ETC 693 Master Project

CLASSROOM MANAGEMENT

Rylan Leese

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 _____   _____
                          Rylan Leese   March 19, 2020
                      Candidate's Name   Date

Approved by
                          C.Coch   6/4/2020
              _____   _____
                  Charlotte Cochran, Ph.D.   Date

                          Vicki Butler

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

Table of Contents

Acknowledgments

Abstract

Classroom management is a primary challenge to academic instruction in elementary classrooms. Establishing and maintaining student engagement may be a controllable way to create a functioning classroom management system. The 26 participants in the study were students in a fifth-grade classroom in a suburban elementary school. An intervention was designed by this researcher to introduce academic honesty into the classroom routine through positive behavior interventions and supports (PBIS) community circles. The goal was to measure any changes to student engagement rates. It would be anticipated that student engagement would rise as students' participation in community circles rose per research on classroom management through positive attending (Ciobanu, 2014).

Introduction

First-year teachers are challenged in many ways. The anxiety involved with starting a new career are present of course, but they are also responsible for understanding curriculum, designing a method to effectively convey it to students, managing new peer relationships, as well as learning the unspoken rules of the academic environment they entered (Gage, Scott, Hirn, & Macsuga-Gage, 2018). This occurs concurrently with the actual practice of teaching.

Since the challenges confronting first-year teachers can appear insurmountable, it is necessary to focus one's efforts on adopting teaching practices that increase academic success among the students, and those that can be consistently practiced by the teacher (Alvarez-Bell, Wirtz, & Bian, 2017). Literature about how a recently graduated educator should approach the first year of teaching is not in short supply. However, within that literature, some themes point to a few key practices that have been shown to most efficiently create an academic environment where student learning can occur (Larson, Pas, Bradshaw, Rosenberg, & Day-Vines, 2018). Effective classroom management techniques emerged as the most important skills to adopt to ensure the success of new teachers, and the academic progress of the students in their care (Sean Kearney, Smith, & Maika, 2016).

Dilemma

Within elementary classrooms, disengaged students are at a far greater risk of underperforming academically compared to their engaged peers (Grant-Skiba & Ongalo Orwa, 2018). Student disengagement is considered one of the leading causes of negative academic outcomes by researchers. (Yang, Bear, & May, 2018). This researcher observed that students' willingness to engage in academic concepts both familiar and unfamiliar may have been predictive of their ability to master new skills.

Rationale

Disengaged students consistently underperform academically compared to their engaged peers (Hanna, 2014). This disparity can be addressed by selecting and implementing classroom strategies that positively attend to the needs of students (Reno, Friend, Caruthers, & Smith, 2017). According to research on student engagement, properly designed and implemented classroom management routines are the best predictors of students' academic success (Marzano & Marzano, 2003).

Literature Review

Classroom Management

Classroom management is of paramount importance for all teachers concerned with student learning (Elsenman & Harper, 2016). The strategies to gain, hold, and reestablish the attention of students are myriad (Wilkoff, 2006). It is within that varied landscape that teachers evaluate and select classroom management strategies be it consciously or unconsciously. The critical importance of education as a necessary process to foster the minds of critically-thinking adults who will go on to maintain the society they are a product of cannot be overstated (Reno et al., 2017). Of all the factors tied to student achievement, classroom management that has a direct positive impact on student engagement has the largest impact (Marzano & Marzano, 2003). The presence of student engagement, at the group or individual level, is the factor most closely associated with academic achievement regardless of other contributing factors (Alvarez-Bell et al., 2017).

With multiple evidence-based classroom management strategies available to a teacher, a selection criterion that focuses on student engagement allows teachers to address undesirable student behavior before it begins (Elsenman & Harper, 2016) and ensures their academic

achievement now and in the future (Alvarez-Bell et al., 2017). Employing this selection

technique directly addresses negative behavior and low academic achievement of students as a

symptom of disengagement, rather than as the primary issue to be corrected (Elsenman &

Harper, 2016). By focusing on teaching practices that maximize student engagement, a teacher

bypasses classroom management as an end goal and yet achieves it as a matter of consequence

(Yang, Bear, & May 2018).

Themes

Themes emerged within the literature that identified disengagement as a primary factor of

academic underachievement in children (Hanna, 2014). Disengagement leads to distracting

negative behaviors that are symptoms of a larger issue (Hanna, 2014). This larger issue can be

addressed when a student's academic success is seen as the responsibility of both the instructor

and the pupil (Marzano & Marzano, 2003). Shared success can only exist when there is trust

between those two parties. Trust creates an environment of safety, which leads to student

engagement, and since students who are more engaged are more academically successful it,

therefore, leads to greater student achievement (Hanna, 2014). Concrete actions can be taken by

the teacher to model behaviors that will establish trust by promoting academic honesty, and

modeling expectations (Hewitt, 2018).

