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PBIS: Moving Beyond a Focus on Behavior to Relationships

Flor Gomez
California State University, Monterey Bay

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CSU Monterey Bay
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Abstract

School-Wide Positive Behavioral Intervention and Supports (SW-PBIS or PBIS) is a classroom management system that has become increasingly popular in our K-12 educational systems. PBIS was originally created for special needs students and it is now being enforced in schools with a large number of minority student populations. This classroom management method relies on a token rewards system that focuses on reinforcing positive behavior in the classroom. Issues with this classroom management system encompass it being a form of exclusionary discipline, a student conditioning system, and not a culturally grounded and/or responsive system. For this Capstone Project, teachers and students were interviewed to better understand their thoughts on ways to improve PBIS. Improving PBIS is important because the reward system used, raises questions as to whether students are being controlled and conditioned versus encouraged to grow in a holistic manner. Based on an analysis of the data and the relevant research literature, the researchers used what they learned to formulate an action that responded to the focus issue in a way that inspired, informed, or involved a particular audience.

PBIS: Effective or Ineffective Classroom Management?

Anita[1] immigrated from Mexico the previous year. She is very smart, as can be proven by her participation in "La Escolta." "La Escolta" is composed of the top six students. Students' grades, from first grade to fifth grade, are averaged and the six students with the best grades are selected to be a part of "La Escolta" for their entire sixth grade year. "La Escolta" is one of the top honors a student can receive, especially if s/he is the flag bearer. The flag bearer is the student who has the highest grade average from within the top six students and this was Anita.

Anita looks back on these days and reminds herself that she is not "special needs" as she is commonly referred to by her teachers in America. Anita has been in the U.S. long enough to understand common phrases used in the English language and can also speak the language, but quite honestly it is very butchered. This is why Anita decides to quietly listen during her classes. Anita is quiet, not because she is shy and not because she is antisocial, but because she feels like the more she listens the more she learns. Most IMPORTANTLY, Anita is quiet because her culture taught her that to be a good student one must demonstrate respect to their teachers by sitting quietly and attentive during class time.

Unfortunately, Anita's attentive-quiet listening does not align with her teachers' classroom management styles. Many of Anita's teachers are nice white ladies, but they always reprimand her for being quiet. Anita's teachers misinterpret Anita's quietness for shyness. Since good classroom management is perceived as a classroom where all students' are listening and actively taking turns to participate Anita is looked at as disrupting this system. So, her many teachers try in vain to get Anita to be more talkative as this is what they consider active participation.

Employing a culturally relevant classroom management style would have enabled these teachers to be able to better detect whether Anita's quiet behavior was due to shyness or due to a cultural practice, where old school traditional Mexican-American parents teach their children to show their best behavior to their teachers by sitting quietly and attentively. Mexican-American children are also taught not to question their teachers' authority thus, when a student is told that s/he is "special needs" then s/he will slowly if not immediately begin to internalize such labels.

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[1] Pseudonyms have been used for the names of people, places, and organizations.

So, here we have a misinterpretation of a student's behavior. Teachers' lack of experience or guidance in the area of classroom management may further exacerbate the experiences of culturally underrepresented and marginalized students. As a culturally underrepresented-minority, I have had similar stories as the above and so have all of my culturally underrepresented friends. We see the need for future and current educators to critically analyze their assumptions about behavior and the techniques they are using, especially with respect to their impact on students who are members of non dominant groups. The continued failed use of classroom management skills and/or programs are reasons why I decided to conduct my research on the use of Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports (PBIS) for classroom management at a school serving a predominantly Latinx population.

Literature Synthesis And Integration

School-Wide Positive Behavioral Intervention and Supports (SW-PBIS or PBIS) is a classroom management system that has become increasingly popular in the United States educational system (Reinke, Herman, & Stormont, 2013). The use of PBIS by teachers in K-12 classrooms consist of a rewards system used to reinforce positive behavior. Teachers are encouraged to focus on praise instead of reprimands and to highlight a student's good behavior through rewards such as scholar dollars, so as to further encourage students to behave (Lagerwerff, 2016). Teachers under this system are usually given a four to one (4:1) ratio they are asked to meet daily in their classrrooms. The ratio means that teachers should give four compliments before giving one reprimand (Reinke, Herman, Stormont, 2013). The assumption is that students will be motivated to exhibit desirable classroom behavior once they see other students are given incentives. These token incentives range in form from a sticker, a stamp, points, toys or scholar dollars. PBIS is much like the technique of "conditioning incompatible behavior" (Skinner, 2005, p. 192) that the theorist Burrhus Frederic Skinner (B. F. Skinner) describes in his book *Science and Human Behavior*. In his book, B.F. Skinner describes how the conditioning of incompatible behavior is done by controlling an emotional tendency through the reinforcement of "stoic behavior" (Skinner, 2005, p.192). In other words, the method of conditioning of incompatible behavior much like PBIS works to condition students to behave through the use of positive reinforcement. The school in which our research took place has teachers reward students in the form of scholar dollars. All staff, faculty, as well as school personnel in this school print scholar dollars and each time a student performs a desired behavior

