Masters Capstone Project

Classroom Management: Middle School Interventions

Briauna R. Hansen

Submitted to the Graduate

School of Education City

University of Seattle

In Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements

For the Degree of Master in Teaching

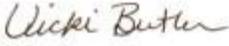I give permission to City University to store and use this MIT Project for teaching purposes.

Submitted by _____   _____6/4/2020_____
                           Briauna R. Hansen   Date

Approved by
                           _____   _____6/4/2020_____
                           Charlotte Cochran, Ph.D.   Date

Approved by _____   _____6/4/2020_____
                           Vicki Butler, Ed.D.   Date

Table of Contents

Acknowledgements

First, I want to express my appreciation for the participants and their families from this study for their unbiased participation and allowance for me to collect data during the allotted time. Additionally, I would like to give thanks to the teaching team involved in my growth and success throughout my time within the school and their classrooms.

To my family, I want to thank you all for keeping me positive and supporting me throughout my program. Especially to my mom who has been my source of inspiration and my light at the end of a long tunnel. I'll never forget your sleepless nights and dedication to your own Master's degree which fueled me in times when I was questioning my strength. To my forever person, I'll never forget your endless energy and excitement in my success and pursuit of my career. Thank you so much.

Lastly, to my companion throughout this entire journey. Between the weekend study sessions, calendar planning, and hour-long phone calls, you have been my rock. I can't express how great my appreciation of you and that first coffee meeting has impacted my life. If not for you, I may not be this successful or have the depth of knowledge I now have because of your enriching support and care. I only wish you love and success in this life.

Abstract

Classroom management interventions were implemented in a middle school resource room over a 6-week period. Of 32 students, 12 opted out of participating, which left 20 participants total. The goal was to implement classroom management interventions that would reduce undesired student behaviors that interfered with instructional time. Classroom management interventions included a teacher greeting at the classroom door followed up with a student answered expectation reminder, weekly scheduled expectation reminders, and a consistent reward system. Undesired target behavior included: use of phones, verbal interruptions, misuse of Chromebooks, wandering around, unprepared for class, off-task, and leaving the classroom without permission. Baseline data showed constant displays of undesired classroom behaviors. After six weeks data analysis showed a decrease in undesired behaviors.

Introduction

Proper classroom management strategies can heavily dictate the positive impact of academics on students (Bowsher, 2018). With how dramatically classroom management can impact a student's academic success, the pressure on teachers to create classroom management strategies is essential. Unfortunately, Bowsher (2018) found that only 57% of early-career teachers felt prepared to handle classroom management, which means 43% of early-career teachers felt unprepared to support a structured and reliable learning environment for students to express academic success. Teachers who displayed poor classroom management strategies are more susceptible to higher frequencies of serious behaviors that may result in suspensions or expulsions (Evans & Lester, 2010). Teachers who have had to resort to punitive punishment due to these serious behaviors, reduce time dedicated to the lesson, thus negatively affecting the academic success of all of their students in the process (Garwood & Vernon-Feagans, 2017).

Dilemma

The problem was undesired behaviors in the learning environment, which were impacting instructional time. Many teachers report undesired student behavior throughout each of their years teaching, often making changes to their classroom interventions and rewards systems to develop a classroom routine that halts these undesired behaviors. In middle school, teachers rotate different groups of students each hour, changing the student dynamic in their classrooms depending on what students reside in that group. Teachers have to become creative with their classroom interventions to address the variety of students they serve, making trial and error a

common practice for teachers. The inconsistency of strategies causes frustration shared by both the teacher and students, and may put tension on the vital rapport building between them.

In addition to teachers' specific classroom expectations, school administrators have developed school-wide expectations and policies that teachers uphold in their classrooms. Teachers using classroom expectations not derived from the school administrators creates a variety of possibly conflicting expectations between classes and can create confusion among students who rely on stability and consistency to manage their behaviors. Students often questioned why they were being disciplined after displaying undesired classroom behavior which escalated their behavior to a point that required more severe consequences. Based on student reactions when disciplined, it was observed that many students felt the inconsistency in the expectations being implemented by the array of teachers that it spawns mistrust between the student-teacher relationship.

Rationale

When establishing healthy classroom routines and expectations, students should be able to rely on consistency and commitment to school policy (Bailey, Jacob, & Jones, 2014). This does not only include creating consistent discipline measures but instead increasing the need for consistent reward systems. According to Evans and Lester (2010) "Positive behavior support (PBS)... [is] defined by teaching behavioral expectations" (p.57), a practice that is often taught in the beginning of the year, but not as often revisited on a consistent basis. Teachers should be prepared to address behavior prevention over addressing behavior discipline. Evans and Lester (2010) found that when teachers prevented undesired behaviors in their classrooms, the necessity for behavior interventions was reduced.

While observing the behaviors within the researcher's specific classroom environment, seven undesired behaviors became apparent disrupters both for the teacher giving instruction and the students tasked with learning in the classroom. These seven undesired behaviors included having a phone out, verbal interruption, having a Chromebook out, wandering around the classroom, being unprepared for class activities, being off-task, and student(s) leaving the classroom without permission. Many of these behaviors violated the school-wide expectations and required constant discipline that often left the teacher fatigued and the students frustrated, damaging the teacher-student relationship and trust. The classroom management strategy used by the teacher relied more on disciplinary actions instead of preventative measures. Students began protesting by increasing negative behaviors, which caused a significant decrease in instruction.

Literature Review

Introduction

Creating affective classroom management strategies and routines can be complicated and frustrating to many teachers. Teaching diverse students, coupled with an increase in the use of technology in the classroom, have forced teachers to become creative when handling student behaviors (Marks, 2000). The more teachers develop classroom management strategies to address behaviors, the more complex and sometimes confusing the expectations become for the students who transition between different classes, specifically in the middle school environment (Marks, 2000).

Targeting the specific needs of the students and classroom environment are the first steps to addressing issues within the classroom and school as a whole. Before a solution can be initiated in the classroom, an understanding of the previous mistakes made by teachers must be

understood. Additionally, by understanding the motives and the undesired behaviors of students, it will narrow down the strategies needed to curb the behaviors. Once these two factors are understood, crafting classroom management strategies will become easier and proper implementation can begin within the classroom environment.

Classroom Management

As facilitators of learning, teachers have a responsibility to make sure the environment where their students learn is equipped to support a stable and encouraging routine (Bailey, Jacob, & Jones, 2014). Bailey, Jacob, and Jones (2017) remarked that "effective classroom management is based on planning and preparation… it is an extension of the quality relationship of the room" (p. 19). Essentially, when teachers plan, they must take into account their learning space, resources, class routines, and expectations. Formulated plans should be created and set as a consistent schedule for students to base their own expectations on from the beginning of their time in that space. Bailey, Jacob, and Jones (2017) identified that social-emotional learning starts with the interactions that students experience in the classroom. If students are consistently being disciplined, they can be mislabeled as a problem child. To avoid this mislabeling, the class routines and expectations need to be clearly defined and available to both the students and the teacher with daily consistency in discipline and incentives. If this is not followed through each day, the teacher-student relationship can be damaged and the integrity of the classroom management strategies become ineffective (Bailey, Jacob, & Jones, 2014).

