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**The Relationship Between Teacher Use of Exclusionary Discipline and Using a
Problem-Solving Approach to Conflict with Eighth Grade Students**

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Abstract

The purpose of this study was to determine the impacts of using a problem-solving approach to behavior instances within the classroom that decreases the use of office referrals. This study focuses on eighth-grade students in math and social studies classrooms. Within this study Pre- and Post-Assessments were used to gauge classroom culture, Behavior Logs to document behavior instances, a Conflict Data Gathering Tool to identify student perceptions of the private conversations, and a Teacher Reflection Chart to identify alternative behavior prevention strategies that could also be implemented. The researchers found that implementing a problem-solving approach to student behavior instances significantly reduced their use of office referrals for discretionary student misbehavior compared to previous years. The researchers plan to continue using a problem-solving approach to student behavior concerns and recommend that other educators implement the problem-solving approach as well.

Keywords: middle school, exclusionary discipline, conflict, referrals, problem-solving approach

To meet the demands of inflation and rising costs of living standards it is essential that people can find and hold a career that pays more than minimum wage. To accomplish this, individuals must at least graduate from high school and likely also obtain some post-high school training or education in order to open the doors to sustainable-wage careers. A significant contributor to success in school is the amount of time students spend in the classroom. There is a direct correlation from increased suspension, absences, and behavioral issues in which students are sent out of the classroom to a decrease in academic achievement (Anderson et al., 2019; Eddy et al., 2020; Gregory, Skiba & Noguera, 2010; Minnesota Department of Education [MDE], 2014). Decreased academic achievement leads to lower chances of graduating from high school on time, which can lead to greater financial insecurities in adult life. Thus, it is important that educators find better strategies to keep students in the classroom, rather than relying primarily on out-of-the-classroom discipline.

Research shows many negative impacts of out-of-the-classroom discipline for minor student misbehavior, such as being “disrespectful” or “disruptive” (Heilbrun et al., 2018). Students who receive out-of-the-classroom discipline are much more likely to misbehave, repeat grades levels, fail academically, and drop out of school following out-of-the-classroom discipline (Anderson et al., 2019; Eddy et al., 2020; Gregory, Skiba & Noguera, 2010; Minnesota Department of Education [MDE], 2014). Studies show that student-teacher relationships that lack trust and understanding may often lead to vicious cycles of student misbehavior followed by a teacher using out-of-the-classroom discipline, which can alienate the student, reinforce the student’s mistrust and decrease the quality of their relationship with staff, increase their subsequent misbehavior, and

the cycle continues (Anderson et al., 2019; Baroni et al., 2020; Heilbrun et al., 2018; Okonofua et al., 2016). Heilbrun et al. note that nationally, middle school students who have been suspended (removed from the school setting for at least one day) are five times more at risk of contact with the criminal justice system as adults for committing violent crimes (2018). When student misbehavior in class is followed by out-of-the-classroom or out-of-school discipline, this often correlates with juvenile and adult criminal behavior. This relationship is known as the school-to-prison pipeline (Baroni et al., 2020; Heilbrun et al., 2018). Not only are there a host of negative student outcomes from using out-of-the-classroom discipline for minor misbehaviors, but out-of-the-classroom discipline is also often not administered equally for all students.

There are currently many strategies that have been researched to keep students in the classroom, such as positive behavioral intervention strategies (PBIS) and culturally responsive teaching. However, the researchers found that there is a gap in research on the problem-solving approach to student discipline. The problem-solving approach is simply seeking to find the root cause of the student misbehavior through the use of a private conversation with the student (Okonofua et al., 2016). If teachers were to use the problem-solving approach to student discipline this could help to minimize the amount of out-of-classroom time for students for minor infractions, thus increasing student instructional time. Therefore, the researchers aim to answer the following question throughout the research: What effect does using a problem-solving approach to student-teacher conflict have on the use of office referrals with eighth-grade math and social studies students? To answer this question, the researchers conducted research for nine weeks with eighth-grade students in a math and social studies class.

Theoretical Framework

Reducing out-of-the-classroom discipline time is grounded in choice theory as an explanation of why students may behave in the way they do. Choice theory explains that all human behavior is driven by five needs: love & belonging, power, fun, survival, freedom (Glasser, 1997; Louis, 2009; Walter, Lambie, & Ngazimbi, 2015). This framework also discusses a quality world “is created after birth and is continually re-created by the individual throughout life” (Walter, Lambie, & Ngazimbi, 2015, p. 7). Simply, a quality world can be viewed as an ideal world of what meets an individual’s needs best. The quality world is then reconstructed throughout life based on previous and additional experiences and background. For example, a picture of an individual’s family may be placed in the quality world, because subconsciously the individual has a sense of belonging when he or she is with family. This framework requires that teachers have an understanding of how individual student quality worlds can be influenced by the way in which the individual student is treated (Glasser, 1997). Glasser puts an emphasis on teachers showing a genuine interest in students so that students will view teachers as part of their quality worlds. In other words, the student believes that the teachers meet a foundational need in the student (1997). Just like all people, adolescents will choose behaviors in an attempt to satisfy their needs (Walter, Lambie, & Ngazimbi, 2015). When adolescents do not feel their needs are being met, they are more likely to make behavioral choices that will get them in trouble with teachers and other school staff (Walter, Lambie, & Ngazimbi, 2015).

The theoretical framework of choice theory was utilized for this study as a way to find alternative teacher responses for minor student misbehavior, rather than resorting

primarily to out-of-the-classroom discipline for minor misbehavior. This leads students to remain in the classroom for instruction and can help foster a more positive student-teacher relationship. Relationship building with students can help students feel a sense of belonging and place the teacher in the student's quality world. This has the ability to reduce the amount of misbehavior a student exhibits in the classroom. This study examines whether the problem-solving approach to minor misbehavior is an effective way for educators to help students meet their needs when minor misbehavior arises.

