

The Effect of One-on-One Student Mentoring
on the
Negative Behavior of Middle School Students

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Abstract

The purpose of this study was to determine if the number of referrals a middle school student receives would change following a one-on-one student mentoring intervention (Check-In/Check-Out). The measurement tool was the number of minor and major discipline referrals as recorded by STARS. This study involved use of a pre-experimental design where one group of students received the intervention and data was examined before and after the intervention. Reductions in the number of minor referrals were significant for the students participating in the study. There was no significant change in the number of major referrals following the intervention. Research in this area should continue as school boards are looking for alternatives to suspension and the study showed signs of affecting behavior in a positive way.

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

The problem studied was negative student behavior. Many students at risk for failing, summer school, or repeating a grade level are exhibiting negative student behavior that results in removal from class and suspension, which contributes to their academic problems. The use of a positive system of Check-In/Check-Out will be analyzed to see its ability to affect the behavior of students.

Overview

According to the Maryland State Board of Education (2012) in the state of Maryland, 66,955 students were suspended or expelled during the 2010–2011 school year. This amounts to 8% of the total student population for the state. Of the students suspended, 9,550 were suspended three or more times and as such are missing a great deal of class time due in part to this negative student behavior. This has prompted the Maryland State Board of Education (2012) to rethink the policies and procedures regarding student discipline. With a shift in attitudes and procedures towards preventing and dealing with negative student behavior, it has become important more than ever to establish positive behavior strategies.

At the researcher's school, there a great number of students who fail classes and are required to attend summer school or are not promoted to the next grade. When reviewing these students, it became apparent that these are the same students who are on our "high flyers" list. This is a list of students with frequent infractions resulting in multiple negative consequences. These students are often sent out of class to another teacher's room or given a school suspension. Either of these consequences results in the student no longer being in the classroom and therefore not receiving instruction. The school's suspension and academic data indicated that over 60% of

summer school and retention students for 2012–2013 had received at least one suspension during the school year. As a former PBIS co-chair, the researcher was interested in finding a positive way to effect change in these students. The researcher wanted to create a way to not only decrease the negative student behavior with these students but hopefully have an impact positively on their academics and staff relations.

Statement of Problem

It is apparent that traditional consequences and interventions are not effective in assisting all students to be successful in both their behavior and academics. A student intervention like Check-In/Check-Out allows the student to develop a positive relationship with a staff member that is beneficial to the student. This study will examine the impact of these interventions by comparing students' minor and major office referrals for a five-week period in 2nd quarter to a five-week period in 3rd quarter in which the chosen students are involved in the intervention.

Hypothesis

This study will investigate the impact of student interventions on negative student behavior. The null hypothesis is that there will be no effect on the amount of referrals (negative behavior) for students on the high flyers list involved in the intervention.

Operational Definitions

The independent variable in this research is participation in the Check-In/Check-Out intervention, which is defined as meeting with a mentor teacher before and after school every day for a period of five weeks. The dependent variable is negative student behavior as defined as the number minor and major office referrals.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

The purpose of this literature review is to explore the definition, causes, and solutions to negative or disruptive student behavior. The review presents information on the definition of what negative student behavior is and why it is a problem, what positive behavior is and why it is important, the causes of negative student behavior, and various solutions and interventions to stop existing negative student behavior and stop future negative choices, including one on one student mentoring.

Negative Student Behavior

According to Reed and Kirkpatrick (1998), aggression, immorality, defiance of authority, class disruptions, and “goofing off” are the five categories of negative student behavior. Aggression pertains to both physical and verbal attacks and threats. Immorality is defined as lying, cheating, or stealing. Defiance of authority is the refusal to follow directions or respond to the authority figure. Class disruptions refer to students’ actions in class like calling out, getting out of their seat, throwing objects, or “class clowning.” “Goofing off” pertains to students who are not doing their work, daydreaming, dawdling, or fooling around. Of these behaviors, defiance of authority, class disruptions, and goofing off are the offenses teachers deal with most frequently because the others result in administrative consequences. Volenski and Rockwood (1996) support this idea by stating that disruptive students (students who exhibit negative behavior) do not listen to their teachers, are non-compliant with directions, do not follow school rules and procedures, and as a result spend much of their academic career in consequence. Levin and Nolan (1996) further defined disruptive students by addressing specific actions. These actions include: interfering with teacher instruction and violating school rules and procedures,

disrupting student learning for any length of time, making the learning environment unsafe physically or psychologically, and destruction of any property not belonging to the student (Levin & Nolan, 1996).

