How Does Classroom Management Affect Student learning and Motivation?

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December 16, 2012

University of New England

EDU 690: Action Research

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Abstract

Student motivation and the connection to classroom management, in a physical education classroom, at Signal Hill Elementary School have been discussed previously by the classroom educators. Often, the educators wondered what variables factored into discipline problems. The students in this study responded that various triggers affect classroom discipline and how classroom discipline affects student motivation. The triggers varied from lessons not being challenging enough, to the need to reiterate expectations and consequences on a frequent basis. Methodology such as formative evaluations, focus group interviews, and an attitude survey were used in the data collection process. The findings revealed that parental approval was the primary reason for succeeding in school, by the students surveyed. Additionally, teacher approval also scored very high, by the same group of respondents. Students were also surveyed about their interests and out of school activities. The purpose of this was to become more knowledgeable about the students and to create a stronger connection to them. It is concluded, that students who are intrinsically motivated are not affected by the triggers that result in other students disrupting instruction. Likewise, the development of challenging, yet not overwhelming lessons, also reduce the number of triggers that contribute to classroom disruptions.

Key words: *elementary school, discipline, motivation, triggers, attitude*

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Introduction

Background

Research conducted by Robert Chase, a kindergarten through fifth grade physical education teacher. The study was led by Mr. Chase during scheduled physical education classes and during remediation/enrichment time at the latter part of the school day. The respondents were students in grades three through five at Signal Hill Elementary School. Signal Hill is part of the Prince William County Public School District in Manassas, VA. The elementary school enrollment of 650 students, includes an English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) program, and multiple special education programs – Autism (two classrooms), Severely Disabled (SD), and one Moderate Cognitive Impaired (MoCI) classroom.

Problem Statement

Since student motivation and classroom discipline go hand-in-hand, teachers at every level must ensure that their learning environment is conducive to student learning. The desire to have such a learning environment to promote student motivation should be a natural goal for teachers regardless of the grade level/age of the students. According to Anderman and Anderman, "when teachers create environments that are not conducive to student's needs, motivational problems can be quite serious" (Anderman & Anderman, 2010, p.171). Students who are actively engaged in the classroom will likely not have the desire to misbehave and disrupt the environment. Additionally, students who believe that their teacher is truly interested in their likes and dislikes; their interests and hobbies; generally are motivated to be more successful in school. When students are motivated, they will be less likely to engage in disruptive behaviors. "During the elementary school years....it is easier for teachers to redirect students back to the task at hand" (Anderman & Anderman, 2010, p. 174).

Rationale for Study

At the time of the study, Signal Hill had various behavior interventions in place, primarily the *1-2-3 Magic* classroom program (http://www.123magic.com/) and the school's Think & Write and the Respect Violation interventions. The Think & Write was a process where a disruptive student would have to write or, in the case of the lower elementary students, draw their behavior that resulted in them having to fill out the Think & Write form. They also needed to write/draw the expected behavior, so that they will not receive the Respect Violation. The Respect Violation is a form that is filled out by the teacher, stating the misbehavior by the students and the interventions used. The form then is sent home where it was signed by the parent(s) and the student, then returned to the teacher the next day. The Respect Violation form then stays in that students cumulative file. The desire to determine additional strategies to reduce the amount of triggers in the classroom and to further motivate the students was the predominant reason for the study conducted by Mr. Chase.

Participants

The primary researcher has been teaching physical education for 19 years, all of which have been in the elementary (K-5) level. Mr. Chase has first-hand experience with working with general education as well as special education students, as well as having experience with the special education individualize education program (IEP) process. Mr. Chase works closely with a team of educators to teach, promote and maintain school wide expectations.

Student participation included 116 students in grades three through five. The focus group that was interviewed consisted of two fourth grade girls and one fourth grade boy; and one fifth grade girl and one fifth grade boy. Three white and two Hispanic students made up the group's demographics. Students were chosen for the group based on teacher recommendations. Aside from the focus group interview, data was collected throughout the study during regularly scheduled physical education

classes.

Research Questions

To direct the action research process, specific questions were comprised. Firstly, what are the dominant factors of student motivation and learning? Is parent/family approval a greater factor, in student achievement, than teacher approval? Secondly, how does classroom management affect student achievement and student learning? Finally, what are the specific triggers that can affect student behavior?

Hypotheses

It was hypothesized that students who are intrinsically motivated to succeed in class experience less classroom discipline issues than those students who experienced no intrinsic or extrinsic motivation. It was further hypothesized that student success in the classroom is directly linked to classroom management as well as teachers who developed lessons with their students' interests in mind, experience less classroom discipline issues as a whole.

Ethical Considerations

Administrative Approval. As an educator at a state public school, obtaining permission for the focus group and the formative assessments was only a matter of informing administrators of the intentions of the researcher and objectives of the program. There were no possible ethical concerns regarding the confidentiality of student data.

Parental Consent. Parents of study participants were contacted by the researcher prior to the implementation of the focus group interview to discuss the purpose of the interview and to ensure them that the responses would not affect student grades (Appendix A). They were also informed that while the group's primary goal was to increase student motivation, it was also being used as part of a graduate study to improve the physical education classroom. The consent letter was approved by

Signal Hill administration, and was to be signed and sent back to the researcher prior to the focus group interview.