One tenant of choice theory is that student misbehavior leads to discipline from school staff, which can lead to increased student misbehavior (Glasser, 1997). As discussed in the next section of this study, extensive research has shed light on this same cycle of repeated student misbehavior and discipline in school.

Review of Literature

Classroom management and administering discipline can be some of the most challenging aspects of teaching middle school students. When students engage in disruptive behavior during class time, teachers often resort to exclusionary discipline for minor misbehaviors that could have been avoided. Students then miss critical instructional time, which can then lead to lower academic achievement. This review of the literature surrounding student-teacher conflict and school discipline will define exclusionary discipline and outline its adverse impacts on students. Then, we will describe the effects of teacher attitudes and beliefs on the use of exclusionary discipline. Finally, we will identify behavior intervention strategies to help reduce unnecessary exclusionary discipline within the classroom.

Background Information on Exclusionary Discipline

Defining exclusionary discipline.

Scholars define exclusionary discipline as removing students from a classroom for disciplinary reasons (Eddy et al., 2020). Exclusionary discipline can take the form of office referrals, in-school suspensions, and out-of-school suspensions (Eddy et al., 2020; Heilbrun et al., 2018). Suspension is when staff removes students from the classroom setting for at least one day (Heilbrun et al., 2018). Gallagher (2019) describes that office disciplinary referrals [ODRs] occur when a staff member documents a student violating a school rule and passes this ODR documentation on to school administration, who assigns consequences- such as detention or suspension- for the misbehavior (Gallagher, 2019). Writing an ODR is the only phase of exclusionary discipline that teachers have direct control over (Eddy et al., 2020), so teachers must keep in mind that each ODR results in an average of 20 minutes the student is not in the classroom (Gallagher, 2019).

Negative impacts of exclusionary discipline.

Exclusionary discipline reduces academic achievement. Anderson et al. (2019) point out that educational learning gaps usually follow exclusionary discipline due to the students losing instructional time from when they were out of the classroom for disciplinary reasons. Naturally, this loss of instructional time can lead to lower academic achievement, increased academic failure, more frequently repeating classes or grade levels, and increased rates of dropping out of school (Anderson et al., 2019; Eddy et al., 2020; Gregory, Skiba & Noguera, 2010; Minnesota Department of Education [MDE], 2014). Several studies have found that each time a student receives an added

suspension from school, their chances of high school graduation go down by 20% (Gregory, Clawson, Davis, & Gerewitz, 2016; Heilbrun et al., 2018).

Another significant adverse outcome of using exclusionary discipline is the escalation of negative student behaviors following exclusionary discipline. Students who have received a suspension are at increased risk of increased absenteeism from school (Baroni et al., 2020; Heilbrun et al., 2018; MDE, 2014), likely due in part to the fact that they have not been present in the classroom long enough to gain success with the curriculum (Anderson et al., 2019). Following the use of ODRs, students are likely to continue and even increase their negative or disruptive behaviors (Anderson et al., 2019; Baroni et al., 2020; Dubin, 2015; Eddy et al., 2020; Gregory, Clawson, Davis, & Gerewitz, 2016; Gregory, Skiba & Noguera, 2010; MDE, 2014). Studies show that student-teacher relationships that lack trust and understanding lead to cycles of student misbehavior followed by exclusionary discipline. This can alienate the student, reinforce the student's mistrust and decrease the quality of their relationship with staff, increase the subsequent misbehavior, then the cycle begins again (Anderson et al., 2019; Baroni et al., 2020; Heilbrun et al., 2018; Okonofua et al., 2016). Increased misbehavior following exclusionary discipline also continues to escalate the severity of consequences students receive. Students who have received exclusionary discipline for minor, subjective offenses- for example, disrespect- are three times more at risk of entering the juvenile court system during the next year (Heilbrun et al., 2018). This same study notes that nationally, middle school students who have been suspended are five times more at risk of contact with the criminal justice system for committing violent crimes as adults. School misbehavior that is followed by exclusionary discipline, which

then correlates with juvenile and adult criminal behavior, is a relationship known as the school-to-prison pipeline (Baroni et al., 2020; Heilbrun et al., 2018).

Disparity gaps in exclusionary discipline.

Research on exclusionary discipline has revealed disparity gaps between students groups concerning disabilities, race, and gender (MDE, 2014). One gap within exclusionary discipline consists of students with disabilities. Students with disabilities should have access to behavioral interventions and supports; however, these students are more likely to be overrepresented in the use of exclusionary discipline (Baroni et al., 2020; Hurwitz et al., 2021; MDE, 2014). In Minnesota public schools during the 2012-2013 school year, 15% of students received special education services, but 50% of suspensions involved special education students (MDE, 2014). Additionally, Hurwitz et al. (2021) found that students receiving special education services are 20% more likely than their peers to face out-of-school suspensions due to misbehavior.

