, Kǎdélā, zhè shì shénme? (XXX, what does this mean?)" I would try my best to include him, not letting him feel isolated. (ST interview #3, observed in classroom observation #6)

In this scenario, ST was able to include the student when he was physically isolated from his peers due to disruptive talking. She was also to apply more than one principles (#1, #2, #3) to take care of discipline, relationship and engagement at the same time while addressing the problematic behavior (Novodvorsky & Weinstein, 2014).

I tried my best to use as much as I can, I mean what I learned in methods class, it really worked out. (ST, interview #1, replicated in #2 and #3)

This was also observed in multiple classroom observations, and it revealed that ST was enrolled in a strong teacher preparation program, which provides solid theoretical foundation for field experience for ST.

**Cultural difference.** Both CT and ST had lived in the U. S. for several years, and both were fully aware of the difference in education between America and China. Both the CT and ST mentioned the influence of cultural difference on the classroom management practice. They expressed their concern about the influence of the different ethnical backgrounds and how the background influence teaching and learning when they responded to interview question 6 (i.e., How does the difference between your cultural background and your own cultural background would affect you to manage your class successfully?). First, teaching and learning are different in American and China in terms of expectations, as are the roles of teacher and students. Students are supposed to be quiet and be the listener in classroom. Both CT and ST mentioned about the differences in instructional strategies, students motivation, students' readiness to learn, frequency and types of classroom behavioral problems. In their response, they mentioned Chinese teachers are regarded as respectable, whereas, teachers need to earn respect in daily teaching practice.

... because Chinese culture will prefer the students kind of be a listener, a little bit more passive way. ...the cultural background, I am also kind of still learning, too. ... (In China), we will kind of sit there quietly; you have to be very quiet to do the worksheet. ... then you can't just avoid ... they need to talk and they are multitask ... 'cos everybody is not sitting quiet and do the worksheet, right? (CT interview #3)

It's completely different, the learning atmosphere between America and China, is so different from America, in China, the students, they are so self-disciplined, they are just like work so hard, you don't have this behavioral problem or

problem of discipline, basically, you just teach, you know, like the traditional way of teaching, the teacher is the center of the class, dominant the class. Basically, students are more like listener; you don't have to deal with the discipline, you know, in China. (yea - L), because the students are so good. But here, ... they do like a lot of behavioral problems in class. That's kind of really affect instruction, we waste a lot of time to manage your class, and you might not be able to finish your whole lesson as you want. (ST interview #1)

...not ready to learn. (CT ST interviews #2, teaching reflection #5)

Next, the participants stressed that the cultural difference between her and her students became a barrier to foster positive relationship with students.

...I don't know, and if I know more, I can talk with them more, and get to know them ... if we have this kind of communication, they would communicate more ... we would be closer... and the relationship would be better.... (teaching reflection #5)

...would influence the communication between the teacher and students.... (teaching reflection #5)

Also important to note, participants discussed how cultural differences hinders her make teaching more relevant to students' interest.

... I am so different from them (students) ... I don't know ... it negatively affects my lesson planning, if I could integrate their cultural background, I could create more interesting and engaging lessons for them and they would be more engaged and follow better... if we find more in common, students would like you better, which would also benefit your Classroom Management. (ST, interview #3, replicated in teaching reflection #4)

**Language frustration.** As a non-native speaker of English, the ST mentioned her frustration of not being able to achieve the same effect in managing her class with verbal instructions as native speakers do. She mentioned wording and pragmatic usage of language in classroom context.

...I am not good at express myself in English, ...the phrases, the words, those important ones, in your classroom management, should be powerful, but when I said it...the effect is just different, and the students also feel the difference....the phrases, American teachers would use them naturally, clearly and powerful, ...mine is not as clear, powerful, and that would also affect how students receive my message. (Teaching reflection #5)

Next, she emphasized how the language barrier made clear instruction challenging and time-consuming on daily basis, since more time was needed for wording and rehearsing in advance. In order to achieve the same effect, the only solution for her was to spend more time to prepare in advance. Lack of confidence and frustration was also observed in class and was also mentioned in teaching reflections afterwards when she was not able to afford that extra preparation time in advance.