A Review of the Literature

Teacher Roles – Motivating

Intrinsic and extrinsic motivation. In the classroom, motivation is related to self-concept or personal needs. Educators must motivate and energize the students, while sustaining that motivation. Classroom teachers will also seek to foster the climate through success in achieving school and personal goals. There are two categories of motivation: intrinsic and extrinsic. "Intrinsic motivation is a response to needs within the students. Extrinsic motivation is motivation from outside the learner and has to do with external rewards for the completion of a task" (Andruis, 2012). There are six strategies to motivating students to learn: capture student interest in the subject matter, highlight the relevance of the subject matter, help students maintain expectations for success, design the lesson to maintain interest and promote student success, express interest in the content and project enthusiasm, and provide feedback and rewards for patience (Andruis, 2012).

Three time phases. When planning a lesson, there are three time phases. The first is beginning a lesson. Two factors affect student motivation: attitude and needs. Attitude is the student's stance towards the teacher, subject matter, etc. Need is a force that leads the student to move in the direction of a goal. The second phase is during a lesson. During the lesson, stimulation and affect are two factors in motivation. Stimulation deals with holding a student's attention and involving them in the lesson. Affect deals with the student's feelings, values, concerns, etc. The last phase is ending a lesson. There are two motivational factors at the end of a lesson; competence and reinforcement. Competence is the degree of progress students perceive they have made.

Reinforcement is an event that changes subsequent behavior.

 Cooperative Learning as a Classroom

Cooperative learning. Cooperative learning is a strategy where small groups of students work together to maximize their learning. Within the framework of cooperative learning, all students are working toward the same goal and the students' communication skills are enhanced. The author of this article has four basic rules "during group work: every member was allowed equal opportunities to contribute ideas; members were to give and receive feedback; no member was allowed to take over the group; and information could not be written word for word from the text or from the person giving the information, but rather paraphrased to ensure complete comprehension" (McCracken, 2005).

Enhancing student motivation. Cooperative learning enhances student motivation, creativity, and understanding. Students who disrupt class usually do so as a result of not being on task, not challenged, and lack the confidence to complete a task successfully. In a cooperative learning group, the student who needs more of a challenge, this student can become a peer teacher for those students who are struggling in class. Students in this type of environment exhibit "more positive, tolerant and equal status interactions between members of the group and the class as a whole" (McCracken, 2005).

How to Motivate Students Without Losing Control of Your Class

Successful classroom management. What if a teacher's enthusiasm is contributing to students undesirable behavior? One of the techniques for successful classroom management is calmness. There are times when it pays to be enthusiastic and when to be calm, according to Michael Linsin. In this article, there are suggestions on when to be calm and when to be enthusiastic in the classroom. The following are suggestions when to be outwardly calm: during transitions, procedures, independent work, entering and leaving the classroom, and misbehavior. Likewise, there are suggestions on when to be enthusiastic: during lessons, when modeling, during read aloud/shared reading/guided reading,

storytelling, and during learning games/science experiments/special projects. All of these suggestions

are extremely helpful for teachers trying to balance between motivating students and classroom

discipline (Linsin, 2010).

The Four Cs of Successful Classroom Management

   Factors. One of the ways to establish a successful classroom environment is the

implementation of the four Cs: commendation, communication, consistency, and content. Among other

factors, consistent routines and procedures is an important part of classroom management. In the

classroom, establishing a one-to-one connection with the students, coupled with using praise, is a

valuable tool that promotes respect. The purpose of praising a student is to show interest in, to praise,

to encourage, and to describe the student's behavior. Complimenting those students who are

demonstrating desirable behavior often results in others demonstrating the same desirable behavior in

order to be praised. Providing either/or choices is a technique that is often used in the classroom that

affects the student who is disrupting class, rather than the whole class or the teacher (Reese, 2007).

   Communication. Communication skills are very important when establishing teacher-student

and teacher-parent relationships. Equally important is to ensure that the student who is misbehaving is

not embarrassed or humiliated in class. Usually, student motivation for misbehavior is attention

seeking. However, this can quickly escalate to a power struggle, or even worse, revenge. Some tools

that can reduce misbehavior include eye contact with the misbehaving student, establishing proximity

to the student, implementation of a two-strike system, and speaking to the parents as soon as the

behavior exhibits itself. Consistency, specifically routines and procedures, provide a solid foundation

for classroom management. When establishing procedures in the classroom, the teacher must explain,

model and demonstrate the behavior; practice the procedure; and reinforce and reteach until the

procedure becomes second nature.

Classroom Management Problems and Solutions

      Classroom management and discipline. Student apathy, negative attitudes, and inappropriate

behavior impedes student learning as well as causes a high level of stress for an educator. Without

classroom management and discipline, very little learning occurs in the classroom. A strong and

effective classroom management system helps students learn responsibility and self-control. Students

have certain needs that must be met in order for learning to occur.   Those needs are: physiological

satisfaction (hunger, thirst, etc.), safety (free from harm, psychological abuse), nurture (acceptance

from others, sense of belonging), sense of personal value (self-esteem, self-confidence), self-

actualization (realizing one's potential). A successful classroom management system helps ensure that

students are protected from physical harm, learning in a healthy environment, and protected from

psychological abuse. Factors outside the school can result in misbehavior (unstable home situations,

feelings of powerlessness, etc).

      Teacher influence. Additionally, misbehavior in the classroom is often a direct result of the

teacher. Insufficient modeling, low expectations of students, being the student's "buddy" instead of the

adult in charge, lack of consequences, and a child's lack of respect or pride in themselves and the

school. Some solutions for dealing with misbehavior include the teacher's body language, voice level,

gestures, and moving the student to the perimeter of the classroom, away from the attention of the

group. The most effective means of classroom management is being proactive. Creating an effective

learning environment (modeling, specific directions, and consistent action) is one of the first steps one

should take. Well-planned lessons, quick pacing/not spending too long on a task, appropriate variety of

activities, and assessing students are some of the ways to also create an effective learning environment.