they are given a scholar dollar. SW-PBIS reinforces positive behavior not only in individual classrooms, but in every single inch of the school's property which can be seen through the use of scholar dollars by staff, faculty and any other school grounds personnel.

What is the issue?

The issues with a system like SW-PBIS is that it can be considered a form of exclusionary discipline, it is a student conditioning system, and it is not a culturally grounded/responsive system (Lagerwerff, 2016; *Public Counsel,* 2017*;* Weinstein, Tomlinson-Clarke, & Curren, 2004*)*. PBIS can be considered a form of exclusionary discipline in which students who do not exhibit "good" behavior traits are excluded from receiving extrinsic rewards, such as fake money or "scholar dollars" that can be used at their school store to trade in for toys or school supplies. Teachers implementing PBIS in their classrooms can also exclude certain students from getting compliment centered tokens when highlighting other students' favorable behavior. For example, if everyone in Ms. Anderson's classroom has been listening attentively to her talk except for two children, Ms. Anderson can sidetrack her conversation a bit in order to compliment all of her students well behaved manner by giving everyone a sticker except for the 2 children who have not been listening attentively. By doing so Ms. Anderson has now put these two students on the spotlight and alienated them even if she did not reprimand them (Lagerwerff, 2016). According to the *Toolkit For Educators (Public Counsel,* 2017*)* exclusionary discipline contributes to students feeling judged and alienated to the extent of severing student-teacher relationships. SW-PBIS can also create a competitive versus supportive environment amongst students.

PBIS is a system in which students who yearn for teacher affection or connection are simply overlooked as can be seen in this quote, "Yet, instead of a conversation, a hand on the shoulder, a word, a look—students are given a token. Like a slot machine: stickers in, correct behavior out " (Lagerwerff, 2016, p.25). Moreover, PBIS is another way to condition students to do as the teacher wants them to do. In other words, PBIS is a system that focuses on conditioning students to engage in what teachers consider favorable behavior by rewarding students with tokens each time they "behave". In this system there is no room for students to do as they wish to do. For example, if a student learns better visually and decides to draw what s/he is learning but the teacher wants to see words for notes instead of pictures students are not rewarded. Then, this same student might see her/his neighbor get rewarded for taking notes in the form of phrases

so s/he will do the same in order to get a reward because s/he will see that this is what is favored. This system is another way of subtly limiting students' creativity and uniqueness by enforcing uniformity (mainstreaming) through the use of extrinsic factors (Fraczek, 2010). Students are conditioned to suppress their individuality and become mainstream because that is what they perceive will give them success in academia as well as a good student-teacher relationship. This system is conditioning students to be mechanical: do as you are told and you will get a prize, walk with your hands behind your back in a straight line and you will get a prize, do not speak unless you are talked to and you will get a prize. Tomorrow's future, as we so often like to refer to children as, are being trained to be submissive and not question our educational systems which can only transfer to real life scenarios, such as not questioning other powerful societal structures.