A second gap is the racial discipline gap. American Indian students are more likely to be overrepresented in disciplinary actions than their White peers (Anderson et al., 2019; Gregory & Fergus, 2017; Gregory, Skiba & Noguera, 2010; MDE, 2014; Tobin & Vincent, 2011). Tobin & Vincent found that African American students are three times more likely to experience exclusionary discipline than their White peers (2011). Other research has found that Latino and Native American students are also overrepresented in exclusionary discipline; all of these racial and ethnic minority groups are the same groups of students disproportionately affected by the achievement gap (Gregory, Skiba & Noguera, 2010; MDE, 2014). Studies repeatedly show that “there is no evidence that Black students are more disruptive or commit more offenses than their White peers”

(Heilbrun et al., 2018, p. 326). However, punishment is disproportionately more severe for African American and Latino students than their White peers for the same minor, subjective misbehaviors, such as disruptive or disrespectful (Heilbrun et al., 2018; Tobin & Vincent, 2011). In contrast, White students primarily receive exclusionary discipline for objective behaviors, such as drug possession (Morris & Perry, 2017). MDE notes that in 2012-2013, most out-of-school suspensions were for being disruptive, disobedient, or showing disorderly conduct, misbehavior which does not endanger other people. In contrast, less than 3% of suspensions involved a weapon, and only one-third of suspensions involved a victim (2014).

The intersection of racial and gender disparities in discipline is particularly confounding. The MDE has found that boys are more likely than girls to receive exclusionary school discipline (2014). However, researchers have found that African American girls are six times as likely as White girls to be suspended from school and 12% more likely to be suspended than girls of any other race (Baroni et al., 2020; Morris & Perry, 2017). Morris & Perry found that White boys and African American girls have the same odds of receiving an office referral (2017). This same study found a relationship showing that African American boys receive double the office referrals as White boys receive for the same minor to moderate rule infractions. Still, African American girls are predicted to receive three times the number of referrals as White girls for the same minor, subjective offenses (Morris & Perry, 2017). In summary, the racial discipline gap between White and Black girls is significantly more profound than the discipline gap between White and Black boys (Baroni et al., 2020; Morris & Perry, 2017).

Exclusionary discipline has many implications on students and disparity gaps. Research has shown that ODRs can quickly escalate to suspension if the student receives repeated office discipline referrals, which can sometimes even feed the school-to-prison pipeline. Thus, it is crucial to find other forms of behavior intervention strategies to help reduce the use of ODRs in individual classrooms. Preventing and resolving student-teacher conflicts in the classroom can help reduce the numbers of ODRs teachers write, which can help reduce the use of other exclusionary discipline measures, which can, in turn, help reduce the disparity gaps within school discipline.

Teacher Attitudes and Beliefs

Teacher empathy and the problem-solving approach.

Perhaps the quickest and most effective way to solve a teacher-student conflict is to use a problem-solving approach. Instead of reacting to student misbehavior in frustration, teachers and staff should ask “why” and try to get to the root cause of the conflict (Dubin, 2015; Gregory, Skiba & Mediratta, 2017; Sprenger, 2020). A problem-solving approach to discipline includes empathy in that the teacher or staff member works with the student to understand why the misbehavior occurred and then work together towards a solution (Gregory, Skiba & Mediratta, 2017; Okonofua et al., 2016). This process of working together to find a solution builds trust between students and teachers (Gregory, Skiba & Mediratta, 2017; Okonofua et al., 2016; Sprenger, 2020; Thakur, 2019) and helps reduce the use of exclusionary discipline (Amemiya et al., 2020; Gallagher, 2019; Tobin & Vincent 2011). Furthermore, researchers found that when teachers were encouraged to use an empathic mindset while giving discipline, exclusionary discipline was used much less often (Okonofua et al., 2016, Sprenger,

2020). Okonofua et al. found that student suspension rates were cut approximately in half, even for boys, African American students, Latino students, and students who had been suspended in previous years (2016). Other researchers have also found that teacher empathy may significantly reduce the risk of an adolescent receiving an ODR during the school year, specifically for ODRs involving defiance (Gallagher, 2019; Tobin & Vincent, 2011).

Teacher efficacy & emotional regulation.

Teacher efficacy also has an impact on exclusionary discipline used within schools and classrooms. Eddy et al. concluded that lower suspension rates are used when teachers have higher efficacy (2020). The data of ODRs, as Eddy et al. (2020) note, does not always display an accurate account of students who were removed from the classroom. Suspensions, both in-school and out-of-school, do, however, indicate if a student was removed from the classroom. Classroom management can also impact exclusionary discipline within the classroom, especially for inexperienced teachers (Thakur, 2017). Thakur discusses the lack of classroom management training pre-service teachers receive and are unprepared to handle challenges within the classroom (2017). Due to teachers not being trained in classroom management, teachers often rely on their personal experiences and the input of those within the school community to guide their classroom management (Thakur, 2017). Additionally, Eddy et al. (2020) found that when teachers feel capable of handling challenging student behaviors, they will address the behavior without exclusionary discipline.

Regulating the teacher's emotions and emotional exhaustion is also crucial in reducing the excessive use of exclusionary discipline. Often, teachers remove students

from classrooms as an immediate solution to an in-class problem. However, the effects of removing a student from the classroom are only temporary, and the behaviors may increase following student removal from class, as discussed above (Eddy et al., 2020). Research has shown a correlation between teacher emotional exhaustion and discipline referrals and in-school suspensions. The same study noted that, even though classroom teachers can indeed contribute to disciplinary actions, administrators tend to deviate from exclusionary discipline actions if they are aware of the teacher's emotional exhaustion. Hammond (2015) and Thakur (2017) indicate that teachers need to be mindful of their personal signals of stress and frustration to regulate their own emotions first before engaging with a student. This allows teachers to solve the conflict from a place of understanding, rather than reacting to student misbehavior with an ODR or other punitive discipline (Hammond, 2015; Thakur, 2017).

Teacher care, warmth, and trust.

