THE EFFECT OF A PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT CLASSROOM MANAGEMENT MODEL ON AT-RISK ELEMENTARY STUDENTS' MISBEHAVIORS

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The problem in the study was that at-risk elementary school students had too many classroom disruptive behaviors. The purpose was to investigate the effect a Professional Development Classroom Management Model would have on reducing these students' misbehaviors.

The study implemented a classroom management model to improve the classroom management skills of the 11 teachers who worked with the 224 students in the four grade levels. The generic research design was the concurrent mixed methods research design. Descriptive statistics were calculated; the inferential statistical model was the two-sided z test. Findings for research question 1 showed the mean number of discipline referrals decreased by 11 referrals. Findings for research question 2 showed the number of suspensions decreased by 26 suspensions.

Statement of the Problem

The problem in this research study was that at-risk elementary school students in four grade levels had too many disruptive behaviors which interrupted classroom instruction. Many of these students had certain characteristics, specifically low-income, single-parent families and poverty; that, according to Donnelly (2007) classified students as being at-risk for academic failure.

Donnelly (2007) indicated that one of the struggles for at-risk students was learning how to function in a school environment with minimal interruptions due to misbehaving. Donnelly contended that some at- risk students were low academic achievers who exhibited low self-esteem. As a result, at- risk students became more problematic as they lagged behind other students relative to academic achievement.

Four grade levels (i.e., pre-kindergarten, kindergarten, second grade, and fifth) at the elementary school were targeted for this study because 136 of 259 (53%) discipline referrals were written by the 11 teachers who taught the four grade levels. 35% of the classroom teachers had the highest number of discipline referrals. The 11 teachers selected for this study taught 224 students in the four grade levels.Furthermore, a review of report card grades for the 224 students for three consecutive terms revealed a decline in grades. The teachers of the targeted kindergarten, second and fifth grade classes stated that some students might be retained if no academic improvements were made. These teachers attributed most of the academic

problems to the students' inappropriate disruptive behaviors. Research studies have supported teachers' contention that students' disruptive behaviors contributed to academic problems (Sloat, Beswick, & Williams, 2007; Graham & Prigmore, 2009). Therefore, a reduction in at-risk student's misbehavior could have a positive effect on academic performance.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this research study was to determine what effect the Professional Development Classroom Management Model (PDCMM) had on reducing at-risk elementary school students' misbehaviors. The study developed, implemented, and monitored a classroom management model to improve the classroom management skills of the 11 teachers who worked with the four targeted grade levels. Research studies demonstrated that teachers with improved classroom management skills had a more structured classroom that resulted in fewer student misbehaviors (Sterling, 2009; Desidero & Mullennix, 2005; Evertson & Meal, 2004).5/10 4:07 PM

Theoretical Framework
and Literature Review

The Locus of Control Theory served as the theoretical framework for the research study. Graffeo and Silvestri (2006) documented that Locus of Control deals with a student's personal attribution of success or failure. Locus of Control can be external and internal. Internal Locus of Control students often felt their behavior and achievement were in submission to their personal control, while external Locus of Control students, such as the elementary school students in this research study, felt

their behavior and achievement were dominated by the environment. According to the theory, at-risk elementary school students generally appeared to have an external Locus of Control orientation and did not perceive themselves as being fully in charge and responsible for their misbehaviors.

Graffeo and Silvestri (2006) mentioned that Locus of Control Theory revealed how academic achievement was based on external and internal forces that may be positive and negative. These two researchers noted a correlation between socioeconomic status and student achievement. Graffeo and Silvestri theorized that persons with a higher socio-economic status were more likely to take responsibility to achieve social and economic advancements. These persons tended to have an internal Locus of Control orientation. On the other hand, a person from a low socioeconomic status usually felt he or she was being controlled by the environment. These students tended to have an external Locus of Control orientation. Students targeted for this research study were from mostly low-income single-parent families and were on the federally funded free or reduced lunch program.

With the No Child Left Behind Act, teachers had added responsibilities in the school and the classroom (McKenzie, 2005). McKenzie reported that these added responsibilities included extensive paperwork, more professional learning activities, and service on committees. McKenzie revealed that stress from maintaining Adequate Yearly Progress caused the teachers to compromise implementing effective discipline strategies. Teaching young children could be an emotionally exhausting profession when children were not acade-

mically achieving and are disruptive (McKenzie, 2005).

