

“Check Out” this Classroom Management Intervention

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Background That Led to Your Team’s Inquiry:

Perhaps the single greatest challenge of any teacher is to create a well managed learning environment that allows for highly effective instruction. At Central Elementary, the social and emotional needs of our students have become as important as the academic ones. It has become increasingly difficult for teachers to develop and maintain effectively managed classrooms. Over the past few years, our professional development has been primarily focused on academic instruction. With the recent implementation of the PBIS framework, heavy emphasis has been placed on positive interactions with students. The team identified the need for additional support for the classroom teachers that were struggling to maintain a well managed learning environment in which high quality instruction would be provided to the students. As well, the team was committed to identifying an intervention that would be effective but not add a great deal of work to the teachers.

Therefore, the purpose of this Action Research was to identify an easy to implement intervention that teachers could use to support appropriate behaviors in the classroom.

Statement of Your Team’s Wondering:

Will applying the concept of the check in/check out system to the entire classroom have an impact in the overall effectiveness of the management of the classroom?

Methods/Procedures:

To gain insights into our wonderings, we applied the concept of the individual check-in/check-out behavior intervention to the classroom as a whole. Five times each day the teacher and students reflected on how well they were meeting the four classroom expectations and score that period of time. The classroom’s daily goal was to score 80% or higher in relation to these expectations. The teacher provided frequent, focused, and positive reminders to keep the students on track throughout the day. Each day during the class’s morning meeting, the teacher took 2-3 minutes to review the process and discuss how to best meet the daily goal. Each afternoon, the teacher and class reflected on the day to discuss why they did or did not meet the goal. As well, during the day the check-ins required 2-3 minutes of reflection and evaluation. It was the intent of this project to identify a familiar and “easy to implement” intervention that supported the improved effectiveness of classroom management. To align with how we provide most interventions, the project was designed for a 20 day implementation. By design, it was intended to be specific and not to be perceived as a burden to the already heavy load of the classroom teachers.

The project included three parts:

- First, the students completed a rating scale at the beginning (Day One) and the end (Day 20) of the project. This rating scale had the students identify how often they perceived they met the four

expectations that had been identified as key to the successful management of the classroom. This data was analyzed to determine if the students' awareness of how well they are meeting expectations improves.

- Next, each day the teacher and class completed the check-in/check-out rubric. This data was analyzed for both the overall score of the day and to determine if there are times of the day that the students were more or less able to meet the expectations.
- The final piece of the project required the principal to complete 10 minute observations each day to script the interactions between the students and the teacher. This was analyzed to determine the frequency and type of reminders that the students were receiving.

At the end of the 20 school days, the team analyzed the data to focus on the change in the students' awareness and attitude, the daily, weekly, and overall score on the rubric, and the frequency of positive interactions provided by the teacher.

Stating Your Team's Learning and Supporting it with Data:

As a result of analyzing our data, three important things we learned include:

- The students must be clear on a few and specific expectations and how they can meet those.
- The teacher must be positive and focus on desired behaviors. The teacher sets the tone!
- The administrator must provide support to the teacher through observations, discussion, and offering suggestions.

The students must be clear on a few and specific expectations and how they can meet those. Based on the analysis of the rating scales, the students perception of meeting expectations improved in three of the four areas. Throughout this process, the students' capacity to self-reflect on their behavior increased. It was key for the students to understand exactly what they would be working toward and have frequent and focused reminders on how to meet expectations.

The teacher must be positive and focus on desired behaviors. The teacher sets the tone! The check-in/check-out scores improved over the four weeks in the following way.

Week One, 14.8

Week Two, 15

Week Three, 16.2

Week Four, 16

Average, 16

The goal each week was a score of 16. So based on the data, by the end of the intervention the class was meeting expectations. The teacher became more aware of the importance for providing positive feedback and clear expectations during instruction. As well, the teacher was able to consider her interactions with students and to see the impact these interactions had on the overall atmosphere of the classroom.

The administrator must provide support to the teacher through observations, discussion, and offering suggestions. The role of the administrator in this process was to continually manage and monitor the data. The rubrics were provided daily for entry into the class's spreadsheet and analysis. In addition, the daily observations provided insights into the overall management style of the teacher along with the interactions between the teacher and students. The following is an example of one of these observations.

Date: October 27, 2017

Time: 1:47

Subject: Math

Notes: He has three in each group – thumbs up if you have three in each group. Good we have 21 divided by 7 is three last one 25 divide by 5 how many total counters do we have how many groups count to 25 ready go she already has her answer and I think that I know how she did it

She is ready, she is ready I like how those people put their thumbs up to give me their signal when they are ready ten more seconds there are five what are counting by – fives we could have done this one in our head. Do you have five in each group? Read these two out loud, if you have already turn the page and put your finger on 12 (read the problem) this is a small word problem you need to CUBE first, what two numbers do you have? Ask yourself? What? Now you box your question – how many bugs are in each row no extra information and then read 13 so we can read it aloud (read the problem) hold off I want you and your shoulder partner to come up with division problem – hand up with the your partner always you are Michael's shoulder partner – I like how I see these two groups making equal groups like we just practiced. I like how they have put their label on their answer – this is still a word problem.

Positive Interactions: 6

It was very important for the administrator to spend time in the classroom each day completing these “mini” observations. These validated for the teacher that there was significant positive reinforcement occurring during instruction. For these 20 days, the teacher averaged 5 positive interactions or about a positive reinforcement every other minute.

In summary the team identified the following as key points of learning.
Clear and specific behavior objectives are key to successful management.

The process provided the opportunity to identify time periods during the day that were more difficult for students to meet expectations.

Dividing the school day into smaller time periods allowed for resets of behavior when needed. The learning environment of a classroom can improve with emphasis on specific expectations.

Providing Concluding Thoughts:

In conclusion, this Action Research project provided a specific intervention that could be put into place to support teachers that are struggling to provide effective instruction due to concerns with classroom management. It was specific, manageable, and included both qualitative and quantitative data to support it's success. Teachers were able to easily manage this process and it gave the teacher the opportunity to collaborate with others in order to make a direct impact on the learning environment. Through this process, teachers were able to gain support without feeling as if they were a failure. The objectivity of the project eliminated any sense of judgement that they may have feared at having others support their management systems.

Moving forward this intervention will be available for teachers as they begin to struggle with effective classroom management. The goal would be to provide this intervention early, before the learning of the students is impacted negatively and for greater periods of time. In addition, the team will provide teachers

with positive input and feedback to encourage their efforts. It was noted that just as the students, the teachers need to hear the positive comments as well. Finally, through this project the importance of the mood and attitude teacher was identified as the most important factor when determining the success of the learning environment.

Overall, the intended and unintended results of the Action Research project had a positive impact on the management of the classroom. This has, however, not been a quick fix. There are still struggles and concerns, but having completed this process, the teachers are able to be very specific in their focus and the students continue to grow in their ability to meet the expectations. Continuing to “wonder” our team will consider how we can begin the school year with classrooms having a clear understanding of the expectations and the ability to monitor and regulate actions in order to be successful.

This process has provided the team the opportunity to work through school improvement in a specific and manageable way. Action Research provides a framework that students, teachers, administrators, and other school staff can collaborate to work toward school improvement.

References:

- Beatty-O’Ferrall, M., Green, A., & Hanna, F., (2010, March). Classroom Management Strategies for Difficult Students. *Middle School Journal*.
- Marzano, R. J., & Marzano, J. S. (2003, September). The Key to Classroom Management. *Educational Leadership*, 61 (