Some of the most vital indicators of a positive teacher-student relationship are the level of care students perceive from their teacher and the mutual trust between the teacher and their students. Tobin & Vincent (2011) found a decrease in exclusionary discipline on African American students when they had a positive and trusting relationship with their teacher. Furthermore, increased levels of teacher care for pre-teens and young adolescents is associated with lower levels of risky rule violations (ex- illegal activity, substance use, absenteeism), thus resulting in fewer instances of receiving school discipline (Gallagher, 2019). Research has shown that when middle school teachers and students identify their schools as having rigid yet fairly administered rules combined with a perception of teachers being supportive results in

fewer overall uses of suspensions (Gregory, Skiba & Mediratta, 2017; Heilbrun et al., 2018; Thakur, 2017; Tobin & Vincent, 2011). Amemiya et al. (2020) found that the only adolescents whose behavioral engagement improved following discipline were those who had trusted both their teacher and their school. The same study found that a lack of student trust in the teacher showed no change in student engagement following discipline. Additionally, students who trusted their teacher but not their school showed decreased engagement or increased misbehavior following teacher discipline (Amemiya et al., 2020; Gallagher, 2019; Tobin & Vincent, 2011). This may be due to the effect discussed above of the student perceiving the school as strict but unfair (Heilbrun et al., 2018).

Behavior Intervention Strategies

Social-emotional learning.

Teacher attitudes of warmth, care, and trust can affect their classroom, but school-wide perceptions of teachers as both strict and fair can drastically affect exclusionary discipline throughout the school. Heilbrun et al. (2018) found that schools rated by both teachers and students as strict and fair had an 8% lower racial disparity gap in the use of exclusionary discipline. This finding indicates that “by providing clear expectations for student behavior- and communicating an established protocol for handling misbehavior- schools can aim to reduce the ambiguity associated with student misconduct, and the response to such behavior” (Heilbrun et al., 2018, p. 334).

Two ways in which teachers can provide clear behavior expectations in the classroom and school is through social-emotional learning and positive behavior interventions. Osher et al. (2010) note the importance of social-emotional learning and

school discipline. Social-emotional learning can also help to reduce suspension rates while improving student behavior (Dubin, 2015; Gregory & Fergus, 2017).

Teacher-student relationships are equally crucial in social-emotional learning. The better the relationship between the teacher and student, the more likely it is that the student will make sense of the school rules while also increasing prosocial and on-task behavior in the classroom (Gregory, Skiba & Mediratta, 2017; Osher et al., 2010).

Positive behavior interventions.

Positive behavior interventions are another strategy that can be implemented to reduce disruptions. Studies have shown a decline in the use of exclusionary discipline practices- including a 50% decrease in office referrals- when positive behavior supports are implemented at a school-wide level (Gregory, Skiba & Mediratta, 2017; Lee et al., 2021; MDE, 2014; Osher et al., 2010). Positive behavior support focuses on discipline and problem prevention while increasing positive behaviors shown by all students (Lee et al., 2021; Tobin & Vincent, 2011). Research has shown that positive behavior interventions and supports increase instructional time by reducing possible disruptions and office discipline referrals and increasing academic achievement (Lee et al., 2021; Tobin & Vincent, 2011). However, research is inconclusive about whether or not school-wide positive behavior interventions reduce or maintain the racial discipline gap (Gregory, Skiba & Mediratta, 2017; Tobin & Vincent, 2011).

Culturally responsive teaching.

An additional strategy for preventing conflict in the classroom is for teachers to use Culturally Responsive Teaching. As it relates to discipline, culturally responsive teachers work to understand the student's home culture and why a student might be

behaving a certain way before using standard exclusionary discipline (Gregory, Skiba & Mediratta, 2017; Hammond, 2015). Hammond (2015) explains that a direction given in the form of a question can be misconstrued as a choice within the African American community. A simple cultural difference like this can result in frustration and teacher-student conflict, perhaps leading to an office referral or other punitive discipline (Hammond, 2015). Research has shown that when teachers are culturally aware, respectful, and inclusive, students feel more connected to and trusting of their teachers (Gregory, Skiba & Mediratta, 2017). As previously outlined, positive student-teacher relationships are a strong foundation for increased academic achievement and decreased teacher-student conflict (Amemiya et al., 2020; Gallagher, 2019; Gregory, Clawson, Davis & Gerewitz, 2010; Gregory, Skiba & Mediratta, 2017; Heilbrun et al., 2018; Tobin & Vincent, 2011).

Restorative practices.

Another strategy that can aid in the prevention of exclusionary discipline is restorative practices. Gregory and Evans (2020) describe that restorative practices aim to prevent challenging behaviors from occurring by addressing the student's needs (i.e., emotional, cognitive, etc.). When conflict does arise, restorative practices allow students to have conversations with the people they harmed, including teachers, peers, and parents (Dubin, 2015). This aids schools in shifting away from traditional, zero-tolerance & exclusionary discipline policies towards a disciplined approach that is more holistic for the student (Dubin, 2015; Gregory & Evans, 2020; Gregory, Skiba & Mediratta, 2017). Gregory, Clawson, Davis, and Gerewitz found that increased teacher use of restorative practices was associated with more student respect to and from their

teachers and associated with teachers using fewer referrals for disruptive or defiant behavior (2016). Restorative practices can help improve the overall reduction of exclusionary discipline and reduce the racial discipline gap (Gregory & Evans, 2020). When restorative practices have been implemented in high schools across rural, urban and suburban schools with diverse demographics, the result is about a 50% decrease in violence and suspensions, as well as a 70% decrease in ODRs coded as disrespectful and disruptive (Gregory, Clawson, Davis, & Gerewitz, 2016).