Teachers expect students to be polite listeners and cooperative learners. Since teachers are also

expected to be role models, it only seems appropriate for teachers to model the same behavior with

students as well as fellow colleagues (Gordon, 2001).

Accountability and Discipline in Classroom Management: Case Study: Jarash – Jordan

  Major issues. Undesired behavior by students is considered one of the major issues to teachers in general, especially new teachers. In order to be a successful educator, applying control and discipline is imperative. Classroom management refers to routines used by educators to maintain order. Classroom discipline refers to strategies used by the educator to deal with inappropriate actions or behaviors by the student. In classroom discipline, various models are used. The Discipline Model ensures that the teacher is responsible for the classroom, and that a student does not have a right to disturb the classroom. This model enforces positive behavior and provides consequences for inappropriate behavior. The Traditional Model is based on monitoring student behavior, primarily inappropriate behaviors and actions.

  Student behaviors. Two questions were addressed in the study of student behaviors. The first dealt with behaviors investigated by new teachers. The second question looked at the strategies used by those teachers. The results of the study indicate that behaviors that relate to management of learning include: interruptions of teacher, lack of interest in material, refusal to participate, cheating, and not completing assignments. Behaviors that are related to management of students' behavior include: talking/joking during class, repeated requests, using the mobile phone, lying, theft, and damaging classroom property (Magableh & Hawamdeh, 2007).

  Proactive strategies such as being well prepared for the lesson, showing respect to the students, diversity in methods, and allowing students to express opinions, were used by teachers when misbehavior arose. Likewise, procedural strategies included: school discipline regulation, changing the student's seating arrangement, contacting parents, and following up with classroom consequences.

Teachers rarely agreed on the models of classroom discipline, most likely due to lack of pre-service training.

Classroom Behavior Management: A Dozen Common Mistakes and What to Do Instead

      Positive classroom atmosphere. Teachers are challenged daily to create and maintain a positive classroom atmosphere where all students are learning. Most inappropriate behavior is learned and usually occurs for a reason. Acknowledging this, teachers have a great deal of influence over student behavior. The most efficient way to eliminate misbehaviors is to prevent them from occurring. The twelve mistakes range from only looking at the behavior, repeatedly trying an approach that isn't working, establishing too many rules or not reviewing the rules frequently, lack of planning for transition time, ignoring inappropriate behaviors, inconsistent expectations and consequences, viewing educators as the only classroom manager, lessons being too easy or difficult, and taking student behavior seriously (Barbetta, Leong Norona, & Bicard, 2005).

      Solutions. Some solutions offered include determining why misbehavior is occurring, trying different approaches to classroom management, ensuring rules are stated specifically and are reviewed often, planning transitions so they occur quickly and quietly, ignoring behaviors that are for attention getting purposes and focusing on behaviors where safety is involved, enforce and reinforce clear expectations, utilize peer groups to help with monitoring and reinforcing student behaviors, and realizing that misbehavior often is a result of other factors rather than a personal attack on the teacher. Engaging and Motivating Students: Five Research Based Models/Approaches for Engaging Students to be Productive!

      Internally motivated. In order for students to become serious about the learning process, motivation has to be activated internally. Students need to be convinced, by teachers, that what they are being taught is going to help throughout their lives. There are five models for engaging students:

School Connectedness Model, Task Choice and Goal Setting Theory, Guided Inquiry Theory,

Productive and Inclusive Climate Theory, and Attribution Theory.

        Models for engaging students. The School Connectedness Model states that students have the

belief that the adults in the school care about them as individuals. Students have a sense of being part

of the school, believe teachers are supportive, and are interested in their own academic progress. The

Task Choice and Goals Setting Theory is one where the learning community is based on individual and

collaborative goals. Proper classroom management, appropriate instruction, and positive teacher-

student communication are hallmarks of this theory. The focus is on individual and collaborative goals

and the achievement of those goals. Each goal should be relevant, activities should be challenging but

doable, and should be feasible. The Guided Inquiry Theory uses questioning to encourage students to

think creatively. Students use multiple sources of information to understand and complete a task. The

Productive and Inclusive Climate Theory focuses on creating a classroom environment that is inclusive,

so that every student is provided equal opportunities to learn, to be respected and valued. Attribution

Theory provides students with a level of success that encourages students to be highly motivated to

learn. Students who do well in school tend to give themselves credit for their successes. Likewise,

when unsuccessful, students tend to blame others. Four factors are connected to attribution theory:

ability, task difficulty, effort, luck (Marandos & Randall, 2012).

Student Motivation to Learn

        Student development of motivation. Motivation has to do with students' desire to participate

in the learning process. The sources of student motivation differ even if students are equally motivated

to learn. A student who is intrinsically motivated takes on the lesson for the enjoyment of the lesson,

for the learning that occurs, or the feelings of accomplishing the task. Extrinsically motivated students

take on a task in order to receive a reward or avoid punishment. Motivation to learn has a different

meaning: the value and benefits of the task to the student, even if they may or may not be intrinsically interesting.

Many factors influence a student's development of motivation. The home environment shapes the attitudes they acquire toward learning.   In a home that is nurturing, that promotes self-worth and competence, students are more willing to accept the risks involved in learning. Students who do not feel competent, the capacity to cope with failure is diminished greatly. Students form beliefs about successes and failures in school at an early age. Successes could be a result of luck, effort, and ability; while failures could be a result of a lack of ability or effort (Lumsden, 1994). Advantages to intrinsic motivation are evident when students attempt tasks that demand more effort, use more logical information gathering, and are moderately challenging. Conversely, students who are extrinsically motivated put forth little effort in order get the maximum reward.