The Problem with Negative Student Behavior

When teachers are asked about the most difficult part of their jobs, they often speak to the disruptive nature of negative student behavior. In a survey of middle and high school teachers, 76% of teachers stated they would be more effective in educating students if negative student behavior were not so prevalent (Warren et al., 2006). Negative student behavior may be referred to as disruptive, anti-social, or misbehaving. Whatever the name of the behavior, the result is the same: the students are not performing like their on-task classmates. Negative student behavior comes in varying levels of seriousness that all impact instruction.

The problems associated with negative student behavior vary depending on who is being affected and the level of impact or resulting consequence. One of the most overlooked victims of negative student behavior is the teacher. As stated by Reed and Kirkpatrick (1998), Levin and Nolan (1996), and Volenski and Rockwood (1996), teachers are at the center of the offense for most of the actions of a disruptive student. Since these actions are directed at the teacher, it is important to equip the teacher with the necessary training to deal with this. Disruptive behavior is a growing problem in schools and is one of the most serious concerns of teachers and parents (Bear, 1998).

These offenses are beginning to take their toll on educators and may be contributing to the fact that teacher job dissatisfaction is the lowest it has been in more than twenty years according to a 2012 survey conducted by MetLife of the American Teacher (Santos, 2012). Santos (2012) further states that the impact on the teacher's psyche is compounded when one

factors in the other pressures that exist in the field of education (standardized tests, evaluations, school progress, new curriculum, etc.) and that teachers do not feel as though they are prepared or trained to handle these disruptions. One of the biggest problems that disruptive behavior is contributing to is the burnout of teachers (Fernet, Guay, Senecal, & Austin, 2012). In schools, 12% – 20% of teachers experience burnout once a week; this is a feeling of overload in terms of work, expectations, and helplessness. This burnout sensation can lead to teachers taking or using sick days to avoid work, cutting back on their participation in the school, and possibly even leaving the profession. Fernet et al. (2012) further state that the ability of teachers and schools to manage student behavior is linked to the turnover rate of teachers in schools. Schools that do a better job of managing disruptive and negative student behavior have higher retention rates for teachers (Riggs, 2013).

The students who are in classes with these disruptive students also experience problems as a result of the negative behavior. As teachers are focused on redirecting and dealing with the disruptive student, the class is not receiving instruction (Reed & Kirkpatrick, 1998). This continued interruption of lessons leads to a lack of progress and the teacher being forced to teach very one-dimensionally, not allowing for much differentiation, independent learning, or problem-based learning.

Ultimately, it is the offending students who are most harmed by their own negative behavior. This behavior, if left unchecked or resolved, will continue to escalate throughout their academic careers and eventually cause them to be suspended, to be expelled, or to either fail or drop out of school (Lewin-Bizan et al., 2010). When students exhibit these negative behaviors, there is typically a consequence levied. These consequences are often punitive academically, behaviorally, or both. This results in removal from the classroom or school activities

(Gottfredson, Gottfredson, & Hybl, 1993). This removal limits the instruction the student receives and ultimately puts them behind their peers academically. This disparity will manifest later when the lack of success in school may contribute to further negative behavior. The causes of negative disruptive behavior will be discussed later in this literature review.

Positive Student Behavior

Positive behavior defined

Positive or responsible behavior is in most cases the opposite of negative or disruptive behavior. Positive student behavior can be categorized into four main groups: being respectful, being responsible, being safe, and being prepared (Lewis, Sugai, & Colvin, 1998). These make up many schools' codes of conduct and are the cornerstone for most Positive Behavior Intervention and Support (PBIS) systems. If we look at what Montana State University (1995) lists as disruptive behavior and evaluate the opposite, we can determine what positive behavior is (Reed & Kirkpatrick, 1998). Positive behavior includes: completing class and homework assignments, waiting until called on to speak, following class and school rules and procedures, displaying a positive attitude in class, being attentive and not distracting during instruction, having all necessary materials for class, and being kind and respectful of other students.

