

Reducing Classroom Disruption through Restorative Practices

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Abstract

Trauma is an unfortunate reality in the lives of many students, and their behaviors in school reflect the past they have experienced with students responding aggressively to traditional discipline involvement from adults. Discipline as it has been traditionally used- suspending or expelling highly disruptive students- has not been effective in improving student behavior in classrooms. The study investigated the impact of discipline style on student disruptions.

Participants were 52 diverse students in two sections taught by one teacher at a large public high school in the mid-Atlantic. Disruption totals were gathered for classes during traditional discipline use, and then both classes were instructed in a Restorative Practices method for improving interactions during conflict. Disruption totals were gathered again after students had time to practice the method. Data was gathered using a counter app on the teacher's phone and based on a list of disruptive behaviors developed by the students in the respective classes.

Analysis on the disruption totals before the intervention showed no significant differences between the sections, so all students were combined into one test group for analysis. Comparing the pre- and post-intervention disruption totals did not indicate a significant difference in student behavior, although anecdotal observations do demonstrate changes in the behavior of many students' behavior. This research question may demonstrate different results with further study if a larger sample is used.

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Overview

The long-term effect of students being removed from the school setting due to behavior problems are well-documented. Students who have been suspended from school are more likely to fail academically (Brown, Maggin, & Buren, 2018); drop out (Kline, 2016); and encounter problems with law enforcement (Hirschfield (2018)). Although these negative effects are known, many schools continue to attempt to change student behavior by removing the student from the school environment. The U.S. Department of Education's (2016) latest report of exclusionary discipline showed that in the 2011-2012 school year 3.5 million students were suspended in-school, and 3.45 million were suspended out-of-school. In addition, 130,000 students were expelled during the year. Hirschfield (2018) found that schools with high minority enrollment were more likely to use exclusionary discipline. To improve school climate at the study's location, many conversations centered on reducing student disruption incidences but without concrete processes for achieving this. Restorative Practices appear to be an effective alternative to exclusionary discipline.

Statement of Problem

The purpose of this study is to investigate the impact between teacher-chosen discipline style and behavior for high school students.

Hypothesis

The null hypothesis is that student behavior is independent of the discipline style chosen by the teacher. Students will behave in statistically similar ways as part of a class using exclusionary discipline during baseline data collection and as part of a class using Restorative Practices after the treatment has been administered.

Operational Definitions

Disruptive behavior for the classes included in the study was defined to include:

- Loud off-task conversations or interrupting
- Roaming the classroom without purpose
- Refusal to participate in group work
- Inappropriate phone or laptop use
- Leaving the classroom without permission
- Physical or verbal fighting

Exclusionary discipline was defined as a process where the individual appearing to cause disruption is removed from the situation. Often the consequences enacted in exclusionary discipline escalate with continuing disruption: beginning with parental contact, then detention, and moving to suspension or expulsion from school.

Restorative Practices are a formal program run by the International Institute for Restorative Practices (IIRP). The mindset of Restorative Practices gives a voice to the harmed and the violator, seeks to repair the relationship, and teaches skills to prevent harm in the future. Restorative Practices have been proven to be most effective if implemented school-wide with appropriate training for all staff.

The mindset of formal Restorative Practices was adopted during the study, however the Restorative Practices implementation was limited to the teacher's classroom and simplified in procedure: students assessed their emotional state at the beginning of each class, teacher and students used Mullet's (2014) 'mini-chats' to address interpersonal relationship and behavioral

infractions, and the class had daily closing discussions to reflect on successes and suggestions for improvement.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Overview

The current approach to discipline in many American schools is not optimal. Students in American schools face distinct challenges from their predecessors, and school climates will serve the students better with different approaches than in the past. This paper identifies sources and results of trauma for many students, reasons traditional (or exclusionary) discipline is less useful as a long-term solution, and a different approach to school climate called Restorative Practices that could produce a better environment for student learning and safety.

School-Age Children and Trauma

The Diagnostic and Statistical Manual, Fifth Edition (DSM-V) developed an updated diagnostic grouping for Trauma-and Stressor-Related disorders (Black & Grant, 2014). The new group combines anxiety disorders, several attachment disorders, and adjustment disorders. In children the traumatic exposure leading to a diagnosis for one of the disorders could stem from social neglect or violence in the home or neighborhood (Black & Grant, 2014). Along with interpersonal sources of trauma, natural disasters can also be a source of distress for children (Wiest-Stevenson & Lee, 2016). Whether or not the experiences are severe enough to cause a diagnosable disorder, children in schools survive many forms of trauma, including homelessness, incarceration of a parent, migration, poverty, and subtle forms of victimization.