...I need to write it (instructions for activities) in my PPT ahead of time, then, I know what to say on the spot. I feel I need to rehearse many times, and I don't have that time...it takes less than a minute for me to explain the activities in Chinese, but five in English.... We have to think about how to make it clear, not to confuse students and what if they don't understand.... (Teaching Reflection #4)

Though the ST was married to an American, and enrolled in graduate program in the university, she was aware that language was still a barrier for her Classroom Management, which hindered her from making her instructions clear and comprehensible to students.

**Attitude and feelings.** ST expressed her concerns and worries when she started her practicum and again at the beginning of student teaching (coded as “nervous” and “worry” in interviews #1, #2 #3, and observations #1, #2, #4).

...at the very beginning of my student teaching, I was very nervous, I was not sure what I did was right, then my face turned red, ...I would try to stop them...try my best to speak louder than they did, and it didn't work out. (ST interview #3, observed in classroom observation #1, # 2, # 4)

In order to address the problems in classroom, the ST had a positive mindset to deal with them (from responses to question #4, #5 in all interviews, coded as “positive attitude” and “problem-solving”), seeking solutions from different resources ranging from peer student teachers, CT, supervisor to professor.

she is not afraid to try new things ... she is not afraid that the outcome does not come out ... she will come up with a way kind of calm down the students ... she is willing to try.... (CT interview #2)

“I feel today the class is much better,” or “I really didn't listen to me at all” but then she starts to think about why they didn't do that.

Varieties of engaging activities and Classroom Management strategies were constantly observed in ST's classroom, teaching reflections and also in lesson plans.

She is more confident ... just the attitude, she is more confident. (CT interview #3)

Multiple data resources revealed ST's transformation from a nervous practicum student to a confident student teacher ready for real classrooms.

**Improvement.** The chronological analysis of the data revealed changes in classroom dynamics and improvement of CT's classroom management skills and understanding of the complexity of classroom management in non-native context, and the related codes are grouped in theme of *Improvement*. The data collected in this longitudinal study demonstrated a cyclical pattern: the same classroom management problem occurred repeatedly throughout the three phases with significant decreasing severity and frequency. For example, the ST had to stop teaching twice to remind students to put away their cell phone when observed the second time in the first phase. When she was observed at the end of the third phase, she was able to address the same issue with “proximity,” which means she had the problem solved by standing next to the student while continue teaching the whole class. Comparative analysis of data showed the improvement of ST's classroom management skills, positive tendency of classroom dynamics,

and ST's understanding of Classroom Management and pedagogical theories and also the complexity of acquiring Classroom Management skills as a native Chinese in non-native context. ST also talked about her own improvement in classroom management in her interviews. Here is a quote from one of her interviews:

... you only have to teach, and I don't think I will have major classroom management challenges. I will teach very well.... (ST, interview #3)

The quote from the last interview with ST reveals that she became more confident with classroom management and it was no longer her major challenge in teaching practice. This also demonstrated her improvement in classroom management.

## Discussion

The findings of this study both support and challenge findings from previous research. In this section, we discuss how the research questions are addressed, and how the findings are related to the existing literature.

**Challenges.** We examined the challenges that the student teacher faced with in order to address the first research question "*what challenges do native, Chinese, pre-service teachers face in the process of developing classroom management skills in practicum and student teaching?*" In the current study, the student teacher was faced with two types of strategies: instructional challenges and contextual discrepancies. Instructional challenges emerged as a major theme, and it included three subthemes: classroom management challenges, balancing between lesson planning and classroom management, and anxiety of ST. Contextual discrepancies included two subthemes: cultural differences and language frustration.

