

Improving Connections with Student Body

Otterbein Elementary School

Rich Brown

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Background Leading to this Inquiry

Over six years of leading Otterbein Elementary School, I have come to believe student achievement rises and student discipline problems decline if students feel more connected with classroom teachers and other adults in the building.

Purpose of This Inquiry

The purpose of my inquiry is to gauge my ability to connect with students and see where it can improve. This will proceed to PD for teachers to better connect with students in year two.

My Wondering

With this purpose, I wondered, how can I improve my abilities to connect with students?

My Actions

- Birthday Pencil, drive-bys
- Last calls
- Lunch presence
 - All K – 3 lunches
 - Random 4 – 6 lunches

Data Collection

A pretest survey was given to students in January. A posttest survey was conducted in March.

Pre/Post Survey Data

The following six questions/statements were posed in a gradient scale for students in grades 1 – 6. Responses are averaged.

1. On a scale of 1 to 5, do you think Mr. Brown cares about you as a person?
2. I feel like Mr. Brown tries to talk with the students.
3. Mr. Brown listens to students.
4. Is Mr. Brown someone you feel you could easily talk to?
5. If you had a problem and needed help, do you think you could go to Mr. Brown?
6. Mr. Brown is visible in school.

Pretest		Posttest	
1.	3.79	1.	4.49
1.	3.57	2.	4.02
1.	3.64	3.	4.71
1.	3.27	4.	4.07
1.	3.21	5.	4.1
1.	3.5	6.	4.03

Tally Charts

482 ÷ 94 = 4.49

94 total

Post	1	2	3	4	5
378 ÷ 94 = 4.02	1	2	3	4	5
381 ÷ 94 = 4.05	1	2	3	4	5
443 ÷ 94 = 4.71	1	6	5	7	3
421 ÷ 94 = 4.47	5	6	3	10	2
385 ÷ 94 = 4.1	6	9	4	10	2
379 ÷ 94 = 4.03	2	9	6	11	6

Please answer the following questions...

Pre

	1	2	3	4	5
356 ÷ 94 = 3.79	4	14	9	10	15
336 ÷ 94 = 3.57	7	16	17	12	11
300 ÷ 94 = 3.19	10	16	5	10	15
307 ÷ 94 = 3.27	13	26	5	12	14
302 ÷ 94 = 3.21	19	34	36	6	14
309 ÷ 94 = 3.3	9	22	17	20	14

My Discoveries

- I am visible, but the students are interested in me being more visible in their classrooms. According to the posttest, 4.03/5 was the rating of my visibility as the principal. Students were asked for suggestions on how I improve as a principal. The most frequent response was to be in the classrooms more often and to stay longer while there.
- The principal is easy to speak to and makes effort to speak with students, but the students do not feel as confident to use the principal as a problem solver or confidant. According to the posttest, 4.71/5 was the rating of ease in speaking with me as the principal. However, 4.1 was the rating given in terms of how confident students are in coming to me for help with a problem. Something that should be noted is student confidence raise from 3.21 to 4.1 from pretest to posttest.

Where Am I Heading Next

- In reflecting on my school, I have learned the student body wants the principal in the classrooms more often. Students seem to be craving positive interactions with the building's leader. A large majority of my interactions with students is positive, but students want more of those interactions in the classroom. Therefore, stepping in and helping students in the academic setting is a future consideration. Two possible resulting actions are providing 30 minute blocks of time to push into classrooms and starting a program of meeting weekly with students with poor academic marks. Recently, I stepped into a 4th grade classroom and taught a math lesson on parallel lines. The group of 25 students make daily comments about the lesson when I see them throughout the building.
- Additionally, PD at my school has focused this semester on how teachers can improve their connections with students through the exploration of the book *You've Gotta Connect*. This book study will continue into first semester of 2019-20.

Bibliography

- Sturtevant, James. (2014). *You've Gotta Connect*. Chicago, IL: Incentive Publications



Improving Connections with Student Body

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The Purpose of My Inquiry

The purpose of my inquiry is to gauge my ability to connect with students and see where it can improve. This will proceed to PD for teachers to better connect with students in year two.

My Wondering

With this purpose, I wondered, how can I improve my abilities to connect with students?

My Actions

At the onset of this inquiry, I had spent years trying to connect with students by delivering a birthday pencil to them on their birthday annually. I was unable to pinpoint other actions that were of regular occurrence. Therefore, I implemented more action steps. I created a last calls tool as a start. As one of the final to-do items of my day, I called a minimum of two families to share a positive about their child. The parent response was immediately positive and welcomed. One hurdle is getting the positive notes from the teachers to be able to call the parents as various levels of buy-in exist. The birthday pencils are still being delivered as a continued action step. Another action step was to be present at all lunch times for grades K-3 minimum and then extending to grades 4 – 6 when the schedule allowed.

Data Collection

A pretest survey was given to students in January. A posttest survey was conducted in March.

My Data

The following six questions/statements were posed in a gradient scale for students in grades 1 – 6. Responses are averaged.

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The image shows two handwritten data sheets. The left sheet is titled 'Post' and the right sheet is titled 'Pre'. Both sheets have columns for questions 1 through 5 and rows for individual students. The scores for each question are written in the cells, and the total score for each student is written in the rightmost column. The total scores for the posttest are 4.49, 4.02, 4.71, 4.07, 4.1, and 4.03. The total scores for the pretest are 3.79, 3.57, 3.64, 3.27, 3.21, and 3.5.

Student	1	2	3	4	5	Total
1	4	4	5	4	5	22
2	4	4	5	4	5	22
3	5	5	5	5	5	25
4	3	3	3	3	3	15
5	4	4	4	4	4	20
6	4	4	4	4	4	20

My Discoveries

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- A second discovery is I am easy to speak to and make effort to speak with students, but the students do not feel as confident to use me as a problem solver or confidant. According to the posttest, 4.71/5 was the rating of ease in speaking with me as the principal. However, 4.1 was the rating given in terms of how confident students are in coming to me for help with a problem. Something that should be noted is student confidence raised from 3.21 to 4.1 from pretest to posttest.

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