When classroom management becomes inconsistent, students lose trust in the teacher and start testing the boundaries of the teacher and the system of discipline (Garwood & Vernon-Feagans, 2017). Testing these boundaries could be as small as making vulgar comments in class, or as big as starting altercations between peers and the teacher. Because the discipline is

inconsistent, students are unaware of what consequences their actions will insight, producing a continuing trend of more distrust between the teacher and the student. Eventually, the teacher will find even the historically tame students acting out or displaying undesirable behaviors, straining the teacher-student relationships and damaging the learning environment as a whole (Bailey, Jacob, & Jones, 2014).

New Teachers

According to the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) (2005), only 55% of early-career teachers felt prepared to handle classroom management and disciplinary challenges. Between 1999 and 2000, about 580,000 new hire teachers were employed in the United States. If this is considered the average new hire rate yearly, 45% of the 580,000 new hire teachers will enter the school year unprepared to establish positive classroom management routines (NCES, 2005). Research has shown the lack of classroom management strategies and training is the leading cause of teacher burnout in the beginning years of teaching (Baker, Gentry, & Larmer, 2016). The NCES (2005) conducted a longitudinal study between 2007 and 2012 to examine teacher retention of early-career teachers. Out of 156,100 early-career teachers, 17% or 27,400 of those teachers left their teaching positions by the 5th year of their career (NCES, 2005). Based on various self-surveys completed by teachers, classroom management strategies are a constantly developing challenge throughout all grade levels.

Common trending mistakes that early-career teachers make include taking challenging behaviors personally, trying to do everything and not asking for help, not having a discipline plan, and focusing on things that cannot change (Flannery, 2010). Combined, early-career teachers face a diverse amount of challenges that they will need to identify to produce an effective classroom management plan and routine for a successful classroom culture to develop.

With all of this information taken into consideration, not preparing an effective classroom management plan and routine can have significant and lasting negative effects on the classroom culture and individual students. Repeated disruptive behaviors that go unacknowledged can consistently disrupt the learning process (Marks, 2000). Teachers who ignore problem behaviors will find that the behavior consistently progresses to more disruptive and potential riskier behavior (Marks, 2000). They also fail to take advantage of the teachable moment to define the proper responses for the student to use (Marks, 2000).

Targeting Behaviors

When targeting undesirable behaviors in a classroom environment, it is important to differentiate which behaviors are considered disruptive to the learning process for the learner and those surrounding the learner, and which behaviors stem from a student's needs to cope with either the environment or the learning process (Garwood & Vernon-Feagans, 2017). Behaviors that disrupt the learning process include but are not limited to disrupting a target student's learning, disrupting surrounding peer's learnings, disrupting the teacher's instruction, and disrupting the learning environment (Garwood & Vernon-Feagans, 2017). Examples of behaviors that are disruptive to the learning process could be playing music out loud during class, wandering around the classroom and engaging with inappropriate peer contact or conversation, or making verbal interruptions over others who are talking. With each of these behaviors, the target student is not the only person affected by the behavior in a way that is halting or completely stopping the learning process.

Behaviors that do not disrupt the learner and instead support a student's needs can be more difficult to target. Many students with special needs might have a specific fidget that helps them focus while expelling some physical energy (Evans & Lester, 2010). In this case, the

difficulty is understanding if the fidget will become a distraction to other students surrounding

the target student with the need to fidget to stay on task. Often, the distractibility of the fidget

relies on the student's preference of fidget (Stott & Moyes, 1985). Fidgets range from foot-

tapping and pencil drumming to clicker cubes and stress balls. Some of these fidgets make

repetitive noises and look like toys and its often difficult to find a fidget that a student finds

helpful while also keeping the distraction to a minimum. When a fidget is distracting, the

teacher needs to help the students in the classroom develop a tolerance for the object and ignore

it (Garwood & Vernon-Feagans, 2017). When this is not addressed and practiced, the fidget can

become a game or toy that has now become a bigger distraction than a support tool for a student

with special needs (Stott & Moyes, 1985).

The question of how to target behaviors now becomes 'what behaviors are a distraction to

the learning process and within my control as a teacher?' A common mistake made by teachers

is when teachers complain or become frustrated about each small mishap in their classroom

(Flannery, 2010). When teachers focus on all the small interactions and incidents that

accumulate over the day, they can start to feel burn-out and reflect that frustration onto their

students. This often makes the teacher-student relationship fragile and unstable, especially in

cases where students are unsure of what behaviors will be tolerated and ignored or what

behaviors will result in discipline (Garwood & Vernon-Feagans, 2017). It is important for a

teacher to establish classroom norms and expectations that will result in discipline with their

students and practice that discipline regularly when the target behavior is displayed by a student.

Technology

The world of technology has grown exponentially in current-day American society

(Ertmer, Ottenbreit-Leftwich, & Tondeur, 2014). Because of this growth, school districts have

worked to keep up with the changes by providing access to technology in schools in the form of computer labs, classroom computers, or check-out computers. Additionally, students are being given opportunities to access personal technology through their families and their communities. It is not uncommon to see students with personal cell phones, home computers, or tablets that can access the internet or downloadable content (Ertmer, Ottenbreit-Leftwich, & Tondeur, 2014). Access to technology grants a great number of additional resources in the classroom in record speed and has been incorporated in classroom lessons near daily. Often, with positive change in society, comes ways that people will take advantage of the change in a negative way (Ertmer, Ottenbreit-Leftwich, & Tondeur, 2014). Technology within the classroom is not exempt from these problems.

Inappropriate use of technology within the classroom fosters an ill-defined and distracting environment that negatively impacts student engagement in lessons (Marks, 2000). Without proper restrictions on technology use in the classroom, technology easily becomes one of the most frustrating distractions during class time (Marks, 2000). For example, students may use their personal technology to communicate with others, go onto social media or other sites and applications not relevant to the lesson, or use different media platforms as a means to avoid schoolwork. This is not only possible using personal technology, but this has also been done using school-provided technology that is not properly monitored or does not have the capability to lock students from accessing these distractions (Marks, 2000). Proper classroom management and school expectations should detail the use of technology throughout the school campus, along with teacher involvement in supporting those expectations within the classroom to keep technology disruptions low.

Student Engagement

Teachers who put a high value on student engagement have seen an increase in standardized test scores and lower dropout rates (Marks, 2000). For many students, engagement in school decreases as they progress from elementary school to middle school making student engagement a significant barrier for teachers to overcome (Marks, 2000). According to Marks (2000), there are three ways in which student engagement in school; behavioral engagement, emotional engagement, and cognitive engagement.

Based on Marks (2000) findings, teachers who address these three forms of engagement in their classroom will see an overall increase in cognitive response and memory retention in their students. Student engagement can help deepen a student's understanding of a lesson and help students reach a high potential in their academics and social interactions (Marzano, Marzano, & Pickering, 2003). Connecting the three ways in which students can engage in a lesson with classroom management will proactively work to allow students the ability to build relationships and their own cognitive connections within the classroom (Marzano, Marzano, & Pickering, 2003).

