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Effective Classroom Management in Student-Centered Classrooms

Abstract

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Effective Classroom Management in Student-Centered Classrooms

By

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Submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree
M.S Special Education

Supervised by

Dr. Susan M. Schultz

School of Education
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April 2013

Abstract

Classroom management is an essential component to the classroom learning environment. Research has focused on a variety of classroom management approaches; specifically teacher-centered versus student-centered classroom management techniques. After reviewing the research, the question, how can teachers effectively manage a classroom with a wide range of learning abilities and styles, in a student-centered way, was proposed. To answer this question, a study involving a variety of teachers in a suburban school district in upstate New York was conducted. Each teacher participated in an anonymous electronic survey to collect data about the teacher's classroom management approach and how it affects student behavior.

Effective Classroom Management in Student-Centered Classrooms

Recent changes in educational laws have created new classroom management opportunities. According to Wong, Wont, Rogers, and Brooks (2012), "classroom management refers to all the things that a teacher does to organize students, space, time, and materials so that student learning can take place" (p. 61). Effective teachers, who establish an efficient management system from the beginning of the school year, will have more time to devote to student learning, than teachers who are constantly trying to use an inefficient management system. The two federal laws, No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) of 2001 and the Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act (IDEIA) of 2004 made it a necessity to improve student achievement for students of all learning abilities. Due to these changes, classrooms are now shifting from teacher-centered to student-centered learning communities. Garrett (2008) defines student-centered learning communities as having "shared leadership, community building, and a balance between the needs of the teachers and students" (p. 34).

Students of all learning abilities and cultural backgrounds are learning together in the same classrooms with teachers being held accountable for each individual student's achievement. This study will review recent literature regarding classroom management and specific student-centered classroom management programs. Although every teacher's personality is reflected in his/her management style, research has found commonalities within the most effective student-centered management techniques. According to Pereira and Smith-Adcock (2011):

> Although a child-led approach is often seen as a direct contrast to teacher directed (i.e traditional methods) classroom management, the main philosophical differences between the two approaches lies in the emphasis placed on a child's freedom in completing

> learning tasks and the amount of teacher control deemed necessary for proper learning to take place. (p. 255)

In classrooms today, students of all learning abilities and cultural backgrounds are becoming active participants in all classroom decision-making processes. Students' opinions and ideas are valued and enrich the learning environment. McCombs, Daniel, and Perry (2008) explain, "for the past two decades, there (also) has been strong recognition of the needs for interventions to target student motivation and social-emotional growth" (p. 254). This study will determine how classroom teachers, and other school professionals working in a classroom, work together with students to manage a successful learning community.

Literature Review

Schools and classrooms need to be a safe and welcoming place that provides the necessary academic, as well as social and emotional supports, all students need. Kohn's Progressive Education Theory supports student-centered classroom management. According to Kohn (2008), progressive education cannot be defined in one sentence because certain elements of the theory can be interpreted differently. There are, however, elements of the theory that support student-centered classroom management. For example, educators who apply progressive education theory believe in collaboration among the teacher and students. Progressive educators value not only academic growth, but also the social and emotional growth of all students. Kohn (2008) explains, "in progressive schools, students play a vital role in helping to design the curriculum, formulate the questions, seek out (and create) answers, think through possibilities, and evaluate how successful they - and their teachers - have been" (p. 2). Kohn's progressive education theory values students' ideas and opinions. In student-centered classrooms, the curriculum is no longer dictated by the next chapter in a scripted teacher's manual, but is dictated

by student interests. Schools and teachers, who want to use a student-centered approach, should reference Kohn's progressive education theory.

Research Question

It is becoming uncommon today to see a classroom set up with desks in perfect rows and a teacher standing in the front of the room for a majority of the day. Classrooms are becoming diverse, student-centered learning environments, which require a unique management technique. Although there are numerous classroom management theories, how can teachers effectively manage a classroom with a wide range of learning abilities and styles, in a student-centered way?

Models of Management Systems

There is not one single formula to successfully manage a student-centered classroom. Each individual classroom is made up of a diverse population of learners, and student-centered classrooms focus on the needs of each individual student. There are, however, different management programs, which suggest specific strategies for teachers and students to implement. Specifically, the shift from teacher-centered to student-centered classroom management is possible only if there are strong positive relationships between the teacher and students as well as, students and their peers. In student-centered classrooms, teachers share responsibilities with students, so having mutual respect for each other is essential. Also, in order for a student-centered classroom to be successful, classroom expectations must be established. As previously stated, student-centered classrooms rely on both ideas and opinions from teachers and students. Therefore, especially in the beginning of the year, it is important for teachers and students to establish and practice classroom expectations and routines. Student-centered classrooms can be successful when each individual teacher and student knows his/her contributions are needed in order for the whole classroom community to succeed.

Consistency management and cooperative discipline (CMCD)

Teachers and students begin establishing a classroom management system on the first day of school. An effective management system must be followed consistently throughout the school year. Consistency Management and Cooperative Discipline (CMCD) "is an instructional and classroom management program that provides teachers, administrators, students, and school staff with the tools needed to build community and organizational capacity within their schools" (Jerome-Freiberg, Huzinec, & Templeton, 2009, p. 64). This management program creates a student-centered classroom and school by giving students responsibility for their actions, which promotes active learning. According to Jerome-Freiberg et al. (2009), often times management programs focus on discipline after the issue, instead of prevention. Schools and classrooms who apply CMCD, "create fair, consistent, and engaging instruction with predictable daily classroom routines in which students are active participants" (Jerome-Freiberg et al.,, 2009, p. 65). A predictable school and classroom environment, where students are given responsibilities and held accountable for their actions, will decrease the amount of time teachers and students have to spend on classroom management and discipline (Jerome-Freiberg et al., 2009). When teachers and students spend less time on classroom management and discipline, they are able to devote more time to learning.

Jerome-Freiberg et al.~~Huzinec, and Templeton~~ (2009) completed a study, which followed 14 elementary schools that implemented CMCD. The study revealed that schools who applied CMCD had "changes in the learning environment and particularly within the component of the environment that focuses on classroom and instructional management… (also a) positive effect on the improvement of student learning outcomes" (Jerome-Freiberg et al., p. 78). The CMCD management program suggests teachers and students find success through cooperation,

prevention, organization and caring (Jerome-Freiberg et al., 2009). Teachers from this study were surveyed and asked to estimate how much time, on average, they saved and were able to devote to instructional time once they began the CMCD management program. Jerome-Freiberg et al. (2009) report that "teachers saved, on average, 26 minutes per day, equaling 13 school days (2.6 school weeks) per year of instructional time" (p. 77). CMCD is a cooperative management program, which maximizes efficiency and instructional time.

Cooperative Discipline.

Albert's Cooperative Discipline (2005), also states students need to be given responsibilities and held accountable for their actions. According to Charles (2005), Albert's believes all students need to feel capable while connecting with others, and making contributions in the classroom, school and community. Charles (2005) states, "Albert's main focus is on helping teachers meet student's needs, thereby prompting students to cooperate with the teacher and each other" (p. 200). When students are active participants in their learning and feel their contributions are valued in the classroom, it is more likely the students will have a positive attitude about school.

Albert's Cooperative Discipline management program, suggests similar strategies as the CMCD management program. For example, both management programs rely on teachers and students to cooperate and work together in the classroom and school (Jerome-Freiberg et al., (2009), Huzinec, & Templeton, 2009; Charles, 2005). One specific characteristic of Cooperative Discipline is ensuring students feel connected in the classroom (Charles, 2005). Jerome-Freiberg et al. (2009) would agree that helping students connect with their teacher and peers is an essential component of a successful management system. A teacher who applied the CMCD management program in her classroom states, "students want to know how much you care before

they consider how much you know" (Jerome-Freiberg et al.,~~,~~ 2009, p. 66). Pereira and Smith-Adcock (2011), agree by stating, “when students feel connected to their teacher and peers, as a valued member of the classroom community, they are more prepared to actively engage in the curriculum” (p. 257). Students who feel comfortable in the classroom will be more willing to take risks and share personal ideas and opinions.