Caring classroom climate. In order to foster motivation to learn in the school setting, a caring classroom climate is necessary. Student tasks should be challenging, but achievable, as well as relevant. Specific, short-term goals can help students associate effort with success. Extrinsic rewards should be used with caution, as they decrease intrinsic motivation that may be evident in students. School-wide policies should stress learning, task mastery, and effort. There are specific ways to help students that are unmotivated. Students who cheat, procrastinate, or give little effort, are trying to protect their sense of self-worth. Attribution retraining can be used with discouraged students, where the goals are to help students concentrate on the tasks, retrace steps to find mistakes, and realize the failures are a result of reliance on ineffective strategies rather than lack of ability (Lumsden, 1994). Teacher Praise: An Efficient Tool to Motivate Students

Effectiveness of praise. Using praise is a valuable tool to motivate students. The use of praise by a teacher signals the approval of the teacher and has the ability to improve behavioral performance

if it reinforces acceptable behavior to the student. To increase the effectiveness of praise; teachers

should describe noteworthy student behavior (giving feedback to guide learning), praise effort and

accomplishment but not ability (steer clear of praise that makes assumptions about global student

ability), and match the method of praise delivery to student preferences (praise a student in front of the

class or in private). The use of praise boosts student performance, effort, accuracy, fluency, ability to

set goals, and/or speed on an assignment. In order to use praise more frequently, teachers can keep a

daily score of the amount of praise used in class. Additionally, selecting four or five students to single

out for praise is another technique to allow teachers to self-monitor the amount of praise. By linking

praise to classroom routines, teachers make using praise habit-forming. The use of praise often results

in other students modeling the desirable behavior ("Teacher Praise: An Efficient Tool to Motivate

Students", 2012).

Methodology

Research Design

The primary research approach in the study was qualitative research. The study was designed to

determine the relationship between student motivation and classroom management, specific triggers

which cause student misbehavior, and the impact of family on student achievement. Various formative

assessments were used as the primary research approach. Additionally, observations were used at the

end of each lesson. Focus group survey and basic surveys were used in the research process to

compliment the formative assessments and observations. Research was conducted quantitatively as

well, using an attitude scale. Using these approaches allowed Mr. Chase to gather information, using

action research, to determine how the students are motivated.

Action Research. The definition of action research is as follows: "Any systematic inquiry

conducted by teacher researchers, principals, school counselors, or other stakeholders in the

teaching/learning environment to gather information about how their particular schools operate, how they teach, and how well their students learn" (Mills, 2011, p. 5).

Problem Statement

Student motivation and classroom discipline go hand-in-hand, teachers at every level must ensure that their learning environment is conducive to student learning. The desire to have such a learning environment to promote student motivation should be a natural goal for teachers regardless of the grade level/age of the students. When students are motivated, they will be less likely to engage in disruptive behaviors. "During the elementary school years....it is easier for teachers to redirect students back to the task at hand" (Anderman & Anderman, 2010, p. 174).

Research Questions

Firstly, what were the dominant factors of student motivation and learning? Is parent/family approval a greater factor, in student achievement, than teacher approval? Secondly, how does classroom management affect student achievement and student learning? Finally, what were the specific triggers that can affect student behavior?

Participants

Student participation included 116 students in grades three through five. The focus group that was interviewed consisted of two fourth grade girls and one fourth grade boy; and one fifth grade girl and one fifth grade boy. Three white and two Hispanic students made up the group's demographics. Students were chosen for the group based on teacher recommendations.

Site

Data was collected throughout the study during regularly scheduled physical education classes. The focus group interview was conducted in Mr. Chase's classroom room at Signal Hill Elementary

School, from 3:00 p.m. until 3:30 p.m. Workspace for completing the survey included a large table

with bench seating.

Data Collection Plan

A data collection matrix was developed in order to identify data obtained from students

(Table 1) that would be used to monitor classroom management and motivational factors.

Table 1

Data matrix for Classroom Management and Motivational Factors

Research Questions	D.S. 1	D.S. 2	D.S. 3	D.S. 4
What are the dominant factors of student motivation and learning?	Student survey	Focus group survey	Attitude scale	Formative assessment
What are the specific triggers that can affect student behavior?	Student survey	Focus group survey	Attitude scale	Enthusiasm chart
How does classroom management affect student learning/achievement?	Student survey	Focus group survey	Formative assessment	Time on task chart

Note. The above abbreviations D.S. 1, D.S. 2, D.S. 3, and D.S. 4 represent Data Source 1,
Data Source 2, Data Source 3, Data Source 4

Data were collected over a six-week period in which the focus group met twice. During this time

frame, formative assessments were conducted during physical education class periods. The focus

group first met October 25, 2012 and last met on November 20, 2012.

Data Validity Analysis

When comprising the data plan, there was a focus on interviews with a focus group, surveys,

and formative evaluations. The procedures that are outlined maintain the focus on the same specific

group of students - those in grades three through five. The sources of the data – formative evaluations (learning and enthusiasm chart, time on task chart, classroom expectations, etc.), attitude scale, students surveys addressed the initial question of how classroom management affects student motivation. The study was developed in order to determine the connection to a positive learning environment and classroom management. Likewise, data was collected to determine student motivation – whether the students surveyed were motivated intrinsically or extrinsically – and how that motivation, or lack-there-of, affects the classroom learning environment.