The positive behavior is not limited to just the student. It must be present in both the actions and words of the teacher. A teacher shows positive behavior by establishing classroom rules and expectations, implementing of consistent rewards and consequences, and setting realistic learning goals (Ritchie, Rinholm, Flewelling, Kelly, & Sammon, 1999). In addition to these behaviors, teachers show positive behavior through the use of positive language (Wood & Freeman-Loftis, 2012). The use of positive language conveys belief in the children and enables them to be successful while at the same time modeling appropriate ways to communicate with

people. A positive classroom environment employs teaching, classroom management, and interaction strategies that emphasize pre-planning, engagement, positive communication, active supervision, frequent questioning, and teaching of all routines and procedures (Lewis et al., 1998).

Most of the positive behavior discussed has been related to classroom behavior, but behavior outside of class is just as important to define as it has a large bearing on the school climate. Students who exhibit positive behavior outside of the classroom will walk, not run through the halls, will socialize at an acceptable volume and about appropriate topics, will be considerate of their classmates and teachers, and follow the four roots of PBIS (respectful, responsible, safe, and prepared) in all areas of the school.

Reasons Students Exhibit Negative Student Behavior

There is no one single reason why students exhibit negative or disruptive behavior. The literature suggests that it is attributed to four main factors: home, society, school, and learning disabilities.

Home life

A child's home life has a profound effect on that child's behavior (Achenbach, Howell, McConaughy, & Stanger, 1995; Coie & Dodge, 1998; Loeber & Farrington, 2000). The students' behavior is impacted by their exposure to divorce, level of poverty, level of parental involvement, amount of attention and supervision, and style of punishment (Reed & Kirkpatrick, 1998). Children from dysfunctional homes are highly susceptible to adjustment difficulties, which lead to problems in school, and therefore are likely to exhibit the negative or disruptive behavior (Edwards, 2000). According to Edwards (2000), the four major aspects of these adjustment difficulties are damage to self-concept, attention deprivation, love deprivation, and

excessive control. Children will react to situations in school based on their level of adjustment in each area. A student that is attention deprived at home will act out in school in order to receive the attention he or she is not getting at home. Students who have excessive control in their home environments will see school as an opportunity to test rules and freedoms that they are not given anywhere else. A research study by Volenski and Rockwood (1996) states the importance of home influence on student behavior. Their study showed that children from homes with conflict, lack of organization, and high levels of expressed anger were much more likely to be disruptive in the school setting. The lack of parental supervision and nurturing can also be a large contributing factor to negative student behavior. Children who have parents who are preoccupied are more likely to exhibit disruptive behavior at school (Edwards, 2000). Children measure their parents' love by the amount of attention received. If children do not feel adequately loved, they may turn to disruptive behavior in order to obtain some form of adult attention.

Educators know that parents send their very best and can do very little to alter or change the home environment of their students. Hopefully understanding the possible causes for the behavior in the classroom will lead teachers to be better prepared to handle these situations when they arise and develop appropriate consequences for correcting the behavior.

Societal factors

Teachers are at the mercy of another behavior altering force which they have no control over: society. With the ever-increasing violence in the media (television, movies, video games, and music), it is hard to argue that children are not being affected. Ascher (1994) believes these influences are the major cause of the disruptive behavior in students.

In addition to the violence in media, the socioeconomic status of students and families can be a major societal contributing factor to student behavior in schools. Children who grow up

in poor neighborhoods, with run down housing, and fear of crime often lack good role models to demonstrate the appropriate behavior in school and life. According to Jensen (2009), children raised in poverty are faced with many overwhelming challenges that affect the brain in ways that may impact school behavior. The lack of role models and feelings of helplessness and frustration make them likely to display disruptive behavior in school. Many of these societal factors are closely related to factors in the home life. Home and societal factors are outside of the school but have a huge influence on students' behavior.

School factors

Though factors outside of school are large influences on student behavior, there are numerous factors in the school environment that contribute to disruptive behavior in children (Reed & Kirkpatrick, 1998). School factors can include run-down and overcrowded buildings, lack of resources, inappropriate classroom placements, irrelevant curriculum, a lack of cultural awareness, low expectations of teachers, classroom management, and a lack of teacher experience.

The structure and organization of the school can present challenges for students, contribute to their behavior, and often lead to the disruptive actions (Reed & Kirkpatrick, 1998). The lack of supervision during transition, recess, cafeteria, and in large capacity classrooms allows students to get away with some disruptive behavior and therefore continue this into the classrooms where teachers will find it unacceptable. When in an overcrowded class, the children who are prone to disruptive behavior, due to home or societal factors, feel they can perform or be protected from discipline (Baker, 1998). The actual discipline procedure can also contribute to disruptive behavior in students. School systems that employ harsh disciplinary consequences will

see that the chronically disruptive students become disengaged from school and continue their behavior and in some cases act out more severely (Baker, 1998).