Both the Cooperative Discipline management program and CMCD management program encourage students to contribute their individual ideas and opinions to improve the classroom environment (Jerome-Freiberg, et al., ~~Huzinec, & Templeton,~~ 2009; Charles, 2005). Charles (2005) indicates that with Cooperative Discipline it is important to, “ask students to state their opinions and preferences about class requirements, routines, and other matters" (p. 207). Similarly, Jerome-Freiberg et al. (2009), state with CMCD, "student opinions and perspectives are heard. Students learn how to solve disputes, prevent problems, and work and learn in groups, all within a supportive, caring environment" (p. 66). When students and teachers are working together to cooperatively manage the classroom, there is shared leadership and responsibility. This type of cooperative management will minimize disruptions and create a more productive learning environment.

Culturally Responsive Teaching

A third classroom management theory~~program~~ is Culturally Responsive Teaching. It is crucial that teachers develop the knowledge, skills, and predispositions to teach children from diverse racial, ethnic, language, and social class backgrounds because classrooms today are continuing to become increasingly diverse. Weinstein, Curran, and Tomlinson-Clarke (2003) explain:

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> In order to be culturally responsive, we must acquire "cultural content knowledge." We must learn, for example, about our students' family backgrounds, their previous educational experiences, their cultural norms for interpersonal relationships, their parents' expectations for discipline, and the ways their culture treat time and space. (p. 270)

Teachers set the tone for their classroom on the very first day with their welcome and continue to be role models for their students throughout the school year. The physical environment of a classroom reflects the teacher's respect for diversity. For example, while displaying pictures, teachers need to make sure they avoid any stereotypical representations. Examples of a stereotypical representation are images of Mexicans wearing wide brimmed sombreros (Weinstein, Curran, & Tomlinson-Clarke, 2003). Teachers need to educate themselves, or have students educate them, about different cultural values and traditions. Albert's Cooperative Discipline includes similar management strategies as Culturally Responsive Teaching by stating that teachers need to communicate, "that it is all right for each student to be as he or she is, regardless of culture, abilities, disabilities, and personal style" (Charles, 2005, p. 206). Sobel and Taylor (2006) write about Ms. Linda Hillmera, a third grade Caucasian teacher who comes from a middle-class European American family, but engages her students each day in a Culturally Responsive classroom. For example, all signs, cabinets and classroom materials are labeled in English, Spanish, Russian, and American Sign Language. Even in a classroom that is made up of the mainstream culture, it is important for teachers to educate themselves and their students about cultural values and traditions. Teachers must remember to encourage a positive, culturally responsive learning environment because students of all cultural backgrounds need to feel comfortable in the classroom in order to maximize their learning opportunities.

Allowing time to share stories about life outside of school also helps build a classroom community. Jerome-Freiberg, Huzinec, and Templeton (2009) explain with CMCD, students are able to share personal stories and opinions comfortably during classroom meetings. Learning about students' families and working with families in and out of the classroom is essential, but can cause conflicts when the home and school cultures collide. Teachers need to be aware of the cultural differences and accommodate ~~the~~ student and family needs (Bondy & Ross, 2006). Bondy and Ross (2006) explain that, "gaining insight into cultural values and habits helps teachers monitor their reactions to student behaviors that they might deem bad, but that are considered normal or even valued in the student's home culture" (p. 56). Teachers should be educated about different cultures so they do not misinterpret certain behaviors. Being accepting and willing to learn from students is key for teachers in a culturally responsive classroom. According to Sobel and Taylor (2006), "Responsive teaching encompasses much more than the items displayed on a classroom wall… [it] calls for teachers to create respectful, inclusive, supportive environments that foster authentic learning communities" (p.34). Culturally responsive teachers respect cultural differences and communicate with all students and their families to meet everyone's needs. Culturally Responsive Teaching requires constant communication, patience, and education from all teachers and students, but is a necessity in a student-centered classroom.

Student and Teacher Relationships

In order to build a classroom and school community, teachers must develop a strong positive relationship with each student. Also, teachers must encourage strong student-peer relationships. Dollard, Christensen, and Colucci (1996) state, "the positive connection formed within a relationship between student and teacher becomes the foundation for all interaction in

the classroom" (p. 5). Students must feel safe and feel they are able to express their feelings in a classroom in order to excel academically. According to Bondy and Ross (2008), "what is missing is not skill in lesson planning, but a teacher stance that communicates both warmth and a nonnegotiable demand for student effort and mutual respect" (p. 54). Teachers must make time to show students they care about them. When students know their teacher cares and respects them, the students will be more likely to work to their full potential. Teachers need to be consistent in communicating expectations for respect between teachers and students as well as students and their peers. Dollard, Christensen, and Colucci (1996) would agree with Bondy and Ross (2008) when stating there needs to be mutual respect amongst everyone in the classroom. In student-centered classrooms, teachers need to give up some control and trust their students to manage and be teachers as well. For example, Soter and Rudge (2005), describe the most productive classroom discussions are when the teacher has control, but there is room for flexibility and elaboration from the students. Teachers are not the only teachers in a classroom. Students can learn a lot from each other and student-centered classrooms have valuable discussions throughout the day. Teachers need to facilitate, not control, conversations. According to Nystrand (2006), "dialogically organized instruction involves fewer teacher questions and more conversational turns than recitation, as teachers and students alike contribute their ideas to a discussion and the exchange of ideas are at the core" (p. 400). It is difficult for teachers to give up control; however, the most productive conversations in classrooms are facilitated by students.

Classroom Expectations

Although student-centered classrooms are collaborative learning environments with input from all students, the teacher is the main facilitator who sets the tone. As Nystrand (2006) states,

"what counts as knowledge and understanding in any given classroom is largely shaped by the questions teachers ask, how they respond to their students, and how they structure small-group and other pedagogical activities" (p.400). In student-centered classrooms, teachers value all students and view all students' opinions and contributions as a chance to learn. Smith and Lambert (2008) agree with Nystrand (2006) by stating in productive learning communities, teachers must assume all students want to be in school each day, participate, and learn good behavior, Lane, Wehby, and Cooley (2006), conducted a study during the 2001-2002 school year in a large school district in Tennessee and asked teachers which social skills they believe are necessary for success. A questionnaire was given to teachers in the district at the elementary, middle, and high school levels. The questionnaire gathered information about the teachers demographics and also asked them what social skills they think are essential for learning to be successful. The researchers found:

> General and special education teachers at the elementary and middle school levels shared similar views regarding the importance of self-control skills, whereas high school special education teachers viewed self-control skills as significantly more important than did high school general education teachers. (Lane, Wehby & Cooley, 2006, p. 163)

In student-centered classrooms, it is especially important for students to have self-control because students will be responsible for engaging in individual, or group work assignments with minimal teacher interaction and supervision. Smith and Lambert (2008) agree with Lane, Wehby, and Cooley (2006) and suggest a few strategies for teachers to implement while managing student-centered classrooms. According to Smith and Lambert (2008), "many teachers believe they are showing students they care when they continually give one more chance. Unfortunately, giving one more chance demonstrates that a teacher does not mean what

he or she says" (p. 18). It is important for teachers to clearly explain directions and routines, especially in a student-centered classroom because often times students will be required to use self-control to complete tasks with minimal teacher interaction once it is expected all students can complete tasks independently.

In student-centered classrooms, teachers must expect that each student in their classroom will succeed. Bondy and Ross (2008) believe that day-to-day interactions with students are essential. Each individual student in a classroom needs to feel appreciated. It is not enough for teachers to give students a "get to know you" survey at the beginning of the year. Similarly to Bondy and Ross (2008), Smith and Lambert (2008) suggest that teachers take time every day to have a personal conversation with students about anything the student is interested in. For example, "the use of a student's name, or a question that shows you remember something the student has mentioned- these small gestures build and nurture teacher-student relationships" (Smith & Lambert, 2008, p. 56). In student-centered classrooms, it is significant to establish clear expectations from the beginning of the year. Teachers will need to be a role model for how certain routines should be completed; however, accepting new ideas from students is the key to success.