Instruments

Qualitative data were collected throughout the duration of the study. Interventions were also used throughout the duration of the study. Verbal/ non-verbal redirection was used, along with proximity control, to help the students who off task. Praising desired student behavior likewise was conducted with verbal redirection. Posted classroom rules and consequences were reviewed often to reinforce procedures. Transition times were planned for and practiced every class period. Lastly, classroom observations were made to determine effectiveness of the interventions.

Verbal Redirection. Verbal redirection was used in accordance with the aforementioned *1-2-3 Magic* program. A student who had been misbehaving is counted to a *1* for that specific behavior. When that student repeated the same behavior, the student is counted to a *2*. When the student was counted to a *3*, a Think & Write form was used (Appendix B). Verbal/nonverbal redirection was also used along with proximity control. When students engaged in inappropriate behavior, Mr. Chase stood close to those students or used a nonverbal cue to control the behavior.

Teacher Praise. A staple in Mr. Chase's classroom management techniques, teacher praise was used daily and during every class period. Students who were demonstrating the desired student behavior were praised frequently. During class lessons, Mr. Chase walked around the room, observing

student work and behavior, and verbally praised students who worked hard and remained on task.

Classroom Rules. Classroom rules and consequences had previously been created by Signal Hill Elementary students. Frequent review of the rules and consequences were conducted in class. Particularly after extended time off from school, such as long weekends, inclement weather, and holidays. To make more of an impact, students were chosen to read the rules and consequences, rather than Mr. Chase.

Transition Times. Students were given time challenges for transition times. Mr. Chase would time the classes to determine how much of the class time was spent on transitions. The following class period, a goal was set, and a challenge was issued for the classes to best the previous time. The class who had the best time for that period, would get to choose the next day's warm-up lesson.

Classroom Observations. During class lessons and transition times, classroom observations were made on a frequent basis. By moving throughout the classroom, Mr. Chase was able to observe student behaviors and help those students who were struggling with the lesson.

Ethical Considerations

In order to address parent concerns about confidentiality and the impact on student grades, a parental consent letter was sent home prior to the first focus group meeting (Appendix A). This letter assured the parents that the responses to the focus group survey/interview would not affect their child's grade in physical education class.

Conclusion

It is the teacher researcher's belief that the data collection tools/instruments and interventions were chosen to best analyze student behavior and motivation issues. Observations and teacher proximity worked well combined with verbal or nonverbal redirection. The presence of an adult near misbehaving students greatly diminished the undesirable behavior. Likewise, the repeated review of

classroom expectations and the rules and consequences provided the students with ample opportunity to demonstrate their understanding of routines.

<div align="center">**Results**</div>

Findings

Data was collected to respond qualitatively to the question of whether or how student motivation affects classroom discipline. Analysis of the data occurred during and after the six-week collection period. Formative assessments were made by the students at the end of the lesson. Data from the assessments was analyzed frequently to detect patterns. Responses from the attitude scale and student surveys were compiled and analyzed, and attendance was taken at the focus group session.

Formative Assessment. To determine the appropriateness of a physical education lesson, Mr. Chase presented to the students, a formative assessment. Two questions were posted on chart paper in the classroom, one question asked if the lesson was too easy, the other question asked if the lesson was too difficult (Table 2). The students then used ink markers to record their opinion of the lesson. The data collected from this assessment helped determine one of the possible triggers toward student misbehavior.

Table 2

Formative Assessment 1

Assessment Question	Responses by %
Today's lesson was too easy	96
Today's lesson was too difficult	4

Attitude Scale. An attitude scale "allows teacher researchers to determine what an individual

believes, perceives, or feels" (Mills, 2011, p. 91). The attitude scale used in the study (Table 3), by the focus group, was similar to a Likert Scale, which asks students to respond to statements by indicating whether they strongly agreed, agreed, were undecided, disagreed, or strongly disagreed (Mills, 2011, p. 91). The attitude scale addressed beliefs regarding parent/family approval or teacher approval regarding student motivation. The scale also addressed perceptions about physical education class at Signal Hill Elementary School.

Table 3

Attitude Scale

Survey Question	Response Choices	Responses by %
How important is parent approval for you to do well in school?	very important	100
	important	0
	moderately important	0
	little importance	0
	unimportant	0
How important is teacher approval for you to do well in school?	very important	60
	important	20
	moderately important	20
	little importance	0
	unimportant	0
I believe Physical Education is an important part of my education at school.	strongly agree	40
	agree	60
	don't know	0
	disagree	0

	strongly disagree	0

Physical Education is NOT organized recess.	strongly agree	20
	agree	20
	don't know	20
	disagree	0
	strongly disagree	40
How important is Physical Education to you?	very important	40
	important	60
	moderately important	0
	little importance	0
	unimportant	0

Student Survey A. The first of two student surveys was presented to the focus group on October 25, 2012. The survey questions required the students to write out their answers and explain their answers (Table 4) . Mr. Chase reassured the students that there were no wrong answers to the survey. The questions varied from the importance of teacher approval, to what the respondents believe causes other students to misbehave. Additionally, if a lesson was too difficult, the students were asked if they tried harder or did they become frustrated. Likewise, if a lesson was too difficult, the respondents were asked if they lost their focus in class.