Conclusion

The teacher's attitudes and beliefs can mitigate the negative impacts of exclusionary discipline on discipline and classroom and school-wide behavior intervention strategies. Gaps within the literature indicate that more research needs to be done to determine if strategies such as the Monarch Room, a trauma-informed discipline strategy (Baroni et al., 2020), and teacher coaching programs such as My Teaching Partner Secondary (MTP-S; Heilbrun et al., 2018) consistently reduce the racial discipline gap. The literature suggests gaps within school reporting of office discipline referrals [ODRs]. Current school reporting does not adequately identify whether or not a student was removed from a classroom or how the ODRs were addressed by administrators (Eddy et al., 2020). Gregory, Skiba, and Mediratta (2017) and Tobin and Vincent (2011) both indicated that regular reporting and collection of discipline data is needed to identify and correct disparities in discipline. This raises the question that perhaps more rigorous reporting of all exclusionary discipline data- including ODRs- needs to be required of schools to identify and reduce disparity gaps in exclusionary discipline quickly.

Throughout our action research study, we will seek to answer the following question: “What effect does using a problem-solving approach to conflict have on our use of office referrals with eighth-grade math and social studies students?” With this, our research will focus on the use of the problem-solving method to ameliorate and avoid conflicts. Other strategies known to promote positive student behavior in the classroom will be integrated into our practice as able and prudent such as: developing positive teacher-student relationships (Gallagher, 2019), teaching social-emotional learning (Osher et al., 2010), using positive behavior interventions (Thakur, 2017), implementing culturally responsive teaching (Gregory, Skiba & Mediratta, 2017) and restorative practices (Gregory, Skiba & Mediratta, 2017). We will also document when we use any of the above strategies and note any observable student behavior resulting from the strategy.

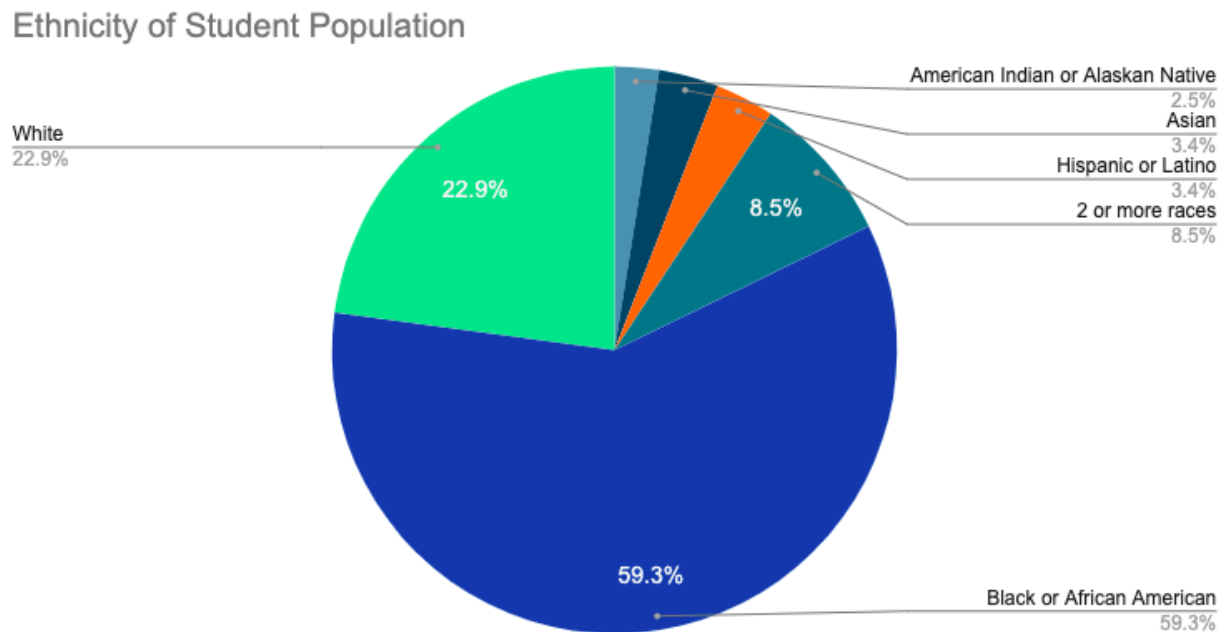
Methodology

This study used a classroom action research design. A mix of qualitative and quantitative data was collected. The researchers began with the archived artifacts of baseline data from student behavior referrals that the researchers wrote during the fall of the 2019-2020 school year. The primary data collected was the researcher’s observational data recorded in the Behavior Logs (see Appendix C), which contained both qualitative and quantitative data. Classroom Culture Pre- and Post-Assessments (see Appendix A) and Conflict Data Gathering Tools (see Appendix B) were administered to students for the purpose of triangulation and strengthening the findings of the Behavior Log (see Appendix C). Researcher Reflection Charts (see Appendix D) were used as qualitative data to support the observational data in the behavior log,

which allowed the researchers to adjust behavior intervention strategies as needed throughout the study.

With this, the research focused on the use of the problem-solving method to ameliorate and avoid conflicts. Other strategies known to promote positive student behavior in the classroom were integrated into our practice as able and prudent such as: developing positive teacher-student relationships (Gallagher, 2019), teaching social-emotional learning (Osher et al., 2010), using positive behavior interventions (Thakur, 2017), implementing culturally responsive teaching (Gregory, Skiba & Mediratta, 2017) and restorative practices (Gregory, Skiba & Mediratta, 2017). The researchers documented when any of the above strategies were used and noted any observable student behavior resulting from the strategy.