Homeless youth have high exposure to many forms of trauma. Often they leave home to escape violence, abuse, or poverty, only to experience further traumas living on the street (McKenzie-Mohr, Coates, & McLeod, 2012). In addition, if homeless children or adolescents are still attending school, their differences from their peers can be a source of trauma. Homeless

students lack basic needs like food, shelter, and social support and are often under more police surveillance due to long periods in public spaces. These combined stresses create a feeling of shame about the students' experience.

Another shame-inducing traumatic experience for children is having incarcerated parents. Loss of a parent for any reason is traumatic, particularly if the parent is the primary care-giver, and when the parent is incarcerated the loss is compounded by the trauma of the event, the ambiguity of the situation, and a lack of social support for the family left behind (Arditti, 2012). In addition, the incarceration of a parent can lead to reduced family income or children having irregular caregivers and even entering the foster care system.

Refugee or immigrant children are another group that has often experienced high levels of trauma. Displacement, witnessing war, interrupted schooling, and poverty all are likely to exist in the background of refugee children (Ogilvie & Fuller, 2016). Even without war, the choice to immigrate (legally or illegally) is often rooted in traumatic events such as economic or political instability (Kammien, 2015). Families will migrate elsewhere to escape a harsh economic environment. The economic environment is frequently influenced by subsidiary companies of transnational corporations neglecting regulations to ensure fair treatment of the local workforce. Once in their new homes, many immigrant children face content, language, and cultural differences at school (Ogilvie & Fuller, 2016).

Childhood victimization is a form of trauma including any form of abuse, assault, abduction, bullying, or neglect (D'Andrea, Ford, Stolbach, Spinazzola, & van der Kolk, 2012). These less dramatic sources of trauma can be caused intentionally or unintentionally by peers or adults. Additionally, minority groups (based on race, gender, sexual orientation) experience low-

level but continuous trauma stemming from their differences; over time the constant struggle to manage the negative experiences can take enormous effort (McKenzie-Mohr et al., 2012).

Trauma is not always well-documented, so reported levels for children and adolescents vary. The National Survey of Children Exposed to Violence reports that about 60% of American adolescents have already experienced at least one traumatic event in their lives (Treatment and Service Adaptive Center, n.d. in Wiest-Stevenson & Lee, 2016), and the landmark survey of more than eight thousand participants in the Permanente Medical Group showed similar results: 52% of those surveyed experienced at least one trauma during childhood (Felitti, Anda, Nordenberg, Williamson, Spitz, Edwards, & Marks, 1998). Felitti et al. (1998) divided the traumas into abuse- physical, psychological, or sexual- and household dysfunction- the presence of substance abuse, mental illness, violence toward mother, and criminal behavior. These problems are not exclusive to America: worldwide, at least 33% of children experience physical abuse and 20-25% experience sexual abuse (D'Andrea et al., 2012). Finally, some experts also recognize the impact of witnessing excessive news or social media coverage of traumatic events as sources of "secondary traumatic stress" (Figley, 1995 in Wiest-Stevenson & Lee, 2016, p. 499). The sources of trauma children can experience are wide-ranging, but trauma has well-defined effects.

The DSM-V lists similar symptoms for the diagnoses within the group: uncontrolled thoughts and preoccupations, difficulty experiencing pleasure, dissatisfaction or anxiety, anger and aggression, and dissociative behavior (Black & Grant, 2014). Experiencing trauma is documented to cause physical changes in the brain, especially if the experience happens during childhood. D'Andrea et al. (2012) found less brain volume in many areas of the brain for individuals who had experienced trauma: the corpus callosum, the prefrontal cortex, the temporal

lobe, the hippocampus, and the amygdala. These areas of the brain control memory, storing emotions, reasoning, and communication between the left-and right-hemispheres of the brain. The documented brain changes trauma causes could explain the common problems with emotional regulation, impulse control, attention and cognition, dissociation, interpersonal relationships, and attributions seen in individuals who experience trauma (D'Andrea et al., 2012). Attachment theory influences understanding of the effect of the loss of a parent on the development of children, indicating lower emotional security in children affected by the loss of a parent (Arditti, 2012). The behaviors of a trauma survivor easily describe the 'problem student' in school settings.

The behavioral and brain differences of students who have experienced trauma can also result in school-specific problems. Students may exhibit lower GPA, attendance, reading readiness and increased disciplinary actions and dropout rates (National Child Traumatic Stress Network 2008 in Wiest-Stevenson & Lee, 2016). Children who have experienced trauma often develop co-occurring disorders, such as depression, ADHD, or anxiety disorders (D'Andrea et al., 2012). Further compounding the problem, adolescents who have experienced trauma often attempt to manage their feelings with drug use (McKenzie-Mohr et al., 2012). These are merely the short-term effects of trauma; according to Felitti et al. (1998), the effects can influence trauma survivors their whole lives, making disease, disability, and early death more likely than for individuals who experience no major trauma events. An individual for whom trauma has been "the rule rather than the exception" will always be on guard to protect themselves from further harm (McKenzie-Mohr et al., 2011, p. 136).