   Another major issue is that PBIS is not culturally grounded. Not only is SW-PBIS not a culturally responsive classroom management system, but it tends to have white-middle class teachers enforcing it. The majority of classroom teachers in our current educational systems are white-middle class women who have a white cultural mainstream background (Fraczek, 2010; Weinstein, Tomlinson-Clarke, & Curren, 2004). These teachers, for the most part, may not be well prepared to teach or manage a culturally and ethnically diverse classroom (Weinstein, Tomlinson-Clarke, Curren, 2004). PBIS is also not structured in a way that will help teachers maintain good classroom management in a diverse classroom setting when its main focus is to reward versus getting to know the students. Students from different cultural backgrounds often than not end up being the ones who "rub off" negatively on their teachers. This difference in classroom behavior practices between students and teachers can be seen when it comes to students who are outspoken, students who are silent or students who always smile. This misalignment between the perceptions of students as well as teachers classroom behavior expectations can causes teachers to think that their students are purposefully portraying undesirable behavioral characteristics (Fraczek, 2010; Skiba, Horner, Chung, Rausch, May, & Tobin, 2011). To add to this, as mentioned earlier, PBIS can cause students to feel alienation, judgement, competition, as well as a disconnect from their teachers and these issues are only further exacerbated for students of color due to the lack of a culturally grounded component to the program (Weinstein, Tomlinson-Clarke, & Curren, 2004).
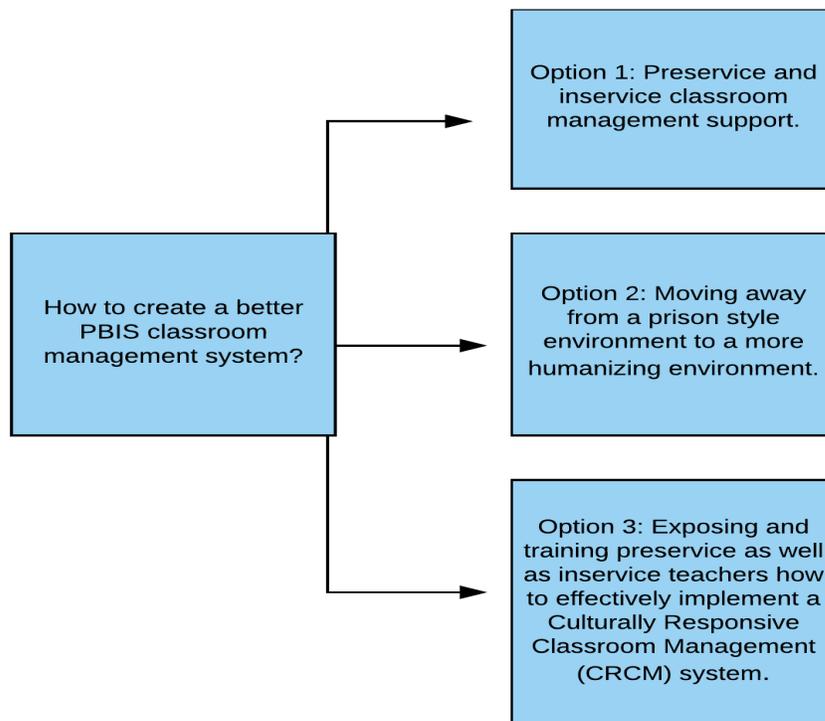
What should be done?

Figure 1: This figure summarizes the three different options to improve PBIS classroom management system.

There are three possible solutions that research on this topic recommends to improve SW-PBIS's classroom management system: (see figure 1) 1. preservice and inservice classroom management support (Reinke, Herman, Stormont, 2013); 2. moving away from a prison style environment to a more humanizing environment (Weinstein, Tomlinson-Clarke, Curren, 2004; Yang, 2009); and 3) exposing and training preservice as well as inservice teachers how to effectively implement a Culturally Responsive Classroom Management (CRCM) system (Brown, 2004). The first option of offering preservice and inservice classroom management support for teachers is the most commonly recommended change for teachers struggling with classroom management. Many preservice as well as inservice teachers enter the workforce without having adequate experience or training in behavior management therefore these teachers are not prepared to manage a classroom full of students let alone behavioral problems that arise (Reinke, Herman, & Stormont, 2013). Difficulty with classroom management often leads many teachers to either transfer to other schools or change professions which only further exacerbates this issue (Rosas & West, n.d.).

The second option of moving away from a prison style environment to a more humanizing environment is calling for a more humane and engaging classroom environment not your rote memorization lectures that are so common today. This option calls for creating learning environments that are supportive of students' individuality. Supportive learning environments can be created when teachers engage their students through personal life experiences, socioeconomic realities, diverse cultural backgrounds and the social context of their given community (Yang, 2009). These supportive learning environments are where teachers acknowledge students' misbehavior and use those moments as learning experiences for the students as well as themselves. It may well be that in the students' cultural or ethnic background a certain trait, such as speaking out, is actually embraced and can be used to the teacher's advantage if s/he takes the time to reflect. Perhaps, the teacher can learn from possible strengths of being outspoken and how to implement such a trait in the classroom to help other students succeed (such as those that are a bit timid and need help being more outspoken) or they might just change their previous definition of appropriate behavior all together (Weinstein, Curran, & Tomlinson-Clarke, 2003).