Table 4

Survey A

Survey Question	Responses	Responses by %
Is teacher approval important to you? Why?	Yes; to avoid getting in trouble	60
	Yes; I want to do the best I can	20
	Yes; I want to improve	20
What do you think causes students to misbehave?	Think it is funny to play around; don't care if they get in trouble	20
	Talking out of turn	20
	Think they can do what they want; don't care if they get in trouble	20
	Being rude; talking out; blame on the group	20
	Don't know	20
If a lesson is too difficult, do you try harder or do you get discouraged and stop trying?	Try harder; might be easier	20
	Try harder; don't want bad grades	20
	Try harder to get better	20
	try harder; do not like to give up	20
	Try harder; like to try new things	20

If a lesson is too easy, do you lose focus in class? Explain your answer.	Doesn't lose focus; don't want to get in trouble	40
	Doesn't lose focus;	20

	zones out	
	Doesn't really lose focus; try to make lesson a little more difficult	20
	Loses focus; not sure what to do	20

Student Survey B. The second student survey also was presented to the focus group. As in the previous survey, the students were assured that there were no wrong answers and were encouraged to respond to the best of their ability. The questions in the second survey (Table 5) dealt with improving the physical education lessons for the students at Signal Hill Elementary School. Additionally, the respondents were inquired about their favorite school or after school interests, hobbies, and activities.

Table 5

Survey B

Survey Question	**Responses**	**Responses by %**
What could I do, as a teacher, which would make my classes better?	No answer	60
	Make some activities more fun; not too hard or easy	20
	Make lessons harder; so they can be more athletic	20
Which activities do you participate in after school or on the weekends?	Gymnastics, walking	40
	Playing outside, dance	20

	Baseball, soccer	40
What are your interests of hobbies?	Soccer	40
	Gymnastics, painting	20
	Drawing, reading, playing outside	20
	Baseball, softball, basketball	20
What activities in Physical Education do you NOT like?	Push-up test	40
	Pacer test	20
	Curl-up test	20
	Poly-fishing	20

Classroom Expectations Assessment. The classroom assessment (Table 6) outlines the four classroom expectations, which are: cooperation, challenging myself, following directions, and staying on task. The classroom expectations were based on a five point scale, with zero (0) being extremely low and five (5) being very high. The assessment was given at the conclusion of the third, fourth, and fifth grade lesson. The chart was posted on the gymnasium wall and divided into the above four categories. The students were given stickers and placed the stickers along the percentage line in each category, according to where they believed they were during that specific lesson. The results are shown in Table 6.

Table 6

Classroom Expectations Assessment

Assessment Area	Range	Responses by %

Cooperation	0 – 1	0
	2 – 3	0
	4 – 5	100
Staying On Task	0 – 1	0
	2 – 3	0
	4 – 5	100
Following Directions	0 – 1	0
	2 – 3	15
	4 – 5	85
Challenging Myself	0 – 1	10
	2 – 3	25
	4 – 5	65

Enthusiasm and Learning Chart. The formative assessment was presented to the third,

fourth, and fifth grade classes at the end of a three day period. The enthusiasm chart was comprised of

four horizontal rows labeled *Learned a lot*, L*earned some*, *Learned a little*, and *Didn't learn much*.

Likewise, the chart also was comprised of four vertical rows labeled *Loved it*, *Liked most of it*, *It was*

ok,   and *Didn't like it at all* (Table 7). The students once again used stickers to determine how much

they liked or didn't like the lesson and how much or how little they learned from the lesson.

Table 7

Enthusiasm and Learning Chart

Assessment Area	Number of Responses
Learned a lot and loved it	54

Learned a lot and liked most of it	10
Learned a lot and it was ok	3
Learned a lot and didn't like it at all	3
Learned some and loved it	8
Learned some and liked most of it	5
Learned some and it was ok	2
Learned some and didn't like it at all	0
Learned a little and loved it	4
Learned a little and liked most of it	0
Learned a little and it was ok	0
Learned a little and didn't like it at all	0
Didn't learn much but loved it	2
Didn't learn much but liked most of it	1
Didn't learn much but it was ok	4
Didn't learn much and didn't like it at all	7
Learned a lot and/or learned some and it was ok	1
Learned a lot and loved it and/or liked most of it	1
Learned a little and/or didn't learn much but liked most of it	2

Time On Task Assessment. The time on task assessment was given at the conclusion of the

lesson for students in grades three through five. Once again, the students performed a formative

assessment regarding the amount of time they remained on task throughout the lesson (Table 8). The

students used a sticker to determine how well they stayed on task. The chart ranged from 25% to

100%.

Table 8

Time on Task Assessment

On Task %	# of Respondents
25	5
50	13
75	23
100	103

Discussion of Findings

The data in Table 2 confirm that the lesson was not challenging enough. Potential misbehavior by students due to the lessons being too easy is a major factor in classroom management. One possible reason for the huge discrepancy is that this lesson was repeated for some of the students, due to the fact that one quarter of the classes were not taught the lesson previously as a result of the school physical education schedule. This particular lesson was one that combined exercise and throwing accuracy. Students who were inclined to misbehaved attempted to take advantage of the time where they were not challenged sufficiently. Constant observation and teacher proximity was required for this particular

lesson. One possible way to make a future lesson more difficult would be to integrate another aspect of the elementary school curriculum (such as mathematics) with the physical fitness aspect of the lesson. This technique had been done in prior lessons and worked exceptionally well.

The data in Table 3 reveals the attitudes of the students surveyed. A variation of a Likert Scale was implemented to determine the attitudes toward Physical Education class. The students indicated that the prevailing attitude towards physical Education is one of importance in the education of students at Signal Hill Elementary. Additionally, students responded that parental approval was the most

important factor in doing well in school, with teacher approval also important to the same students. One obstacle that has to be overcome is to ensure that students understand that Physical Education class is not organized recess. The process had been slow to eliminate that flawed thinking from not only students but teachers alike.