Teachers with no structured classroom management skills contributed to negative student outcomes (Geiger, 2000). Excessive misbehaviors was a major problem in many elementary school classrooms, and the way teachers solved this problem was important to how well elementary school students learned, performed, and achieved in the classroom. Yet, all too often, teachers were unaware of the effectiveness of the discipline and classroom management techniques they adopted (Geiger, 2000).

At some schools, teachers reacted to students' misbehaviors with poor classroom management skills (Tidwell, Flannery, & Lewis-Palmer, 2003). Some of the teachers' in the study by Tidwell et al. used unacceptable classroom management skills, such as shaming, verbally reprimanding, threatening, embarrassing, or paddling students. These poor classroom management skills often contributed to stigmatizing students who internalized the labels "mean," "bad," or "crazy" and by misbehaving, reflected back to the teacher and/or school the negative labels applied on them (Tidwell et al., 2003).

Some researchers, Tidwell et al., agreed the management of discipline problems at the elementary school level should no longer focus on punishment and retribution, but on conflict resolution, guidance, positive behavior motivational incentives, and training good classroom management strategies to teachers. The approaches to managing discipline problems practiced in this study aimed at establishing a nurturing learning environment by using positive classroom management strategies for inter-vention and by formulating proactive rules to govern student behavior and to augment students' time on-task.

Sometimes children came to school motivated; most of the time that was not the case (Bartholomew, 2007). A lack of motivation, language barriers, and socioeconomic barriers contributed to behavior problems in the classroom. Furthermore, some educators thought that classroom management and motivation were the same things. They thought that a tight, controlled classroom environment led to motivated students and that a quiet classroom with busy students was a result of good teaching. Yet, highly controlled classrooms or extremely quiet classrooms did not necessarily mean that the students were motivated, working hard, and academically on task.

Thomas, Bierman, Thompson, and Powers (2008) noted that elementary schools centralized in impoverished areas were more likely to have a greater disadvantage with furnishing students with quality resources, retaining highly-qualified teachers, and securing early intervention programs. As a result, classrooms became heavily populated with aggressive, disruptive students who destabilized classroom quality by exhibiting aggressive and disruptive behaviors. Even though this may be the circumstance, implementing positive and consistent classroom management practices rather than punitive authoritarian practices tend to have a better effect on aggressive and disruptive students (Thomas, Bierman, Thompson, & Powers).

Methods

Participants

Teacher participants in the research study included a convenience sample of 11 teachers. Two teachers taught pre-kindergarten; two teachers taught kindergarten; five teachers taught second grade; two teachers taught fifth grade. The 11 teachers taught 224 students in four grade levels. The teacher participants were selected based on having a large number of discipline referrals. Two different data collection sources were used to collect data for the two research questions. Discipline data from the school's computer database were the data collected for research question 1; suspension data from this computer database were the data collected for research question 2.

Professional Development
Classroom Management Model

The classroom management model for this research study, the PDCMM, was student-centered. It was based on the work of Garrett (2008). Garrett indicated that the student-centered approach used with classroom management was likely to preserve a classroom atmosphere that promoted active relationships and communication, close personal associations with students, shared respect, in addition to student self-control, fortitude, and independence were cultivated.

The PDCMM curriculum was based on strategies in three widely used classroom management resources. One resource, a workbook by Reglin (1995), was *Achievement by African American Students: Strategies for the Diverse Classroom.*

Another book, an e-book (practical guide) published by Institute of Education (2008), was titled *Reducing Behavior Problems in the Elementary Classrooms*. The third resource was authored by Fred Jones (2008) and included a book, video toolbox, and a study group activity guide.

The following are examples of some of the classroom management strategies that were discussed with the teachers in the 18-week training session. Teachers were informed that when a student displayed an off-task behavior in the classroom, the teacher should concretely identify the off-task behavior in a language understandable to the student. The off-task behavior should be stated in a way that was measurable by the teacher and would facilitate the teacher applying the correct interventions (Institute of Education, 2008).