This action research study was conducted in the fall of the 2021-2022 school year with eighth-grade students in social studies courses and mathematics courses in diverse middle schools in urban and suburban Minnesota. There were a total of 118 participants; 57 participants in the social studies course and 61 participants in the mathematics course. Figure 1 represents the ethnicity of the student population; note, one course consisted of 100% of students identifying as Black or African American. Of these 118 participants, 65 were males and 52 were females and one transgender student. The 118 participants were enrolled in grade-level, required social studies and mathematics courses. The courses both met every day for 40 minutes for the social studies course and 46 minutes for the mathematics course.

Figure 1*Student Sample Population Ethnicities*

The researchers utilized four tools to collect data throughout the research process. First, the researchers administered the Classroom Culture Pre- and Post-Assessment (see Appendix A). This assessment collected data before and after the behavior interventions. Students were to self-rate their perceptions of their relationship with their teacher (the researchers), classroom culture, and their perceptions of the content. The next data collection tool that was utilized was a Behavior Log (see Appendix C). This documented the approximate number and frequency of teacher-student conflicts in the classroom, along with details regarding the disruptive behavior, whether the researchers were able to resolve the conflict using the problem-solving approach and whether the conflict resulted in an office referral. The Conflict Data Gathering Tool (see Appendix B) was utilized to show if students feel that the behavior problem was solved through the teacher using the problem-solving

approach. It also allowed for some open-ended responses on students' views of the effectiveness of the intervention. This data collection tool was used on an as-needed basis. Finally, the Teacher Reflection Chart (see Appendix D) was used as a tool where the researchers reflected on the behavior of students and on what may have caused the observed behavior. Together, the researchers reflected on why they thought the observed positive or negative behavior occurred and planned next steps for encouraging positive student behavior. This data tool also provided a space where the researchers recorded the use of other classroom management strategies such as positive behavior interventions, positive discipline, ENVoY strategies, restorative practices, social-emotional learning, and culturally responsive teaching and how this affected student behavior.

Baseline data was gathered from the researchers' aggregate data on numbers of student discipline referrals and written during the 2019-2020 school year for a similar intervention period. Every student in the mathematics and social studies courses involved was provided with a passive consent form. Students were given five days to return the passive consent form in order to opt-out of the study. After five days, the research began. The researchers administered the Classroom Culture Pre-Assessment (see Appendix A) to students via a Google Form. Of the 118 students who were in the social studies and mathematics course, 98 students responded to the Classroom Culture Pre-Assessment (see Appendix A). The researchers then began teaching the courses as normal. When a behavior or conflict within the classroom arose, the researchers then used the problem-solving approach Conversation Guidelines (see Appendix E) to mitigate the behavior issue. The problem-solving approach was used to

understand why the misbehavior occurred. The student was then provided with a brief Conflict Data Gathering Tool (see Appendix B) and completed the form on paper; this was provided on an as-need basis. This allowed the researcher to see how effective the student viewed the intervention. The behavior was also documented in the Behavior Log (see Appendix C). Also, the researchers recorded the numbers of discipline referrals (confidential) for when students were sent out of the classroom. The researchers met throughout the nine weeks of intervention to reflect on data collected so far and plan for interventions and refinements in the coming weeks. This data was recorded in the Teacher Reflection Chart (see Appendix D). After nine weeks of intervention, all students received a Post-Assessment Classroom Culture Assessment (see Appendix A) that asked the same questions as the Pre-Assessment. Of the 118 students, 96 responded to the Classroom Culture Post-Assessment.

Analysis of Data

The raw data from this study was in the form of field notes (the Behavior Log, see Appendix C; and the Reflection Chart, see Appendix D), survey results (the Classroom Culture Pre- and Post-Assessments, see Appendix A; and the Conflict Data Gathering tool, see Appendix B). The team of two researchers separated the Behavior Log field notes by weeks, then tallied the number of behavior instances that resulted in private conversations with students. The researchers also tallied the weekly number of student removals to administration and the weekly number of office referrals written for behavior instances. Each researcher initially tallied their own data and removed any identifiable student data, then the researchers tallied each other's data to ensure accuracy before compiling totals. The researchers then created tables and graphical representations of

the total weekly numbers of private conversations, student removals, and office referrals written. The researchers also analyzed the Reflection Chart that was completed throughout the research process. Each researcher compared their own Reflection Chart with their Behavior Log to identify if the additional strategies that were implemented correlated with decreased behavior instances as noted in the Behavior Log.

After the Behavior Log (see Appendix C) was completed, the researchers analyzed the Conflict Data Gathering Tool (see Appendix B) responses. This raw data did not include any identifiable data. The researchers compiled the data together and found the mean and median of two specific questions on the Conflict Data Gathering Tool (see Appendix B). The percentages of student responses for each scale option on the data gathering tool were represented graphically.

The researchers then analyzed the raw data from the Classroom Culture Pre- and Post- Assessment (see Appendix A). Prior to analysis, the researchers removed any identifiable data from the Pre- and Post-Assessments and compiled the results for each question. The researchers compared the Pre- and Post- Assessment results for each question, but focused on five specific questions. These questions pertained to how respectful the students felt their teacher was toward them, how connected to their teacher they feel they are, how concerned the teacher would be if a student walked into class upset, how often the teacher is truly interested in how the student is doing, and how often the student was able to explain why they may have misbehaved. The researchers included these specific questions, as they all offer insight into the quality of

the teacher-student relationships within the classroom. A variety of tables and charts were included to display the findings.

Findings

The purpose of this study was to discover the effect of using a problem-solving approach to student-teacher conflict on the use of office referrals with eighth-grade math and social studies students. This study was conducted using a classroom action research design with a mix of qualitative and quantitative data.