The data in Table 4 primarily indicates that the most common reason students misbehave is there is no fear of the consequences. This lack of fear could be attributed to the lack of parental support for the teachers or the belief that there would be no significant consequences if students are referred to an administrator. Respondents indicated that students misbehave by talking out of turn, playing around, etc. The students who responded to the survey indicated that teacher approval was important, therefore avoiding trouble was likewise important for the respondents. Most students surveyed also tried harder to succeed if the lesson was or became, too difficult. Likewise, if the lesson was too easy, most students responded that they did not lose focus on the lesson.

Table 5 outlines student interests, either in school or outside of school. The responses of those surveyed indicates that students are very active and involved in various activities. The results of questions in the survey will be used for future planning purposes. Knowledge of the students' activities and interests and implementing them in future lessons should help students feel a sense of ownership in

the lessons. The respondents suggested that Mr. Chase should indeed make lessons more difficult as well as more "fun". According to the data, the students responded that the activities they do not like are mostly the Virginia state physical fitness tests. The fitness tests are the physical education equivalent of the Virginia Standards of Learning (SOLs).

The data presented in Table 6 illustrates student responses in the four assessment areas. Students used markers to record assessments of their behavior. According to the responses the students determined, through self-assessment, there was cooperation with each other and with the teacher

researcher. The students also determined that they stayed on task roughly 100% of the time during the

lesson. The assessment on following directions revealed that the students felt they followed directions

well-to-very well. The assessment on challenging themselves resulted in students determining that they

did not challenge themselves well to those who decided they did challenge themselves well. The very

small minority indicated that they experienced difficulty in all four (4) areas.

The Enthusiasm and Learning chart is represented in Table 7. The data shows student responses

to a particular unit. According to the data, students were not only enthusiastic about the lessons, but

they also were engaged in learning. Likewise, there were students who did not like the lessons and

responded that they did not learn anything. Interestingly, a small number of students responded that

they learned a lot and/or learned some, as well as determined the lesson was ok. Some students liked

most of the lessons and/or loved the lessons, while also learning a lot. Lastly, some students

determined they learned a little and/or did not learn much, but liked most of the lessons.

The time on task formative assessment in Table 8 revealed that the students felt that they

generally stay on task throughout the lesson. Mr. Chase had informed the classes that they would be

completing the assessment at the conclusion of class. During class, the students were to remain

cognizant of how much time they were on task or spent off task. This included transition times, which

included arrival and dismissal, moving from warm-ups, to the lesson activities, to cool-down

stretching. Markers were used so that the students could check off their percentage of class spent on

task.

Conclusions

The rational for the study was to determine how student motivation affects classroom

management. The findings from the study revealed a few common patterns or trends. The most

prevalent motivational factors to succeed in school, according to the respondents, are family approval.

The students also indicated teacher approval was highly important in their desire to succeed. The results indicate that students who were surveyed are extrinsically and intrinsically motivated. The intrinsic motivation comes from the desire for family approval. Likewise, the desire for teacher approval – which could result in obtaining good grades, special privileges, etc – is extrinsic motivation.

Specific triggers were noted and recorded in the study. The difficulty level of lessons (Table 2) was one of the areas addressed in the data collection plan. When a lesson became too easy or difficult for the students, students were off task and misbehaving. Fast paced lessons, teacher observation, non-verbal teacher cues contributed greatly towards getting students back on task. Additionally, repeated review of the classroom rules and consequences contributed to the students becoming more aware of the routines and procedures.

As stated by Anderman, "when teachers create environments that are not conducive to student's needs, motivational problems can be quite serious" (Anderman & Anderman, 2010, p.171). The specific interventions used by the teacher researcher impacted the physical education program positively. Lessons that are well-balanced, and connect with student interests, diminish inappropriate behavior and the desire to disrupt class. A classroom that contains effective management strategies ensures that all students will have the chance to achieve and learn.

Limitations

The most obvious limitation of this study is the small number of participants in the focus group. The study originally planned for 18 members of the focus group, however, circumstances occurred that resulted in a much smaller group. The findings of the study would then be enhanced, therefore creating a larger data sample. The current research also was bound by time limitations. During the six week data collection period, most classes met between 10 and 11 times. The researcher believes that continuing the data collection and intervention until the conclusion of the second marking period would have been beneficial. A larger data sample would provide perhaps a more complete picture of the rational for the study.

A final observation of the limitations of this study is the small survey and assessment samples. The surveys were primarily given to the focus group, while the larger formative assessments were presented to students in grades three to five. While the formative assessments had upward of 130 respondents, that was not the entire third, fourth, and fifth grade students at Signal Hill Elementary School.

Further Research

The teacher researcher plans to continue action research through the second marking period. Mr. Chase will continue to collect data through surveys, attitude scales, and formative assessments. Strategies will be developed and implemented for the physical education classes based on the findings. The data will be analyzed at the end of the second marking period to help decide future steps and interventions.

Further research is also needed regarding the sources of motivation for students and the sources of classroom disruptions in the lower elementary grades kindergarten through second. Though the focus of this study was on students in grades three through five, the focus group and assessments may prove beneficial for the younger students as well. Collecting and monitoring the data would give the researcher greater insight to the effects of the strategies and interventions.

