ETC 693 Master Project

Social Emotional Learning and Classroom Meetings

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I give permission to City University to store and use this MIT Project for teaching purposes.

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Abstract

This researcher studied the effect weekly classroom meetings had on classroom climate. The participants included nineteen second-grade students in a Seattle public school over a one-month period. Students led and participated in a weekly meeting regarding social and emotional behaviors amongst peers. The goal of the meetings was to increase student responsibility for their actions thereby creating a more positive classroom climate. Assessments included exit tickets, journals, observations, and questionnaires.

Introduction

Student to student collaboration has increasingly been an important component in creating a positive classroom climate. Educators are being challenged with incorporating student to student collaboration into their curriculum in order to give students the opportunity to work together and learn from each other (Tinzmann, Jones, Fennimore, Bakker, Fine, & Pierce, 1990) Learning strategies such as think, pair, share and project-based learning are two examples of student to student collaboration that group students together and encourage shared learning.

Along with shared learning, student to student collaboration may include shared social responsibility, which can be explored through classroom meetings. Students who participate in classroom meetings may have more strategies for problem solving and are less likely to participate in act of physical or verbal violence (Edwards & Mullis, 2003). Through the implementation of weekly classroom meetings, students may become more socially and emotionally empathetic toward their peers as their sense of classroom trust and community increases (VandenBerg, 2018).

Dilemma

The problem was that students were not engaged in consistent social emotional learning, and therefore were not taking responsibility for contributing to a positive classroom climate. Students did not have a platform in which to air grievances, ask questions, discuss issues, or collaborate among their peers.

Rationale

The researcher wants to create a more positive learning community through the implementation of social emotional learning. The researcher hopes to establish a classroom

community that fosters learning and student engagement while increasing positive relationships between the teacher and student as well as student to student ("Education Comps," 2014). Students who do not receive adequate social emotional learning have a higher rate of inappropriate behaviors and more absenteeism (Dabbs, 2013).

Literature Review

Classroom climate

Classroom climate is an important factor that affects student learning. Students may learn better when they see their learning environment as a positive and supportive one. An environment where students feel a sense of belonging, where they trust those around them and where they feel like they can take a risk, where they can be challenged and ask questions is a positive learning space. When students have a safe space that encourages feedback and opportunities to build social skills, they are better equipped to be successful.

Educators have the ability to regulate the circulation and construction of knowledge. In a classroom where students feel included they are more likely to volunteer different perspectives and thereby participate in rich discussions; whereas, if students feel that their contributions are not as valued as others, they will withdraw from the conversation diminishing the discussion for the entire class (Dusenberry, 2019). If this occurs, not only will learning decrease for that student who did not feel valued, but all students in the class will be without that student's contribution in effect making their learning less as well.

Safety

A safe learning environment requires physical, emotional, and intellectual security for students (Dusenberry, 2012). As our brain interprets novelty as a bit threatening (Bernard, 2010), we must consider what the first few days of school can be like for some students,

especially a young child. In a new setting children can be easily overwhelmed, which can lead to a feeling that is not safe. Not feeling safe can be prohibitive to learning (Bernard, 2010).

Predictable, consistent behaviors and routines lend themselves to a sense of safety. For a young student this may mean having a consistent, predictable relationship with a teacher and having their needs met. When discussing safety in a school setting, two types of safety to include are physical and emotional.

Physical safety. Physical safety is the measure of how safe a student feels their body is at school. Do students feel a health risk being at school due to bullying, substance abuse, gang related activity?

Bradshaw, Waasdorp, Debnam, and Johnson (2012), collected data from 58 Maryland high schools. The study was looking for an association between school climate and student outcomes. The data for this study comes from Maryland's Safe and Supportive Schools Initiative (MDS3), which was a joint project of the Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE), Sheppard Pratt Health System, and Johns Hopkins University (Bradshaw, Waasdorp, Debnam, & Johnson, 2014). A central aspect of this study on school climate was safety. The study reflected a student's fundamental need to feel safe in school. It was noted that previous research had used individual items assessing physical safety as the only indicator of perception of school safety, the researchers suggested that bullying and substance use also played a role in student perceptions of safety. The findings from this study were consistent with prior research showing a link between bullying and aggression with poor school climate (Bradshaw et al., 2014).