Teacher-Student Rapport

Benn (2018) described rapport as respect in three dimensions; respect for self, respect for your role as a teacher, and respect for the variety of needs, characteristics, and obstacles that come with each of their students. Benn (2018) continued by identifying respect as the cornerstone of rapport. Students in need of the most compassion might show their needs in disrespectful or rude ways. Benn (2018) observed that "when a student lashes out in class, you must have the presence of mind in the moment to know that sometimes, poor behavior isn't about you personally" (p. 20). School may bring about anxieties and fear responses in students who

react poorly towards teachers when they do not trust the teachers. Because of these responses, the rapport between a teacher and student can significantly improve a student's emotional response to academics. If a teacher responds negatively towards students when they respond poorly to academics, the negative response can push the student farther from progress in their academics and emotional maturity (Benn, 2018).

It is a teacher's responsibility to establish a positive rapport. If a teacher's authority is "only assumed and perpetuated without regard to student buy-in and sincere relationship building," this will foster a bad rapport (Benn, 2018, p. 22). This leads to potential abuse of power, loss of student self-efficacy, and ultimately a loss of student engagement or learning. If students are expected to learn in school, teachers are also expected to reach out to students in a positive way that nurtures student's behavioral, emotional, and cognitive engagement and well-being (Benn, 2018; Marks, 2000). When teachers do not take this approach to a student's rude comments or sarcastic tones, small grudges can be formed against those students, evolving into larger forms of defensive disposition (Benn, 2018). Instead, Benn (2018) described the teacher's role as servant leadership, a position that prioritizes student needs and well-being over their own emotional response.

Some conflicts between teachers and students can be unavoidable but ultimately, a majority of conflicts are preventable. In one case, Benn (2018) described an incident between and student and teacher that she mediated where the student has a verbal outburst in an uncharacteristic way. After further investigation, the teacher told the student 'nunya' after the student asked where another student had gone. In the student's family, 'nunya' is translated to 'none of your damn business.' Although the teacher never meant it in this way, the student believed the teacher had cursed at her, causing her to respond with a verbal outburst and insults

at the teacher. Benn (2018) wanted to know how the mistranslation was not caught before and found that the teacher had not built more than a superficial relationship with this student, neglecting to actively understand the student's culture and sensitivity to slang words.

Special Education Changes and Perceptions

Serving students with special education needs calls for flexibility and compassion in the general education setting. Statistics collected by the British Columbia Teachers' Federation (BCTF) (2019), special education students in the general education setting is at about 10%. Over the last 20 years, this has remained consistent, but there are significant changes in the needs of those students and how they qualify for special education. Among the changes included a 90% increase in students with a physical disability, a 21.3% increase in student with Intensive Behavior Interventions/Mental Illness, and a 26.3% increase in students with a Learning Disability (BCTF, 2019). Although the increase in needs is significant, there has been significant understaffing of special education teachers to meet the needs of those students.

Darjan and Lustrea (2018) created a study to evaluate how teachers (special education versus pre-service teachers) perceived the idea of having special education students with special needs in their classes. The survey was completed by 82 different teachers and the results were varied. The survey did not find large differences between the different teachers who self-reported, but some differences were significant. It was found that special education teachers were more open reported being more open and willing to have relationships with people who have mental illnesses. The researchers assessed if there was a difference in the openness depending on if the Special Education teacher reported having a family member with a mental illness and found that it did not make a significant difference between other Special Education teachers. Instead, the additional training Special Education teachers received to be specialized

and continue their education on mental illness was found as a correlating factor to increasing the openness and willingness to create and develop relationships with students who have mental illnesses.

Student Anxieties in School

Special needs students who report anxieties towards school and academics may lash out behaviorally in a way that will allow them to avoid anxiety (Garwood & Vernon-Feagans, 2017). Often, a student would rather be sent out of the class to avoid doing schoolwork because this eliminates the anxiety of failure when attempting school work (Garwood & Vernon-Feagans, 2017). Ozokcu and Yildirim (2018) conducted a study that focused on the fears of special needs students. Participants included 69 special needs students who were interviewed using open-ended questions about specific fears ranging from fear of earthquakes to fear of scary movies. The researchers compiled all interview answers into 52 different codes and 8 categories of fear. Among the 8 categories of fear, being negatively evaluated by figures of authority and other students was the third theme discovered by the researchers. Students gave examples of this fear including fear of police, fear of principals, and fear of report cards or receiving low grades.

In regard to causes for student misbehavior, Erdem and Kocyigit (2019) conducted a study to identify different causes for the behavior. After observing 19 different teachers in their respective classrooms over a semester of time, the teachers were interviewed about recorded incidents, reactions to behaviors, the system meant to prevent behavior or initiate discipline, and possible causes for behavior. Results indicated that behaviors could be divided into two separate categories; out of class causes and in-class causes. Within the 'out of class' category, causes such as family-related, society related, and school administration related causes were narrowed

down while in the 'in-class' causes included students related, academics related, and curriculum/school system-related causes.

During the interview portion of this study, the researchers would refer to an incident and ask the teacher if they knew what they possible cause of the behavior could be. The reported answers ranged from students having a family issue to loss of self-efficacy that causes the student to try to avoid the work by misbehaving (Erdem & Kocyigit, 2019). Additionally, the researchers recorded their own observations of the teacher's responses and reactions to student behavior to find unacknowledged causes for behavior. When addressing in-class causes, the researches remarked that "the [teachers] mostly blamed students for their misbehaviors rather than their own classroom management skills (Erdem & Kocyigit, 2019, p.109)." When asked about this, some of the participants commented that the cause of behavior was due to the student's characteristics and prior exposure to academics and lack of social/emotional skills.

Question

What is the impact on undesired student behaviors when implementing positive interventions and an incentive strategy including greeting students at the door, keeping the door locked from the inside to remove outside interruptions, reviewing expectations, and handing out Howl About tickets?

Purpose

The purpose of this action research study was to investigate the impact of implementing positive interventions and an incentive strategy including greeting students at the door, locking the door from the inside, reviewing expectations, and handing out Howl About tickets on undesired student behaviors.

Methodology

The study initiated was the result of problem-solving a current middle school class issue. The teacher was dealing with a variety of disruptions and behaviors that had halted lessons on some days. The class was a special education, resource room English Language Arts (ELA) class with a variety of students on BIPs and other students who have social/emotional goals in their IEPs. Various interventions had been introduced into this classroom, but with little organization or data collected to show the effectiveness of those interventions. Often students were just given detention that they often did not attend or were held accountable for, making very little difference in classroom behaviors. According to Evans and Lester (2010), "middle school teachers are twice as likely to report disciplinary issues than elementary school teachers (p. 56)." Through the use of classroom interventions and incentives, the need for discipline such as lunch or after school detention would not be as necessary because the problem will be curbed directly in the classroom.

