Effects of Classroom Management on Student Achievement:
A Study of Three Inner-City Middle Schools and Their Comparison Students

Abstract

The Context. Student disruptive behavior is the primary reason both new and veteran teachers exit the profession (Brackett et al., 2011; Friedman, 2006; Hastings & Bham, 2003). Teacher stress, exhaustion, and well-being have been linked to student disruptive behavior (Richards, 2012; Tsouloupas et al., 2010). School administrators report classroom management is their greatest concern regarding new and struggling teachers (Ladd, 2000; Nixon, Packard, & Douvanis, 2010). Particularly in the middle school years (ages 12-14), classroom management should balance the needs of teachers and their adolescent learners, enabling students to take personal responsibilities that lead to self-discipline and improved well-being (Emmer & Gerwels, 2006; Chafouleas, Hagermoser Sanetti, Jaffery, & Fallon, 2012).

The Intervention. Consistency Management & Cooperative Discipline[®] (CMCD[®]) is a fully-developed classroom management intervention, founded on humanistic and person-centered principles (Rogers, 1951, 1969; Rogers & Freiberg, 1994; Freiberg 1999). CMCD builds student self-discipline and responsibility by forging positive teacher-student relationships, creating an organized learning environment, improving instruction, and cooperatively establishing discipline procedures. Early research has shown that students in a person-centered condition miss fewer school days, have significantly higher achievement gains in math and reading, and have significantly fewer disruptive behaviors (Aspy & Roebuck, 1977; Aspy, Aspy, & Roebuck, 1984). Cornelius-White's (2007) meta-analysis reports person-centered educational environments correlate with positive academic outcomes, with the highest correlations being critical/creative thinking ($r = .45$), and math achievement ($r = .36$). Hattie (2009) also concludes that teacher-student relations have a high zone of educational effects ($d = + 0.72$).

The CMCD model is comprehensive, linking Behavioral, Instructional, and Organizational (BIO) management strategies that enable teachers and their students to share responsibility for learning, discipline, and classroom organization. The BIO framework builds from over 20 years of research using the CMCD model (Freiberg 1999; Freiberg, 2012; Freiberg, in press). CMCD expands the teaching repertoire to maximize achievement and minimize student disruptions. The CMCD model provides professional development workshops and manuals to all who work with children, teachers, administrators, parents and school support staff. After the first session, those in attendance must vote in a secret ballot if they wish to continue with CMCD. An affirmative vote of at least 70% is needed for CMCD continuance. CMCD provides two years of direct support including three workshops a year, online coaching, classroom implementation observations, and school climate and discipline data collection and analysis. Table 1 compares traditional teacher classroom management with CMCD. The following has been evidenced in classrooms from Pre-K through college.

Table 1. Traditional and Consistency Management & Cooperative Discipline Classrooms

Traditional Classroom Management	Person-Centered CMCD Management
The Teacher is the singular leader.	Leadership is shared between the teacher and students.
Management relies on control and compliance.	Management is a form of guidance and leadership with high levels of trust and caring by the teacher and students.
The teacher appoints the same students for classroom chores.	All students may apply to be classroom managers: selected from posted job applications and interviews, with positions rotated at pre-set times.
Discipline comes from the teacher in the form of control.	Students learn self-discipline, building from experiences in managing various classroom operations.
The teacher is responsible for all classroom paperwork and organization.	Students are an integral part of classroom management building connectedness with their teacher and peers.
Rules are developed by the teacher and posted for the students.	Teachers and students collaborate to create a classroom constitution, signed and posted by the students.
Consequences are fixed for all students.	Consequences are rational and fit the situation.
Rewards are mostly extrinsic.	Rewards are mostly intrinsic as students take greater personal responsibility for their behavior and learning.
Students are allowed limited responsibilities.	Students share in classroom responsibilities to create sense of community and connectedness.
Few members of the community enter the classroom.	Partnerships are formed with business and community groups to enrich the learning opportunities for students.

Source: "Traditional and Consistency Management & Cooperative Discipline Classrooms." CMCD® H. Jerome Freiberg © 2012 All Rights Reserved. Used by Permission.

The Study. This study examined CMCD's effects on student achievement in reading and mathematics with three high poverty inner-city middle schools against a control sample, using a national, norm-referenced assessment (Stanford 9) and the state's assessment (TAAS). A stratified randomized sample of 500 students was equally divided between the intervention and comparison groups, using two years of student achievement data. CMCD students were matched for ethnicity/social economic status using pre-established, statewide comparison student groups. Previous internal/external CMCD studies reported by Slavin and Lake (2008) in their meta analyses, found moderate to high effect size gains in elementary student achievement ($d = +. 33$, $+. 40$, $+. 53$). Other studies of CMCD show similar gains in reading achievement ($d = +.34$ and $d = +.54$) and math achievement ($d = +.42$ and $d = .+39$), with CMCD students outperforming their control cohorts (Freiberg, Huzinec, & Templeton, 2009; Freiberg, Stein, & Huang, 1995;

Freiberg, 2012). This study includes individual student achievement data clustered within one geographic location and reports the potential CMCD effects at the middle school level.

    Results. Findings indicate that the use of CMCD provides significant, positive effects on student achievement in mathematics and in reading. On standardized national tests (Stanford 9), when compared to the randomized comparison group, CMCD students had medium effect size gains in reading ($d = +0.20$) and in mathematics ($d = +0.36$). This indicates that in reading, 58% of CMCD students would have greater reading improvement than the average comparison student. In mathematics, 64% of CMCD students would have greater mathematics improvement than the average student in the comparison group.

    On the criterion-referenced, state-wide test (TAAS), when compared to a control sample, CMCD students had medium effect size gains in reading ($d = +0.35$) and in mathematics ($d = +0.44$). This indicates that in reading, 64% of CMCD students would have greater reading improvement than the average comparison student. In mathematics, 68% of CMCD students would have greater mathematics improvement than the average comparison student.

    The CMCD model does not provide a curriculum in middle school mathematics or reading content. However, gains in both content areas, as measured by nationally normed and statewide assessments present an opportunity to examine non-curricular variables, such as person-centered classroom management, that can improve the conditions for both teaching and learning.

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