Gang related activity can manifest inside the boundaries of a school campus. Gangs can be defined as a small group of people with a recognized leader whom band together, often for

criminal activity (Miller & Klein, n.d.). The National Gang Center stated, "Gangs, unchecked and unidentified in a school setting, often engage in threat and intimidation; physical and cyber bullying; fighting; recruiting; and criminal activities such as the introduction and use of weapons, assault, sex trafficking, vandalism, and illegal drug sales" (National Gang Center, 2019, p. 3). Students who engage in gang activity may bring those behaviors into their school community making school feel like an unsafe place for other students. Other considerations for physical safety include ambient noise, such as construction taking place nearby, a classroom that is either too warm or too cold to be comfortable, even classroom arrangement such as where desks are placed can create a physically unsafe feeling and have been shown inhibit a student's ability to learn (Physical Environment, 2019).

Emotional safety. Classroom meetings may be most welcome by students when the student has a sense of emotional safety. Emotional safety is "an experience in which one feels safe to express emotions, security, and confidence to take risks and feel challenged and excited to try something new" (National Center for Safe Supportive Learning Environments, 2019, para. 1). Matsumura, Slater and Crosson (2008) looked at specific teaching behaviors in relation to certain student behaviors. A positive classroom climate was defined as "one that promotes respectful, caring relationships, cooperation, and emotional safety (i.e., an environment where individuals express themselves and are not subjected to taunting or slighting remarks)" (Matsumura, Slater, & Crosson, 2008, p. 295). The researchers indicated that in 73% of their observations, teachers were respectful toward students and listened attentively to them during class discussions. The results showed that in 14.3% of the observations teachers were observed treating students in a

disrespectful manner such as talking over students and/or yelling at, humiliating, or insulting students. In the remaining 12.7% of the classes, teachers did not insult students but did not show much interest in student's contributions during class discussions. These teachers either interrupted students or simply did not acknowledge or respond to their contributions (Matsumura et al., 2008). Although this study showed that for the most part the teachers observed were fairly positive toward and with their students there is still room for improvement.

Educators are continually challenged to show student growth while in their classrooms. Sieberer-Nagler (2015) looked at classroom climate as a social climate that influences student growth and behavior. A positive classroom climate was defined as feeling safe, respectful, welcoming, and supportive of student learning (Sieberer-Nagler, 2015). The authors indicated that meeting mutual needs and changing counter-productive feelings was a component of an emotionally safe learning environment. Sieberer-Nagler stated, "Meeting mutual needs creates a good partnership between the teacher and the student" (Sieberer-Nagler, 2015, p. 166). Sieberer-Nagler also indicated that the feelings of teachers are important as it sets the tone for the entire class. Therefore, it becomes important to for teachers to change negative feelings such as frustration and to look for positive feelings and develop empathy, putting themselves in the mindset of their students. Changing counterproductive feelings can help teachers to see things more clearly and have positive interaction between themselves and their students (Sieberer-Nagler, 2015).

Dusenberry (2012) recommended that educators be conscious of their school and their classroom. She questioned the climate of the rest of the school, advising that some schools felt like prisons where students feel like that cannot even talk or where students appear to be overly compliant. In order to create a climate of learning and respect educators must set up their

classrooms to be welcoming and well-organized and work with other teachers and administrators to encourage positive interactions between students (Bucholz & Sheffler, 2009). Dusenberry stated, "If you want students to be interactive and engaged in your class, what happens at school after they leave your class also matters" (Dusenberry, 2012, para. 11). Learning occurs when there is a sense of safety and respect (Cohen, Cardillo, & Pickeral 2011).

Collaboration

An effective classroom management plan can help promote a collaborative learning community (Watkins, 2005). "By creating a productive and engaging class environment, or climate, a teacher increases the probability for student success and discourages disruptive behavior setting the tone for the entire year" (Watkins, 2005, p. 49). There are several types of collaboration including teacher collaboration, parent/teacher collaboration, and student to student collaboration.

Teacher Collaboration

Teaching can be emotionally and physically exhausting. Teachers who work in teams and share responsibilities may feel less stress. It has been shown that proponents of teacher collaboration believe that teachers working together can be a positive impact on each other and contribute naturally to school improvement (Arkansas State University, 2017).

In a study of over 9,000 teachers in 336 Miami-Dade County public schools over the course of 2 years, it was found that on average, collaboration quality was causally related to student achievement (Ronfeldt, Farmer, McQueen, & Grissom, 2015). It was noted that "Teachers and schools that engage in better quality collaboration have better achievement gains in math and reading. Moreover, teachers improve at greater rates when they work in schools with better collaboration quality" (Ronfeldt, et al., 2015, para. 1). Teaching teams that prepared

together for instruction, practiced co-teaching, observation of one another, and grouping students flexibly between classrooms for particular instructional purposes had better overall student achievement (Ronfeldt et al., 2015).