Teaching strategies and teacher experience are two other ways that schools influence student behavior (Baker, 1998). When teachers design their lessons with little differentiation, a lack of sensitivity to diversity, or few connections to the “real world,” children become disconnected from learning and will often turn to disruptive behavior to occupy their time. The expectations that a teacher has for their students can have a huge impact on their behavior. Low-achieving students receive more negative attention from the teacher, and this leads to poor relationships. Baker (1998) further states that students perceiving some bias or restrictive environment will display negative behavior as an act of frustration or by fulfilling the role that the teacher has established for the student.

Students’ peers can have a huge impact on their behavior in a school setting as well. Students who exhibit disruptive behavior are often characterized and stereotyped as troublemakers and class clowns. These definitions become prophetic as students cast into these roles will experience some rejection from their classmates and will seek out other children who act or think similarly (Baker, 1998).

Learning disabilities

A student’s own abilities to learn and communicate within the school can have a major impact on the behavior of that student. Children with learning disabilities are at a higher risk for problem behavior than children who do not have learning disabilities (Vallance, Cummings, & Humphries, 1998). Learning disabilities lead to feelings of frustration, anger, helplessness, and sadness (Trimble, 2001). These feelings can often enhance the learning disability, leading to more frustration. This all comes out in the student’s behavior as he or she seeks a release from

the feelings he or she is experiencing. The behavior is often addressed by the teacher or school in a way that further upsets the child. The teacher or school is only addressing the symptom and not the actual root of the problem. It is difficult for schools and teachers to do this because of emotion connected to conflict, a lack of training for how to deal with these situations, or simply an inability to recognize what the problem is. Ultimately, it is important to identify these students and develop interventions to address these problems or they will continue to experience low levels of achievement that lead to the emotional and social problems that determine student behavior (Lackaye & Margalit, 2006).

Negative Behavior Interventions and Consequences

When addressing disruptive student behavior, there are two basic ways that school systems have approached dealing with the issue: consequence-based interventions and positive interventions. Consequence-based interventions can include typical discipline (detention, in-school suspension, and out-of-school suspension), behavior plans, and student contracts.

Consequence-based interventions

Concerns with school safety, implementation of zero tolerance policies, and the focus on school progress have led to an increase in exclusionary discipline (suspension and expulsion) as a means to deal with disruptive behavior (Christle, Nelson, & Jolivette, 2004). The most frequent behaviors that lead to suspensions are defiance, skipping detention, class disruption, truancy, fighting, use of profanity, damage to school property, theft, dress code violations, and leaving school grounds (Sautner, 2001). Sautner (2001) goes on to summarize the findings of the National School Board Association by stating that suspended students are often the students who most need direct classroom instruction. These students often view the suspension as a reward that can lead to them being labeled as a problem kid. Students labeled as problem children will

seek out this negative attention as a substitute for positive attention. School systems that employ suspensions as a means to handle the majority of their disruptive students are susceptible to increased academic failure, grade retention, negative school attitudes, and in high schools higher drop-out rates (Nichols, 2004). To avoid these issues, it is recommended that schools find alternatives to using suspensions as the first resort for any negative behavior. Sautner (2001) discusses several options used by other school districts including in-school suspension, student contracts, counseling or mentoring, and positive reinforcement.

Suspension

In-school suspension is different from out-of-school suspension in that it requires the student be at school, complete assignments under the supervision of a staff member, but is removed from the regular classroom environment, not allowing him or her to experience the social aspects of school that most students enjoy. In-school suspension has three basic models: strict rule enforcement, discussion format, and academic model (Sheets, 1996). In the strict rule enforcement model, students are in a “jail-like atmosphere,” and the experience is viewed as a punishment. In the discussion model, students work with a faculty member to discuss appropriate ways to handle conflict and deal with whatever issue resulted in their in-school suspension. In the academic model, it is assumed that the students exhibited disruptive behavior as a result of academic challenges. These students receive tutoring and goal setting as a means to not only help them improve in school but also to correct whatever disruptive behavior resulted in them being removed from the classroom. Though in-school suspension is less punitive than out-of-school suspension, it is still regarded as a consequence.