Disengagement

Disengaged students struggle academically far more than their engaged classmates

(Grant-Skiba & Ongalo Orwa, 2018). Multiple academic sources attribute negative academic

outcomes to the root cause of student disengagement (Yang et al., 2018). This list included

dropout rates (Reno et al., 2017), criminal behavior (Yang et al., 2018), and lower academic

achievement (Harvey, Lambourne, Green, Gibson, Lee, & Donnely, 2018). In an environment

where teacher time and therefore, attention is limited, any classroom management strategy that can address both groups of students would be beneficial. Students engaged in distracting behaviors waste not only their limited learning time but the time of teachers and their fellow peers (Peel, 2018). The questions then become who is responsible for this engagement, and what are the established, attainable, and evidence-based methods to establish it?

Classroom educators are uniquely positioned to establish this environment of academic engagement (Taneja, 2014). The need to focus on effective student management, however, is not only to maximize minutes spent on learning but also because it is directly tied to student achievement (Marzano & Marzano, 2003). Disengagement causes students to fall years behind their engaged classmates (Grant-Skiba & Ongalo Orwa, 2018). Establishing and holding student attention is a challenge that can be met despite the challenges.

The growing ubiquity of digital screens and the resulting opportunities for distraction in the lives of school-age children are factors that teachers have begun to consider as part of their practice (Hanna, 2014). To foster student achievement, teachers need to stretch their view of what teaching is to solve for an issue created by their very discipline (Turcotte & Betrus, 2016). One of the primary perspective changes to be made is that engagement stems from motivation (Ciobanu, 2014). To foster motivation teachers must create an environment that is engaging to students. To achieve this, teachers will first need to build quality academic relationships with each student (Hanna, 2014). Marzano and Marzano (2003) found that the key to building these relationships with students is to not treat all students the same. When students are treated as individuals in all aspects by the teacher, they are more likely to receive the attention they need, in the way they need it (Marzano & Marzano, 2003). If these relationships are absent, academic disengagement will be the probable consequence (Hanna, 2014). To build those relationships, a

teacher can use students' inaccurate preconceptions about a new topic to construct trust along with new knowledge.

Addressing Misconceptions

One approach to academic honesty is to treat students' misconceptions about a topic not as a potential habit to be swiftly corrected before it takes root, but as a fund of knowledge to be built upon by the teacher in cooperative dialog with the student (Campbell, Schwarz, & Windschitl, 2016). Furthermore, the acknowledgment that a student's misconception about a subject is a sign of prior knowledge on the topic can build trust between the students and their teacher (Armstrong, 2015). Though a teacher is more experienced and knowledgeable on most any subject being taught, it is beneficial to remember that ignorance proceeds all new knowledge and that the willingness to be vulnerable is a small, but a critical sign that a student is engaged in the material (Campbell et al., 2016).

School-Wide Adoption

A barrier to individual teacher adoption of an evidence-based positive reinforcement engagement strategy such as positive behavior interventions and supports (PBIS) is often a failure of leadership to encourage the adoption of those practices (Reno et al., 2017). Students are part of several community cultures between their school and home life. Though it is incumbent on the teacher to create a culture of positive engagement within their classroom, it is that same classroom that must be regarded in the context of the school it represents (Yang et al., 2018). Children who adhere to a ruleset within the context of their classroom will not follow the same ruleset if expectations are inconsistent outside of it (Yang et al., 2018). This theme of inconsistency and the failure of well-intentioned teacher initiatives are found throughout the

literature (Reno et al., 2017). The systematic nature of classroom-based engagement strategies is often undercut by an absence of the same in a larger school context (Harvey et al., 2018).

Another form of this inconsistency is the variation in student behavior expectations between grade levels and individual grade-level classrooms (Campbell et al., 2016). It is difficult to enforce a behavior expectation for a group of students if only that single teacher within that single classroom, is the one demanding compliance (Campbell et al., 2016). Students in adjacent grade level classrooms are likely to ignore the norms outside of their classroom unless they are seen as part of a cohesive whole that is merely reinforced within their classroom (Gage et al., 2018).