Design

This qualitative action research study took place over eight weeks in a middle school resource room. Two weeks were dedicated to gathering pre-intervention observations, the other six weeks were dedicated to following the set interventions and incentives while collecting data on student behavior. The first intervention that took place during the six weeks was greeting students at the door for every class. The door was always locked to decrease classroom interruptions so students would have to be greeted by the teacher to come into the classroom. The second intervention was to revisit the school-wide and classroom expectations every Monday, be sure to ask students to give examples of how they would show those expectations in class. Incentives (Howl About tickets) were given out a minimum of five times per class period

each day to various students who displayed the desired behaviors such as being prepared, phone and Chrome book is away, staying on task, raising their hand to speak, and staying in their spot. A data collection sheet (Appendix A) was created to record seven disruptive behaviors types for each student each day including phone use (P), verbal interruptions (VI), Chrome book use (C), wandering (W), off-task (OT), left the classroom (LC).

In the data collection sheet (Appendix A), daily observations were made and recorded in the /Post-Intervention Observation sheet. Students would be tallied for every time they displayed the undesirable behavior and given verbal acknowledgment of their behavior. Tallies were totaled at the end of the day and charted on both an individual data collection sheet for the day and a second data collection sheet that compared the day to the pre-intervention observations. Figure 1 shows the data recorded and graphed for the two weeks of pre-intervention. observations collected.

Context

Participants were enrolled in a Title I middle school resource room for English Language Arts in Washington state (Washington Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction, 2020). The classroom was a detached, single portal classroom with 2 windows facing the school track and field. There were two block classes included in this study. Each block class included two consecutive 60-minute periods. In the first block, there were 18 students and in the second block, there were 14 students, totaling 32 students. Of the 32 students in class, 20 gave consent for this study.

Participants

All students had Individual Education Plans (IEPs) and five were English Language Learners (ELL). There were 9 females and 11 males. Five students were also on Behavior

Intervention Plans (BIPs). These participants were chosen because the researcher was a student-teacher in their classroom. The assigned paraprofessional in the classroom read the script (Appendix B) to the participants when the researcher was absent from the classroom to protect student participant choice from bias. The script outlined the student participant role in the study as well as the interventions that would be put into place during this study. The script also covered student confidentiality, incentives, and allowed students to deny consent or have the chance to deny consent at any point during the study. Students were asked to write yes or no if they gave consent or not on a sticky note that was gathered by the paraprofessional and later given to the researcher. For the students who gave consent, they were sent home that day with a packet of information about the study along with parent signature required permission slips to be returned to the researcher by the end of the week.

Intervention

The interventions during the study included the researcher greeting students at the door before class, keeping the door locked from the inside at all times, scheduling school and class-wide expectation reminders every Monday, and using Howl About tickets and these interventions were used as incentives for desired behaviors a minimum of five times per class. To start class off with students prioritizing student engagement, each student will start off being individually acknowledged and personally addressed, accessing the emotional and cognitive aspects of student engagement (Marks, 2000). Daily, during passing period, the researcher stood at the doorway of the classroom greeting students as they came into the classroom. At the door, the researcher would allow students into the classroom only after they answered the question "how do you come into the classroom?" Expected responses included: quietly, calmly, silently, or respectfully. The classroom door remained locked from the inside for the rest of the class

period to allow for students to freely leave the classroom. Students could leave the classroom for

a variety of appropriate reasons, which included but was not limited to use of the bathroom,

request by administration/counselor/office staff to leave class, and scheduled break time for a

student with specific break accommodations. If a student left for one of these reasons, the

teacher would allow the student back into the classroom after asking the student "how do you

come into the classroom?"

Evans and Lester (2010) suggested making expectations clear to students regarding

behavior in order for students to self-assess their actions and for students to be aware of the

agreed upon consequences of their actions. Every Monday during the six weeks of the study,

starting the first week of May 2019, the researcher presented the class with a visual

representation of the school-wide and classroom expectations (Appendix C). These expectations

were visually found on a school created poster displayed at the front of the classroom and a

student-created poster found at the back of the classroom on the bulletin board. The researcher

proceeded to ask for student volunteers to recite the school expectations and classroom

expectations. The researcher then asked students to give a variety of examples of what those

expectations looked like or what the students could do to display the use and importance of those

expectations.

Garwood & Vernon-Feagans (2017) discussed the anxiety many students have towards

authority figures in school, often reacting negatively towards those authority figures. Rewards

for positive behavior starts to correlate teachers with a positive response, overwriting that initial

anxiety and allowing students to become increasingly open to more classroom engagement

resulting in more academic and cognitive growth along with developing positive relationships in

school (Garwood & Vernon-Feagans, 2017). Throughout each class, the researcher used the

school-wide incentive called Howl About tickets as a reward for students who displayed the desired behaviors in class. Howl About tickets were used as a sort of currency at this school that students gathered until they had a specific amount that translated to an item available for 'purchase' from the administration. A minimum of five tickets was given to students throughout each class period, specifically if those students displayed the desired behaviors that aligned with school and class expectations. Data on the Post-Intervention Observation spreadsheet (Appendix A) was collected by the researcher throughout the school day during the entire six weeks.

Data Gathering Instruments/Assessments

Data was gathered using the Pre-Intervention/Post-Intervention Observation spreadsheet shown in Appendix A. The Pre-Intervention/Post-Intervention Observation Spreadsheet was printed daily to record data and then transferred to the digital record sheet at the end of the day for convenience. On the Pre-Intervention/Post-Intervention Observation spreadsheet the date, students' codes, and the seven undesired behaviors were listed as columns. Pre-intervention observations were collected for the first two weeks of the study and charted as shown in Figure 1.

If a student displayed one of the seven undesired behaviors, the researcher would fill in the date and student code followed by a tally in the column of the undesired behavior along with a verbal acknowledgment of their behavior. If the student showed a different undesired behavior or continued the undesired behavior after being given a verbal acknowledgment of their behavior, they would receive additional tallies in the corresponding columns on the Pre-Intervention/Post-Intervention Observation sheet. This information was transferred to the digital Pre-Intervention/Post-Intervention Observation sheet at the end of the day. These tallies were totaled and charted at the end of the week.

School-wide expectations (Appendix C) were displayed in the classroom and reviewed weekly per the interventions in the study. Howl About tickets (Appendix D) were handed out a minimum of 5 times per class per the interventions in this study.

Assessment #1: Pre-Intervention Observation. Data from this assessment was used to collect baseline observations of the seven undesired behaviors before interventions.

Assessment #2: Post-Intervention Observation. Data from this assessment was used to collect observations of the seven undesired behaviors during the integration of the interventions.

Validity: The data collected is a direct result of observed behaviors targeting the seven undesired behaviors from the dilemma correlated to this specific classroom. The interventions used in this action research study can be re-created and adjusted for various grade levels and classrooms (Henricks, 2013). The use of these interventions was created to be easily integrated into other classrooms with various school diversities such as diverse school demographics and diverse communities.