Parent/Teacher Collaboration

Another important component of collaboration is between the parents (caregiver, guardian) and the teaching staff. There has been much research about the advantages of parental involvement in every stage of a student's learning experience, starting with young children who have adults who read to them as well as older students that have homework supervision (Newchurch, 2017). The question has always been how do we as educators get families more involved? How do we help them feel comfortable in our classrooms or in our schools? Teachers and administrators are providing more opportunities for parents to volunteer in the classroom, planning family math or science nights, creating class blogs to keep caregivers up to date on classroom happenings. But is all this working? One factor to keep in mind is the parent's beliefs about parental involvement.

Hornby & LaFaele (2011) noted, "Parents who believe that their role is only to get children to school, which then takes over responsibility for their education, will not be willing to be actively involved with either school-based or home-based parent involvement." (p. 39). For some parents, they may have a lack of confidence because of a language barrier or because of their own negative experiences with school. Another barrier could be if the parent feels they are not academically prepared to help their student. Hornby & LaFaele (2011) also noted that teachers with positive attitudes towards parental involvement, who actively invite parents to help, increase the effectiveness of that parental involvement.

Student to Student Collaboration

Peer learning, or student to student instruction is a type of collaborative learning that involves students working in pairs or small groups. This type of collaboration helps students discuss concepts or find solutions to problems. Student to student collaboration is a key element to a successful classroom climate (Sparks, 2017). Educational experiences that are active, social, contextual, engaging, and student-owned lead to deeper learning (Sparks, 2017). Students benefit from collaborative learning by developing higher-level thinking, greater oral communication, self-management, and leadership skills (Cornell University, 2019). Students who engage in peer collaboration tend to take more responsibility for their learning which in turns raises their self-esteem (Goss & Sonnemann, 2017).

Collaborative learning between students is also being supported by collaborative standards. Both the Common Core State Standards for reading and math as well as the Next Generation Science Standards have been implemented by school districts to weave collaborative learning into their programs (Sparks, 2017). These standards call for students to develop group problem-solving and collaboration skills (Sparks, 2017).

Collaboration has become a necessity in both the classroom and the workplace (Sparks, 2017). A survey by the Association of American Colleges and Universities found that more than 80 percent of midsize or larger employers look for collaboration skills in new hires (Sparks, 2017). However, less than 40 percent of new graduates were prepared to work in teams (Sparks, 2017). Collaboration does require leadership in order for students to feel supported and represented.

Leadership

In general, leadership is necessary to ensure goals are met, needs are fulfilled, and operations run smoothly. Leadership is integrated in most every facet of living, whether it be in the workplace, the family, society, or school. When in a school setting, leadership can take many forms, such as student leadership, teacher leadership, transactional leadership, and transformational leadership.

Student Leadership

Research has shown that students generally do better academically if they are engaged in the process of learning (University of Washington, 2019). When students feel like a contributing member of their classroom, when their voices are heard, and their ideas brought to the attention of others they take responsibility for their own learning. In order for students to feel like an equitable member, educators must look at the contributions of all students, we must have inclusive student leadership (Edwards, 2018). Another way to promote student leadership is to have class meetings. Class meetings give students a chance to bring up topics that may concern them and also gives students a chance to collaborate on solving these issues. Solving problems together in an emotionally safe environment also contributes to a positive classroom climate (Kamb, 2012). These student leaders also rely on a strong teacher leader to facilitate an environment where they feel valued.

Teacher Leadership

Teacher leaders have many responsibilities, such as supporting student leaders they also are they facilitators of learning and teaching to their students. Furthermore, they are mentors for their colleagues and experts in their fields. Teacher leaders contribute their schools by being

active participants in their schools Parent Teacher Student Association, school committees and leading team training all of which to school improvement (Kilinça, 2014).

Transactional Leadership

Leadership was once led by mostly transactional leaders or those whose followers agreed with, accepted, or complied with the leader in exchange for praise, rewards, and resources or the avoidance of disciplinary action (Bass, Avolio, Jung, & Berson, 2003). A transactional leader teacher would offer rewards and recognition when students successfully carried out their roles and assignments (Bass et al., 2003). In contrast, transformational leadership is often considered a type of shared or distributed leadership (Hallinger, 2003). Rather than one person, the teacher coordinating and controlling the classroom climate, transformational leadership focuses on stimulating change through student participation (Hallinger, 2003.)