Flipped Classrooms

Student engagement, while a quantified benefit to the practice of teaching, (Gage, Scott, Hirn, & Macsuga-Gage, 2018) is not a requirement of instruction delivery in the traditional classroom. In that setting, a teacher offers opportunities for students to engage through instruction but does not end that same instruction if a student or students are not exhibiting behaviors indicative of engagement (Burke & Fedorek, 2017). In that paradigm, two classroom management issues emerge. That of the single disengaged and consequently, disruptive student (Gage et al., 2018) and that of the majority disengaged classroom. In each case, the ability for the students to learn is being negatively impacted, yet the teacher may not be aware of the impact or able to adjust to it (Alvarez-Bell et al., 2017).

The focus on the teacher in a typically structured classroom, therefore, lends itself to disengagement. From this structural risk, another form of class focus has been created and termed a flipped classroom (Burke & Fedorek, 2017). The focus of the flipped classroom is to create an academic environment where student engagement is required as a means to all

knowledge acquisition (Burke & Fedorek, 2017). To achieve this, the students engage in

cooperative learning that is peer-led, inquiry-based, and driven by the expressed academic needs

of the students themselves instead of solely the aims of the instructor (Burke & Fedorek, 2017).

  The requirement that students actively engage with the academic material to create a

conversation about it is beneficial to the goal of increasing student engagement even in its

description. The detailed structure and unique challenges of this engagement strategy are beyond

the scope of this literature review, but the positive effects of increasing student engagement, in

this case through necessity, are clear from other readings (Alvarez-Bell et al., 2017). In any

classroom management methodology that requires students to contribute to the instruction, there

are benefits to their academic success, their emotional well-being, and a reduction of negative

behavior (Gage et al., 2018).

Authority

  Typically, managing a classroom is achieved by the teacher establishing themselves as a

dominant force within the classroom (Marzano & Marzano, 2003). This model depends upon a

definite separation between the student as the learner and the teacher as an absolute authority

(Elsenman & Harper, 2016). In this model, the teacher exists as the sole holder of knowledge

while the student is merely a receiver (Marzano & Marzano, 2003). Changing this model in an

existing classroom would require that the teacher begin to model acceptable behavior in all of

their actions (Hanna, 2014). For the teacher, authority is not modeled by expertise in the subject

matter but through her ability to discover (Hanna, 2014). This occurs through such diverse

avenues as her body language (Marzano & Marzano, 2003) to how classroom rules are

established (Letitia Trif, 2011).

Once classroom behavior expectations are established, a teacher should exercise this authority by recognizing each student's actions to incentivize preferred behavior and provide disincentives for unacceptable behavior (Marzano & Marzano, 2003). Alternatively, teachers can demonstrate their authority through academics (Turcotte & Betrus, 2016). By properly clarifying the expectations and information to be covered in upcoming academic lessons students get a chance to prime their minds for new information and bring in their personal experiences to the lesson (Marzano & Marzano, 2003).

Establishing Trust

The key to any effective behavior management technique is a quality relationship between teacher and student (Hanna, 2014). Therefore, a teacher has an opportunity to build trusting relationships within her classroom practices that will result in patterns of acceptable behavior (Griffiths, 2016). Student behavior will continue to provide a lens by which the teacher can observe which practices do and do not motivate her students (Marzano & Marzano, 2003).

An alternative to the typical teacher-led classroom environment are practices where teachers share personal details about their life and experiences in a purposeful effort to humanize themselves and their role (Hewitt, 2018). Emotionally involving the students and the teacher as participants in the same task can reduce off-task behaviors by addressing unspoken norms (Hanna, 2014). These efforts seek to level the emotional state of the classroom by presenting the teacher as an example of someone further along the academic path and therefore not too much different from the students themselves (Hewitt, 2018). Through this, students can become aware that academic success today can result in success later in life (Perle, 2018). The teacher, through stories about their academic struggles and achievements (Hanna, 2014) can then establish a direct route for students to connect their challenges to the teacher (Marzano & Marzano, 2003).

Another path that teachers can consider taking to further humanize themselves to their students is to foster an environment of genuine academic openness (Crane, 2017). In the context of student engagement, openness on behalf of the teacher is a willingness to engage in academic talk with students at their level, rather than where they should be based on their age and grade placement (Armstrong, 2015). This includes working with misconceptions instead of stamping them out quickly (Campbell et al., 2016), but also an ability on behalf of the teacher to inquire about a subject without a predetermined answer in mind that students can sense the teacher is merely waiting for them to stumble upon (Crane, 2017). When a teacher can anchor new knowledge in the existing information already accessible to the student (Crane, 2017), there is a greater likelihood that the new information will replace a misconception (Campbell et al., 2016) and that the student will retain the new information (Alvarez-Bell et al., 2017).