The third option that can be utilized is exposing and training future as well as current teachers how to implement a Culturally Responsive Classroom Management (CRCM) style. Culturally Responsive Classroom Management is classroom management that incorporates:

" (a) recognition of one's own ethnocentrism and biases; (b) knowledge of students' cultural backgrounds; (c) understanding of the broader social, economic, and political context of our educational system; (d) ability and willingness to use culturally appropriate classroom management strategies; and (e) commitment to building caring classroom communities" (Weinstein, Tomlinson-Clarke, & Curren, 2004, p. 27).

In other words, CRCM is a deep reflection of "the self", "the other" and "the context" (Weinstein, Curran, & Tomlinson-Clarke, 2003, p. 3). CRCM can be as broad as deciding which multicultural curriculum to incorporate into lesson plans to ensuring that communication processes for students and teachers are congruent (Brown, 2004). Lastly, CRCM also takes into account the emotional needs of diverse cultural and ethnic students within a classroom. Engaging innovative, culturally sensitive, and emotional strategies to classroom management systems such

as CRCM can positively enhance social and behavioral student functions (Montanez, Berger-Jenkins, Rodriguez, McCord, Meyer, 2015).

Conclusion

In retrospect, School-Wide Positive Behavioral Intervention and Supports (SW-PBIS or PBIS) is a classroom management system that has become increasingly popular in our k-12 educational systems. This classroom management method relies on a token rewards system that focuses on reinforcing positive behavior in the classroom. Teachers have a 4:1 ratio of 4 compliments before being able to give any 1 reprimand. Issues with this classroom management system encompass it being a form of exclusionary discipline, a student conditioning system and not a culturally grounded/responsive system. Possible improvements to SW-PBIS include: 1.) preservice and inservice classroom management support, 2.) moving away from a prison style environment to a more humanizing environment, and 3.) exposing and training preservice as well as inservice teachers how to effectively implement a Culturally Responsive Classroom Management (CRCM) system.

Methods

With Positive Behavioural Interventions and Supports Program (PBIS) there is a goal to improve positive behavior in the school environment. In an attempt to be successful all around there is a disconnect between students and teachers. First, teachers may not be getting the training needed to properly and effectively manage a classroom, let alone any behavioral issues that may arise. Second, students are not gaining meaningful connections with their teachers due to their teachers' ineffective classroom management skills. Therefore, the need for teachers to possess effective classroom management skills is imperative for the overall success of teachers, students and PBIS. After interviewing students and teachers from El Caballo elementary, we used the data collected to identify potential areas for improvement of PBIS.

Context

Caballo[2] Elementary is located on the northeast side of Caballo City in California. According to the U.S. Census, as of July 1, 2016, the population within Caballo City was 157, 218 people. In 2011-2015 approximately 37.7% of Caballo City's population was foreign born. The mean percentage for those who have an education equal to or greater than a high school

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[2] Pseudonyms have been used for the names of people, places, and organizations.

diploma during 2011-2015 was 59.5%. Caballo Elementary is a school that serves students from grades one through five and is located in the outskirts of Caballo City. Caballo Elementary is a relatively new school in comparison to the neighboring elementary schools in Caballo City, it has only been in service for five years. The school first opened during the 2013/2014 school year. It is gated throughout its perimeter and is located in a middle class income community. The school site serves 724 students, 95% of which are Hispanic students. Its relative newness can be seen all over campus. The students' playground has new equipment with not a single hint of chipping in the paint. This sizable playground is where students can play basketball, hopscotch, four square, ride slides or hang upside down on an elaborate geometric playground climber. Students also have the option to play in grass playgrounds with bright green grass and not a single sign of pot holes. These two grass playgrounds are a soccer and baseball field where students can play on a more soft and natural terrain.

Building structure wise Caballo Elementary looks new and freshly painted. The classrooms are all neat, clean and organized with new materials such as desks, projectors as well as yoga balls for chairs. At the front of each classroom can be seen a colorful behavior chart with clothespins attached to different colored segments. All students in the classroom have their own clothespin and are expected to place their individual pin on the color which best reflects their behavior throughout the day when instructed to do so. Each classroom will also have a three R's chart as a constant reminder to students that in order to be considered a scholar they must be Responsible, Respectful and Ready at all times.