Traditional Discipline Approach

The continuation of harm often follows trauma survivors through their school experiences. Not all trauma survivors act out, but the individual behaviors often exhibited by trauma survivors are frequently the types of actions that lead to disciplinary actions in schools and with police (Hirschfield, 2018). Traditional discipline is appealing when encountering noncompliance because it gives the appearance of quick, decisive change in the situation (Mullet, 2014). However, focusing discipline on removing the ‘trouble-maker’ actually damages the feeling of community in a school (Kline, 2016). These exclusionary discipline approaches do not teach students strategies to replace their inappropriate behavior and prevent future problems (Kline, 2016). Exclusionary discipline can become a cyclic process: if a student has contact with the criminal justice system and is assigned probation, they often have school attendance requirements, but the same actions that are likely to lead to probation could also lead to removal from school under exclusionary discipline approaches (Hirschfield, 2018). Finally, suspensions limit students’ opportunities to learn by removing them from the classroom environment (Kline, 2016).

The risk of exclusionary discipline can also be broader, affecting entire schools or neighborhoods. Schools with high enrollment of African-American students are more likely to suspend students for an infraction that at other schools would be considered minor (Hirschfield, 2018). Additionally, these same schools often exist in neighborhoods where students walk or take public transit to school and are more likely to be screened by police during their school commute. Many studies show minorities are over-represented in school discipline data based on their percentage of the population (Hirschfield, 2018; Gregory, Clawson, Davis, & Gerewitz, 2016; McKenzie-Mohr et al., 2012).

For moderate to serious offences, one of the most common exclusionary discipline responses is suspension, which has both immediate and long-term results. During the actual time outside school, students are more likely to be under close police supervision as a minor in the community during normal school hours (Hirschfield, 2018). This is the basis of the “school-to-prison pipeline” (Flannery 2015 in Kline, 2016, p. 99): schools with high suspension rates place students in vulnerable situations where they may make further poor choices and then have legal issues. At school, students who feel persecuted become defensive- distracting their attention away from their own responsibility for their actions- or they misdirect their anger about the perceived unjust discipline onto other students with less power than themselves (Mullet, 2014). In the long run, suspensions can lead to academic failure, increased drop-out rates, and more interactions with the juvenile justice system (Losen & Gillespie 2012 in Brown, et al., 2018). The overall result of traditional, exclusionary discipline is at odds with education’s goal of “engaged citizenship within a democratic framework” (Ogilvie & Fuller, 2016, p. 88).

A Different Approach: Collaborative Discipline

To encourage children to fully engage in their communities, schools need a new approach. Restorative Practices can be used with discipline, but they are really a holistic attitude (Ogilvie & Fuller, 2016). Historically, restorative justice is based on relationships within a community and repairing the relationships when misdeeds damage them (Zehr 2002 in Kline, 2016). The traditional idea of disruption was breaking rules; the Restorative Practices view sees disruption as unmet needs caused by the action and possibly as the root cause of the action (Ogilvie & Fuller, 2016). Restorative Practices are useful because they give voice to all involved in the act of harm and discuss how to repair the harm; in schools this is seen as efforts to “make things right” instead of simply punishing by suspensions or similar exclusionary actions (Kline,

2016, p. 99). Ryan and Ruddy (2015) believe focusing primarily on healthy relationships in schools allows the academic curricula to be well-adjusted to student needs.

Effective and respectful school discipline allows all students the best chance to learn (Kline, 2016). Restorative Practices involve all stakeholders- staff, students, parents, and community members- and focus on preventative as well as reactive processes (Kline, 2016). Using Restorative Practices, students are treated as part of the decision process, working for community betterment (Ogilvie & Fuller, 2016). The preventative aspects of Restorative Practices are essentially community-building activities, while the reactive aspects attempt to repair damaged relationships through conferencing and mediation (Kline, 2016). In Restorative Practices, students do not simply endure punishment but take responsibility for their actions and plan both restitution and better future actions (Ogilvie & Fuller, 2016). The focus is to both give voice to the harmed individual and reintegrate the individual who caused harm back into the community (Mullet, 2014). Ryan and Ruddy (2015) emphasize that the continuous link to the community makes it more likely reparation to the harmed individual will occur. Kline (2016) proposes continued ties to the community makes future harm less likely because “when students are valued and have equal input in their community they are less likely to offend in that community” (p. 100). Mullet (2014) also proposes restorative practices help students develop self-discipline.