Methodology

Context

For this study, I interviewed teachers in a small suburban school district in Western New York. This school district was selected because it was the school district in which I was currently a practicum student. Being a practicum student in the district, gave me access to frequently communicate with the teachers. The data I collected from the surveys reflected what type of classroom management styles the teachers in this particular school used. Also, this data

enabled me to conclude how a teacher's specific management style affected student behavior. Based on the survey results, I determined if managing a classroom in a student-centered way has a positive or negative ~~ce~~affect on student behavior.

Participants

All of the participants in this study are elementary school teachers. Each participant's teaching experience, sex, and race is varied. Teachers participating in this survey are not all general education classroom teachers. A variety of teachers were surveyed, including special education teachers, speech and language teachers, and reading teachers.

Researcher Stance

I graduated from the State University of New York at Cortland in May 2011 with a Bachelor's of Science in Childhood Education. Currently, I am working towards earning a Master's of Science in Special Education. My role in this study was to distribute electronic surveys to participating teachers using the online program Qualtrics. I sent an introductory letter explaining the survey process, and was available to support the teachers though the process.

Method

For this study, I reviewed the literature and surveyed elementary school teachers to collect data to determine if and how teachers effectively managed their classrooms in a student-centered manner. The survey had seven questions total. Four of the seven questions were multiple choice, with some questions allowing for an extended written response. Two of the seven questions required the teachers to type a written response. One of the seven questions was a matrix table with fifteen sub questions. The teachers had three possible choices for each of the fifteen sub questions. The teachers could choose to respond either yes, sometimes, or no for

each sub question. The last question asked for the teachers to add any additional comments, including any challenges, successes, or advice related to classroom management.

Informed Consent and Protecting the Rights of the Participants

All participants in this study had a clear understanding of their rights. Each participant was provided a letter of consent prior to completing the survey (please see Appendix A). In the letter, it stated that completion of the survey indicates their consent. For the purpose of this study, I used pseudonyms to protect the participant's privacy.

Data Collection

The data collected in this study was qualitative. The survey questions gathered information about teacher's demographics, teaching experience, training in classroom management and opinions regarding classroom management styles and techniques. The survey was sent to teachers electronically on Thursday March 14, 2013 via e-mail. The teachers were given ten school days, to complete the survey. A reminder e-mail was sent out to the teachers on Thursday, March 21, 2013 thanking the teachers who had taken the time to complete the survey and asking those teachers who had not, to please take a few minutes to do so. The survey closed on Thursday, March 28, 2013. On April 9, 2013, I brought refreshments and spoke briefly at the faculty meeting to thank the teachers for taking my survey.

Data Analysis

Analyzing the data collected from the surveys took several weeks. The first step I took was to open each of the surveys electronically to see if I noticed anything out of the ordinary. I did notice one teacher opened the survey for fifty eight seconds, but did not respond to any of the

questions. Therefore, I analyzed the results of thirteen respondents. On another survey, one teacher articulated that ,some items do not apply to her given the settings she works in throughout the day. This respondent left four of the fifteen sub questions in question six blank. Therefore, only twelve respondents had completely answered the survey questions. I then inputted the data from each survey into Microsoft Excel. This allowed me to make a bar graph of each question and analyze the results of the data. By looking at the graphs of each question, I was able to make conclusions based on the results of each question, as well as compare question responses.

Findings

The first five questions of my classroom management survey collected data on teacher's demographics and classroom management training. The first question surveyed teacher's gender. Eleven of the teachers surveyed were females and two of the teachers surveyed were males. The second question surveyed teacher's race. Twelve of the teachers surveyed were Caucasian and one teacher choose other, but did not specify his/her race. None of the teachers surveyed were African American or Hispanic. The third question surveyed teachers' specific teaching positions. Seven teachers surveyed were general education teachers, two teachers surveyed were special education teachers, three teachers were reading teachers, and one teacher surveyed responded other and specified that she was a speech and language teacher. The fourth question was a written response question asking for teachers to report the number of years they have been teaching. Three of the teachers responded they have been teaching for twenty six years or longer, two teachers responded they have been teaching between twenty one and twenty five years, two teachers responded they have been teaching between sixteen and twenty years, four teachers responded they have been teaching for six to ten years, and two teachers responded

they have been teaching between zero and five years. The fifth question asked the teachers if they have participated in classroom management training. Eleven of the teachers responded yes while two of the teachers responded no. Out of the eleven teachers who responded yes, four of them included an extended response with examples. The four examples included an undergraduate course, a graduate course, and district in-service training. These first five questions provided me with demographic and background information about the teachers surveyed. This was beneficial because I was able to make connections between the teachers based on the results of the rest of the classroom management specific survey questions.

The sixth question was broken down into fifteen sub questions. As a whole, the sixth question surveyed teacher's classroom management style. The data from these sub questions provided information to determine if teachers managed their classrooms in a student-centered way, or not. The first sub question asked teachers if they were~~are~~ the only adult in the classroom. The response rate for this question was about fifty percent who said that they were the only adult in the classroom, while fifty percent stated that they were sometimes. Thus, seven out of thirteen teachers responded yes to this sub question, and six out of thirteen teachers responded sometimes to this sub question. The second sub question asked teachers if establishing expectations is a collaborative effort with their students. All teachers, except one, responded yes to this question. One teacher responded sometimes to this question. The third sub question asked the teachers if ~~every day~~ their students follow the same morning routine every day. Ten of the thirteen teachers responded yes, two of the thirteen teachers responded sometimes, and one of the thirteen teachers responded no. The fourth sub question asked teachers if all students have a classroom job. Two teachers responded yes, four teachers responded sometimes, and seven teachers responded no. The fifth sub question asked teachers if

they post their daily schedule for all students to see. Only twelve teachers responded to this question. Seven of the twelve teachers responded yes, two of the twelve teachers responded sometimes, and three of the twelve teachers responded no. The sixth sub question asked if the teachers plan instruction based on individual student's needs. All teachers responded either yes or sometimes to this question. Eight out of thirteen teachers responded yes and five out of thirteen teachers responded sometimes. The seventh sub question is similar to the sixth sub question. The question asked, "I take students' current interests into consideration when planning my lessons" (please see Appendix B). Nine out of thirteen teachers responded yes to this question, four out of thirteen teachers responded sometimes, and zero out of thirteen teachers responded no. The eighth sub question asked if they teach following a scripted lesson. One of the thirteen teachers responded yes, nine of the thirteen teachers responded sometimes, and three of the thirteen teachers responded no. One hundred percent of the teachers surveyed responded yes to the ninth sub question. The question stated, "Teacher-student and student-peer relationships are important" (please see Appendix B). The ninth sub question asked teachers if they educate themselves and their students about cultural diversity. All teachers who responded, responded either yes or sometimes. Nine out of twelve teachers surveyed responded yes and three out of twelve teachers surveyed responded sometimes. The tenth sub question asked teachers if they consistently communicate with parents. All teachers surveyed responded yes, except for two teachers who stated that they do sometimes. Sub question eleven had twelve respondents. The question asked if teachers use a classroom wide behavior system, such as a token or stop light system. Ten teachers responded yes and two teachers responded sometimes. The twelfth sub question surveyed teachers to see if they send students out of the classroom or to time away due to behavior. Twelve teachers responded to this question. Three out of the twelve

teachers responded yes, five out of the twelve teachers responded sometimes, and four out of the twelve teachers responded no. The teachers had the option of further extending upon their response, but none of the participants did so. Sub question thirteen and sub question fourteen surveyed teachers about sending notes home with students. Sub question thirteen asked the teachers if they send positive behavior notes home with their students and sub question fourteen asked the teachers if they send negative behavior notes home with their students. Three teachers responded yes and ten teachers responded sometimes to sending positive behavior notes home with their students (sub question thirteen). One teacher responded yes, eleven teachers responded sometimes, and one teacher responded no to sending negative behavior notes home with their students (sub question fourteen). The last sub question, question fifteen, asked teachers if they take privileges away from students due to behavior. Twelve teachers responded to this question and three of the teachers responded yes and nine of the teachers responded sometimes.