Participants and Participant Selection

For this capstone project three participants were interviewed. The interviewees consisted of two teachers and two students. The three participants consisted of Mrs. Emmy (a fifth grade teacher), Bella (a fifth grade student), and Spiderman (a fifth grade student).

Mrs. Emmy: Mrs. Emmy is a Hispanic teacher in her mid 30's, she has been teaching sixth grade at Caballo Elementary for one year now. Mrs. Emmy transferred from Hogwarts Elementary where she had been working for 10 years and had first been exposed to PBIS. She is the oldest of three siblings with two younger brothers. Mrs. Emmy grew up in Grazefield and graduated from Grazefield High School in 2002. She then went on to attend Hogwarts College and graduated in 2004 with her AA degree in General Studies. After Hogwarts, Mrs. Emmy

transferred to CSU Mountain View, graduated in 2006 with her bachelor's degree in Liberal Studies and continued there with the multiple subject credential eventually graduating in 2008. Mrs. Emmy began teaching in the Caballo District in 2007 as a second grade teacher.

Bella: Bella is a fifth grade student in Mrs. Emmy's class. Bella was born in Caballo City. Bella is part of a family of four, her mom, her dad and one older brother. Both of Bella's parents are bilingual. Bella is a really motivated young lady and is the ASB (Associated Student Body) Vice President for Caballo Elementary. Everyone from Caballo Elementary can always count on Bella to lend a helping hand to students and teachers.

Spiderman: Spiderman was also born in Caballo City. Spiderman is part of a family of four that is composed of his mom, step-dad, himself and one younger brother. Both of Spiderman's parents (mom and stepdad) are bilingual. Spiderman is a very active boy his mother thinks he might have Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) and has voiced her concerns to his teacher. According to Mrs. Emmy, Spiderman is a very smart boy but the only challenge for her is to get him to focus during class time because he becomes distracted very easily yet his strong suit undoubtedly is math.

Researchers: This group of researchers consisted of two Latinx-female Liberal Studies majors from California State University, Monterey Bay (CSUMB). The first researcher, Flor Gomez, is a fifth year Latinx who is in the process of applying for graduate programs in the areas of Mexican American/Chicanx/Latinx Studies. The second researcher, Sylvia Chavez is also a fifth year and currently in the process of applying to teaching credential programs. Both researchers see the imperative need for improvements in PBIS especially in the area of creating meaningful student-teacher relationships as they recognize this is one of the key foundations for effective classroom management. The researchers have first-handedly witnessed many failed attempts of teachers trying to enforce ineffective classroom management programs. Ineffective programs that are detrimental to a student's overall learning environment and further exacerbate teachers' ineffective classroom management skills.

Experiences that qualify the researchers to carry out this project include being students who have experienced different behavioural incentive programs that aim at disciplining students versus listening to them. The background knowledge they have include knowing that PBIS was originally created for special needs students and that it is now being enforced in schools with a majority of minority students. Personal qualities and skills that qualify the researchers

encompass being skilled in the areas of conducting qualitative research. Both researchers are personable, passionate and advocates for individuality, as well as positive social change. What makes the researchers standout from the influentials is that they are looking at PBIS from a third person view without any biases for the program. Due to the passion that the researchers carry in regards to this particular topic both must acknowledge a degree of bias against a system that both perceive to be conditioning versus promoting individuality. As all good researchers do, both researchers have critically analyzed their biases and made all efforts possible to be unbiased throughout the research process in order to effectively analyze the effects of PBIS on children.

Semi-Structured Interview and Survey Questions

1. Tell me about your experiences with PBIS.
2. What are the advantages of implementing PBIS at this school?
3. In what ways has student behavior improved due to PBIS?
4. What do you see as the challenges of PBIS?
5. What are you concerned about when it comes to PBIS?
6. Are there types of behaviors that haven't improved or students who have not responded to PBIS?
7. Are some students not interested in or do some lose interest in scholar dollars ? Why and how does this impact the effectiveness of PBIS at this school?
8. What does "activity time" look like for students who do not earn a membership for PBIS activity day
9. How does PBIS impact student & teacher relationships?
     A. How about student to student relationships?
10. What is currently being done to improve PBIS at this school- by whom - and what do you think about this?
11. What do you think should be done to improve PBIS at this school?
     A. What do you think are the obstacles to improving PBIS?
12. What does it mean to implement PBIS here given the school's demographics?
     A. What are the implications of utilizing PBIS in schools and classrooms primarily serving historically undereducated and marginalized populations?
13. Is there anything else that you would like to say about PBIS and/or the improvement of

PBIS?