Restorative Practices are a form of procedural adaptation to curriculum by asking students and parents what they need in the school setting (Ogilvie & Fuller, 2016). In effective change, procedural adaptations balance published methods for change with the resources available and local population needs (Brown et al., 2018). Schools commonly use procedural adaptations by asking for feedback from parents and community and allowing content

adaptations for primary language and cultural differences of students. By meeting student needs with Restorative Practices, the school environment and positive student development form a positive feedback loop, each influencing the other to become better (Acosta, Chinman, Ebener, Phillips, Xenakis, & Malone, 2016). Restorative Practices in schools also can help reduce suspensions and student contact with the juvenile justice system (Teske 2011 in Kline, 2016).

The best predictor for Restorative Practices success seemed to be school readiness for change, clarity of goals, and good training for staff before implementation (McCluskey, Lloyd, Kane, Riddell, Stead, & Weedon, 2008). Gregory et al. (2016) also emphasize the necessity of in-depth training and subsequent follow-up supports for staff when implementing Restorative Practices. A drawback to Restorative Practices is that the process does not consider or alter the existing power relationships between teachers and students (McCluskey et al., 2008 in Ryan & Ruddy, 2015). If Restorative Practices are treated as simply an optional choice among other discipline tools, they are less impactful (McCluskey et al., 2008). Because of this existing attitude, some teachers may need to be convinced that Restorative Practices are worth their time (Gregory et al., 2015).

There are many guidelines for enacting Restorative Practices. One respected training group is the International Institute for Restorative Practices (IIRP). An important part of Restorative Practice is authentic listening. One educator using Restorative Practices uses a short writing assignment each morning to allow students to reflect on their experiences and share feelings; the teacher reads the assignments but does not grade them for ‘quality’ of writing, he simply shares his reactions (Ogilvie & Fuller, 2016). Acosta et al. (2016) shared the IIRP’s 11 Essential Practices (Table 1, p. 416). The basic elements are “affective or ‘I’ statements” where each individual can share their feelings and “restorative questions” to guide interactions after

harm has occurred (Acosta et al., 2016, p. 417). All school staff are encouraged to be trained, from classroom teachers to cafeteria workers.

The dialogue aspect of Restorative Practices has dual benefits for English Language Learners: more talking leads to more verbal language development and allows students to share their experiences with peers who may have lived through similar situations (Ogilvie & Fuller, 2016). Fuller also includes home visits in the Restorative Practices to ask parents what they think students need and allows for informal meetings with students by implementing “teatime” to discuss student views. Another application of Restorative Practices is using “minichats” to discuss harm to a relationship (Mullet, 2014, pp. 160-161). The individual who experienced harm has a chance to ‘unwind’ and express their feelings and suggestions to correct the situation, while the individual who committed harm can ‘rewind’ and think about antecedents, effects, and corrections. Then all individuals involved ‘wind-up’ to prepare for enacting the amends. Scripts are given to assist facilitators in keeping the tone appropriate (Mullet, 2014, pp. 160-161).

Beyond the basic elements, if an incident occurs, Restorative Practices respond with a mediation circle in which all individuals involved come together and share their experience, ultimately developing a way to repair the harm done to the relationship (Acosta et al., 2016). Accepting responsibility for actions in public is also an important aspect of the process, but facilitators must use skill to minimize shame and instead promote positive community engagement (Acosta et al., 2016). Because any new program in schools must fit the circumstances, Restorative Practices are often slightly different at each school location, but common features focus on relationships across the school, positive modeling by staff, and restorative language (McCluskey et al., 2008).

Evidence for the Benefit of Restorative Practices

Gregory, et al. (2016) studied two high schools with similar demographics in the same small, East Coast city. The teachers at each school were trained to implement Restorative Practices according to IIRP guidelines, and 29 teachers volunteered to give feedback on the implementation and results through surveys and interviews. One class from each teacher involved in the feedback was chosen randomly, and students with parent permission also completed surveys after the first year of implementation. Student survey reports showed that teachers implemented the Restorative Practices equally across races (Gregory et al., 2016). Additionally, teachers who implemented Restorative Practices reduced the referral rate difference between white/Asian students and black/Hispanic students, although they did not eliminate the difference (Gregory et al., 2016).

In a wide-reaching study of 11 schools in Scotland, McCluskey et al. (2008) found that after one year of Restorative Practices use, in primary schools there was evidence of children “developing conflict resolution skills” (p. 410) and students seemed to enjoy being at school more than before the program began. In the same study, the secondary schools showed more variation. The schools whose climate had already been positive saw more gain than schools that were struggling to develop a positive school environment. Some teachers in the Scottish study saw benefits for Restorative Practices in daily classroom interactions, but expressed doubt that it would be enough if Restorative Practices would change behavior after serious infractions.