Results

During the first two weeks, pre-intervention observations were collected and charted as seen in Figure 1. In the first two weeks of pre-intervention observations, of the twenty-students participating, 217 recorded behaviors fell in at least one of the seven undesired behavior categories (phone out, verbal interruption, Chromebook out, wandering, unprepared, off-task, and left classroom). Verbal interruption was the observed behavior with the highest number of incidents with 52 recorded. In week one, a total of 112 undesired behaviors were recorded, of which the largest number of behaviors falling under verbal interruptions with a total of 50 incidents recorded. Figure 2 shows the data recorded.
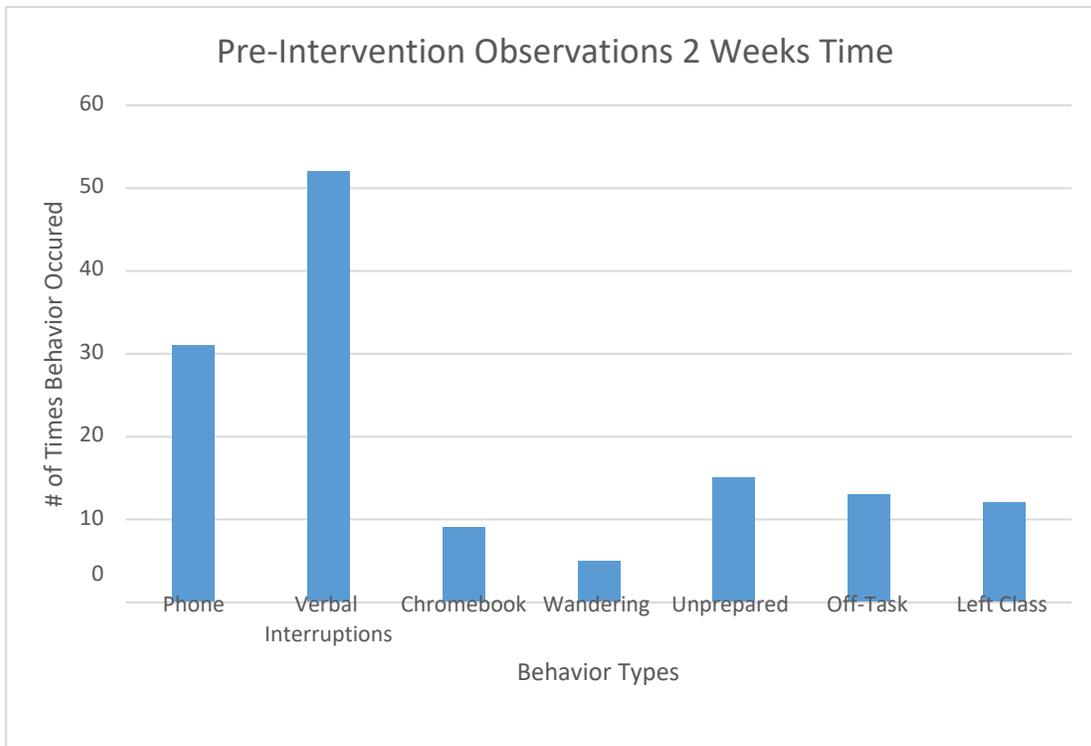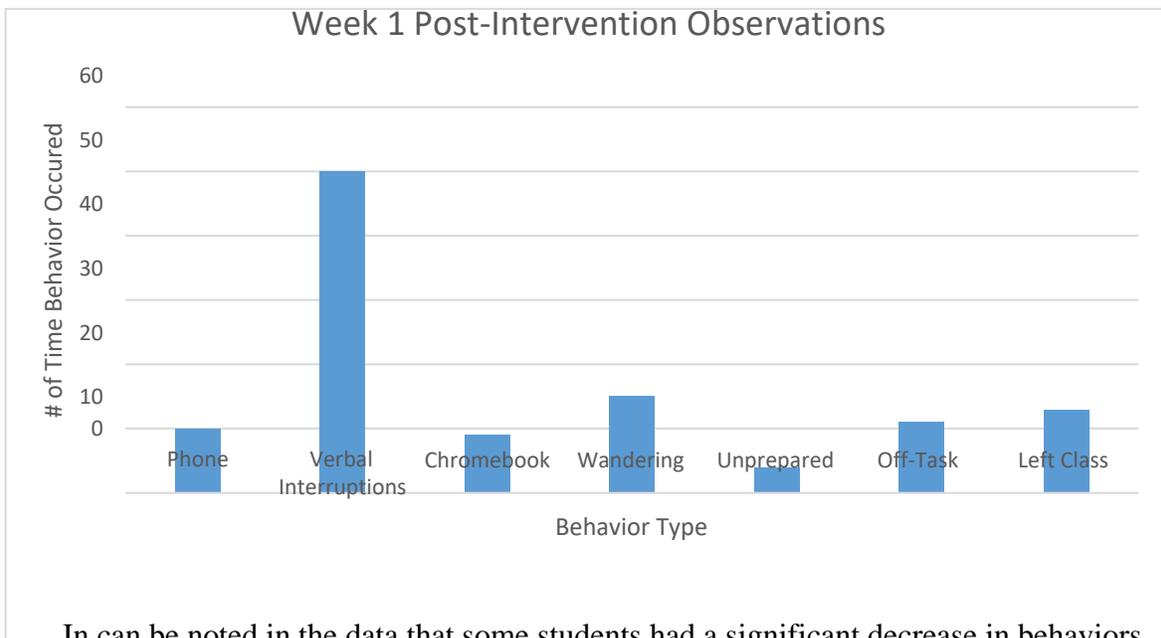
Figure 1

Figure 2

In can be noted in the data that some students had a significant decrease in behaviors between the pre-intervention observation data and the first week of post-intervention observation data. The decrease could be due to absences from school for that week. In the second post-

intervention observations, the undesired behaviors were only present 94 times, the largest amount

of behaviors falling into the Off-Task category with 23 incidents recorded, as shown in Figure 3.

Already there is a decrease shown in overall behaviors when compared against the pre-

intervention observations of almost 30%.