The researchers sought to answer the following question throughout the research: What effect does using a problem-solving approach to student-teacher conflict have on the use of office referrals with eighth-grade math and social studies students? To answer this question, the researchers collected baseline data from 2019-2020 office referrals written during a nine-week period at the beginning of the school year. Combined, the researchers wrote 12 total office referrals for behavioral instances, not including referrals written for attendance. Throughout the study, the researchers used a Behavior Log (see Appendix C) to track the number of behavioral instances that resulted in the teacher having a private conversation with the student to try to solve the problem and also tracked the number of behavioral instances resulting in student removal to administration or an office referral written.

The results in Table 1 of the Behavior Log (see Appendix C) data collection showed a decrease throughout the study in the number of behavior instances each week that required a private, problem-solving conversation with the student as well as a decrease over time in the number of student removals to administration. Student removals were considered a break from class in which referrals were not written. This

happened when students were too escalated to engage in a private conversation with the teacher in a timely manner and were instead sent to administration to process the incident. In this study, student removals resulted in the administration contacting home, but no other out-of-classroom consequences. Some students returned to the classroom after a short conversation with administration. The data that the number of problem-solving conversations and student removals decreased over the course of the study supports the finding that the researchers wrote fewer office referrals during this study as compared to the baseline data.

Table 1 shows that throughout the research, there were a total of 61 private conversations with students following behavior instances. There were also 17 total student removals to administration as a result of behavior instances during the time of the research. When the researchers began the interventions, there were 15 private conversations that took place in Week 1. By Weeks 8 and 9, there were only two behavior instances for which researchers needed to have private conversations with students. Week 5 was a shortened week of school, and Week 9 was the week prior to a holiday break. Table 1 also shows when each of the three office referrals was written for student behavior instances.

Table 1

Behavior Log Results

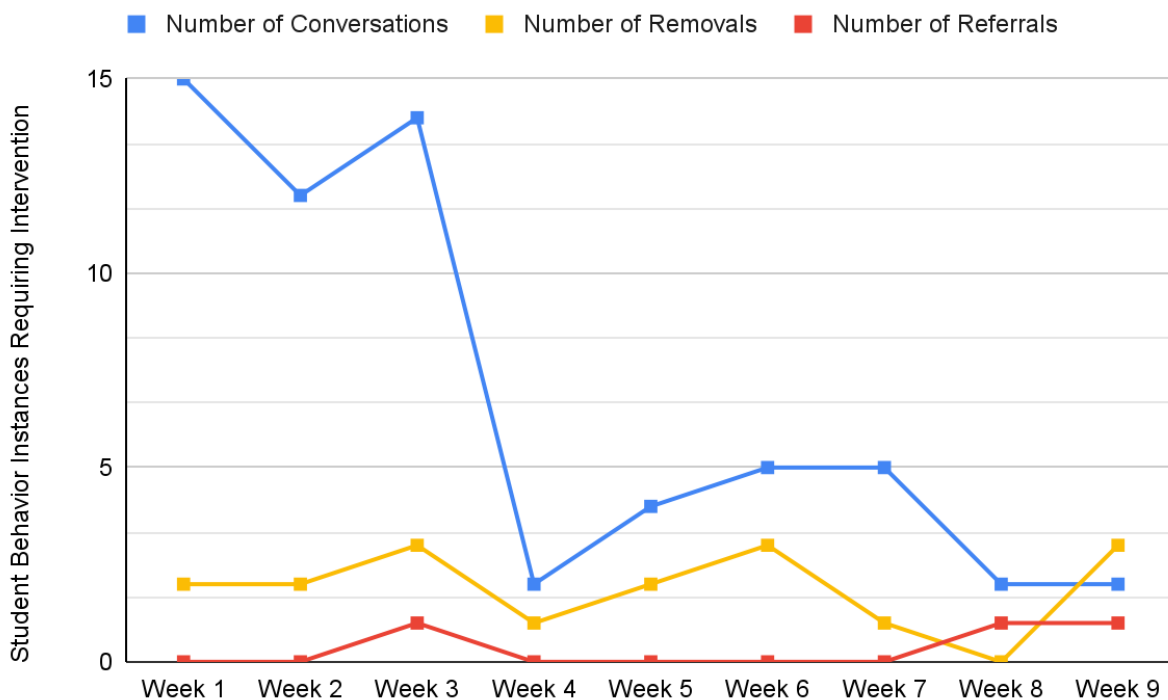
| <u>Exclusionary Discipline</u> | <u>Week 1</u> | <u>Week 2</u> | <u>Week 3</u> | <u>Week 4</u> | <u>Week 5</u> | <u>Week 6</u> | <u>Week 7</u> | <u>Week 8</u> | <u>Week 9</u> | <u>Totals</u> |
|--------------------------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|
| Number of Conversations | 15 | 12 | 14 | 2 | 4 | 5 | 5 | 2 | 2 | 61 |
| Number of Removals | 2 | 2 | 3 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 1 | 0 | 3 | 17 |
| Number of Referrals | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 3 |

Figure 2 shows the correlation between the number of student removals, referrals, and private conversations. Week 3 had an increase of all three measures of

behavior instances. Week 4 had a decline in all three measures of behavior instances. However, in Week 9 the number of student removals (3) surpassed the number of private conversations (2). Overall, the total number of private conversations with students decreased significantly from the beginning of the study to the end of the study.