Procedure

      The participants interviewed included teachers and students from Caballo Elementary. The interviews consisted of two interviewers and one interviewee. After being introduced to the teacher they would be working with at their site and spending time in her classroom, the researchers asked her if she would be interested in answering a few questions regarding PBIS as well as her experience with it. The participant was asked to sit down in a classroom and answer the questions the researchers had regarding the program. At the conclusion of the interview, the researchers asked the teacher if she would be willing to further help them on their capstone project by allowing two of her students to undergo similar interview processes. The teacher immediately agreed and provided the researchers with contact information for them to set up a time and date in which they could interview the students. Shortly after, an interview time was set-up and the two students were interviewed separately. Both students were asked similar questions as those asked to the teacher. After all interviews were conducted the interviewers set up one last meeting with the teacher and her students in order to facilitate an activity named Stressed out Sam.

Data Analysis

      After all of the interviews were collected the researchers relistened to the audio files for further analysis. The researchers then began the coding process. After analyzing the background literature as well as the interviews the researchers came across three prominent themes. The three emergent themes were what informed the researchers on possible action projects to help improve PBIS in Caballo Elementary.

Results

      For this Capstone Project, teachers and students were interviewed to better understand their thoughts on ways to improve PBIS. Improving PBIS is important because the reward system used makes us question whether students are being controlled and conditioned versus encouraged to grow in a holistic manner. Based on an analysis of the data and the relevant research literature three themes emerged (see Table 1) as possible solutions to improving PBIS. Themes include: preservice and inservice classroom management support, improved teacher-student relationships and teacher engagement in PBIS. Evidence-based decision making required evaluating each potential Action Option by the following criteria: Probability of impact, Time

and Sustainability. Based on the evaluation of each Action Option one action will be recommended and justified.

Table 1

 Evaluation of Action Options

	Probability of Impact	Time	Sustainability
Improved teacher-student relationships	High	High	High
Teacher engagement in PBIS	High	High	Medium
Pre-service and In-service classroom management support	High	High	Low

Improved teacher-student relationships

      A critical factor for most, if not every relationship is connection. When teachers establish a meaningful connection with their students both parties involved benefit. Developing a connection is going to provide both the teacher and student with a more personal view of one another. A more informal connection will make room for a more comprehensive understanding of one another, this is key. As can be seen in the literature and in *Perpatuating a Culture of White Behavior: The Experiences of Non-Native Speaking Hispanic Students in a PBIS School* (Fraczek, 2010), students perceive that their teachers have the upperhand in all aspects of their schooling. In other words, students feel inferior to their teachers and feel like they have no decision making power as opposed to their teachers,"They see you up here", says Mrs. Emmy (one of our interviewees).

      A possible solution we propose is enhancing student-teacher relationships by providing students with a connection that goes above and beyond academia, one that will create a deeper bond between both (teacher and student). Meaningful connections with students can be fostered

through the means of something as simple as an activity. Mrs. Emmy explained that after conducting just one single activity in which students were allowed to open up both her students and herself became closer-"I felt after that, we had a connection. They felt comfortable with me." Activities that make room for students to voice their emotions are the most impactful when it comes to establishing a connection with a student and can help reduce student misbehaviour as can be seen in Mrs. Emmy's quote, "A lot of these kids just want to express whats going on, and if they can't, they'll act out". A good example of an impactful activity and possible partial solution is an activity named Stressed out Sam. The purpose of this activity is to have students: a.) learn how to voice their stressors, b.) realize that they have similar stressors to others, c.) learn some coping strategies for stress and d.) create a friendly-meaningful environment amongst peers as well as with the teacher.

Teacher Engagement in PBIS

PBIS is a program that calls for the cooperation of both the students and the teachers. Not only must students be engaged with PBIS, but so must teachers. Without the engagement of teachers in PBIS the program can not be a success. Throughout our research at Caballo Elementary we found that teachers seem to not be genuinely interested in engaging with PBIS and doing the whole scholar dollars ordeal. The distress in Mrs. Emmy's voice when describing PBIS says it all, "I'm totally lost, I'm feeling overwhelmed and I'm like I don't even want to do it" or "No time to print out the dollars". According to Mrs. Emmy some of the reasons why teachers were not engaged were because they either a.) got tired of it, b.) found a better solution, c.) were to overwhelmed, or d.) were unfamiliar with the program and never received proper training.