Figure 3
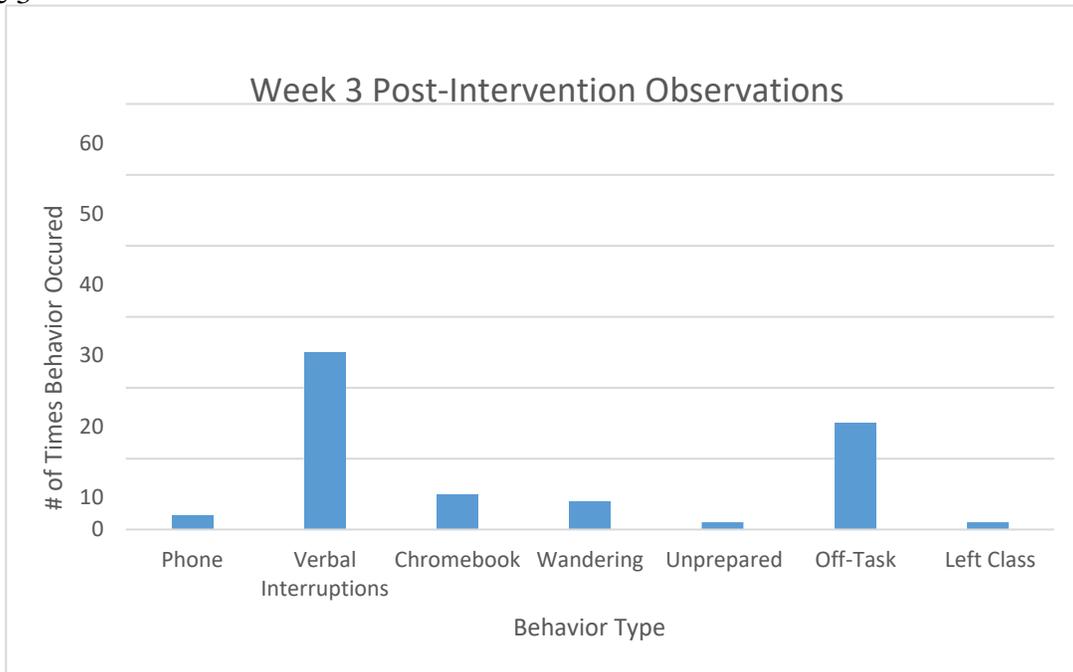
Figure 4

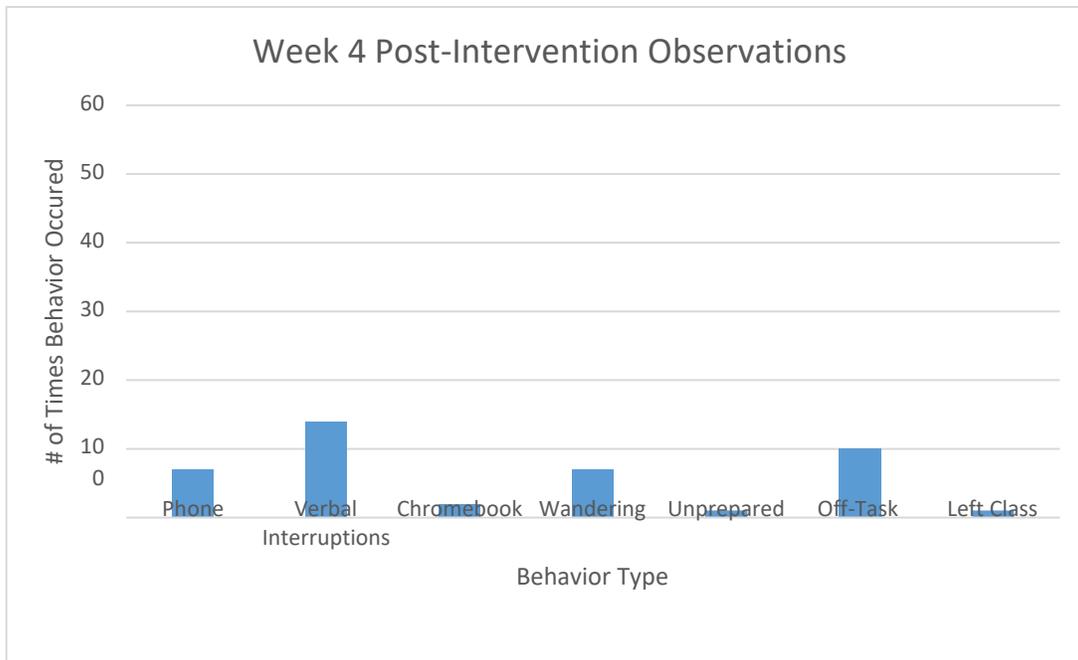The declining trend in behaviors continued as seen in Figure 4, but a slight increase in

behaviors was observed in week 5 as seen in Figure 5. In addition to this slight increase in

behaviors, the trend of Verbal Interruptions being the highest observed behavior was not found

in week 5. In week 5, Off-Task behavior was found to be the most commonly observed behavior

with 17 recorded incidents.

Figure 5

Week 5 Post-Intervention Observations
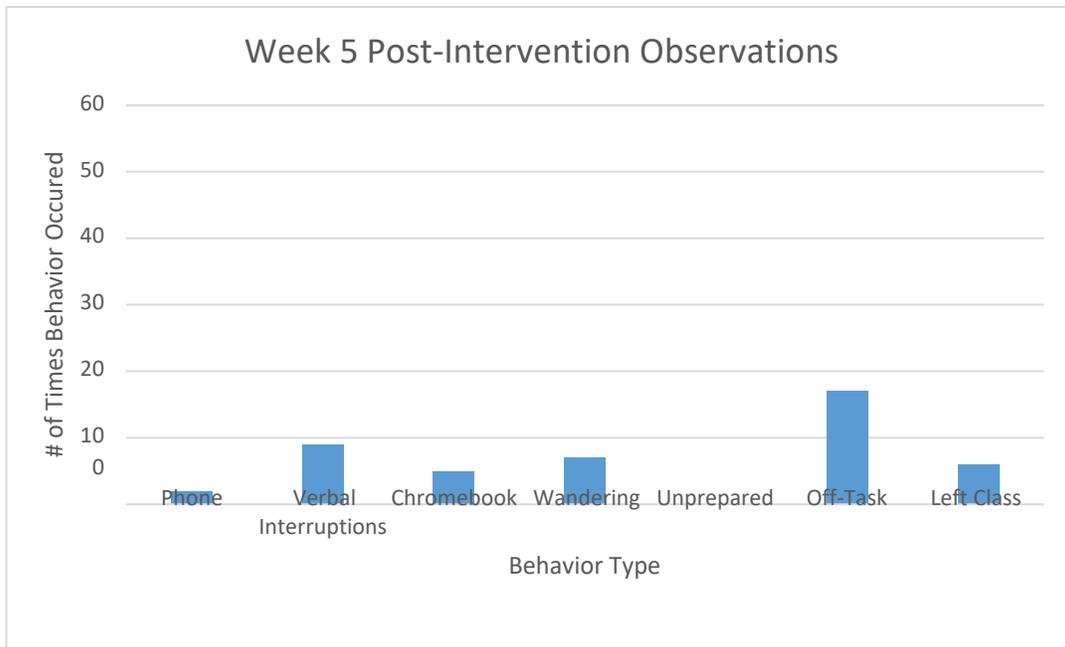
In Figure 6, a clear decrease and overall low in observed behaviors were recorded in week six of interventions. When data from week six is compared to the weekly average from the pre-intervention data (217/2=108.5 behaviors recorded), there is a significant decrease in all seven targeted behaviors adding up to an 82% (20/108.5 =18 rounded down) decrease in overall behaviors recorded from pre-intervention observations to week six of intervention.