The last question on the survey was an extended response question. Teachers had an opportunity to add any additional comments. Three of fourteen teachers responded to this question. One teacher responded, "Some items do not apply to me given the settings I work in throughout the day." A second teacher responded, "The notes I send home about behavior often depend on the students (both individuals and as a group). There have been years that I have really had to teach more lessons on behavior and send notes home (both positive and negative) on a more consistent basis. Likewise, there are years when behavior is more acceptable and the parents do not need as much feedback on a regular basis." A third teacher responded, "I also use individual student behavior systems when needed. Students write their own letter to parents regarding inappropriate behavior. Letter gets signed by parents and returned."

Overall, a majority of the teachers surveyed responded to the questions to lead to the conclusion the teachers manage their classrooms in a student-centered way. Some of the teachers, however, still implement teacher-centered management techniques. All teachers surveyed had formal classroom management training except one general education teacher who had been teaching for 1.5 years and one speech and language teacher who had been teaching for 20 years (please see Appendix D). Therefore, all teachers surveyed, except for two, have been educated on a variety of different classroom management techniques. As the survey results show, the teachers surveyed recognize managing in a student-centered way is effective.

All teachers surveyed believe teacher-student and student-peer relationships are important (please see Appendix D). Establishing positive relationships between teachers and students in a classroom is a student-centered approach. When teachers take the time to get to know their students and when students get time to get to know their peers, the overall classroom environment is more positive and personalized learning environment for students.

Also, all teachers surveyed, except one, responded *yes* to collaboratively creating classroom expectations with their students. The one teacher, who did not respond yes, responded sometimes (please see Appendix D). In the beginning of a school year, establishing classroom expectations or a classroom code of conduct collaboratively with students is a student-centered management technique. Students are more likely to understand and respect classroom expectations when the list of expectations is the student's ideas. If there is a misunderstanding, or a student is not following a classroom expectation, the teacher can remind the student the classroom expectation was their original idea. The teacher can ask the student to explain what the expectation means, and have the student explain why they are choosing not to follow the expectation. This approach is an effective student-centered approach, opposed to the teacher-

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centered approach where the teacher establishes all classroom expectations, tells students how to follow them and what the consequences are if the students do not follow them.

All teachers surveyed responded yes, or sometimes to taking student's current interests into consideration while planning lessons as well as, all teachers surveyed responded yes, or sometimes to planning instruction based on individual student's needs (please see Appendix D). Teachers who differentiate instruction and plan their lessons based on individual students needs and interests are managing in a student-centered way. Classrooms today are diverse learning environments with students of all learning abilities and learning styles. In order to maximize the learning potentials of all students, instruction must be differentiated and individualized.

Some of the survey responses conclude that some of the teachers are using teacher-centered techniques to manage their classroom. For example, a majority of teachers surveyed responded no to, "all students have a classroom job." If the teacher is taking the responsibility for managing and controlling all, or a majority of the daily classroom routines and jobs, this is a teacher-centered management approach. Teachers who manage in a student-centered way, trust their students with the responsibility to work together as a classroom to complete daily classroom routines and jobs together. When the work load for daily management tasks, such as taking attendance and lunch count, is split up, more time can be devoted to learning content. Also, when students have responsibilities such as a classroom job, they will have more confidence and a sense of belonging in the classroom. This will build students positive outlook on school.

All teachers surveyed, except for three, responded yes or sometimes to teaching following scripted lessons. Using scripted lessons is a teacher-centered approach. Some districts require teachers to use scripted lessons for a specific content area, so the response to this question could have been out of the teacher's control. Scripted lessons are often times not

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differentiated and do not consider different learning styles. Scripted lessons deliver instruction one way for all students, which is not effective in a diverse classroom. A student-centered approach is when teachers plan individual lessons based on students' needs and interests, not based on the next lesson in a scripted manual.

All teachers surveyed responded yes, or sometimes to using a classroom wide behavior management system. A classroom wide behavior system is a teacher-centered management approach. A student-centered behavior management approach would be individualized. Often times classroom wide behavior management systems, such as a stop light systems, publically display student's behavior. This causes anxiety and stress for students because classmates are aware of the students who are displaying "good behavior" and the students who are displaying "not good behavior." Also, teachers often times give out classroom prizes, or individual prizes for "good behavior." This can increase anxiety and stress levels. An example of a student-centered behavior management approach is when the teacher and student discuss behavior and implement an action plan privately.

All teachers surveyed responded yes, or sometimes to taking privileges away from students due to behavior. This is a teacher-centered management approach, if the teacher makes all of the decisions about why and what privileges the student is losing due to behavior. A student-centered management approach would be if the teachers have a discussion with the student about their behavior. Together, the teacher and student can discuss an action plan. If both the teacher and student feel losing a specific privilege is appropriate, then this approach is student-centered.

Based on the survey results, when the teachers implement student-centered management techniques, there is more positive behavior. At the same time, some teacher's responses conclude the teachers are implementing teacher-centered management techniques. Teacher-

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centered management results in more students being sent out of the room due to behavior and more negative behavior notes being sent home (please see Appendix D). Some districts require teachers to follow certain guidelines, which include teacher-centered management techniques. The survey responses which show student-centered management, result in positive effects on student behavior.

Implications and Conclusions

With the recent changes in educational laws and new classroom management opportunities, students are becoming more actively engaged in instruction. Unfortunately, Kohn (2008) states that student-centered classroom management is rare because it requires, "a willingness to give up some control and let students take some ownership, which requires guts as well as talent" (p. 4). While reviewing the literature, the information concludes, CMCD, Cooperative Discipline and Culturally Responsive Teaching, are management programs or theories that~~which~~ encourage teachers to manage their classrooms collaboratively with their students in a student-centered way. When students are given responsibilities in the classroom, feel their opinions are valued and have a sense of belonging, there is a positive effect on student behavior.

Teachers have a tremendous impact on a child's life and their success starts in a student-centered classroom. This study was limited due to time and placement restraints. This study collected data through electronic surveys that were taken by a variety of teachers at the elementary level in one suburban district in upstate New York. To further this research, student's perspectives should be examined. Do students feel their ideas and opinions are valued in the classroom? Also, this study should be implemented in an urban setting. How are the survey results similar and or/vary from a suburban ~~suburn~~ and urban setting? Teacher's

management techniques also could vary from an elementary, to middle and high school placement. To further this research, teachers and students from middle and high school placements should be studied as well.

School administrators need to support student-centered management and provide training and skills to their teachers because teachers and their students will have higher outcomes and success. Because classrooms are diverse and have students of all learning styles and learning needs, teachers need to implement individualized student-centered classroom management techniques to ensure all students will be successful. Teacher-centered classroom management, such as using classroom wide behavior management systems, or following scripted lessons are not effective ways to meet the needs of individual students.

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Appendix A

February 24, 2013

Dear Teachers,

I am writing to request your assistance with my Capstone research study investigating classroom management. Please help me collect data for my research by completing this brief electronic survey.

The survey should take less than 10 minutes to complete. By completing this confidential survey, you are providing your consent to participate in my research.

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me at djv04119@sjfc.edu, or my supervising teacher at sschultz@sjfc.edu

To ensure my graduation in May, it is important that you complete this survey by March 18, 2013. Please allow me to thank you in advance for your participation.