Behavior contracts

Behavior contracts are another method of stopping negative student behavior. Behavior contracts are a bridge between consequence based interventions and positive reinforcement. Behavior contracts allow school systems to develop an individualized plan for students who are exhibiting negative behavior, identify the cause for these behaviors, establish consequences for violating the terms of the contract, and establish rewards to positively reinforce the students do not violate the terms of the contract (Anderson, 2002). For the contract to be successful, it must be agreed upon by the student, teachers, parents, and school. There need to be check points for the students after entering into the contract to allow for discussion and counseling with a faculty member assigned to the student.

Positive reinforcement

Consequence-based interventions are necessary for some situations, but research shows that positive reinforcement and student mentoring or counseling can be the most effective means of changing student behavior. Positive behavior support is a proactive approach to dealing with negative student behavior (Warren et al., 2006). Positive behavior support uses educational methods to guide students to more appropriate behavior. A school that employs PBIS will have a team representing all school stakeholders, school-wide rules and expectations, a system in place to teach students appropriate behavior, a system for recognizing and rewarding positive behaviors, and continued monitoring of the effectiveness of the system through data. For this system to be successful, it is imperative that the school have staff buy-in, a shared vision, administrative support, leadership outside of the administrative team, ongoing professional development and monitoring, data-based decision making, and continuous regeneration (adapting the program to the population of both students and faculty) (Coffey & Horner, 2012).

When PBIS is implemented under these conditions, schools see significant decreases in their negative school behavior. In a study of urban middle schools in Kansas, the results showed decreases of 5–57% in the categories of in-school conferences, time-outs, in-school suspension, short-term suspension, and out-of-school suspension (Coffey & Horner, 2012).

Check-In/Check-Out

Tier 1 interventions are those that are designed to target the general population of a school and take place in the classroom. PBIS data, such as number of referrals, suspensions, and expulsions, have shown that Tier 1 interventions are effective in transforming the behavior and culture of the school, but they can have limitations in changing the behavior of students who are chronically disruptive. Target interventions, or Tier 2 interventions, are needed to address these students (Campbell & Anderson, 2008). Tier 2 interventions are more focused as they are used for specific students on a case by case basis. One of the most effective Tier 2 targeted intervention is Check-In/Check-Out. This intervention is designed to reduce incidences of negative behavior and increase the positive behavior and social skills that lead to success. Check-In/Check-Out (CICO) has three basic components to it: students meeting with their CICO coordinator in the morning to set goals and at the end of the day to review how the day went, a point card for teachers to evaluate the student's behavior throughout the day, and a series of rewards for demonstrating positive behavior and earning points. This system is most effective for students who enjoy positive interaction with adults and works well to decrease negative classroom behavior. The benefit to this system is that the student's first adult interaction is positive and allows him or her to have at least one adult relationship that is not punitive.

The positive effect of CICO can be seen with students in alternative education programs. These students typically have a higher frequency of negative student behavior and require more

one-on-one assistance in improving their behavior. In a study conducted in alternative education schools, research showed a 30% to 60% reduction in negative student behavior of students participating in CICO (Swoszowski, McDaniel, Jolivet, & Melius, 2013). Though the study had some limitations, it provides evidence of the effectiveness that this intervention can have in changing the behavior of students with a high number of occurrences.

School systems need to employ a variety of strategies and interventions to manage the school environment. Both consequences based and positive reinforcement interventions have their place; CICO serves as an effective strategy for students who do not respond to the traditional and general approaches of the school.

Summary

Negative student behavior is behavior that disrupts the classroom and impacts instruction adversely. This behavior is influenced and caused by home life, societal factors, school factors, and learning disabilities. These actions are leading to problems not only with the offending student but with teachers and other students. Positive behavior, like being attentive and following school rules and procedures, is the desired outcome. Schools work to achieve these outcomes through consequences like suspensions and behavior contracts, but these work only to punish the behavior and not change it. Interventions like positive reinforcement and Check-In/Check-Out are designed to stop the negative behavior and encourage the positive behavior.

CHAPTER III

METHODS

The purpose of this study was to examine and evaluate the impact of one-on-one student mentoring on negative student behavior and student achievement of at-risk students.

Design

This study used a pre-experimental design where one group received the intervention (one-on-one student mentoring), and data (academic and behavioral) was examined before and after the intervention. The independent variable was identified as one-on-one student mentoring in the form of “Check-In/Check-Out.” In this system, students met with a mentor in the morning before the start of school and at the end of the day before going home. This continued for a length of five weeks. The dependent variables analyzed student behavior as measured by the number of minor and major referrals received. The sampling technique was a convenience sample of students at the researcher’s school since they were identified as “at-risk” and would be available for the mentoring program.