Figure 6
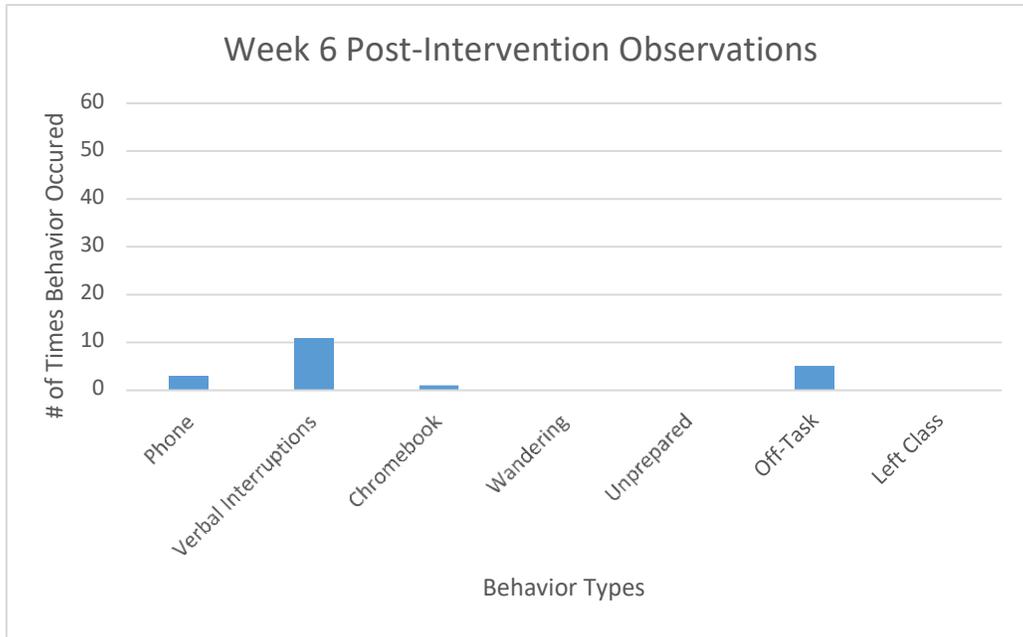
For a visual comparison, total behaviors tallied have been compared in Figure 7. Figure 7 shows a clear decline in behaviors, not only from the pre-intervention observations but also in comparison of Week 1 implementing interventions to Week 6 implementing interventions from the post-intervention observations. The difference in total behaviors from Week 1 to Week 6 alone decreases by nearly 82% (20/112 = 0.178 · 82%).

Figure 7

of Behaviors/Week

217
220
170
120
112
94
70
53
46
42
20
20

-30

Basline 1-2   Week 1   Week 2   Week 3   Week 4   Week 5   Week 6

OF BEHAVIORS RECORDED

WEEK INTERVAL

# of Behaviors/Week
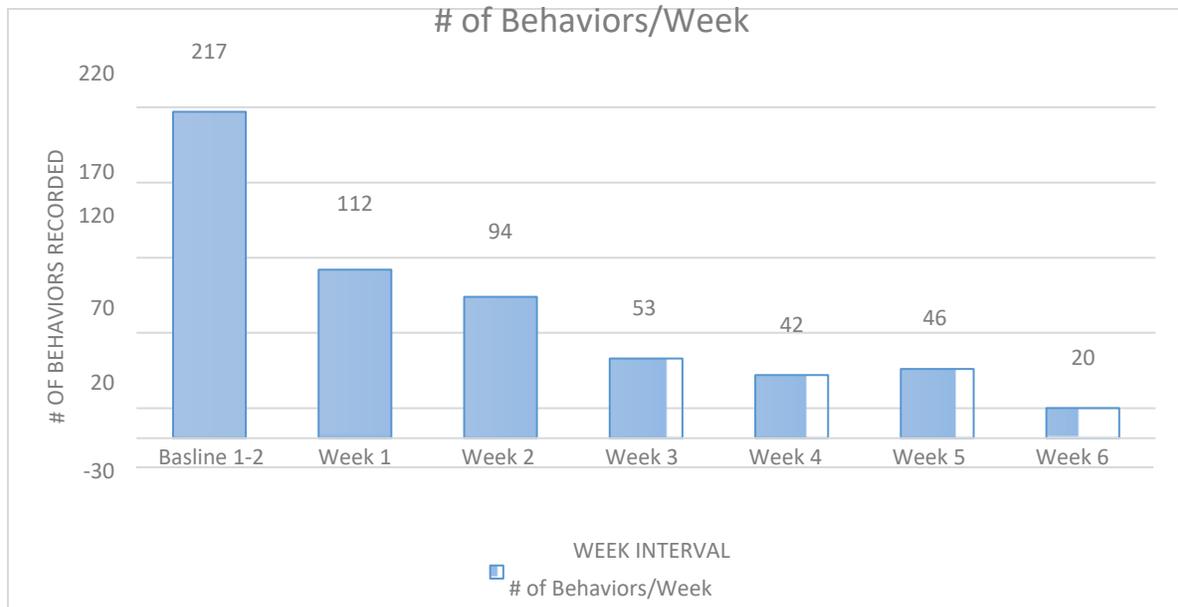
The researcher found that students who had the opportunity to review school-wide expectations and classroom expectations regularly were more confident about following them. Students not only reviewed the expectations weekly but also found ways to demonstrate what those expectations did and did not look like giving visual learners the chance to express their understanding of the expectations. Student expression and repetition enhanced the teacher-student relationship because trust and consistency were strengthened every week the reviews were practiced.

Additionally, students who were prone to leaving the classroom often expressed frustrated with the constantly locked exterior door. It was observed that after Week 3 implementing interventions, those students stopped leaving the classroom as often. Those students made comments like "I hate having to wait for the door to get opened" and "I don't want to tell the teacher how I should come into class every time I have to get the door opened." The constant battle for those students to come and go as they pleased was removed, thus resulting in those students opting to stay in class more often. This is evident between Figure 2

and Figure 7 which shows a 100% decrease in students leaving the classroom from 12 times in

the pre-intervention observations to 0 times by Week 6 of post-intervention observations.

When addressing the Howl About tickets, within Week 1 and Week 2, students became

invested in receiving the tickets, showing decent improvement in behaviors. As the weeks

continued, select students continued to show interest in the tickets, while other students lacked

enthusiasm when being rewarded, often discarding the tickets, or leaving them on their desks or

the floor. There was, however, a sudden increase in demand for the tickets among students when

the rewards available for purchase from school administration was increased in value and

diversity. This change in prize options increased the demand for Howl About tickets among

students, leading to more significant decreases in behavior in the later weeks.

Discussion

Conclusions

In conclusion, the interventions used were very successful in decreasing the seven

targeted undesirable behaviors. The data collected showed an overall 82% decrease in behaviors

from pre-intervention observations to week 6 of post-intervention observations across all seven

of the documented behaviors: use of phones, verbal interruptions, misuse of Chromebooks,

wandering around, unprepared for class, off-task, and leaving the classroom without permission.

The participants responded positively to the door being locked from inside to the point

where there were zero incidents of students leaving class without permission by week 6 of post-

intervention observations. Participants also showed an increased interest in the Howl About

tickets when the incentives were of higher value, allowing the reward to have more impact on

behaviors. Of the seven undesired behaviors, wandering, unprepared, and left class were never

observed. Additionally, significant decrease of phone and Chromebook use were observed. The

highest occurring undesired behavior was verbal interruptions with eleven occurrences, but these were easily managed by the teacher and were met with compliance instead of a verbal altercation between the teacher and the student. The data recorded validates the significance of the researcher's use of interventions and their impact on decreasing the occurrences of seven undesired behaviors and strengthening teacher-student rapport.