According to the Institute of Education (2008), if the description of the student behavior was vague (for example, "Jamal, you are a disruptive student in my classroom."), it was difficult for the student to understand exactly the type of disruptive misbehavior he displayed in the classroom. Furthermore, it was difficult for the teacher to direct the correct intervention to the specific disruptive behavior (e.g., blurting out answers without raising his hand). The Institute of Education provided recommended ways for teachers to describe problem behaviors in a language that specifically identified the behavior and was understandable by students. For instance, the teacher can say, "Jamal, you blurted out the answer three times without raising your hand during the lesson." Now, Jamal knows exactly what the misbehavior is "blurting out answers." The teacher can

apply the correct intervention which is to teach Jamal to raise his hand and be recognized by the teacher before divulging the answer.

Another classroom management strategy espoused by the Institute of Education (2008) that was discussed with teachers in the PDCMM was to assess the student's behavioral impact on student learning. The Institute of Education reported that if the misbehavior did not seriously interfere with learning (such as short instances of daydreaming, talking during transitions, or momentary inattention) – the student's behavior should be addressed without interrupting instruction through eye contact or physical proximity.

It was emphasized in the PDCMM that student behavior warranted immediate and additional attention if the behavior persisted, escalated, spread to other students, lessened the student's or other students' ability to successfully engage in learning, detracted from a positive classroom climate, caused other students or adults to avoid interacting with the student, or threatened the safety of students or the teacher (Safran, 2003). Teachers also weighed other important factors as they tried to understand a student's behavior (Reglin, 1995). Could the behavior reflect a cultural difference? Some behaviors, such as a student's persistent lack of eye contact or unwillingness to compete against peers, may be indicative of a student's cultural background (Gay, 2000).

Teachers should account for differences in cultural background when assessing the severity of students' behavior problems. Does the student have the academic or behavioral skills necessary to meet expec-

tations? Students with skill deficits may exhibit behavior problems to help them avoid or escape tasks that are difficult for them. Teachers should frequently assess students' abilities and help them build requisite skills for appropriate behavior. Could the behavior reflect episodic stress or trauma? A student's behavior may be a temporary reaction to a difficult event, such as the death or illness of a family member. Regular communication with students' families helps teachers be understanding and supportive when events in students' lives affect them in school (Evertsen, Emmer, & Worsham, 2006).

Each Monday morning during the 18-week PDCMM treatment period, the 11 teacher participants were assigned brief readings from one or more of the aforementioned three PDCMM resources; it took them about one hour to complete the readings each Monday. Teachers were encouraged to complete the readings after the end of the school day.

Next, each Wednesday for about 50 minutes during the school day, this writer met with the 11 teachers in one of the teacher's classrooms to review, discuss, and answer any questions teachers had about Monday's readings. Then, each Thursday of the 18-week treatment period, the writer modeled the classroom behaviors targeted by the Monday's assigned readings with students in one of the teachers' class. All 11 teachers were present for the demonstration of the appropriate classroom management behaviors and were encouraged to ask questions. These Monday, Wednesday and Thursday activities were repeated each week during the 18-week treatment period. During the

week following the 18-week intervention period of the PDCMM curriculum, post-intervention data were collected.

Research Design

The generic research design was the mixed methods research design. Quantitative research methodology and the single group pretest and posttest research design were the guide for data collection and data analysis for the two research questions. In the single group pretest and posttest design, the treatment or independent variable was the PDCMM. There were two quantitative dependent variables which were the number of student discipline referrals and student suspensions.

The writer closely supervised the research project, collected the data, and monitored the project activities, so extraneous variables would not adversely affect the study during the treatment period. Examples of extraneous variables were teacher tardiness and poor attendance in the PDCMM, unannounced and distracting visitors during the PDCMM activities, and noise such as cell phones ringing. The extraneous variables were managed by reminding the teachers before the start of each PDCMM treatment day of the adverse effect of the extraneous variables on the study's outcome relative to contaminating the findings of the study. Confidentiality of data was maintained at all times, and data were stored in a vault at the school until time for data analysis.

Data Analysis

Quantitative data for the two research questions were analyzed using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS), Student Version 19.0 and the Wang calculator. A review of the literature revealed numerous calculators using the two-sided or two proportion z test to calculate the differences between pre and post data in the form of proportions, frequencies, and percentages. Examples of calculators discovered in the literature were: In-Silico Online Two-Proportion Z Calculator (Joosse, 2011), A/B Experiment Two-Proportion Test Calculator (AMADE-SA Corporation, 2011), Difference in Proportion Test calculator (Answer Research Inc., 2011), and the Wang Two-Sided Z Test Calculator (Wang, 1996).