*Instructional challenges.* The challenges of classroom management supported findings from previous studies (Hustad, 2015; Xu, 2012; Zhou & Li, 2015) in terms of culturally embedded differences in expectations, lack of experience of dealing with problematic behaviors, working with students with special needs, and struggle in the navigating between Chinese classroom management skills and American classroom management skills. However, ST was not overly surprised by student behaviors in the U.S. classroom, which was defined as "classroom management cultural shock" in previous studies (Ding & et al., 2008; Zhou & Li, 2015). There are two possible reasons behind this discrepancy. First, public school setting was familiar to ST, since she had experience working in public school in Arizona before. Although she was not teaching Chinese at that time, she was accessible to classroom settings and was exposed to classroom interactions between teacher and students. Secondly, ST was enrolled in a teacher strong preparation program, and the supporting course paralleled with practicum was classroom management, and she was systematical trained in classroom management in theory to support her practice in practicum and student teaching. This may also explain why the current study does not replicate the previous studies in terms of "lack of coping strategies" and "inaccessibility of adequate support in classroom management" (Hustad, 2015; Xu, 2012; Zhou & Li, 2015). With systematic training in both theory and practice, ST was able to present herself as a "warm demander" with high expectations while showing care and maintaining positive relationship with students (Novodvorsky & Weinstein, 2014) towards the end of student teaching.

*Contextual discrepancy.* As for contextual discrepancy, the themes of challenges, language frustration and cultural differences emerged in the study are aligned with previous research (Hustad, 2015; Xu, 2012; Zhou & Li, 2015). However, the cultural difference identified in the current study focused more on how cultural background not only include difference in expectations but also involves the concern about how the discrepancy between the teachers' and students cultural background hindered ST from building closer relationship

with students and from making instruction more relevant to students. This might be closely related to ST's strong believe in managing classroom by promoting positive relationship and engaging instructions, principle 1 and 2 of guidance of Classroom Management practice (Novodvorsky & Weinstein, 2014).

The theme of language frustration supported Xu's (2012) study of challenges faced by native Chinese teachers and Hustad's (2015) study of acculturation experience. Hustad (2015) reported that even English language teachers suffered from language frustration due to inadequate English proficiency. The possible reasons behind this common phenomenon of language frustration among Chinese teachers in U.S. might be related to contextual discrepancy and the tremendous difference between the two languages. Language users tend to draw their native context when they learned a new language in their native context without adequate L2 context (Wang, 2015). Therefore, the proficient English speakers in China found themselves struggling with English due to the contextual discrepancy in the context they learned the language and the context they are supposed to use the language. In addition, according to Sapir-Whorf hypothesis, the grammar and structure of a mother tongue would influence the way we perceive the world (Boroditsky, 2009). Chinese is an analytic language, which allows inductive meaning flow surpass grammatical structure, whereas, English is a synthetical language, which constructs meaning through structures. Given the influence of mother tongue on ways of thinking, it is not hard to understand the language frustration suffered by native Chinese teachers in American schools. It is also understandable why it took four times more time for ST to do the same thing that American colleagues did. With the joint influence of language frustration and cultural difference, it is reasonable for ST's hesitation and postponement in enforcing consequence and contacting parents when she was fully aware of the possibility of confrontation.

**Approaching challenges.** Three themes, coping strategies, feelings & attitudes, improvement addressed the second research question: "*How do native pre-service Chinese teachers approach those challenges?*" In this study, student teacher actively applied the strategies she learned in her methods class to address different behavioral problems. This supports the findings in Zhou and Li's (2015) that teachers actively learned American classroom management skills and strategies. However, she did not experience the struggle of integrating Chinese classroom management skills and American classroom management skills. She had no teaching experience in China and this might be the reason that she did not experience the conflicts between Chinese way and American way of managing classroom.

**Improvement.** The study witnessed the transformation of ST from a nervous practicum student to a confident "warm demander" ready for the classroom (Novodvorsky & Weinstein, 2014). This means she had high expectation for her students while providing her students with sufficient support (Novodvorsky & Weinstein, 2014). At the begging of the practicum, she was not able to address all the problematic behaviors that needed to be addressed even with the presence of CT. She gradually developed more classroom skills, and she was able to establish expectations during her student teaching, and was able to manipulate classroom management principles (Novodvorsky & Weinstein, 2014) and made adequate decisions to properly address different problematic behaviors.