Transformational Leadership

Harris and Muijs (2003) suggested that teacher leaders who employ transformational leadership were so well received by their students that the students had a higher rate of academic performance (Harris & Muijs, 2003) But what is transformational leadership? A transformational leader provides a sense of mission and vision and presents it with optimism (Verma & Krishnan, 2013). These leaders excite their followers and inspire them, acting as a role model. It is noted that a transformational leader provides individual consideration through providing continuous feedback and mentoring (Pounder, 2006). This type of leader stimulates students to rethink old ways of doing things and find new and interesting ways to challenge themselves (Pounder, 2006).

A school leader such as a principal or administrator is considered one of the most influential factors in the development of the quality and character of a school. A principal's

leadership style and skills can impact a variety of teacher characteristics, such as job satisfaction and efficacy as well as engagement levels and academic emphasis (Allen, Grigsby, & Peters, 2015). School leaders are also tasked with closing the achievement gaps between the various sub-populations and identifying factors that may affect student achievement. It could be argued that a principal's leadership skills may not directly impact student outcome, but they impact the principal's relationship with their teachers and unhappy teachers can directly impact student outcome, thus creating a less than positive classroom climate (Allen, et al., 2015).

Classroom Management

Classroom management has two general purposes. The first is to aid in students' academic and social growth and the second is to provide a quiet, calm, accessible environment for learning (Postholm, 2013). Educators are tasked with challenging, supporting and requesting effort from their students while meeting their school and district standards. Classroom management is more however, than a teacher having control over students. Classroom management is a system created by the teacher and students together to come to an agreement over how best to learn and how to best to treat and support each other.

Research indicates that rituals and routines, such as how students enter the classroom and what they are expected to do upon arrival serve as cornerstones of classroom management (Culturally Responsive Classroom Management Strategies, 2008). A well-managed classroom where desks and tables are arranged to support cooperative learning and educators who allow for student ownership, student choice, conflict resolution while holding student accountable for controlling their behavior can create an environment where students flourish as well as teachers (Culturally Responsive Classroom Management Strategies, 2008). Classroom management relies on routines and social emotional learning for support. Routines provide the structure

necessary to develop self-help skills and social emotional learning provides the tools to use those self-help skills.

Routines

An established daily routine provides three substantial benefits for students. The first being an increased sense of safety, the second is increased independence and third the development of positive habits (McLerran, 2018). Students who are allowed to take part in daily routines also have a clearer understanding of what is expected of them (McLerran, 2018). "When students understand what type of behavior is appropriate and what the exact repercussions will be for rule-breaking, they are less likely to overstep or slip"(McLerran, 2018, para. 4). Establishing a regular routine in the classroom can decrease behavioral issues.

When educators can focus on preventative rather than reactive procedures they are better able to establish a positive classroom environment where they can focus on students who are behaving appropriately instead of spending valuable learning time on students who continually disrupt the class (Oliver, Wehby, & Reschly, 2011). In order to set up preventative procedures, an educator must find a way to effectively communicate not only to the class but within the class. Classroom meetings can serve to teach this type of communication and cooperation (Edwards & Mullins, 2003).

Classroom Meetings

Classroom meetings can aid in developing a sense of trust and a sense of responsibility among students (Sittler, 2006). Student participation increases as students show more respect and gain social interaction skills necessary to contribute to a positive classroom environment (Sittler, 2006). According to Sittler, students showed an increase in self-monitoring and self-

regulating once regular meeting were implemented into the schedule. Sittler also noted an effective transition from teacher-regulated behaviors to student-regulated behaviors.

According to Dabbs (2013), classroom meetings have been shown to, "set the tone for respectful learning, establish a climate of trust, motivate students to feel significant, create empathy and encourage collaboration and support social/emotional and academic learning." (para 4). Meetings increase student attendance, decrease bullying and create a more inviting environment for student participation. Students will start to take responsibilities for their own actions and solve their own conflicts with the skills learned through regular meetings (Dabbs, 2013). In order to have an effective classroom meeting where everyone's voices are heard and students feel respected, most if not all students must participate.