Hinders (2004) and Peck, Olsen, and Devore (2009) indicated that the two-sided z test was an appropriate statistical model to compare pre- and post scores for statistically significant differences when the pre- and post data were in the form of proportions, percentages, frequencies, and these data were at less than an interval level of measurement. The suspension and discipline scores for research questions 1 and 2 met Hinders (2004) and Peck, Schaps (2009).

Results

Findings for Research Question 1

Research question 1 asked, What effect did the implementation of the PDCMM have on reducing students' discipline referrals from pre-implementation (data collected during the 90-day period before the intervention implementation period) to the day after the end of the intervention implementation period? For this research question - data were collected, analyzed, and compared using a count of the school's

discipline referrals during the 90-day period preceding the implementation of the intervention and a count of the referrals during the 90-day PDCMM intervention implementation period. The comparison discipline referrals were actually collected from school records on the day immediately following the implementation of the 90-day PDCMM intervention at which time the statistical analyses was started in the study.

There was a concern about the threat of history in the research study. Researchers (Creswell, 2008; Gay & Airasian, 2003; Gall, Borg, & Gall, 2007) indicated history was a major threat to internal validity when using the single group pretest and posttest research design. If not controlled for the history threat would potentially have a negative impact on the validity of the study. It was believed the history threat would have a greater impact if the research study used a post-intervention comparison of data collected three-months after the end of the intervention. If this writer would have pursued this option, during this 3-month post-implementation period, teachers might have participated in district-level class-room management workshops, university courses, or might have been transferred to another school. This option would have added more invalidity to the findings (Creswell, 2008, Gall, Borg, & Gall, 2007).

To somewhat control for the potential threat due to history, the study pursued another option. The second option was to use counts of suspension and discipline referrals during the 90-day period of the intervention implementation as comparison data; in this second option

pre-implementation data collected the 90 days before the intervention implementation period were compared with data collected during the 90 days of the intervention implementation. It was realized the second option posed a threat to internal validity, even though the threat was smaller as compared to the threat related to history. To minimize the effects of the threat due to the second option, during the 90-day implementation period the teacher participants were constantly encouraged to conduct their classes as normally as possible. Teachers were frequently reminded that if they felt classroom circumstances mandated writing discipline and suspension referrals, they should do so with no fear of negative repercussions from the principal.

Relative to the descriptive statistics, prior to implementation of the intervention, the 11 teacher participants wrote 130 discipline referrals. The majority of the discipline referrals had the category, disruptive behavior/disorderly conduct, checked on the referral forms. Other categories checked by the teachers were threatening others, refusing to follow directions, instigating fights, bothering other students, using inappropriate comments to peers, throwing objects, running and elbowing students, hitting teacher, hitting student, giving disrespectful comments to teacher, walking out of class, using wrong gender bathroom, pulling fire alarm, and refusing to do assignments.

Prior to the implementation of the intervention, Teacher 9 wrote a high of 44 discipline referrals; Teacher 11 submitted the second highest number (n=36) of discipline referrals (Table 3). Teacher 1 did not

write any discipline referrals. The descriptive statistics calculated during the three-month intervention period showed the 11 teachers wrote a total of only six discipline referrals. One of the six referral forms indicated the student was using disrespectful comments to the teacher; two referrals were about disruptive behavior. The remaining three referral forms revealed students were refusing to follow directions. Additionally, Teacher 11 wrote the highest number (n=3) of discipline referrals. The data collected the day after the end of the intervention implementation period showed that 7 of 11 (63.64%) teachers did not write a referral.

Further analysis of Table 3 findings showed 9 of 11 (81.82%) teachers had a decrease in the number of discipline refer-

rals from pre-implementation to the day after the end of the implementation period. Regarding the two teachers who did not experience the decrease, Teacher 1 wrote no discipline referrals during the time period before or during the PDCMM intervention. Teacher 7 wrote one discipline referral before the implementation period; this teacher wrote one referral during the implementation period. Regarding the inferential statistics, the Wang (1996) calculator computed the findings using the two-sided z test. The two sided z test computed a z (observed) value = 11.373, and a probability value (p) value = 0.000, showing statistical significance between the pre and post discipline referrals.