These tangents to the established curriculum can connect students' existing knowledge to the new subject matter, but additionally and perhaps, more importantly, show a willingness on behalf of the teacher to adjust the instruction to meet the needs of each student when necessary (Crane, 2017). Students may perceive deviation from the planned lesson to discuss a question as a sign of trust in the class' ability to guide their learning when needed (Burke & Fedorek, 2017). This type of reciprocated engagement between teacher and student adds authenticity to the stated goal to create a classroom culture of mutual respect (Crane, 2017). Once students can be personally engaged in their learning they are more likely to achieve future success (Grant-Skiba, Dawn, & Ongalo Orwa, 2018). Furthermore, once students are aware that engaging in off-task behaviors will be detrimental to their success, undesirable behaviors will diminish (Hewitt, 2018).

Academic Honesty

      To continually control off-task behavior within the classroom, a focus must be established that requires a student's full attention (Hewitt, 2018). The most effective way to achieve this is for the teacher to establish that the content being presented is worthy of the student's attention (Hewitt, 2018). Students can be directly involved in setting learning goals and creating learning objectives (Hanna, 2014). This type of activity will lead to building academic trust between teacher and student (Marzano & Marzano, 2003). A novel approach to building trust within a classroom is to not only allow for student failure but to foster it. Educators can use metacognition to directly address the process of education with students as a process of trial and error (Keeley, 2019). In this approach to pedagogy, failure is not only expected but necessary to the learning process (Hewitt, 2018). Teachers can work to cognitively reframe failure for students as a natural aspect of the learning environment because learning implies imperfection (Ciobanu, 2014).

      Academic honesty encompasses more than an open dialog between teacher and student within a classroom. It also includes delivering feedback to the students on their current level of academic achievement, and where it needs to be (Ciobanu, 2014). Properly explaining the reason behind a lesson can have a transformative impact on student motivation (Keeley, 2019). When students are interested in the subject or see how it is connected to larger themes they are more likely to engage in their learning (Hanna, 2014).

      If the teacher is having a difficult time connecting students with a concept, the teacher is encouraged to directly address this failure with the students. Asking for constructive feedback and involving the students in the direction of the delivery will lead to engagement and therefore reduce off-task behavior (Hanna, 2014). Marzano suggested that students be asked to set

learning targets, create tasks, and to organize teams**.** Marzano postulated that this will convey a sense of agency in the minds of students regarding their education (Marzano & Marzano, 2003)**.**

Traditional teacher authority has a role in this student-directed paradigm as well if the management given is seen as even and fair by the students being directed (Hewitt, 2018). This authority manifests itself as academic honesty on behalf of the teacher, in support of the students (Taneja, 2014). It covers everything from test question design to test preparation practices (Hewitt, 2018). In Hewitt's teaching practice, pre-tests contained all the content from the final exam so that studying was focused on applying learned concepts rather than on a student's talent to recall large amounts of information along with the ability to sort it for relevance in real-time without notes or sources.

A theme within behavior management through positive reinforcement is fairness in teaching practices (Ciobanu, 2014). Teachers should not closely guard a student's level of achievement (Ciobanu, 2014). Regularly sharing information with students allows both the teacher and the pupil to set a direction based on facts and therefore become more invested in the future direction (Hanna, 2014). An academically honest classroom requires pre-planning that includes test design, which is responsive to the specific student groups taking the exam (Keeley, 2019). Also, an intellectually honest classroom is one where the teacher unveils learning objectives well in advance of the day they are to be covered (Ciobanu, 2014). By creating a pattern of presenting transparent learning objectives and pre-planning tailored tests can ingratiate a teacher to a new classroom.

Through actions like those mentioned, a teacher can be sure that students "feel academically worthwhile" (Hewitt, 2018, p. 20). Ciobanu (2014) asked that teachers make students of all achievement levels aware of their shortcomings. Including students in

assessments of their academic progress is not intended to be a critique, but a method to

cognitively establish that new learning is always possible (Ciobanu, 2014).