Participants

The participants in the study were students from a middle school in Maryland. Participants were identified by teachers as “at-risk” of failing due to behavior and academic concerns and on the school’s “High Flyers” list. There were five participants in total, four boys (two 6th and two 7th graders) and one girl (6th grade). All participants met with a mentor daily, before and after school, for a length of five weeks.

Instrument

This study used the school system’s student information database, STARS, as the instrument to collect and measure the frequency and intensity of negative student behavior.

Procedure

Participants were found through e-mailing the staff for recommendations and then by analyzing their academic and behavior data to identify students in great need of assistance. From this list, students were selected based on their willingness and ability to meet with a mentor. Each morning the students would meet with a mentor and discuss their homework completion, project progress, and any incidents that occurred after school that may impact the school day. The students would then meet with their mentor at the end of the day to review the teacher reports, assignments, and any incidents that occurred.

CHAPTER IV

RESULTS

The purpose of this study was to examine the impact of if one-to-one student mentoring on negative student behavior. The overall null hypothesis that was investigated in this study was that there would be no effect on the amount of referrals (negative behavior) for students on the “High Flyers” list involved in the intervention.

Table 1 below shows the data for the students’ minor and major referrals pre- and post-mentoring intervention. The number of minor and major referrals was determined through STARS discipline data reports. This reflects merely the number of referrals and not what the referrals were for.

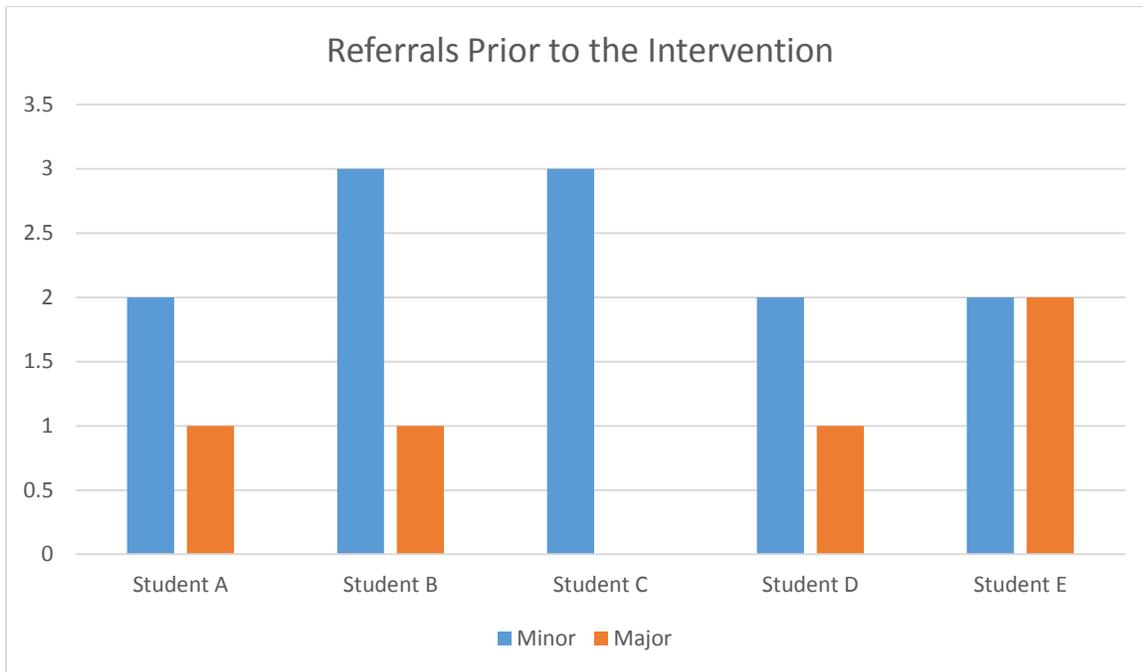
Table 1

Referrals Before and After Intervention

	Prior to Intervention		4/22/14 to 5/30/14	After the Intervention	
	# of Minor Referrals in a 5 Week Period	# of Major Referrals in a 5 Week Period	# of days met during intervention	# of Minor Referrals in a 5 Week Period	# of Major Referrals in a 5 Week Period
Student A - 6th Grade Male	2	1	20/26	0	2
Student B - 6th Grade Male	3	1	24/26	0	0
Student C - 7th Grade Male	3	0	26/26	0	0
Student D - 7th Grade Male	2	1	19/26	0	0
Student E - 6th Grade Female	2	2	25/26	0	0