Table 3

Comparison of the Number of Discipline Referrals Before Implementation to the Period During Intervention Implementation

Teacher	Number Before	Number During	Change
1	0	0	0
2	1	0	-1
3	7	0	-7
4	17	1	-16
5	3	1	-2
6	2	0	-2
7	1	1	0
8	9	0	-9
9	44	0	-44
10	10	0	-10
11	36	3	-33

Note. Number before = number of discipline referrals before intervention implementation period; Number during = number of discipline referrals during the intervention implementation period; change = change in number of discipline referrals during the two periods of time.

Prior to implementation of the PDCMM intervention, the 11 teachers wrote 130 discipline referrals on 40 different students (Table 4). Teacher 9 wrote discipline referrals on the greatest number of students which were 12 students. Teacher 11 wrote discipline referrals on the second highest number (11) of students. Furthermore, in Table 4, the descriptive statistics calculated the day after the end of the intervention period showed Teacher 11 had the highest number of referrals. Teacher 11 wrote a referral on three different students.

In summary, to answer research question 1 with the analyzed data, the descriptive and inferential statistics indicated the PDCMM reduced students' discipline referrals from pre-implementation to the day after the end of the implementation period. The descriptive statistics showed 9 of 11 (81.82%) teachers had a decrease in the number of discipline referrals wrote from pre-implementation to the day after the end of the implementation period.

Also, prior to implementation of the PDCMM, the 11 teachers wrote discipline referrals on 40 different students. During the intervention implementation period, the 11 teachers wrote discipline referrals on only six students. Last, the two-sided z test showed the decrease in discipline referrals from pre-implementation to the day after the end of the 90-day intervention period was a statistically significant decrease at an alpha level of .05.

Table 4

Comparison of Number of Students who received Discipline Referrals Before Implementation to the Period During Intervention Implementation

Teacher	Number Before	Number During	Change
1	0	0	0
2	1	0	-1
3	2	0	-2
4	4	1	-3
5	2	1	-1
6	2	0	-2
7	1	1	0
8	2	0	-2
9	12	0	-12
10	3	0	-3
11	11	3	-8

Note. Number before = number of students the teacher wrote a discipline referral on before implementation of intervention; number during = number of students the teacher wrote a discipline referral on during the intervention implementation period; change = change in number of students during the two periods of time.

Findings for Research Question 2

Research question 2 asked, What effect did the implementation of the PDCMM have on reducing students' suspensions from pre-implementation (data collected during a 90-day period before the intervention implementation period) to the day after the end of the implementation period? For this research question data were collected, analyzed, and compared using a count of school's suspensions during the 90-day period preceding the implementation of the intervention and a count of suspensions the day after the end of the PDCMM intervention period. The comparison suspensions were actually collected from school records on the day immediately following the implementation of the 90-day PDCMM intervention at which time the statistical analyses was started in the study.

Regarding the descriptive statistics computed prior to implementation of the intervention, the 11 teacher participants had 31 suspensions (see Table 5). Each suspension resulted in one missed day from school by a student. The majority of the 31 suspensions were for disruptive behavior/disorderly conduct.

Table 5 illustrates that prior to implementation of the PDCMM intervention, Teacher 9 had the largest number of suspensions (n=10); teacher 11 was second with nine suspensions. Three of 11 teachers (27.27%) did not have any suspension referrals. Furthermore, in Table 5, the descriptive statistics calculated at the end of the PDCMM intervention showed the 11 teachers had only a total of five suspensions. Three suspensions were for students refusing to follow directions. One suspension was for a student making disrespectful

Table 5
Comparison of Number of Suspensions Before Implementation to the Period During Intervention Implementation

Teacher	Number Before	Number During	Change
1	0	0	0
2	0	0	0
3	2	0	-2
4	3	1	-2
5	2	1	-1
6	2	0	-2
7	0	1	+1
8	1	0	-1
9	10	0	-10
10	2	0	-2
11	9	2	-7

Note. Number before = count of suspensions before intervention implementation period; number during = count of suspensions during the intervention implementation period; change = change in count of discipline referrals during the two periods.

comments to the teacher; one suspension was for a student exhibiting disruptive behavior/disorderly conduct. Teacher 11 had the highest number of suspensions with two suspensions. Also, 7 of 11 (63.64%) teachers did not write any suspensions. One teacher wrote two suspensions. The remaining three teachers had only one suspension (Table 5). Regarding the inferential statistics, the Wang (1996) calculator computed findings using the two-sided z test. The two sided z test computed a z (observed) value = 7.853 and a probability value (p) value = 0.000, showing statistical significance between the pre and post suspensions.