Acosta et al. (2016) also planned to assess the effect of Restorative Practices on school climate. Their data is not yet available, but baseline data for the school year 2013-2014 was gathered to compare to survey data gathered at the target and control schools after two years (gathered in 2016). Later data was also planned for 2018, when the Restorative Practices were

implemented at the control schools and the target schools were tested for endurance of the benefits.

CHAPTER III

METHODS

This study investigated the impact between discipline style and frequency of disruptive behavior in one teacher's classroom. The goal was to compare Restorative Practices with exclusionary discipline and determine if student behavior was different following interventions.

Design

The study used a quasi-experimental design using a time-series method. The participants were not entirely random because of class scheduling requirements, but two classes were included in the study that were matched as much as possible: both classes were 24 and 27 students with a mix of ESL (English as a Second Language) and native-English speaking students, with similar first languages and percentages of males and females. The independent variable for the study was the discipline style chosen by the teacher.

Both classes began the school year with two weeks of 'traditional' exclusionary discipline to collect baseline data. Daily class disruptive behavior totals (the dependent variable) were recorded for each class using a phone app, and mean values of disruption for each class before the intervention calculated. Once baseline behaviors were stable, both classes received the treatment by introducing Restorative Practices to the classes and implementing the discipline style associated with Restorative Practices. After Restorative Practices were introduced, this was the expected conduct in the classroom. Two more weeks of disruptive behavior data were collected using the same app, and pre-and post-intervention disruption means were compared.

Participants

The participants of the study were members of two sections of Earth Systems science assigned to one teacher in a suburban East-Coast county school system. The public high school these students attend is both an ESL magnet and a Math, Science, and Technology magnet with a student population of about 2,000. Some of the student population is zoned for the school based on their residence address, but some students in the study are part of the ESL magnet and therefore live in other parts of the school district. Each class of participants was assigned to the teacher without input, and the classes were chosen from the teaching roster to include in the study in order to maximize the sample size, based on finding two classes with high demographic similarities.

Within the study, the two sections were given nicknames: Blue and Gold. Because the classes were mixed sections, the ethnic demographics were different than the majority of the school and district. The Blue class had 17 males and 11 females, ages 13-17. Of these students, 19 were native-English and 8 were English Language Learners (EL). Of the EL students: 6 students were Hispanic, 1 student was Caucasian (speaking Russian), and 1 student was African. In the Gold class, there were 17 males and 7 females, ages 13-17. For the cultural demographics, 15 students were native-English speakers and 9 were EL. Of the EL students: 5 students were Hispanic, 3 students were Asian, and 1 student was African. The Hispanic students' birth countries were generally Central American: El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, and occasionally Mexico. The Asian students' birth countries were Nepal and China. The Caucasian student was from Uzbekistan, and both African students were from Nigeria. The native-English speakers were mostly born on the East Coast, in the county of the school district.

Instrument

The instrument to collect data was an app on the teacher's smartphone called "Tally Counter." The teacher used the instrument to record every time any class member's behavior violated the class norms within each 85-minute period. The students and teacher together developed the class norms, with guidance from the school's Student Handbook; therefore, no reliability or validity data is available for the norms. Class norms always include using technology appropriately and outline special guidelines for distinct class experiences. Group instruction requirements: speaking quietly to neighbors or after permission; individual work requirements: speaking quietly, attempting work before seeking help, asking for help from a peer or the teacher when necessary; group work requirements: equal participation for material gathering, idea sharing, and clean-up, using English in mixed-first-language groups to ensure comprehension by all, speaking in a medium level; and conflict resolution strategies: working with the disagreement instead of gossiping, asking for help if needed, treating others as you would want to be treated. The data collected by the Tally Counter app compared total behavior incidents per day for each class.

Procedure

The study occurred over an eight-week period in the fall of 2019 for two sections of high school science classes. The classes met on an A/B schedule, so they were together every other school day for 85 minutes. During the initial period, the class observed exclusionary discipline: there were class rules, and if rules were violated the consequences included parental contact, detention, and administrative referral. Once Restorative Practices were introduced, the basic expectations in the class remained the same, but the teacher perspective shifted and consequences were also different, focusing on prevention, discussion between harmed parties,

and appropriate reparation to restore a functioning community. The class was instructed how Restorative Practices would be implemented, but student perspective of the treatment was not the focus of the study.