Modeling Expectations

While behavior management is an underlying theme of classroom management

techniques. A central focus of those management techniques is that negative behaviors are a

symptom of a larger issue that can be addressed through engagement rather than a primary issue

to be addressed separately (Marzano & Marzano, 2003). Many circumstances that create the

conditions for students' misbehavior happen outside the classroom. By merely addressing

consequential behaviors in the classroom, teachers may not be targeting the root causes (Hanna,

2014). Teachers must focus on what they can control and be mindful of what they cannot

(Hanna, 2014). Indeed, if a teacher is having a tough time explaining a concept or notices that

the concept is not reaching the students as intended, teachers are encouraged to model

expectations by stopping the lesson and asking for feedback (Hanna, 2014). Asking for

constructive feedback and involving the students in the direction of the delivery will lead to

engagement and therefore, reduce off-task behavior (Hanna, 2014).

Teachers can create active student participation through metacognition techniques and

increased awareness of how the developing brain functions (Ciobanu, 2014). High functioning

teachers consider that there are biological limits to what students' brains are capable of within

developmental stages (Ciobanu, 2014). A teacher may feel obligated to model appropriate and

expected behaviors at all times but should understand that not all students are equally capable of

mirroring that behavior back at all times (Hanna, 2014).

Conclusion

It is through continued reinforcement that students' developmental stages can be bridged, and connections to learning can eventually be made (Skiba, Ormiston, Martinez, & Cummings, 2016). Hanna (2014) encouraged teachers to acknowledge when they made mistakes so that students would reciprocate and be more willing to take risks in their academic pursuits. Student to teacher feedback is the most important contributing factor to their internal sense of understanding. That is where the student's agency is paramount (Ciobanu, 2014).

<div align="center">

Question

</div>

Will establishing academic honesty through PBIS community circles lead to an increase in student engagement in whole-class math lessons?

<div align="center">

Purpose

</div>

The purpose of this study was to increase student engagement in whole-class discussions through the showing of raised hands during daily math lessons from a baseline that would have been measured before the outset of the intervention.

<div align="center">

Methodology

</div>

Due to the spread of a global pandemic in March of 2020, the researcher's target school was closed. Consequently, the researcher was prevented from conducting the study. The primary goal of the researcher was to increase the academic engagement of all students during whole-class instruction. By aiming to create a culture of trust, this project intended to allow more students to participate in the learning environment. To achieve that, daily positive behavior intervention support (PBIS) community circles would have been implemented. Using those practices as a guide, a daily meeting would have been held and students would have been asked to reflect on their academic progress, set goals, and take an active role in reaching those goals.

Upon conclusion, once the data were gathered and analyzed, the results would have answered the following research question: How will establishing academic honesty through explicit sharing and reflection exercises affect student engagement in the classroom?

Design

This study was designed as a qualitative action research project that would have focused on classroom management as a function of student engagement. Within the context of classroom management, the requirement to have a consistently engaged student population was supported by previous research (Gage et al., 2018). To explore this theme, the researcher would have leveraged already established classroom routines and then introduced a new class norm at the start of each school.

Context

This research study would have been carried out in a fifth-grade classroom. The classroom is in one of twelve portables located on the school grounds. Thirty-seven percent of the classroom population qualified for free or reduced lunch. The school itself is located between a neighborhood of single-family homes and subsidized district apartment buildings. Twelve of the students lived near each other in an apartment complex near the school.

Participants

The participants in this study were chosen because they are all members of the fifth-grade classroom in which the researcher was student teaching. The 26 participants are students in a fifth-grade classroom in a suburban elementary school. 11 of the students are female and 15 are male. The students are all aged 10 or 11. 9 students are white, 1 student is African American, 10 students are Hispanic, 6 students are Asian. Thirty-seven percent of the students are on free or reduced lunch. 5 students qualify for EL services. 4 students are on 504 plans. 1 student has an

individualized education plan (IEP). All participants' confidentiality would have been protected

by hiding their identities using randomly assigned numerical identifiers. That number would

have been used to identify them instead of a name. No identifying information would have been

shared. Data would not have been released in any form that would reveal the identity of the

participants. All paper forms would have been kept in the classroom within a locked file cabinet

that is only accessible by the researcher. Electronic data would have been stored on an encrypted

and password-protected laptop. Throughout the study, all data collected would only have been

created and viewed by the researcher. This was designed to be a minimal risk study. It was to be

conducted in a manner that ensured the safety of all participants. If students experienced any

anxiety, distress, or stress from participating in this study, students would have been able to

speak to a school counselor, nurse, a preferred teacher, or administrator as needed.