In summary, to answer research question 2 with the analyzed data, the descriptive and inferential statistics indicated the PDCMM reduced the number of students' suspensions from pre-implementation to the day after the end of the intervention implementation period. Prior to implementation of the intervention, the 11 teachers had a total of 31 suspensions. Many of these interventions were for students showing disruptive behavior/disorderly conduct.

The day after the end of the intervention implementation period, the 11 teachers only had a total of five suspensions. Of the five suspensions, only one suspension was for a student exhibiting disruptive behavior/disorderly conduct. The descriptive statistics showed that after the implementation of the intervention, 7 of 11 (63.64%) teachers did not have any suspensions. The *two-sided z* test showed the decrease in suspensions from pre-implementation to the day after the end of the intervention implementation period was a statistically significant decrease at an alpha level of .05.

Discussion

The findings for both research questions were consistent with the majority of the literature that reported research-based classroom management strategies are effective in reducing the number of students' discipline referrals and suspensions. A major focus of the PDCMM was to train and encourage teachers to treat students will respect and try to maintain a warm and supportive relationship with all students. The findings in this study were interpreted that a proactive and preventative intervention is effective in curbing discipline problems and suspension when implemented in individual classrooms after intensive teacher professional development. Additionally, the best intervention takes an early intervention approach—which may include screening and early identification—and preventing negative behaviors from happening in the first place using proactive classroom management training (NASP, 2001; Skiba, 2000). Furthermore, there is a need for schools' leadership teams to prepare a school-wide discipline plan, and to focus classroom management professional development on developing a positive and warm classroom climate and classroom culture (Bucher & Manning, 2003). School administrators who have implemented school-wide positive behavior support and frequent classroom management professional development sessions experienced positive outcomes regarding discipline and suspensions (Skiba & Peterson, 2000).

Many of the PDCMM activities were designed to help teachers work effectively with the socio-emotional aspect of the students. Teachers in classroom management professional development should focus on social-emotional curriculums and interventions that teachers can implement to prevent behaviors such as those that result in the use of zero-tolerance. Three classroom indicators of decreased behavioral problems observed by during the PDCMM treatment period were (a) teachers who were able and willing to deal with behavioral problems (Baker, 2005), (b) effective and stimulating lessons (Monroe, 2005; Noguera. 2003), and (c) teachers who had high expectations (Black, 2004).

Classroom management training preventative measures are excellent professional development training topics. A preventative measure emphasized through professional development and that teachers can employ in their classrooms is to incorporate social-skills training and violence-prevention curriculums such as Second Step and Promoting Positive Thinking (NASP, 2001). Additional preventative measures which are excellent training topics in classroom management and are beneficial for elementary school teachers are the following: (a) develop rapport with students; (c) mentor students; (d) develop cultural competence; and (e) be a role model (Casella, 2003). When students act up in class, teachers can use alternatives to referring them to the office by using a cool-off room, restitution, and behavior contracts (Casella).

Implications

One implication of the research study's findings is that there are effective alternatives, such as the classroom management training in the PDCMM, to writing disciplinary referrals and dispensing suspensions to elementary school students. Since suspending students and expelling students are ineffective practices, more proactive classroom management strategies such as in the PDCMM are needed at the elementary school level. Furthermore, according to Skiba and Rausch (2006), repeated suspensions can result in expulsions. Expulsion, used far less frequently than suspension, refers to a more procedural removal of a student, for a longer period of time, typically involving a decision by the superintendent and school board (Skiba, Eaton, & Sotoo, 2004). According to Skiba, Eaton, and Sotoo (2004), when students are suspended or expelled, they often get further behind in their academics. If the children's parents are working, a burden is placed on parents to locate suitable child care, and sometimes the children are left in the house unsupervised by responsible adults. The lack of proper supervision might contribute to mischief. Consequently, it is imperative that more interventions like the PDCMM are implemented as proactive alternatives to shape teachers into better classroom managers. Good classroom managers do not perceive a need to frequently write discipline and suspension referrals on their students.