Student participation

Student participation is essential because learning is a whole class experience, it is not just between one student and one teacher. In whole group learning, such as in a classroom meeting, students have the ability to learn from each other and therefore better understand what is being taught (Cimmino, 2007).

Cimmino also noted that when students shared their opinions with their classmates that the student who shared benefited as well. Students who participate tend to increase their appreciation for the class (Cimmino, 2007). Effective student participation relies on students having the correct tools to manage a conversation (Washington University in St. Louis, 2009). These tools are gained through social emotional learning.

Social emotional learning

Social emotional learning is a process where students can gain the knowledge and skills necessary to understand and manage their own emotions (National Education Association

[NEA], 2015). This type of learning is based on a concept that the best, most effective learning occurs when a student feels supported and valued, in turn this makes the learning more challenging, engaging, and meaningful (NEA, 2015).

Teachers who attend to and invest in their student's social and emotional skills see an increase in academic achievement while seeing a decrease in problem behaviors (Elias, Zins, Weissberg, Frey, Greenberg, Haynes, Kessler, Schwab-Stone, & Shriver, 1997). Educators note an improvement in the quality of their relationships with their students as the students become more productive and respectful of their environment (Elias, et al.,1997)

Conscientiousness, emotional stability, openness, and agreeability are all indicators of a person's ability to adjust to their environment. Social emotional learning is a key component of developing these abilities in young students (Brotto, 2018). Brotto stated, "social and emotional learning (SEL) is critical to a child's development, as it directly correlates to success and happiness as an adult" (para 2). For most students, school is the one place where they are given the opportunity to learn these core abilities before they launch into the world as adult members of society (Brotto, 2018).

Question

Will implementing classroom meetings in conjunction with social emotional learning improve students' behavior and the classroom climate?

Purpose

The purpose of this study is to understand in what ways holding weekly classroom meetings will impact students' behavior and the classroom climate**.**

Methodology

The purpose of this qualitative action research study was to inform the reader of how the implementation of social emotional learning combined with regularly scheduled classroom meeting would increase student to student collaboration.

Context

Research included eighteen second grade students at an elementary school in suburban Seattle. The neighborhood was considered upper-middle class with a relatively low crime rate.

Participants

All students in the classroom in which I was conducting my student teaching were included in the study. The class was comprised of second grade students aged 7 and 8 years old. There were eight male and ten female students in the class, seventeen of these students had two parents present in their household. Fifteen students had two working parents, seven students attend before and after-school care. There were two English language learner (ELL) students, both of whom Chinese was their first language and there was one student who had an individualized education plan (IEP) with accommodations made for proximity to the teacher, and occasional scribing.

Ethical guidelines and protocols were followed including obtaining informed consent from the participants conveyed in a manner that was understandable for young students. Parent and/or Guardian consent was also obtained. Students and their parent and/or guardian were made aware there would be no punishment for non-participation as well as no reward for participation. Students were made aware they could discontinue participation at any time and their work would not be part of the published study if they so choose.

Intervention

The intervention would have consisted of weekly classroom meetings ("Class Meetings," 2001) to discuss actions that were successful during the week, perhaps academic achievements or positive behavior and actions that might need improving upon, for example students excluding others or the environment being unkempt. Students would have been called upon for ideas on how to remedy problems and provide feedback. The teacher would have initiated the meeting reminding all students that the classroom is a safe space to be heard and to set the tone for a positive interaction between all members of the class by reminding students of our class charter with our agreed upon ways to speak to one another.

Every Monday morning there would have been a lesson on social emotional learning, to include topics such as kindness, mindful listening, cooperation, and "I" statements. Students would have been given the opportunity to turn and talk to a partner about what they learned; partners changed weekly as to increase student bonding. Throughout the week students would have been encouraged to write down the name of a student showing kindness to another student to place in the "random acts of kindness" jar, acts such as helping another student with classwork, being an attentive listener, inviting a new friend to sit with them during lunch were examples of acts to be reported.

Every Friday afternoon a class meeting would have been held. The teacher would have initiated the meeting asking if any student had something they would like to discuss, either positive or negative. This would have been the opportunity for students to work on creating a positive classroom climate together. At the end of the meeting, the "random acts of kindness jar" would have been emptied and names read, students would have been recognized for making our classroom and school environment a more positive place for everyone.