Respectfully,

Deena VanHousen

Appendix B

Classroom Management Survey

Gender

Male Female

Race

Caucasian African American Hispanic Other

Select the following that best describes your position

General Education Teacher Special Education Teacher Reading Teacher Other

Number of years teaching

Have you participated in specific classroom management training, while you were an undergraduate, graduate, or professional, Explain

Yes No

Please rate the following of EACH of the elements of classroom management as it applies to YOU in YOUR classroom using Yes, Sometimes, or No

Please rate the following of EACH of the elements of classroom management as it applies to YOU in YOUR classroom using Yes, Sometimes, or No

	Yes	Sometimes	No
I am the only adult in the classroom	Please rate the following of EACH of the elements of classroom management as it applies to YOU in YOUR classroom using Yes, Sometimes, or No I am the only adult in the classroom Yes	I am the only adult in the classroom Sometimes	I am the only adult in the classroom No
Establishing classroom expectations is a collaborative effort with my students	Please rate the following of EACH of the elements of classroom management as it applies to YOU in YOUR classroom using Yes, Sometimes, or No Establishing classroom expectations is a collaborative effort with my students Yes	Establishing classroom expectations is a collaborative effort with my students Sometimes	Establishing classroom expectations is a collaborative effort with my students No
Every day students follow the same morning routine	Please rate the following of EACH of the elements of classroom management as it applies to YOU in YOUR classroom using Yes, Sometimes, or No Every day students follow the same morning routine Yes	Every day students follow the same morning routine Sometimes	Every day students follow the same morning routine No
All students have a classroom job	Please rate the following of EACH of the elements of classroom management as it applies to YOU in YOUR classroom using Yes, Sometimes, or No All students have a classroom job Yes	All students have a classroom job Sometimes	All students have a classroom job No
The daily schedule is posted for all students to see	Please rate the following of EACH of the elements of classroom management as it applies to YOU in YOUR classroom using Yes, Sometimes, or No The daily schedule is posted for all students to see Yes	The daily schedule is posted for all students to see Sometimes	The daily schedule is posted for all students to see No
I plan instruction based on individual students needs	Please rate the following of EACH of the elements of classroom management as it applies to YOU in YOUR classroom using Yes, Sometimes, or No I plan instruction based on individual students needs Yes	I plan instruction based on individual students needs Sometimes	I plan instruction based on individual students needs No
I take students current interests into consideration when planning my lessons	Please rate the following of EACH of the elements of classroom management as it applies to YOU in YOUR classroom using Yes, Sometimes, or No I take students current interests into consideration when planning my lessons Yes	I take students current interests into consideration when planning my lessons Sometimes	I take students current interests into consideration when planning my lessons No
I teach following a scripted lesson	Please rate the following of EACH of the elements of classroom management as it applies to YOU in YOUR classroom using Yes, Sometimes, or No I teach following a scripted lesson Yes	I teach following a scripted lesson Sometimes	I teach following a scripted lesson No
Teacher-student and student-peer relationships are important	Please rate the following of EACH of the elements of classroom management as it applies to YOU in	Teacher-student and student-peer relationships are important Sometimes	Teacher-student and student-peer relationships are important No

Please rate the following of EACH of the elements of classroom management as it applies to YOU in YOUR classroom using Yes, Sometimes, or No

	Yes	Sometimes	No
	YOUR classroom using Yes, Sometimes, or No Teacher-student and student-peer relationships are important Yes		
I educate myself and my students about cultural diversity	Please rate the following of EACH of the elements of classroom management as it applies to YOU in YOUR classroom using Yes, Sometimes, or No I educate myself and my students about cultural diversity Yes	I educate myself and my students about cultural diversity Sometimes	I educate myself and my students about cultural diversity No
I consistently communicate with parents	Please rate the following of EACH of the elements of classroom management as it applies to YOU in YOUR classroom using Yes, Sometimes, or No I consistently communicate with parents Yes	I consistently communicate with parents Sometimes	I consistently communicate with parents No
I use a classroom wide behavior management system (e.x - token system, stop light)	Please rate the following of EACH of the elements of classroom management as it applies to YOU in YOUR classroom using Yes, Sometimes, or No I use a classroom wide behavior management system (e.x - token system, stop light) Yes	I use a classroom wide behavior management system (e.x - token system, stop light) Sometimes	I use a classroom wide behavior management system (e.x - token system, stop light) No
I send students out of the classroom, or to time away due to behavior	Please rate the following of EACH of the elements of classroom management as it applies to YOU in YOUR classroom using Yes, Sometimes, or No I send students out of the classroom, or to time away due to behavior Yes	I send students out of the classroom, or to time away due to behavior Sometimes	I send students out of the classroom, or to time away due to behavior No
I send positive behavior notes home with students	Please rate the following of EACH of the elements of classroom management as it applies to YOU in YOUR classroom using Yes, Sometimes, or No I send positive behavior notes home with students Yes	I send positive behavior notes home with students Sometimes	I send positive behavior notes home with students No
I send negative behavior notes home with students	Please rate the following of EACH of the elements of classroom management as it applies to YOU in YOUR classroom using Yes, Sometimes, or No I send negative behavior notes home with students Yes	I send negative behavior notes home with students Sometimes	I send negative behavior notes home with students No
I take privileges away from students due to behavior (e.x - recces)	Please rate the following of EACH of the elements of classroom management as it applies to YOU in YOUR classroom using Yes, Sometimes, or No I take privileges away from students due to behavior (e.x - recces) Yes	I take privileges away from students due to behavior (e.x - recces) Sometimes	I take privileges away from students due to behavior (e.x - recces) No
	Yes	**Sometimes**	**No**

Additional Comments (Include any challenges, successes or advice)

Appendix C

Classroom Management Survey Results:

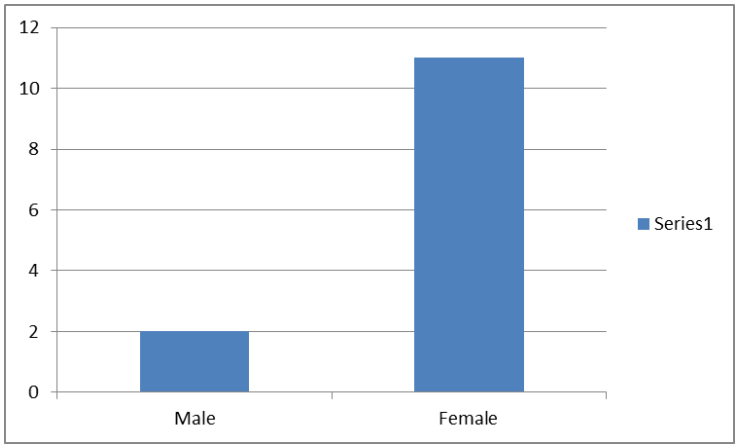
Q1	Q2	Q3	Q3_TEXT	Q4	Q5	Q5_TEXT	Q6_1	Q6_2	Q6_3	Q6_4	Q6_5	Q6_6
Gender	Race	Select the following that best describes your position	Select the following that best describes your position-TEXT	Number of years teaching	Have you participated in specific classroom management training, while you were an undergraduate, gr...	Have you participated in specific classroom management training, while you were an undergraduate, gr...-TEXT	Please rate the following of EACH of the elements of classroom management as it applies to YOU in YO...-I am the only adult in the classroom	Please rate the following of EACH of the elements of classroom management as it applies to YOU in YO...-Establishing classroom expectations is a collaborative effort with my students	Please rate the following of EACH of the elements of classroom management as it applies to YOU in YO...-Every day students follow the same morning routine	Please rate the following of EACH of the elements of classroom management as it applies to YOU in YO...-All students have a classroom job	Please rate the following of EACH of the elements of classroom management as it applies to YOU in YO...-The daily schedule is posted for all students to see	Please the foll of EACH the ele of class manag as it ap to YOU YO...-I p instruct based o individu student needs
1	1	2		26	1	graduate work and professional development	2		1	2	3	3	
1	1	1		10	1		1		1	1	2	1	
2	1	3		10	1		1		1	1	2	1	
2	1	4	SLP	2o	2		2		1	1	3		
2	1	1		26	1		1		1	1	2	2	
2	1	3		9	1	Undergrad classes	2		1	3	3	3	
2	1	1		5	1	Graduate Class	1		1	1	3	1	
2	1	1		25	1		2		2	1	1	1	
2	1	1		29	1	undergraduate course	1		1	1	1	1	

2	4	1	7	1		1	1	1	2	1
2	1	3	17	1	District Inservice Training & Undergraduate Psychology Course Work	1	1	1	3	2
2	1	2	23	1		2	1	2	3	1
2	1	1	1.5	2		2	1	1	3	3