Students were instructed in the practicalities of Restorative Practices by focusing on the classroom as a community. The classroom goal was to provide all students their best opportunity to learn, academically and socially. This meant no student had the right to prevent another from learning, and the teacher also had the right to a positive environment. Each class began with an emotion check-in, to help students determine supports they might need that day to succeed. During the Restorative Practices implementation period, five minutes of each class was used to practice Mullet's (2014) 'mini-chats' of unwinding to let go of the initial hurt of an incident, rewinding to think of what might have led to personal behavior choices, and winding up to make a change in future actions or discuss the interaction with the other party. Students were paired with different partners for each day's mini-chat practice to both develop relationships and provide confidence in the transferability of the conflict resolution skill. Finally, each class concluded with a five-minute debriefing discussion to allow students to express concerns or suggest changes to norms and procedures.

The data was collected by the teacher recording disruptive incidents in the Mikrasya "Counter" app. Actions that were recorded as disruptive were:

- Loud off-task conversations or interrupting
- Roaming the classroom without purpose
- Refusal to participate in classwork or group work
- Inappropriate phone or laptop use

- Leaving the classroom without permission
- Physical or verbal fighting

CHAPTER IV

RESULTS

This study investigated the impact between discipline style and frequency of disruptive behavior in one teacher’s classroom. The goal was to compare Restorative Practices with exclusionary discipline and determine if student behavior was different following interventions.

Data that were collected were described in Chapter III. Two groups of students participated: they were designated as Blue and Gold. Both groups received the same methods: tallies of pre-intervention disruptions, introduction to the “mini-chat” method for conflict resolution, and tallies of post-intervention disruptions. An initial analysis was done on baseline data collected from September 16, 2019 to September 27, 2019.

Table 1 below displays the measures of central tendency for the baseline data.

Table 1:

Measures of Central Tendency for Baseline Data

Counter Name	N	Mean Disruptions	Std. Deviation
Blue1	4	55.25	6.238
Gold1	4	57.25	10.782
Combined1	8	56.25	17.05416

Table 2 displays the statistical analysis of the baseline data. The independent *t* test was used to compare the groups and no statistical significance was found. Thus, one may conclude that the two groups were equivalent at the beginning of the experiment. This allowed the groups to be combined for analysis after the treatment.

Table 2:

Statistical Analysis of the Baseline Data

	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference
Equal variances assumed	-.321	6	.759	-2.000
Equal variances not assumed	-.321	4.806	.762	-2.000

Table 3 displays the post data with measures of central tendency and statistical analysis included.

Table 3:

Measures of Central Tendency for Post Data

Counter Name	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
Blue2	4	46	11.57584
Gold2	4	25.75	5.909033
Combined2	8	35.875	13.76785

Figure 1 shows the daily totals and means for disruptions, before and after the intervention.

Figure 1:

Disruption Incidences and Means

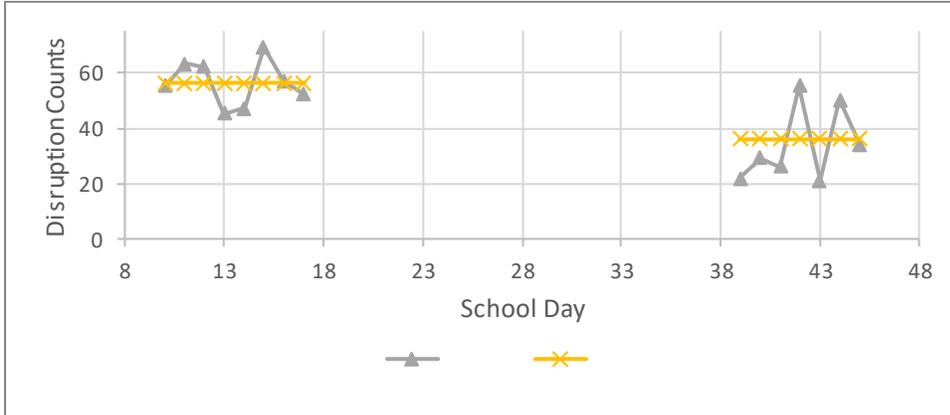
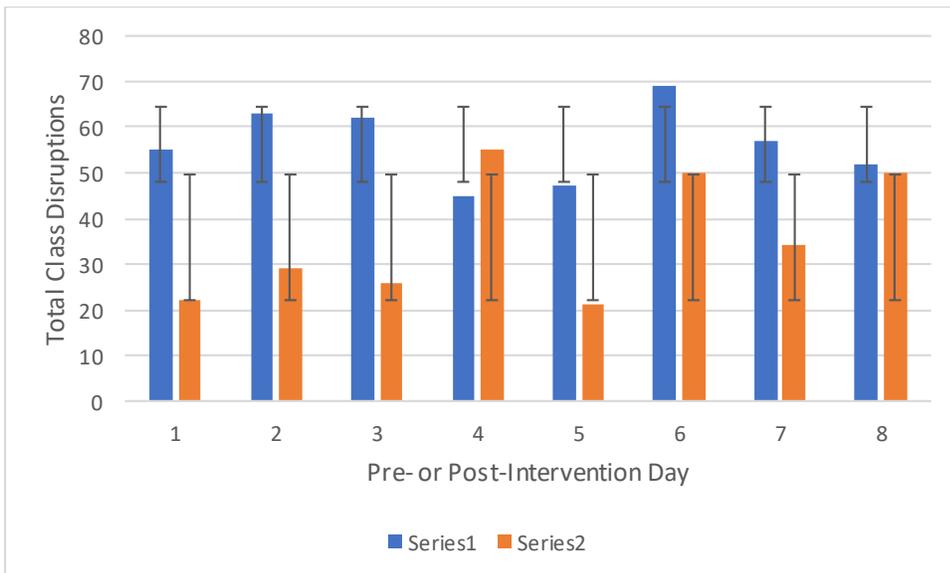