The intervention was to take place over the course of four weeks. Monday of week one, the teacher would have introduced the topic to the students and a mock classroom meeting would have taken place with the teacher and the mentor teacher role modeling how this meeting may play out. A social emotional questionnaire would have been administered, the "random acts of kindness" jar would have been introduced and the first lesson on social emotional learning was presented. The lesson would have consisted of reading the book, "How full is your bucket?" by Tom Rath and Mary Reckmeyer. At the end of the first week on Friday afternoon the first actual classroom meeting would have been held. Teacher and students would have come to the carpet and sat in a circle. The teacher would welcome everyone to the meeting and started the meeting off with a class compliment of something she recognized during the week, for example when Davis invited Peter to join him at lunch. The teacher would then have asked if anyone would like to share a concern, problem, or compliment. The teacher would have acted as a scribe writing comments on the board. When a problem was presented, the teacher would have facilitated the students with finding solutions and all ideas would have been written on the board. At the end of the meeting the teacher would have emptied the "random acts of kindness" jar recognizing students who went out of their way to be kind to a fellow student.

Weeks two, three and four would have followed the same format. Week two's social emotional learning lesson was to be based on mindful listening (Cushing, 2018). Week three's social emotional learning lesson was to be based on cooperation ("Cooperation Skills Lesson Plan and Activity," 2019). Week four's social emotional learning was to be based on 'I statements" ("I Statements Worksheet for Elementary Educators," 2019). The intervention would have been concluded with the students retaking the pre-intervention questionnaire as a follow-up.

Data Gathering Instruments/Assessments

To address the research question regarding how holding a weekly classroom meeting in conjunction with social emotional learning might improve students' behavior while creating a more positive classroom climate, observational data (Appendix E) would have been gathered during the classroom meetings. The teacher would have observed who was participating and what was being presented. The teacher would have kept notes on meetings to determine if similar situations were occurring each week. At the start of the intervention students would have been given a questionnaire (Appendix D) to measure their current social and emotional comfort levels within the classroom. This questionnaire would have been repeated at the conclusion of the intervention to determine the students social and emotional growth as a result of the intervention. Students would have been asked to keep a journal during the intervention to record their thoughts about the meetings, what was successful, if anything were not addressed that should have been and what they may want to discuss at the next meeting. The journals were to be a two-way communication between the student and the teacher. The teacher would read journals after the Friday meeting and record comments for the students, and the journals would have been returned on Monday. The journals would also be used for writing prompts to serve as student artifacts for data collection.

Data would have also been assessed through written inquiry in the form of exit tickets (Appendices A, B, and C) to address the research question regarding students leading the meetings increasing a positive classroom climate. Students would have been asked about their comfort when a classmate was allowed to address topics of concern, if they themselves were interested in leading a discussion and if they felt their classroom was a positive learning environment, why or why not. The use of multiple forms of data collection would have increased

credibility as the reader gained a more complete understanding of the phenomena being studied ("What is credibility in qualitative research and how do we establish it?," 2019).

Assessment #1: Questionnaire (Appendix D). Students would have completed a classroom questionnaire regarding issues they perceive with fellow classmates, classroom expectations and their level of comfort expressing themselves within the classroom. The purpose of this assessment was to measure social emotional growth from the beginning of the intervention to the end.

Assessment #2: Journals. During the four-week period students would have kept journals in which to record their thoughts about the meetings, what was successful, if anything were not addressed that should have been and what they may want to discuss at the next meeting. This assessment would have indicated tools students had gained through social emotional learning. This student artifacts would also have aided in planning the next week's classroom meeting for possible topics of discussion.

Assessment #3: Exit Ticket (Appendix C). During the fourth week, after the social emotional lesson regarding "I statements" students would have completed an exit ticket writing three examples of "I statements". This assessment would have shown the student's ability to advocate for their needs and express their feelings and/or emotions.

Validity: in order for a study to be valid, the following criteria must be met credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability (Hendricks, 2017). In order to meet these criteria, the researcher would have engaged in prolonged observation (Lincoln & Guba, 1985), collecting as much data possible to add to the credibility of the study. The researcher would have engaged the students in member checks to determine if their responses were being correctly interpreted in order to increase the confirmability of the research (Rossman & Rallis, 2012). The

pre and post questionnaire data would have been triangulated with the exit tickets data to provide information regarding how the classroom climate would have improved during the intervention and at what rate (Anderson & Herr, 2009). The researcher would have debriefed with peers to get a fresh perspective and possibly new ideas to keep the study moving forward (Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Rossman & Rallis, 2012). The action research study would have been continually evaluated to understand what was working and what was not working and make changes as necessary to benefit the students involved in the study.