Intervention

The planned intervention was designed to increase student engagement during daily math

lesson discussions. The amount of raised hands was to be measured against a baseline gathered

before the intervention start date. The researcher would have conducted the study between

February 25th and March 17th. At the outset of the study, baseline participation data would have

been collected for each student during the math period of the school day. Participation for each

student would be defined and quantified by counting the number of times they perform the

following actions: raising their hand, offering an on-topic answer with and without being called

upon, asking an on-topic question when and when not called upon, showing topic understanding

by holding up one through five fingers (fist of five), and showing thumbs up or down. Each of

these participation methods would carry equal weight and each would count as a single act of

participation. These actions would have only been tracked for the math block due to it being

scheduled closest to the beginning of the school day. Baseline data would have been collected

for a total of five consecutive school days, Monday through Friday. Having a set of data before

the intervention is performed would set the typical engagement level for each student during the

two-hour block set aside for math lessons each day. Once baseline data had been collected, the

intervention will be conducted for an additional ten consecutive school days. Intervention data

will be tracked during the same block of time used during the baseline collection phase.

In addition to the participation data measured, responses would have been collected on

two questions asked of each student during the community circle each morning. "On a scale of 1

to 5, how academically prepared do you feel today and, "what question do you have about the

previous day's lesson?" Individual responses would have been tracked on the same worksheet

that tracked participation (Appendix A) and then used to triangulate changes to participation

within community circle self-report numbers.

Following practice in sharing academic challenges and successes in a daily community

circle, students' responses would have been tracked along with the number of hands raised

during the whole group math lesson in response to a selected question. The number of hands

raised would have been used as a proxy for student engagement and the community circle

responses as an analogous proxy for academic honesty. These two data points would have been

compared to determine if there was a connection between greater academic honesty and greater

student engagement.

Data Gathering Instruments

Assessment #1: Baseline student self-report scores. A new paper worksheet

(Appendix A) would have been used each day of the baseline collection phase to record

numerical self-report scores in pencil during the morning community circle.

Assessment #2: Baseline response tracking. The same worksheet would be used to track the total number of responses (in the form of raised hands) to a selected question delivered during the math block each day (Appendix A). The total number of responses would have been indicated on the worksheet with tally marks in pencil.

Assessment #3: Intervention student self-report scores. A new paper worksheet (Appendix A) would have been used each day of the intervention collection phase to record numerical self-report scores in pencil during the morning community circle.

Assessment #4: Intervention response tracking. The same paper worksheet would have been used each day for intervention data collection (Appendix A). The total number of raised hands would also have been indicated in pencil with tally marks.

Validity: Having two phases of the data tracking would have allowed two distinct data sets. These two vectors would allow the researcher to determine if changes in student participation within the community circle influenced student participation during the whole class lesson (Hendricks, 2013). These two sources of information provide the greatest chance to make a connection between student participation and self-reflection activities facilitated through a PBIS community circle.

Results

Assessment #1: Baseline student self-report scores: The researcher expected that the self-report scores for the class would have trended higher on average during the beginning of the baseline collection phase than the end. This would be expected because of the students' penchant for attempting to please the instructor at the outset of newly introduced routines to the classroom. Since higher confidence scores would relate in their minds to a greater understanding of the material, the researcher confidently expected higher offered scores. The primary purpose

of the baseline phase was to establish the community circle routine as an opportunity, to be

honest, and open without consequence. Be that academic or social.

Assessment #2: Baseline response tracking. The researcher would have expected

responses tracked during this phase to be low on average. With twenty-six students in the

classroom, it was common for a given question delivered by the instructor during the whole-class

portion of the math lesson to be met with only three to four raised hands.

Assessment #3: Intervention student self-report scores. It would have been expected

to see higher than average scores at the outset of this phase than at the later end of this phase.

The researcher's earnest hope was that students began to see self-report scoring as an opportunity

to ask for help by calling attention to their lack of understanding in each subject. The average

scores at the outset would most likely have been higher due to continued people-pleasing on

behalf of the students.

Assessment #4: Intervention response tracking. In this area, the researcher would

have expected to see the number of hands raised increase dramatically during whole-class

instruction. The researcher would have had the opportunity to reinforce the idea that there was a

safety net for offering responses to a given question during the daily community circle and the

whole class instruction. These additional expected opportunities to reassure students should

have resulted in greater participation.

At the close of the collection phase of the project, the response data points tracked on the

daily baseline and intervention worksheets would have been compared and analyzed for

differences in the number of responses on a given day and a given student (Appendix A).

Discussion

Conclusions

The goal of this research study would have been to foster greater student participation in whole-class instruction throughout the school day by making a connection between their engagement in the material and their emotional connection to the same. If there was found to be a connection between higher self-report scores of academic preparedness and an increased quantity of students' raised hands the project would have been considered a success (Albrecht, 2018).