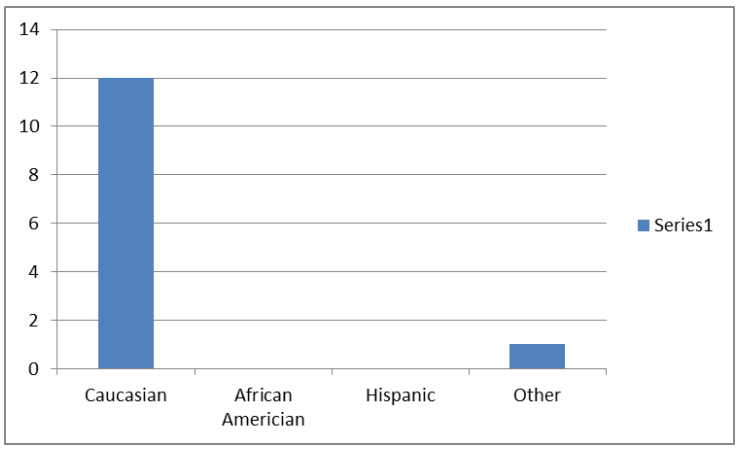
Appendix D

Classroom Management Survey Results:

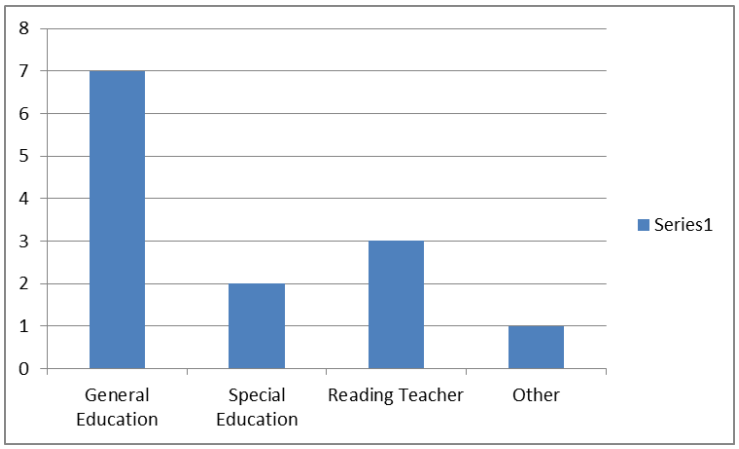
Gender:



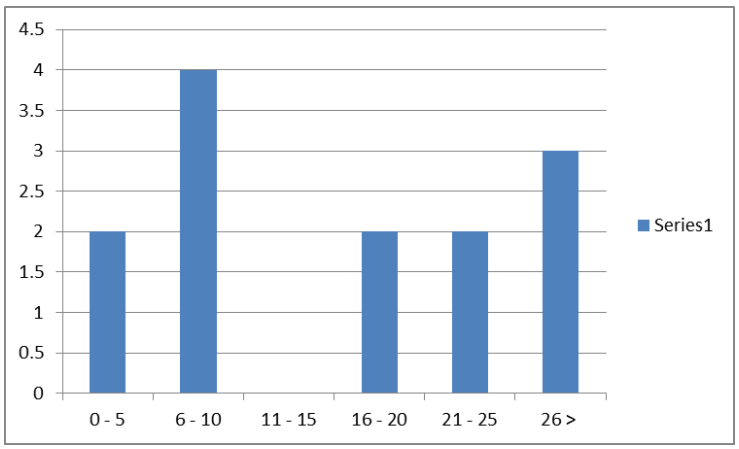
Race:



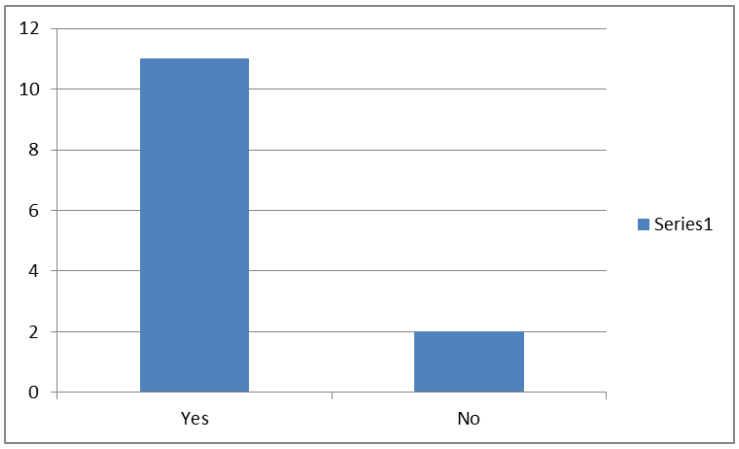
Teacher Type:



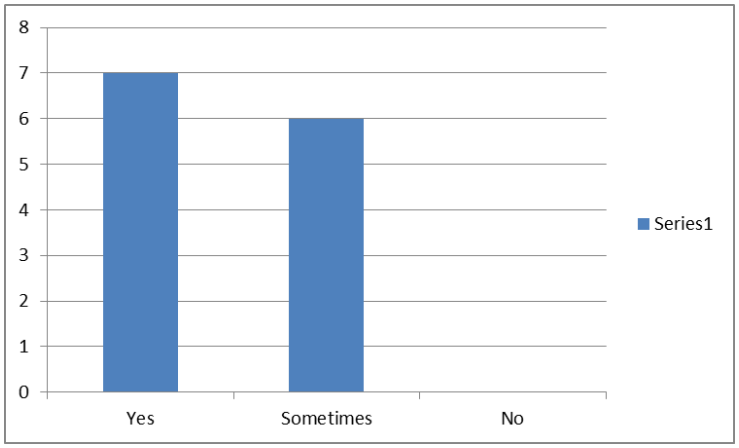
Years of Experience:



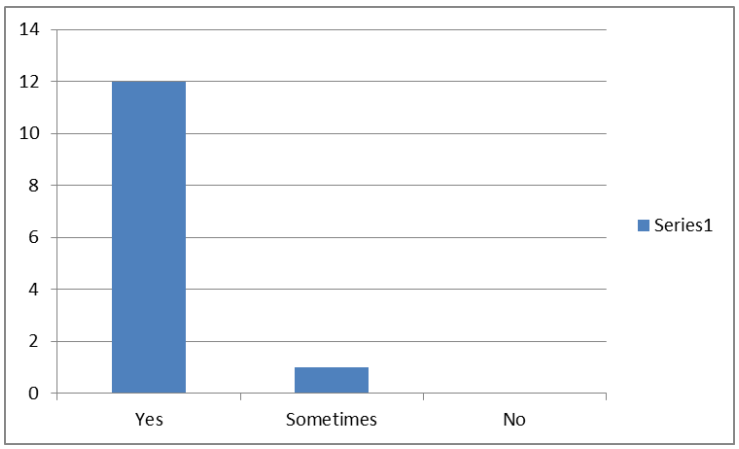
Specific Classroom Management Training:



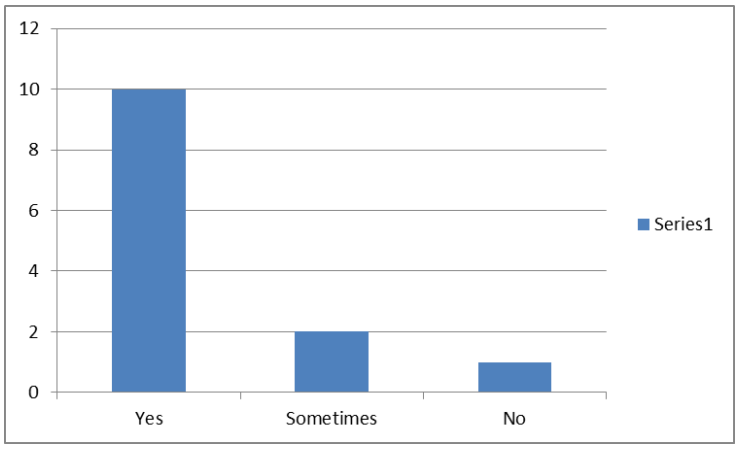
I am the only adult in the classroom:



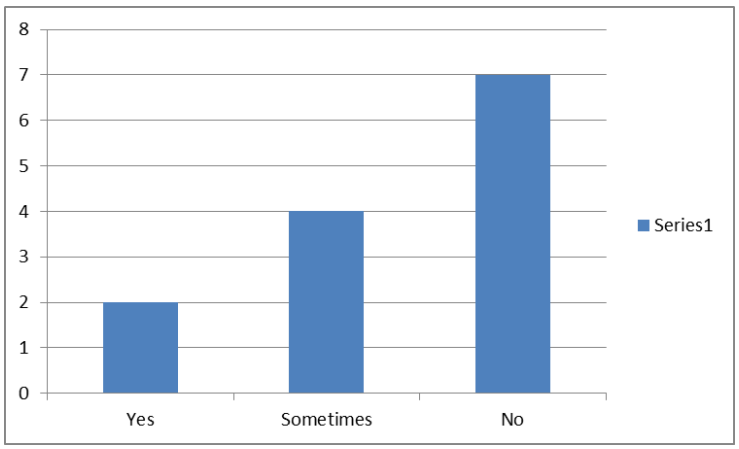
Establishing classroom expectations is a collaborative effort with my students:



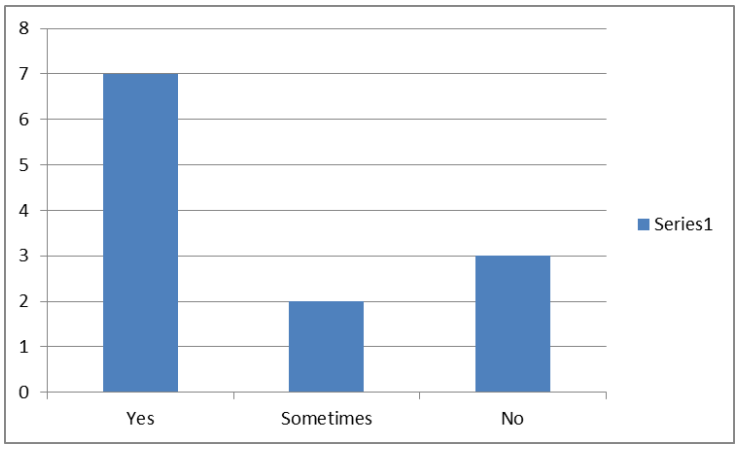
Every day students follow the same morning routine:



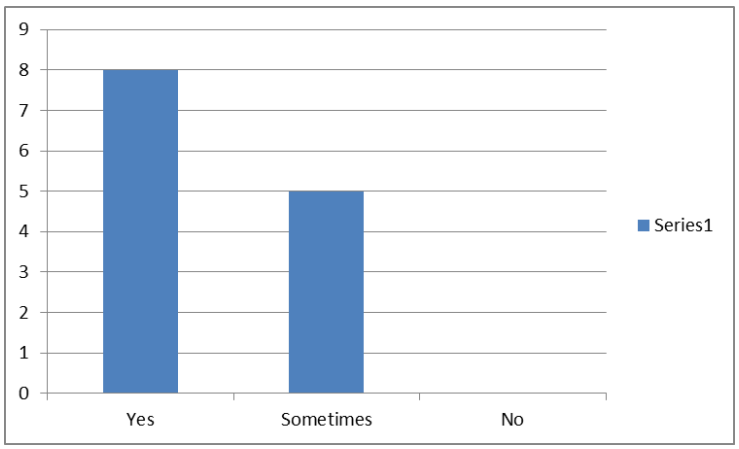
All students have a classroom job:



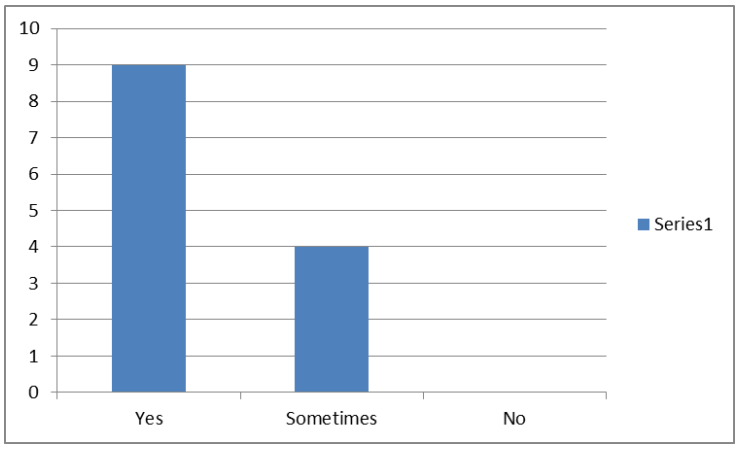
The daily schedule is posted for all students to see:



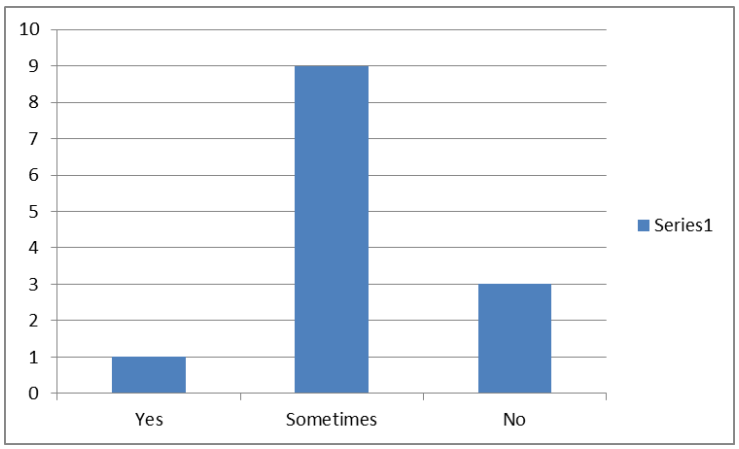
I plan instruction based on individual students needs:



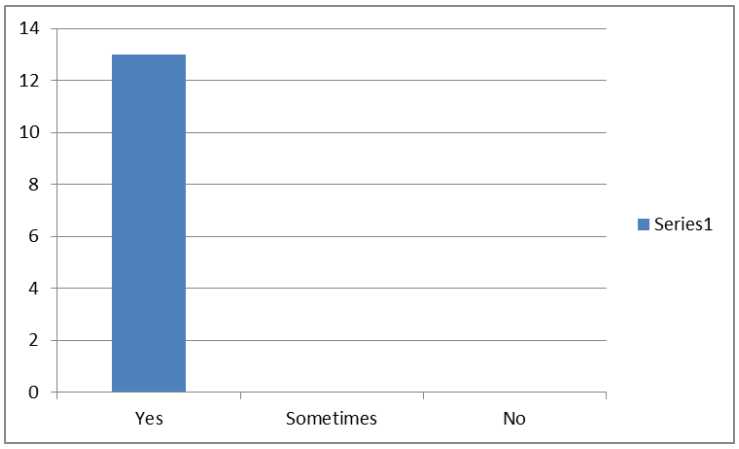
I take students current interests into consideration when planning my lessons:



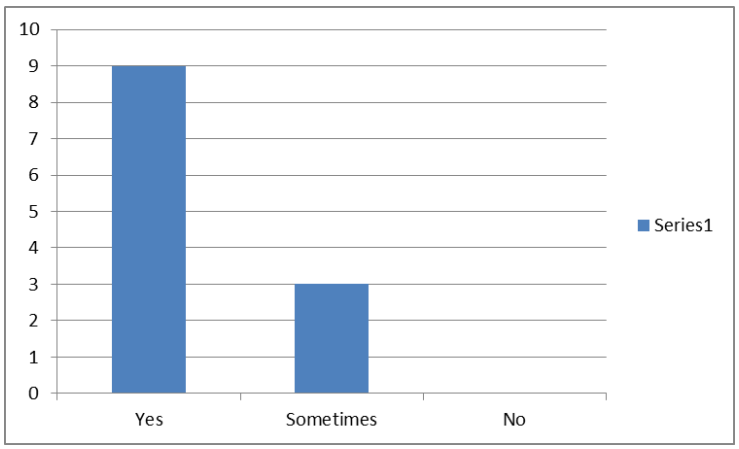
I teach following a scripted lesson:



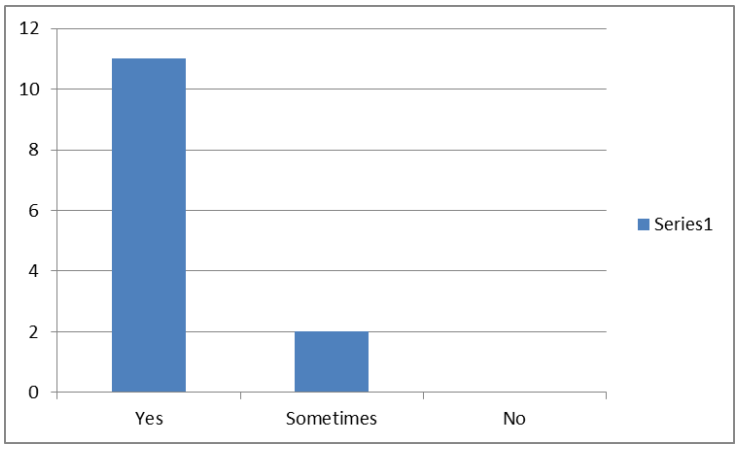
Teacher-student and student-peer relationships are important:



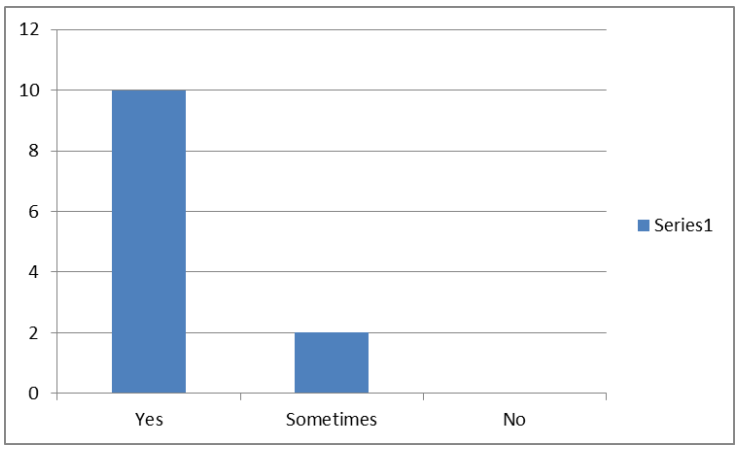
I educate myself and my students about cultural diversity:



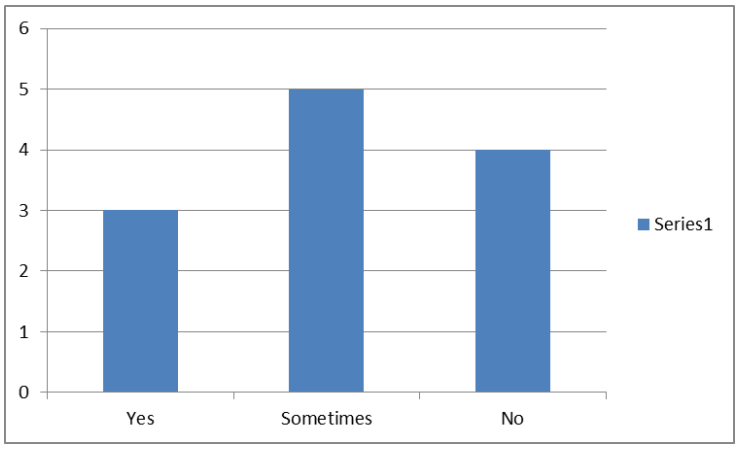
I consistently communicate with parents:



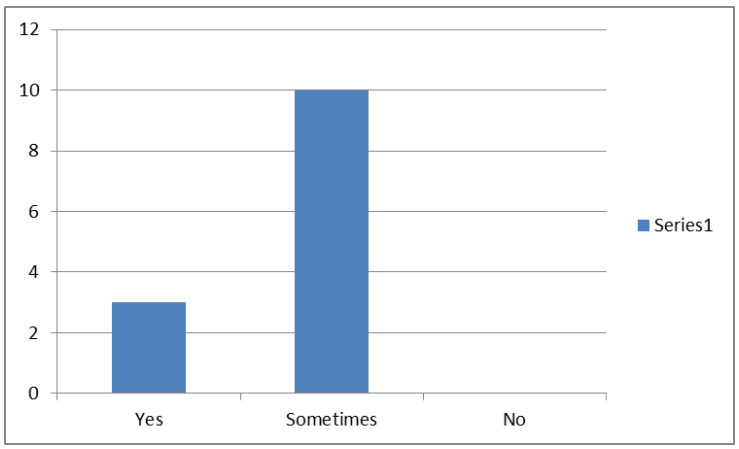
I use a classroom wide behavior management system (e.x - token system, stop light):



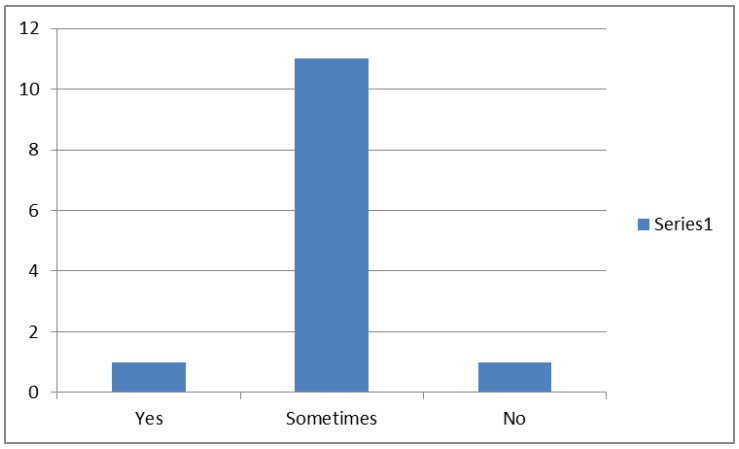
I send students out of the classroom, or to time away due to behavior:



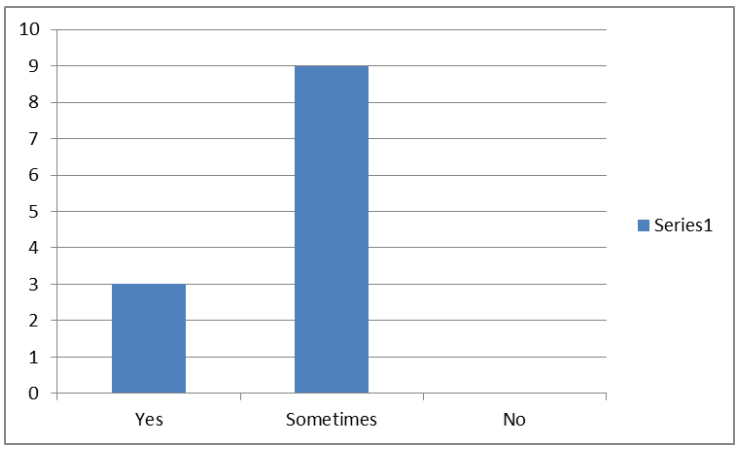
I send positive behavior notes home with students:



I send negative behavior notes home with students:



I take privileges away from students due to behavior (e.x - recess)



Additional comments: 3/14

1. some items do not apply to me given the settings I work in throughout the day.

2. The notes I send home about behavior often depend on the students (both individuals and as a group). There have been years that I have really had to teach more lessons on behavior and send notes home (both positive and negative) on a more consistent basis. Likewise, there are years when behavior is more acceptable and the parents do not need as much feedback on a regular basis.

3. I also use individual student behavior systems when needed. Students write their own letter to parents regarding inappropriate behavior. Letter gets signed by parents and returned.