Results

In March 2020, all public and private schools in Washington State closed for the remainder of the 2019-2020 school year in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. As a result, I was unable to conduct my study and collect the data needed to complete my research project.

Based on my literature review, I would have expected the questionnaire (appendix D) administered to students pre and post intervention to show a significant amount of social emotional growth. Students who participated in regular classroom meetings combined with social emotional lessons exhibited more desired behaviors in comparison with students who were not offered those same opportunities (Edwards & Mullis, 2003). Edwards and Mullis (2003) noted that there was a decrease in acts of physical or verbal aggression.

It would have been expected that students would feel safe writing in their personal journals about what they had learned through the social emotional lessons provided for them. The writing prompt data may have shown that students increased their tools and strategies for problem solving. Edwards and Mullis (2003) noted that students showed an increase in the number of positive strategies for problem solving.

The exit tickets (Appendices A, B, & C) would provide data related to the students' level of perceived emotional safety. It would have been expected to see an increase in the student's ability to self-advocate regarding their personal needs and classroom/community needs. Cohen (2011) indicated that learning occurs best when there is a sense of safety and respect within the classroom.

This study might have shown that weekly classroom meetings combined with social emotional learning would not only have caused an increase in positive behavior and student to student collaboration while decreasing negative or aggressive behaviors but also a general increase in kindness all around. Kindness happens when students feel respected by their teachers and their classmates and when they feel that what they have to contribute is important (Elias et al., 1997). A school community that encourages social emotional learning shows its members that they are cared for and supported and that they matter (Elias et al., 1997). When students feel emotionally supported and important, they flourish academically and are in general kinder to those around them (Bernard, 2010).

Discussion

Conclusions

My anticipated data would have shown the impact of social emotional learning on a student's academic well-being. The data from the exit tickets would have shown the social and emotional growth happening on a weekly basis. The data from both the pre and post questionnaires would have supported the exit ticket data as evidence of sustained growth. The data retrieved from the students' journal in conjunction with the data obtained during observation would have supported the effectiveness of classroom meetings on the students' emotional well-being in the classroom. The anticipated data would have supported the intervention showing the

benefits of social-emotional learning combined with weekly class meetings would increase the positivity of the classroom climate.

Implications

The findings of this study would have indicated to educators the vital importance of taking care of our students emotionally as well as academically. It is widely understood that educators have the ability to regulate the instruction being put forth towards our youth. Understanding the ramifications that social emotional instruction can have on a student not only while in school but in preparing them for a work and family life should make incorporating this subject into every curriculum a must. As Brotto (2018) indicated, social emotional learning directly correlates to happiness and success in adulthood.

Limitations

The study could have been limited by the time of day that the classroom meetings were held. It is possible that having a Friday afternoon meeting may have found the students to be without energy or generally disinterested in coming together as a group to discuss social emotional issues.

Recommendations

To further the study in regard to the merits of classroom meetings, more information regarding how to implement meetings could have been included in the study. The study would have benefited from additional information regarding the importance of classroom routines and their relationship to a student's perceived emotional safety.

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Appendix A

Exit Ticket

Name_____Date_____

When my classmate brings up a topic for our class meeting I feel

_____

Because_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

I <u>would/would not</u> like to lead a class meeting. (circle one)

If I were to lead a class meeting I would want to talk about

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

Appendix B

Exit Ticket

Name_____Date_____

Do you think that class meetings are helping our classroom become a more positive place to learn? Why or why not?

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

Have you noticed yourself or your classmates being more kind to others? If so, give an example

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

Appendix C

Exit Ticket

Name_____Date_____

Please write 3 "I" statements.
Example, "*I feel* proud of you *when you* invite a new friend to sit with you at lunch *because* you are being kind."

1. _____

_____

_____

_____

2. _____

_____

_____

_____

3. _____

_____

_____

_____

_____

Appendix D

Name_____Date_____

Social and emotional learning assessment

1. Are there any problems that you are having with any of your classmates in P1B? If so, please tell me about it without using the person's name

   _____

   _____

   _____

   _____

   _____

2. Do you feel our classroom charter is fair and represents how you would like everyone to behave?

   _____

   _____

   _____

   _____

3. Do you feel comfortable talking to your classmates or a teacher about things that are bothering you in our class?

   _____

   _____

   _____

Appendix E

Observational Checklist

Student Name	Action being observed