Graph 1

Referrals Prior to the Intervention



Graph 2

Referrals Following the Intervention

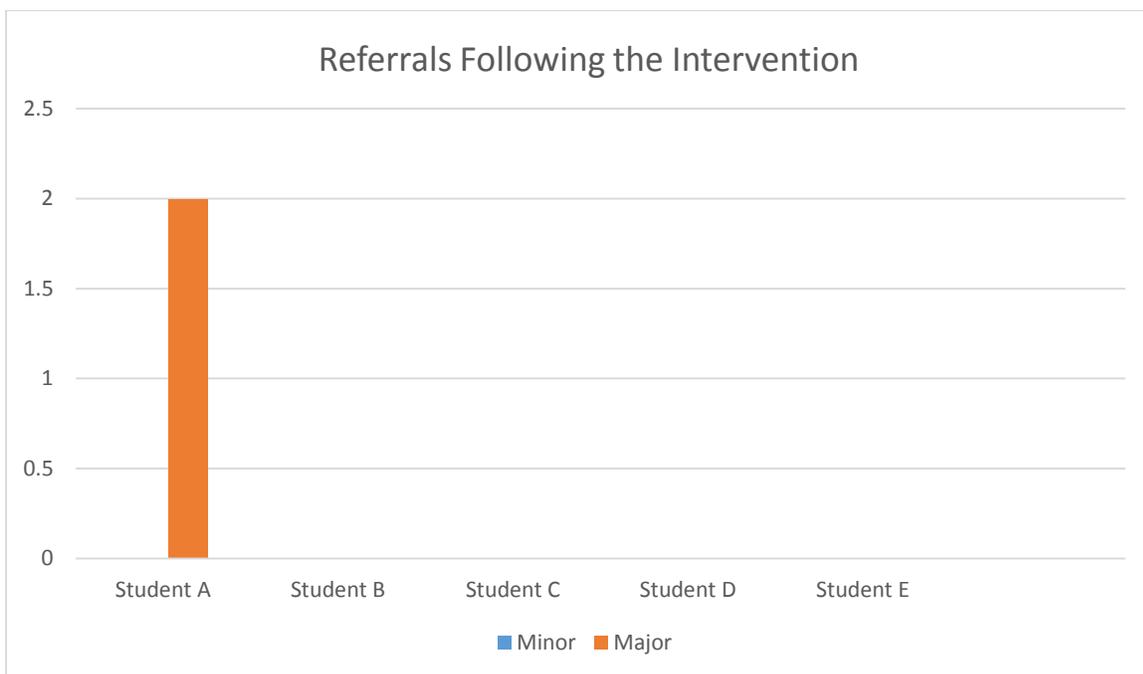


Table 2 below shows the mean and standard deviation for minor and major referrals for all five students who participated in the one-to-one student mentoring.

Table 2

Means and Standard Deviations for Minor and Major Referrals for the Group

Referral Type	Pre-Intervention	Post-Intervention
Minor	2.40 (.548)	0.00 (.000)
Major	1.00 (.707)	0.40 (.894)

Dependent t-tests were run to analyze the difference in the number of minor and major office referrals prior to and after the intervention. Results showed a significant difference in minor referrals [$t(4) = 9.798, p < .01$] and no significant difference in major referrals [$t(4) = 1.177, p > .05$]. The null hypothesis was supported in terms of major referrals and rejected in regarding minor referrals. Students were referred to the office for minor reasons a significantly fewer number of times following the intervention. These results and their implications will be discussed in the following chapter.

CHAPTER V

DISCUSSION

This study was designed to examine the impact that one-to-one student mentoring had on decreasing negative student behavior. Many students who demonstrate a high frequency of negative behavior also perform poorly academically. It is because of this correlation that schools must develop strategies to assist students who fall into this category. The original hypothesis was that one-to-one student mentoring using the “Check-In/Check-Out” system would have no effect on the number of minor and major referrals for negative student behavior. This hypothesis was supported in terms of major referrals finding no significant difference but not supported for minor referrals as the results did show a significant difference.