Unfortunately, due to the global pandemic that began in early 2020 the intervention never occurred. This researcher expected the participation gains to be moderate compared to the baseline data collected before performing the intervention because of the rapid pace of content delivery in the target classroom. A student's time to reflect on their level of comfort with a specific topic would have lasted only to the end of each day. The next day's responses could have been considered irrelevant to the next day's lesson due to the turnover rate of the curriculum.

Due to the researcher's study of the current literature regarding student engagement in elementary schools, the primary benefit realized would likely have been a greater willingness on behalf of the students to make mistakes in a classroom setting (Hewitt, 2018).

Implications

The actual results of this project are impossible to know. However, the implementation of this intervention would have surely resulted in positive benefits for the target classroom (Gage et al., 2018). A more engaging classroom environment necessarily results in greater numbers of engaged students (Peel, 2018). Even without a completely successful implementation, setting a

classroom expectation of self-reflection on one's education would surely have resulted in good

habits. If the number of raised hands offered in response to a targeted question did not increase

drastically, the students would still have gained a forum to express their feelings about the

previous and current day's learning.

Based on this researchers study of student engagement, when the teacher creates an

environment that positively attends to the needs of the individual student there are related

positive benefits in academic achievement and a reduction of problem behaviors in the classroom

and the school (Hanna, 2014).

Limitations

The planned study would have had several limitations due to the setting and

circumstances under which it would have occurred. The first limitation was that the number of

student participants was not a representative sample of elementary school attendance numbers

and demographics. The second limitation was that the focus on a single grade level is too narrow

to apply the results to other grade bands in an elementary school environment. The third

limitation was that the researcher would not have gathered data for all subjects covered during

the entire school day. The fourth limitation was that the planned data collection window was

only ten days long.

Recommendations

One recommendation would be to collect response data from multiple grade levels at

several more elementary schools in the United States. Furthermore, data should be collected for

the entire class day for each planned lesson, and then for each planned question delivered to

students during whole group instruction.

References

Albrecht, N. J. (2018). Teaching mindfulness with children: Being a Mindful Role Model.

Australian Journal of Teacher Education, *43*(10), 1–23.

https://doi.org/10.14221/ajte.v43.n10.1

Alvarez-Bell, R. M., Wirtz, D., & Bian, H. (2017). Identifying keys to success in innovative

teaching: Student engagement and instructional practices as predictors of student learning in

a course using a team-based learning approach. *Teaching and Learning Inquiry*, *5*(2), 128–

146. https://doi.org/10.20343/teachlearninqu.5.2.10

Armstrong, C. (2015). In the zone: Vygotskian-inspired pedagogy for sustainability. *Journal of*

Classroom Interaction, *50*(2), 133–144.

Burke, A. S., & Fedorek, B. (2017). Does "flipping" promote engagement?: A comparison of a

traditional, online, and flipped class. *Active Learning in Higher Education*, *18*(1), 11–24.

https://doi.org/10.1177/1469787417693487

Campbell, T., Schwarz, C., & Windschitl, M. (2016). What we call misconceptions may be

necessary stepping-stones toward making sense of the world. *The Science Teacher*, *083*(03),

28–34. https://doi.org/10.2505/4/tst16_083_03_69

Ciobanu, M. (2014). In the middle - Whose learning Is it anyway? Increasing students'

engagement through assessment as learning techniques. *Ontario Mathematics Gazette*,

53(2), 16–21.

Crane, B. D. (2017). Teacher openness and prosocial motivation. *Management Teaching Review*,

2(1), 7–16. https://doi.org/10.1177/2379298116673838

Elsenman, G., & Harper, R. (2016). Bibliotherapy for classroom management. *Dimensions of*

Early Childhood, *44*(1), 11–17.

Gage, N. A., Scott, T., Hirn, R., & Macsuga-Gage, A. S. (2018). The relationship between

    teachers' implementation of classroom management practices and student behavior in

    elementary school. *Behavioral Disorders*, *43*(2), 302–315.

    https://doi.org/10.1177/0198742917714809

Grant-Skiba, D., & Ongalo Orwa, J. (2018). Raising Lazarus: Creative teaching and learning

    strategies to engage middle high school students. *Literacy Learning: The Middle Years*.