Still, another implication of the research study's findings is that establishing structured routines is critical to the smooth management of the elementary school

classroom. For instance, Naegele (2002) revealed some effective classroom routines that should be an integral part of the professional development of teachers. This writer indicated that making contact with each student at the beginning and close of each day makes a big difference in the smooth operation of the classroom. Naegele reported that each child should be greeted by name. At the start of the school day, the teacher should ask one child to begin by simply saying "Good morning" to a fellow student in the room, greeting him or her by name. That child then chooses the next person to greet. Students can personalize their greetings to suit the occasion (e.g., "Howdy Partner, Rachel" or "Buenos Dias, Lucas") (Naegele).

A final implication of the research study's findings is that classroom management training not only facilitates teachers becoming better managers of a classroom of students, it also fosters teachers shaping better relationships with other teachers in the school. This observation in the study was confirmed in the study by Rooney (2006). For example, Rooney found that an unintended side benefit to clarifying classroom guidelines for respectful student behavior was the exploration of how these guidelines applied equally to adults at the school. Asking students to respect differences called on teachers, also, to actively understand opinions other than their own—an extraordinarily difficult commitment. Requiring students to finish class work obligated teachers to plan lessons and assessments more carefully. Rooney and the teachers at the school realized that discipline went far beyond the student world and according to Rooney,

this realization and the effective implementation of the five classroom management rules at the elementary school significantly contributed to the 80% reduction in discipline referrals and suspensions over the previous school year (Rooney).

Conclusions

It was learned from the study that imparting new and effective classroom management strategies to teachers with ineffective strategies acquired and employed over many years is never easy. There will always be those who resist. Initially, in the research study, there were many reluctant and skeptical teachers in the PDCMM. Fortunately, that old adage about not arguing with success applies here: As the PDCMM teachers witnessed the positive changes in their students and positive changes in the classroom culture, they found it harder to disagree with the research-based classroom management practices.

In the beginning, bringing in change to the 11 teachers was a struggle. But communication was an important factor in introducing the change to these teachers. When one of the teachers attended a professional development session, she enthusiastically shared positive outcomes with other teachers. As this process went on, all teachers began to feel involved and to believe in the PDCMM classroom management practices. The teachers became committed to the strategies because they viewed good results, and they came to believe their hard work in the professional development session was worth it.

One of the study's researchers, the principal of the elementary school, stated with

a high degree of confidence that the time spent building and implementing a proactive classroom management program paid off tenfold by shaping more competent teachers. Today at the elementary school, the targeted teachers are doing the job the school and the school district wanted them to do most—educating our students. Most important, there is a safer and more civil school and classroom culture where students feel valued and respected, empowered and confident—and where they know that the future is theirs.

It was observed that most of the discipline problems arising in the classrooms prior to implementation of the PDCMM were classroom disruption problems rather than severe behavior problems. These disruptions (talking and fidgeting) lead to the conclusion that they reflect some basic needs that the students have been unable to satisfy within the confines of the traditional classroom.

The researchers' concluded that the disruptive behavior (talking out-of-turn) will persist to some degree as long as teachers continue to do most of the talking and are unwilling to change their teaching methods and classroom management methods. Such change could be performed by including as an integral part of teachers' instructional planning, students' verbal and social interaction in the form of instructional conversation and cooperative group work. Fidgeting and out-of-seat disruptive behaviors may also reflect students' need to manipulate and interact with the environment (Piaget, 1969). More hands-on activities could be employed to engage the students' bodies at the same time as they engage their tongues. Working with a peer or peers in group projects and cooperative learning groups, participating in debates, and providing brief class presentations would provide students with new learning opportunities that minimize disruptive behavior.

A final conclusion is the prevention of disciplinary and suspension problems in the elementary grades may rest in training teachers how to manage their classrooms. Public school systems should also ensure that teachers receive ongoing classroom management skills training, particularly in the early school years when students are first learning to negotiate classroom demands.

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