Some potential solutions we propose to help engage teachers in PBIS are to a.) offer PBIS training for all teachers and b.) have new innovative trainings each successive time teachers meet. Through our interviews we discovered that new teachers arriving to Caballo Elementary did not receive the proper training needed to successfully implement PBIS which causes new incoming teachers to not implement it at all. It is no wonder that teachers feel overwhelmed or unfamiliar with PBIS especially when they are told, "Kids will fill you in", instead of actually getting training lessons. Then comes the issue of how engaging these trainings actually are. If trainings are not engaging, teachers will not want to leave their classrooms to

attend a boring training which will only further intensify the issue of teachers not knowing how to properly and effectively implement PBIS.

Preservice and In-service Classroom Management Support

As can be seen in the following quote, "The discrepancy in the beliefs of preservice and inservice teachers indicated that teacher education programs should provide a stronger focus on effective classroom management strategies to effectively redirect students who become disruptive" (Rosas & West, n.d., p.59). That is, there is a need for teacher training programs that will help pre-service, as well as in-service teachers, become effective classroom management responders. The way in which teachers respond to certain classroom management issues can determine what type of relationship the teacher will form with certain students. If a teacher responds ineffectively this might sever any ties that the teacher had with a student. This severing of ties only further exacerbates student-teacher relationships. If the teacher has severed many if not all of his/her student-teacher relationships due to ineffective responses to classroom management this might cause him/her to either create an ineffective learning environment for his/her students or to leave the school all together (Rosas & West, n.d.).

One potential solution we propose for this problem is having credential programs focus on further training of future teachers in the area of classroom management. Credential programs are the perfect time to have future teachers put on the classroom management training wheels, since this is the time when future teachers can fail without any real repercussions. Another potential solution is having the specific schools hiring teachers to provide further classroom management support and trainings throughout a given period. For example, school sites can make classroom management trainings for a new teacher at there school mandatory for three years. The last and most ideal potential solution would be providing future as well as current teachers classroom management trainings where they would be supported until they became effective classroom management responders.

Conclusion

In retrospect, our recommendation for improving PBIS based on the literature and based on our data analysis is **Improving student-teacher Relationships.** Improving their relationship through the means of activities, as proposed earlier can benefit both students and teachers. Positive outcomes for this option include establishing a more meaningful connection with students which can then enhance students feelings of safety and feeling welcomed. This in turn,

would have students feel more comfortable opening up and being unique. Thus, when students are in an environment in which they feel appreciated and heard they are most likely to gain respect for their teachers. An increase in mutual respect between teacher and students can only further foster a productive learning environment as well as an easier classroom to manage.

Limitations for this option include teachers having to invest a significant amount of time getting to know each of their students individually, which can lead to negative impacts on learning time. Teachers might feel like they do not have time to get to know each student individually and might not even try to do so. If teachers do choose it is worth their time and efforts they would have to think about what areas to spend less time on (i.e. instruction, breaks, etc.) in order to focus on this particular topic. Potential negative outcomes for this option may include teachers not following through with getting to know every single student in their classrooms which might help them to get to know just a few students better meanwhile leaving out the rest. Another potential negative outcome might be that teachers choose to take time away from another important topic such as instruction time which could potentially hinder students learning.

Action Documentation and Reflection

The focus issue of this paper was research for social change therefore we, the researchers, interviewed one fifth grade teacher and two fifth grade students from Caballo Elementary to see what areas they thought PBIS needed improvement. The issues with PBIS that emerged through the analysis of our literature as well as our interviews were a need for 1) preservice and inservice classroom management support; 2) improved teacher-student relationships; and 3) teacher engagement in PBIS. Solutions for each of these issues included: 1) having credential programs focus on further classroom management training for future teachers; 2) activities that make room for students to voice their emotions such as an activity named Stressed out Sam; and 3) creating innovative PBIS trainings for teachers each time they meet. The action option we implemented was the activity Stressed out Sam. After evaluating all of our options we chose to implement Stressed out Sam, although the amount of time consumption is high we believe it would be the most effective because of its high probability of impact and high sustainability.

Stressed out Sam

The purpose of this activity is to have students: a.) learn how to voice their stressors, b.) realize that they have similar stressors to others, c.) learn some coping strategies for stress and d.) create a friendly-meaningful environment amongst peers as well as with the teacher.