Possible reasons behind her improvement might be that ST had experience working in public schools in Alaska, and she had experience of working with American high school students before she enrolled in the teacher preparation program. Such experience entitled her to a "better mindset than the practicum and student teachers I had before" (CT), and she was not surprised when she entered the classroom with problematic behaviors. Secondly, ST is married to an American educator, which makes education more accessible to her in terms of resources and support compared to native Chinese who are different in this aspect. Last but not

least, she was enrolled in a strong teacher preparation program, and she had easy access to support from her professors, her peers and her CT when she needed any help.

The findings revealed ST's positive attitude and problem-solving attitudes towards dealing with classroom management in different data resource, including interviews with both CT and ST, classroom observations and teaching reflections. Her constant self-evaluation and reflection on teaching and classroom management also contribute to her success navigation through development of Classroom Management skills.

*Relationship between cooperating teacher and student teacher.* CT was very supportive and had great relationship with ST. CT granted the permission for the ST to try all she wanted concerning classroom management. CT's support provided opportunities and more possibilities for ST to improve her Classroom Management skills in real classroom throughout her practicum and student teaching experience since she had the freedom to experience classroom dynamics and negotiate coping strategies on her own. Such experience is pivotal for teachers to improve their Classroom Management skills, since classroom management is a "learned craft" and it requires knowledge, but also constant reflection, hard work and classroom experience (Novodvorsky & Weinstein, 2014).

Conversely, CT expressed her own "ongoing" struggling with Classroom Management, especially at the beginning of the year. There was not an explicit classroom expectation established when ST came into the classroom for practicum, and CT confirmed that that was no hard copy of clearly explained classroom expectations when the investigator required a copy for data collection. At the end of the study, CT mentioned about adopting classroom expectations ST used in her classroom. The relationship between the CT and ST might be better described as more as an interactive learning together relationship than a hierarchical mentoring and being mentored.

**Implications.** With the discrepancies and consistencies between the current study and previous studies discussed with analysis of possible reasons, several key implications emerged from this research. First, it is important that native Chinese language pre-service have a strong preparation program that includes systematic training of classroom management in both theory and practice. The strong program, the availability of resources and knowledge contributed positively to ST's experience of acquiring the craft of Classroom Management skills. ST mentioned multiple times that what she learned in the program was useful and practical.

Secondly, both the current study and previous research reported contextual discrepancy in language frustration and cultural differences, or the mismatch between native Chinese teachers' embedded native culture and American context. Therefore, it is advisable that teacher preparation program be culturally responsive in order to foster intercultural competence in pre-service teachers. We recommend that foreign-born pre-service teachers be paired-up with their American counterparts for classroom management support so that both can benefit from each other and improve their intercultural communicative skills. American pre-service teachers can help their foreign-born peers to understand their American students, while foreign-born pre-service teachers can help their American peers to build relationship with foreign-born students, ST's positive, problem-solving attitude and constant self-evaluation and reflection helped her constantly trying different strategies during her practicum and student teaching experience. Finally, training on working with students with special needs should be strengthened for native Chinese pre-service teachers due to the inaccessibility to special education in their home culture. Due to lack of real-life experience, native Chinese pre-service teachers are still not confident working with students with special needs even when they have taken special education course in the program. We recommend that field experience for pre-service Chinese teachers include a brief mentoring experience with special education teacher in the same building so that they can have some hands-on experience working with students with special education.

**Limitations.** The study has several limitations in terms of design and conduct. First, the single case is done in a bounded system of Mid-western city; therefore, the findings are not generalizable across settings, a typical proposed limitation of qualitative research. Next, classroom observation feedbacks were not collected as part of data to avoid validity issues due to the lead researcher's dual role of researcher and field experience supervisor. If the feedback were done by a third person instead of the lead researcher, it would be available to be collected. The database would be more convincing in terms of reporting the improvement of ST.

The single case study looked into the native Chinese pre-service teacher's experience of acquiring classroom management skills during practicum and student teaching, and discussed a variety of challenges native Chinese teacher faced with in such process and how such challenges were addressed and not addressed. The study underscored the importance influence of strong preparation program, culturally responsiveness and strengthened SPED training in teacher preparation, positive attitudes, and field experience on native Chinese pre-service teacher's experience of developing classroom management skills. Replications and discrepancies between the current study and previous studies were discussed and possible reasons were analyzed.

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