Figure 2 compares pre- and post-Intervention daily totals with Standard Deviation Error bars. The small pre-intervention Standard Deviation is an indicator that all pre-intervention data had stabilized, while the large post-intervention Standard Deviation demonstrated the greater variation in the post-intervention totals.

Figure 2:

Pre-and Post-Intervention Totals, with Standard Deviation



The Standard Deviations for the pre-intervention and post-intervention data overlapped, which indicates that although the post-intervention totals are lower than the pre-intervention totals the difference is not likely to be significant. This indicates that using this study's treatment and instrument, teacher-chosen discipline style does not significantly impact student disruption. Chapter V addresses validity threats that may account for the lack of impact from the treatment.

CHAPTER V

DISCUSSION

This study investigated the impact between discipline style and frequency of disruptive behavior in one teacher's classroom. The goal was to compare Restorative Practices with exclusionary discipline and determine if student behavior was different following interventions. Analyses conducted in Chapter IV indicated that the null hypothesis should be retained.

Implications of Results

During the study, class disruptions were counted based on class-developed norms. The combined pre-intervention mean for daily disruptions was 51.8, while the post-intervention mean for daily disruptions was 35.875. The post-intervention mean is lower, however the post-intervention data had high variability in the daily totals, indicated by a large Standard Deviation. The Standard Deviations for the pre-intervention and post-intervention data overlapped, which indicates that although the post-intervention means are lower than the pre-intervention means the difference is not likely to be significant. This indicates that using this study's treatment and instrument, student disruption is not significantly impacted by discipline style, indicating the null hypothesis for this problem statement.

Threats to Validity

All studies suffer from threats to the validity of the study. Specifically, those threats are divided into threats involving external validity and threats involving internal validity. In terms of this study the threats to external validity involve pre-test/intervention interaction. Students in the targeted sections were aware of the data collection and the intervention strategy. If students noticed specific incidences of the collection of pre-intervention data, they may have altered their

actions in response. However, the pre-intervention data show consistent amounts of disruption within the pre-intervention dates, so it is likely this threat did not affect the results.

In addition to the external validity threat, the study experienced two internal validity threats. The internal validity threats were history and instrumentation issues. For history, both classes had changes in the assigned roster, and students were absent at times during the study. One student moved from the Gold group to the Blue group during the treatment period, but this was a minor threat to validity because the student was exposed to the intervention in both classes. More compelling history threats were student absences and additions/deletions to the class roster. In the Gold group, three students missed half of the treatment period and one missed all of the treatment. In the Blue group, two students missed half of the treatment period and two missed all the treatment. These students were not prepared as thoroughly with strategies for coping with appropriate peer interaction or redirection from an adult, and their actions coupled with their influence on the class members around them could have influenced the post-intervention data. In the both groups, all post-intervention data included at least one student who was not present for any of the treatment; the disruption values did not follow a clear pattern, although the post-intervention mean was lower than the mean for the pre-intervention period. It is possible with a longer data-collection period for the post-intervention period, the disruption values may have stabilized and provided a clearer indication of the effectiveness of the treatment. Unfortunately, because the sample is based on school attendance extending the data collection period would have increased the chances of more validity threats due to history.

In addition to the history threats were internal validity threats from the instrument itself. The instrument was very subjective and not externally validated at all. The teacher recorded incidences of disruption in the course of teaching normally, which allows for the possibility of

coloration of the counter values from changes in attentiveness or mood. For the instrument the content and criterion-related validity appeared moderately valid; however, the construct and consequential-related validity had issues. The content of the intervention appeared moderately valid because disruption criteria were developed by the classes, so the definition of disruptions were appropriate for the groups and the students in the sample bought into the definition, showing good item and sampling validity. Concurrent sampling from the Blue group and the Gold group showed similar pre-intervention data, which demonstrates moderately valid criterion-related validity.