Implications of Results

The “Check-In/Check-Out” (CICO) system was shown to have a significant impact on the number of minor referrals the students received. The results in this study exceed those of Swoszowski et al. (2013). In their study, they saw a reduction of 30% to 60% in negative student behavior. It is to be noted that in Swoszowski et al.’s study the negative student behaviors were not categorized into major and minor.

In this study, major referrals were shown to have no significant decline as a result of the intervention. Four of the five students who participated in CICO did not receive a major referral for the duration of the study; however, one student did receive major referrals and actually received more. This students’ actions had a dramatic impact on the results of the study. CICO was shown to be effective as a positive one-to-one student mentoring strategy. Sharing these

results with the school's faculty can help to develop a system for those students whose behaviors are not managed with traditional PBIS methods.

Theoretical Consequences

The results of this study indicate that CICO serves to reduce minor negative student behavior. This may be defined as tardiness, class disruptions, incomplete or missing work, and improper use of technology. CICO works most effectively when the students have a relationship with the adult that they are meeting with. This may require staff and teachers to work outside of their contracted time in order to meet with these students, therefore creating a conflict with their contract.

Another consequence that may exist is that if these meetings take place during the school day, then the staff or teacher involved will require schedule accommodations in order to meet with their assigned student in the morning and afternoon. This will affect class schedules, duty rosters, and student schedules. Students will need to be given accommodations in order to meet with their CICO mentor. Ultimately these sacrifices and changes may be for the overall good of the student and school, but these consequences still require thought.

Threats to Validity

The study's validity was threatened both internally and externally. The study's internal validity is brought in question in regards to the lack of diversity in the candidates participating in the CICO strategy. Most of the students who were selected were male and all were African American. This is due to the fact that it was mostly males that were both recommended for the intervention and met the qualifications of the study. In addition, the school used in the research is

predominately African American and, therefore, the students were as well. These factors, though out of the control of the researcher, are a threat to the overall validity of the study.

The study experienced external validity threats due to events beyond the control of the researcher and took place outside of the study. The school's guidance department instituted a character education program to teach students the proper way to act in tough situations and to help reduce the amount of negative behavior in the school. This program may have had an impact on the results in this study and therefore is an external threat to the validity of the study. In addition to the character education program, the school also has a PBIS program that rewards students for positive behavior. The students in this study may have been inspired to act in a positive way based on the rewards established by the PBIS committee. Though CICO is a system designed to work with both character education and PBIS programs, there is no way to determine one hundred percent that the CICO intervention was the cause of the decline in minor negative behavior actions.

Connections to Previous Studies

In a study conducted in 2002 by Epstein and Sheldon, the relationship between student behavior and family and community involvement was analyzed. Epstein and Sheldon theorized that with more family and community involvement activities, the number of incidents requiring disciplinary action would decrease. This was particularly true with activities that increased parental involvement and volunteering. This further strengthens the findings of this research study where the development of positive student and faculty relationships leads to the decline of negative student behavior.

In a study conducted in 2010 by Luiselli, Putnam, Handler, and Feinberg, the effects of whole school positive behavior supports on student discipline and academics were investigated.

It was found that positive behavior supports, including student mentoring, were effective in not only decreasing negative student behavior but also in increasing academic performance as measured by standardized tests. This is directly in line with the research presented with this study as the use of CICO is intended to reduce the amount of negative student behavior but ultimately to increase student academic performance through the change of culture in the classroom and school.

Implications to Further Research

This study raises questions that may be answered through further research. One of these questions is whether the implementation of CICO has a greater effect on minor or major negative behavior incidents. With a larger sample, over a longer period of time, the results of a further study may help to answer this question.

Further study of CICO in schools that do not have character education or PBIS may help to determine the overall effectiveness that this one-on-one mentoring has with students who exhibit frequent negative student behavior. As a result of the environment in which this study occurred, the effectiveness and validity is called into question. It is therefore necessary to find an environment that will allow for fewer variables and factors that influence the study.

Conclusions and Summary

The purpose of this study was to determine the effect, if any, that one-on-one student mentoring strategies like CICO have on negative student behavior. Although it was found in this study that CICO does not have any significant impact on major incidents of negative student behavior, it was shown through the results that CICO does have a significant effect on reducing the number of minor incidents of negative student behavior. This study reminds educators that developing positive relationships with students will lead to an increase in positive behavior that

is conducive to an effective classroom where student learning is the priority. It is only once we have achieved this learning environment that teachers can begin to focus on creating engaging, rigorous, and differentiated lessons.

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