Materials:
- See through plastic container
- A printed out an emotionless emoji face
- Tape
- Scizzors
- Lots of scratch paper

What to do with your materials:
- Cut out your printed emoji face and tape it to the front of your container, this will be Stressed out Sam. This container will be the one you will be passing around the circle so that students may either put in pieces of paper or take out.

Steps:
1. Gather students in a circle sitting on chairs or on the floor.
2. Pass out scratch paper that students will crumble up.
3. Pass around Stressed out Sam so that each student will take turns putting in their piece of paper as they say one thing that stresses them out.
4. Once the container has filled up is back to the beginning, pause activity to ask students how they think Sam is feeling and how they define stress.
5. Once again pass the container around but this time students will take out one piece of paper as they share one way they cope with stress.
6. Once the container is half empty or less and it gets back around to you pause to ask students how Sam might be feeling now and why.
7. To end the activity give a brief explanation of why you did this activity with them.
8. Repeat any steps as you see fit or necessary.

For this activity we had students sit in a circle and share what stresses them out and why. We also had students share ways in which they cope with stress. As the researchers, we were also part of the activity, not only by facilitating, but by engaging in the activity. The purpose of this activity was to get students to open up to us and vice versa. Opening up would then help foster a sense of community which would feed into a meaningful connection between students and facilitators as well as students and students. For our activity we did the following steps:

1. Gathered students in a circle sitting on chairs.
2. Passed out scratch paper for students to crumble up.
3. We passed around Stressed out Sam and each student took turns putting in their pieces of paper as they said one thing that stressed them out.
4. Once the container was filled up and it came back around to us we paused to ask the students how they thought Sam was feeling and we also asked how they defined stress.
5. Then we passed the container around another time, but this time students took one piece of paper out, as they shared one way they coped with stress.
6. Once the container empty and it got back around to us, we paused to ask students how Sam might be feeling now and why.

7. To end the activity we gave a brief explanation as to why we did this activity with them. We also emphasized the importance of being nice to one another.

One of the changes we found ourselves needing to make along the way was passing the container around our circle more than once in order to filled it up and empty it out. We began by giving students the option to "pass", if they were not comfortable sharing. After having a lot of students use the pass option, we found ourselves modifying our second round. We required that all students share at least one stressor or coping strategy in order to make participation fair. We also gave them 10 seconds to talk to their neighbors about some stressors or coping strategies in hopes of gaining greater student participation.

The students' and teacher's response to our activity were all positive. Everyone seemed to have a good time, there were even moments when students shared very personal things. The most surprising thing was how much the students opened up to us even though we were considered outsiders and were not engaging with them on a daily basis. Now we realize that giving students the option to pass without limitations was not the best idea. For example, we saw that a couple of students chose to pass because they thought they were too cool to engage in the activity. Others decided to pass because their neighbor did so they thought it would be funny to pass as well. When facilitating this activity in the future we will require all students to share one thing especially if we give them time to consult with their neighbors because we want to be fair to those who are opening up and sharing. We will also inform them that the only time it is okay to pass is when something might cause them to become over stressed. The next important step that the teacher needs to do is to continue engaging in these activities with her students. Through this single activity we realized how much students are willing and want to open up when they feel safe, comfortable and heard. It is imperative that the teacher continue these activities throughout the academic school year in order to foster and maintain meaningful student-teacher relationships with her students.

Critical Reflection

Working on this research action project has really solidified my direction as a scholar. In other words, this research has further reinforced my passion for research for social change and I want to continue doing this kind of work in graduate school. I have background in research for the general information of the public, but I had never conducted research for social change. Throughout this entire process I developed a sense of fit into the research world and I feel more

empowered to help my Chicanx/Latinx communities through the means of research. The Major Learning Outcomes (MLO's) 1: Developing Educator, 2: Diversity and Multicultural Scholar and 4: Social Justice Collaborator have impacted my professional development in absolutely the most positive of manners. I have learned how to become an inclusive, equity centered and culturally relevant pedagogical scholar as well as future professional. I have become knowledgeable in the areas of social injustices and tools to use in order to resist these injustices. Most importantly, all the knowledge I have gained in this major is knowledge that I can transfer to my future students in order to continue a positive perpetuating cycle of social change. The next step I need to take in order to become the professional I envision is continuing my education through a doctoral program so that I may become an effective expert in my given field of study. This expertise will be what allows me to advance the knowledge in my given field as well as to give back to my Chicanx/Latinx communities through the means of advocacy and education. After all the most powerful tool we can give our oppressed peoples is the power of knowledge and an effective, culturally relevant education.

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