The concerns about the construct and consequential validity overlap somewhat because both reflect unintended consequences: as part of the treatment, students developed additional peer relationships with each class group (Blue or Gold). The new relationships allowed students to be more comfortable addressing disagreements between themselves and a peer, but it also provided the temptation to socialize with their new-found friend. Both these interactions could be interpreted as “disruptions” in the data collection if the teacher was not able to hear the conversation. Additionally, one student reported the reason she was in the hallway so long during one post-intervention class was to help an outside friend ‘unwind’ and ‘rewind’ from a perceived hurt, which demonstrates transference of the intended skill but was coded as a “disruption” under the class definition. The consequential validity threat was that if a student noticed their behavior being counted by the teacher, it could have been seen by the student as attention and considered a motivation to continue the action. This would have been an unintended consequence of the data-gathering process; while the teacher attempted to be unobtrusive counting disruptions by carrying the open phone app on top of a clipboard, some

students did notice when their behavior was counted. The consequential and construct threats to the Instrument's validity could make the entire treatment generally invalid.

Comparison of This Study's Findings to Previous Research

In Chapter II, previous research is presented showing the harmful effects of exclusionary discipline approaches and the benefits of Restorative Practices. While this study did not implement full-scale Restorative Practices, some comparisons can be made to the existing literature. The intervention used was based on Mullet's (2014) Restorative Practices tool called "mini-chats," to give students framework for discussing harmed interpersonal relationships. While the data does not appear to support significant differences due to the intervention, Gregory et al. (2016) assert that Restorative Practices in general are most effective if used school-wide and when facilitators are thoroughly trained. These criteria were not met in this study because the teacher was not formally trained and the treatment was only implemented for two classes, while each student in the sample had seven other classes which did not use the treatment. Finally, five minutes of practice in class during the treatment may have been too short for students to fully internalize the practice and modify their daily behaviors. All these changes from standard Restorative Practices protocol may have contributed to the lack of impact shown in this study.

Although the classroom disruption reductions were not significant, the students did show some reductions in disruptions as well as seeming to build a more positive classroom climate. One benefit the review of existing literature attributes to Restorative Practices involves student-led decision processes for conflict resolution (Ogilvie & Fuller, 2016). In this study when students were reminded of their class-made norms, they often corrected themselves with less argument than if they direction was ordered from an adult. Kline (2016) promoted Restorative

Practice's use of both preventative and reactive actions in relation to school or classroom discipline, and this study was able to incorporate some preventative strategies when students practiced scenarios of potential harm and used the "mini-chats" to address reactive behavioral mediations. Additionally, Ogilvie and Fuller (2016) recognized the benefit of Restorative Practice's holistic interactions. In this study, students began to see each other as complex people through their increased interactions, and the teacher deepened understanding of students' motivations and actions. While conferencing with a student who returned to the class after an extended school-imposed suspension, the student told the teacher he had been out because he was accused of fighting; he never took responsibility for his actions but instead reacted defensively, a response Mullet reports exclusionary discipline often elicits. During the study some students using the "mini-chats" were still defensive and did not acknowledge their contribution to the interaction, but some students evaluated their actions, demonstrated positive buy-in to class norms, and viewed peers and adults more holistically.

Summary, Conclusions and Implications for Future Research

In this study, the impact of discipline style on classroom disruption was investigated. Two classes were tested before the intervention by recording total numbers of daily classroom disruptions, and the total disruption numbers were recorded again after the intervention. Disruption incidences were established by the classes and included off-task discussions; roaming the classroom without purpose; refusal to participate in group work; inappropriate technology use; leaving the classroom without permission; and physical or verbal fighting. The study had threats to both internal validity and to external validity, and these threats may have contributed to the lack of impact seen after the treatment. It is also possible, with more detailed intervention

practice or longer time for data collection, the post-intervention data might have been more definitive.

Based on the slightly overlapping Standard Deviation values for pre- and post-intervention disruption totals, this study did not indicate a significant impact by discipline style on student disruption. In the future, it would be beneficial to retry this study of the impact of discipline style on classroom disruption with more training for the teacher/facilitator or with school-wide implementation. The study could also be modified to use multiple external data collectors, to allow more objectivity in the instrument and reduce some internal validity threats. Another direction for research would be to specifically address the impact of student technology use on classroom disruption/engagement, instead of mixing technology with other classroom disruptions. The topic warrants further research to determine ways to assist students' growth toward healthy interpersonal relationships and the development of self-discipline.

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