Implications

Students thrive on structured routines and expectations in the classroom (Evans & Lester, 2010). Each teacher should develop classroom management systems based on their given environment, school policies, and classroom culture. The system should be consistent and reliable to encourage trust between students and teachers, strengthening the classroom routine. With this study, the goal was the make school-wide and class expectations clear to students on a reoccurring schedule to strengthen student's knowledge and practice of those expectations. Teachers who chose to review these expectations regularly, in a way that allows for student input and buy-in, should see a significant decrease in any undesired classroom behaviors.

Limitations

There are two limitations to this study. Limitations include the time at which the study was initiated and the inconsistency of the school schedule due to end-of-the-year planning. The study was initiated mid-April and ended in late June of 2019. Had the study been initiated closer to the beginning of the school year, the data may have shown an increase in data collected because students may have had less absences earlier in the year. Towards the end of the school year, many end-of-the-year events took place. These events changed the normal school schedule and decreased the academic focus altering the student mindset from academic thinking to a more temporary mindset focused on leaving school for Summer break.

Recommendations

The first recommendation is to conduct the study at the beginning of the school year, whereby, there would be more time to collect data to enhance the focus on students' academic growth. This timing would also allow for students to start school with higher expectations on their behavioral performance within the classroom allowing them to be cognizant of the effect they have on their lesson time.

Second, the overall time that data was collected should be extended from six weeks to ten or more weeks. This would allow for a broader analysis of the data. Adding additional time to this study would also allow for any patterns in behavior to develop and give the researcher more insight about individual students.

Third, the study should be extended to participants in different classes. This study focused on two rotating sets of students in the same classroom. A variety of classrooms, with similar class sizes and instructional content taught, should be chosen from the same campus.

References

Bailey, R., Jacobs, R., &. Jones, S.M. (2014). Social-emotional learning is essential to classroom

management. *Phi Delta Kappan, 96*(2), 19-24

Baker, C., Gentry, J., & Larmer, W. (2016). A model for online support in classroom

management: Perceptions of beginning teachers. *Administrative Issues Journal:*

Education, Practice & Research, *6*(1), 22–37.

Benn, G.A. (2018). "You don't know me like that!" Rapport is a building block of effective

classroom management. Without it, cultural Misunderstandings between teachers

and students can devolve into chaos. *Educational Leadership, 76*(1), 20-25.

British Columbia Teachers' Federation (BCTF). (2019, March). Inclusive Education and Special

Needs in British Columbia. Retrieved from

https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED596496.pdf

Darjan, I., & Lustrea, A. (2018). Attitudes and behaviors towards mental illness of pre-service

teachers in educational sciences. *Journal of Educational Sciences*, *19*(2), 113–123.

Retrieved from https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/EJ1244747.pdf

Evans, K. & Lester, J. (2010)**.** Classroom Management and discipline: Responding to the needs

of young adolescents. *Middle School Journal, 41*(3), 56-63

Erdem, C., & Koçyiğit, M. (2019). Student Misbehaviors Confronted by Academics and Their

Coping Experiences. *Educational Policy Analysis and Strategic Research*, *14*(1), 98–115.

doi: 10.29329/epasr.2019.186.6

Ertmer, P. A., Ottenbreit-Leftwich, A. T., & Tondeur, J. (2014). 7.2 Interpretation of Research

on Technology Integration in Teacher Education in the USA: Preparation and Current

Practices. *International Handbook of Interpretation in Educational Research Springer

International Handbooks of Education, 1239–1262*. doi: 10.1007/978-94-017-9282-0_61

Flannery, M.E. (2010). *How to Avoid New Teachers' Five Worst Mistakes.* Retrieved February,

15 2019, from http://www.nea.org/home/40525.htm

Garwood, J.D., & Vernon-Feagans, L. (2017). Classroom management affects literacy

development of students with emotional and behavioral disorders. *Exceptional Children,

83*(2), 123-142.

Gray, L., & Taie, S. 2015, April). *Public School Teacher Attrition and Mobility in the First Five

Years*. Retrieved February 15, 2019, from https://nces.ed.gov/pubs2015/2015337.pdf

Hendricks, C. (2013). *Improving Schools Through Action Research: A Reflective Practice.*

United States: Pearson Education Inc.

Marzano, R. J., Marzano, J. S., & Pickering, D. (2003). Classroom Management That Works :

Research-Based Strategies for Every Teacher. Alexandria, Va: ASCD. Retrieved from

Marks, H. M. (2000). *Student Engagement in Instructional Activity: Patterns in the Elementary,

Middle, and High School Years*. Retrieved February 15, 2019, from http://

gtnpd46.ncdpi.wikispaces.net/file/view/Marks.pdf/538414934/Marks.pdf

NCES. (2005). 2*005 Spotlight: Mobility in the Teacher Workforce*. Retrieved February 15, 2019,

from https://nces.ed.gov/programs/coe/analysis/2005-sa02.asp

Ozokcu, O., & Yildirim, T. (2018). Determining the Fears of Student with Special Needs in

Inclusive Environments. *International Education Studies*, *11*(6), 174. doi:

10.5539/ies.v11n6p174

Stott, D. H., & Moyes, F. A. (1985). Treatment Strategies for Emotional-Motivational Blocks to

    Motor Functioning in Children. *Physical Therapy, 65(6),* 915–919. doi:

    10.1093/ptj/65.6.915

Washington Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction. (2020). *Cedarcrest School,*

    Marysville School District. Retrieved March, 3 2020, from

    https://washingtonstatereportcard.ospi.k12.wa.us/ReportCard/ViewSchoolOrDistrict/102

    592

Appendix A

Date	Student Code	Phone	Verbal Interruptions	Chromebook	Wandering	Unprepared	Off-Task	Left Classroom

Appendix B

"Over the next 8 weeks, your teacher, Ms. Hansen, will be gathering data on classroom behaviors during class time. Ms. Hansen will be meeting you at the door in the beginning of class and the exterior door will be locked on the outside for safety measures and to help decrease interruptions during class. Ms. Hansen will also be handing out Howl About tickets frequently in class to those displaying good classroom behavior which can be turned in to the office for rewards. All information is confidential and no names will be used during this study. If you would not like to participate in this study, meaning if you would like your confidential data to not be used, you may withdraw at any time and only students whose parents sign the consent form will have data collected on them. There will not be any consequences if you decide not to participate or if you withdraw before the study ends. Your parents will receive the consent form with information about the study and information that allows them to request to see the data collected on you during the study. If you are willing to or would like to participate in this study, please put your name on a sticky note with a 'yes' next to it. If you would not like to participate in this study, please put your name on the sticky note and write 'no' next to it. Do you have any questions about this study?"

Appendix C

Appendix D

SOMETHING TO HOWL ABOUT

STUDENT NAME: _____

RESPECT

RESPONSIBILITY

SAFE

DETERMINED

GIVEN BY:_____