    Retrieved from https://go-galegroup-

    com.ezproxy.csp.edu/ps/retrieve.do?tabID=T002&resultListType=RESULT_LIST&search

    ResultsType=SingleTab&searchType=AdvancedSearchForm&currentPosition=6&docId=G

    ALE%7CA524380200&docType=Report&sort=Relevance&contentSegment=&prodId=PR

    OF&con

Griffiths, D. (2016). Constraints on the use of a conversational strategy to restructure the

    classroom. *Constructivist Foundations*, *12*(1), 113–115.

Hanna, J. (2014). Connecting with sullen students: Using an emotionally honest classroom to

    reach out to disengaged students. *The Clearing House: A Journal of Educational Strategies,*

    Issues and Ideas, *87*(5), 224–228. https://doi.org/10.1080/00098655.2014.929561

Harvey, S. P., Lambourne, K., Greene, J. L., Gibson, C. A., Lee, J., & Donnelly, J. E. (2018).

    The effects of physical activity on learning behaviors in elementary school children: A

    randomized controlled trial. *Contemporary School Psychology*, *22*(3), 303–312.

    https://doi.org/10.1007/s40688-017-0143-0

Hendricks, C. (2013). *Improving schools through action research: A reflective practice*

    approach. (3rd ed.). Upper Saddle River, N.J.: Pearson.

Hewitt, P. G. (2018). Care in the classroom: This teacher's odyssey. *The Science Teacher*, *86*(1),

18–21. Retrieved from www.nsta.org/highschool

Keeley, P. (2019). Apple in the dark, formative assessment probes and metacognition. *Science and Children*, *056*(05), 15–17. https://doi.org/10.2505/4/sc19_056_05_15

Larson, K. E., Pas, E. T., Bradshaw, C. P., Rosenberg, M. S., & Day-Vines, N. L. (2018). Examining how proactive management and culturally responsive teaching relate to student behavior: Implications for measurement and practice. *School Psychology Review*, *47*(2), 153–166. https://doi.org/10.17105/SPR-2017-0070.V47-2

Letitia Trif, R. S. P. (2011). Student motivation, component of classroom management. In *Journal Plus Education*.

Marzano, R. J., & Marzano, J. S. (2003). The key to classroom management. *Educational Leadership*, *61*(1), 6–13.

Peel, K. (2018). Teaching for self-regulated learning: Why aim for compliance when we can inspire learning? *International Journal of Pedagogy and Curriculum*, *25*(1), 15–36. https://doi.org/10.18848/2327-7963/CGP/v25i01/15-36

Perle, J. G. (2018). Teacher-provided positive attending to improve student behavior. *TEACHING Exceptional Children*, *50*(4), 204–212. https://doi.org/10.1177/0040059918757954

Reno, G. D., Friend, J., Caruthers, L., & Smith, D. (2017). Who's getting Targeted for behavioral interventions? Exploring the connections between school culture, positive behavior support, and elementary student achievement. *Journal of Negro Education*, *86*(4), 423–438. https://doi.org/10.7709/jnegroeducation.86.4.0423

Sean Kearney, W., Smith, P. A., & Maika, S. (2016). Asking students their opinions of the learning environment: an empirical analysis of elementary classroom climate. *Educational*

Psychology in Practice, *32*(3), 310–320. https://doi.org/10.1080/02667363.2016.1173015

Skiba, R., Ormiston, H., Martinez, S., & Cummings, J. (2016). Teaching the social curriculum: Classroom management as behavioral instruction. *Theory into Practice*, *55*(2), 120–128. https://doi.org/10.1080/00405841.2016.1148990

Taneja, A. (2014). Teaching tip, Enhancing student engagement: A group case study approach. *Journal of Information Systems Education*, *25*(3), 181–187.

Turcotte, N., & Betrus, A. (2016). Teaching bad apples: A fun way to tackle difficult teaching situations. *TechTrends*, *60*(4), 398–401. https://doi.org/10.1007/s11528-016-0080-1

Wilkoff, W. G. (2006). No child left alone. *Pediatric News*, *40*(7), 31. https://doi.org/10.1016/s0031-398x(06)71164-x

Yang, C., Bear, G. G., & May, H. (2018). Multilevel associations between school-wide social-emotional learning approach and student engagement across elementary, middle, and high schools. *School Psychology Review*, *47*(1), 45–61. https://doi.org/10.17105/SPR-2017-0003.V47-1

Appendix A

Data collection form

Date: _____

Name	Number	Self-Report #	# of Hands	Notes
	1			
	2			
	3			
	4			
	5			
	6			
	7			
	8			
	9			
	10			
	11			
	12			
	13			
	14			
	15			
	16			
	17			
	18			
	19			
	20			
	21			
	22			
	23			
	24			
	25			
	26			