Through the surveys the researcher was able to have an idea of students' interests and favorite activities. In the future, a more detailed student interest survey would be very beneficial and allow the researcher to have a more detailed vision of how to develop lesson plans that cater to student interests. A desire to develop the lessons in order to increase interest and maintain a high level of time on task is of utmost importance.

Action Plan

Continued Implementation. Results of the current study indicate that appropriateness of lessons and strong implementation of rules and consequences are vital to successful classroom management. The interventions used in the classroom will be evaluated according to the data. New interventions will be used in place of those which are ineffective. Administrators and teacher colleagues were in favor of continued implementation of the current data analysis plans. The researcher plans to continue assessing the third through fifth grade classes and meet periodically with the focus group throughout the second grading period. The physical education classes will continue to be assessed and monitored twice a week and the focus group will meet weekly.

Modifications. Intervention procedures will be modified slightly based on the results on the present study.

The researcher will continue gathering information from formative assessments. Data will be collected quantitatively so as to develop a further understanding of the impact the interventions are having on classroom management and student motivation.

     Extension. A focus group for the lower elementary students in first and second grade will be formed during the third grading period with the goal of starting interventions and data collection by the start of the 2013 – 2014 school year. The implementation of school-wide grade levelfocus groups containing two (2) students from each grade level classroom would contribute ideas to the larger focus groups as well as bring any teacher concerns to Mr. Chase. The plan is to have the grade level focus groups in place at the start of the second grading period of the 2013 – 2014 school year.

Table 9

Action Plan Time-line

Recommended Action	Who is responsible for actions?	Time-line	Resources
Current physical education students in grades 3 – 5 will be assessed	* Teacher * Teacher assistant	Ongoing throughout the remainder of the second marking period.	* Baldrige in Education tools
	* Teacher * Teacher assistant	Ongoing throughout the remainder of the second marking period,	* Baldrige in Education tools

		continuing into the next year.	
Replacing ineffective interventions	* Teacher	Immediately and ongoing throughout the remainder of the second marking period.	* Action Research Results and Report
First and second grade focus group formation	* Teacher * Team	Third marking period until end of current school year.	* Classroom teachers
Grade level focus groups	* Teacher * Team * Administrators	September 2013	* Classroom Teachers * Administrators

Conclusion

This Action Research Project was implemented to determine if classroom management affects student motivation and learning. It could also be said that student motivation affects classroom management as well. The motivational climate of the classroom must be conducive to student learning or problems will surely arise. If the classroom is not optimal, students may engage in dysfunctional behaviors and activities (Anderman & Anderman, 2010, p. 166). Student motivation has a dual role in the classroom. Obviously, it can be a positive influence.   However, student motivation can also negatively affect the classroom. Students who are poorly motivated often use avoidance strategies and

inappropriate cognitive strategies. Poor motivation can also affect student behavior (Anderman &

Anderman, 2010, p. 166).

Findings of the current study indicate that students need challenging lesson plans to remain on

task. The difficulty in doing so is making sure that the lessons are not too difficult where the student

who is struggling becomes frustrated, therefore engaging in disruptive behavior. Another result from

the data collected is that frequent review of the classroom rules, consequences, expectations, are vital in

maintaining a positive classroom environment. Future research studies should include additional age

group participants from the elementary school, as well as additional data collection techniques.

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Parental Letter and Consent Form

Appendix A

Dear Parents,

I have selected your child to participate in a focus group on student motivation. The purpose of

this group is to allow me to discover what motivates students in the classroom environment. I believe

that student motivation directly impacts classroom behavior. I will be asking your child a series of

questions about what motivates them, questions about their impressions of our Physical Education

program, and suggestions regarding our daily lessons. The information gathered from these questions

will in no way affect their grade. If you give permission for me to interview your child, please fill out

the bottom portion of this letter.

<div align="right">

Sincerely,

Robert Chase

Physical Education Teacher

</div>

____ I give my child permission to participate in the Physical Education focus group on

   October 25, 2012.

____ I do not give my child permission to participate in the Physical Education focus group on'

   October 25, 2012.

STUDENT MOTIVATION   40

_____   _____

Your Name   Signature & Date

_____

Child's Name

K – 2 Think and Write

Appendix B

Think and Write

| Time |
| Location |

Student Name: _____

Date: _____

| Student Section |

Today I made a choice to….	Next time I will make a choice to…

Reason Think and Write was used:_____

_____

Disciplinary Action Taken (Check all that apply)

STUDENT MOTIVATION   42

☐ Verbal warning ☐ Think and Write sent home for Signature ☐ Respect Violation (attached)	Time-out ☐ in classroom ☐ in another classroom	Parent contact ☐ Email ☐ Phone call
☐ Other:		

_____   _____

Teacher Signature   Student Signature

_____
Parent / Guardian Signature

Please return to the classroom teacher

3 – 5 Think and Write

Appendix C

| Time |
| Location |

Think and Write

Student Name: _____

Date: _____

Student Section
Today I made a choice to: (What happened?)   _____   _____   _____   _____   _____   _____Next time I will choose to: _____   _____   _____   _____   _____   _____   _____

Teacher use only

Reason Why Think and Write was Used:

_____

STUDENT MOTIVATION   44

Disciplinary Action Taken (Check all that apply)

	Time-out	Parent contact
☐ Verbal warning ☐ Think and Write sent home for Signature ☐ Respect Violation (attached)	☐ in classroom ☐ in another classroom	☐ Email ☐ Phone call
☐ Other:		

_____   _____
Teacher Signature   Student Signature
_____
Parent / Guardian Signature
Please return to the classroom teacher