Figure 2

Behavior Log Results



After private conversations with students, a Conflict Data Gathering Tool (see Appendix B) was used to measure the student perception of the conversation. Figure 3 shows the results of the first question addressing if a student feels the teacher attempted to understand why the behavior took place. Students were able to identify how strongly they agreed or disagreed with the question. For the question identified in

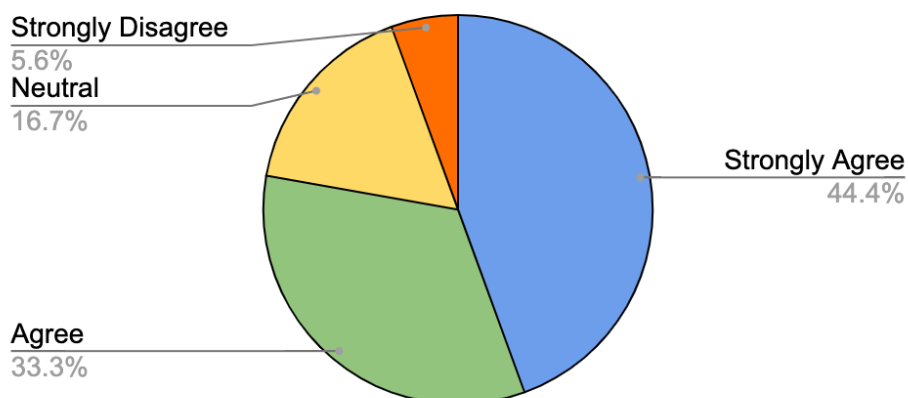
Figure 3, the mean student response on a scale of 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree) was 4.1, while the mode was 4.

Figure 3 shows that 77.7% of students who completed the Conflict Data Gathering Tool (see Appendix B) either agreed or strongly agreed that the teacher attempted to understand why the problem occurred. For this question, there was only one student who strongly disagreed that their teacher attempted to understand why the problem occurred, and no students who disagreed.

Figure 3

Results of Conflict Data Gathering Tool-1

I feel that my teacher attempted to understand why the problem occurred.



The second question posed in the Conflict Data Gathering Tool (see Appendix B) gauges if students felt that the teacher and student were able to agree on a solution to the misbehavior that would work for both the teacher and student. For the question identified in Figure 4, the mean of student responses on a scale of 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree) was also 4.1, and the mode was also 4.

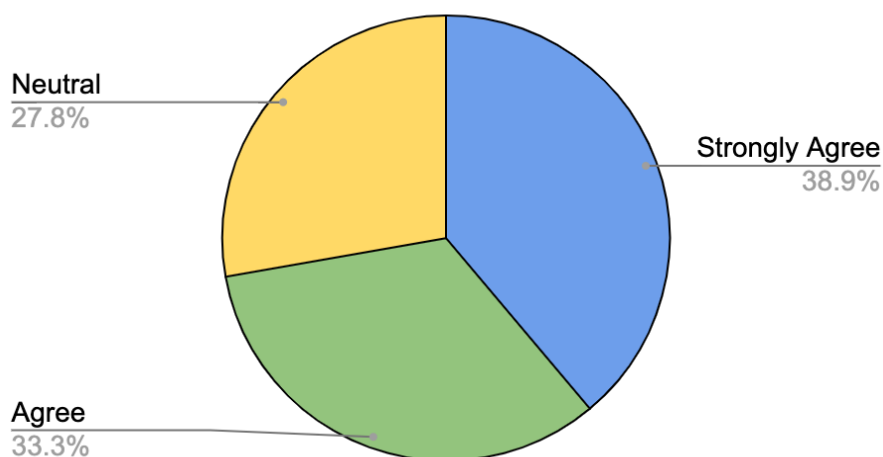
Figure 4 shows that 72.2% of students who completed the Conflict Data Gathering Tool (see Appendix B) either agreed or strongly agreed that the teacher and

student were able to agree on a solution to the behavior instance. The results of this question display that no students disagreed or strongly disagreed with the solution that was agreed upon during the private conversation.

Figure 4

Results of Conflict Data Gathering Tool

I feel that my teacher and I agreed on a solution that will work for both of us.



Throughout the data collection period, the researchers met regularly to discuss the research progress. During this time the researchers used the Teacher Reflection Chart (see Appendix D) to reflect on other strategies that were working to lower behavior instances. The additional strategies that the researchers implemented were: assigned student jobs, gave explicit task and behavior directions, communicated regularly with parents, facilitated small groups with explicit directions and modeled behavior expectations, used a school-wide positive behavior intervention system, wrote redirections instead of verbal redirections, ensured regular student check-ins with other school staff, and taught lessons outdoors. The researchers noticed a decline in student

behavior instances when the additional strategies were implemented as a preventative measure to misbehavior.

At the beginning of the data collection period, students were asked to respond to a series of questions on the Classroom Culture Pre-Assessment (see Appendix A). Students were asked to respond to the same questions at the end of the nine-week intervention period. The results from the five of the questions from the Pre- and Post-Assessment (see Appendix A) are displayed in Table 2, Table 3, Figure 5, Figure 6, and Figure 7.

Table 2 displays the median and mode of student responses on the Pre- and Post-Assessment (see Appendix A) for the number of responses for how respectful the students feel their teacher is toward them. Students responded to this question on a Likert scale of 1 (Strongly Disagree) to 4 (Strongly Agree). The median and mode of student responses for this question were the same for the Pre- and Post-Assessment (see Appendix A). This demonstrates that the teachers in the study maintained a consistently respectful relationship with their students throughout the study.

Table 2

Student Pre- and Post-Assessment Responses #1

| <u>Respectful Relationship</u> | <u>Pre-Assessment</u> | <u>Post-Assessment</u> |
|--------------------------------|-----------------------|------------------------|
| Median | 3 | 3 |
| Mode | 4 | 4 |

Table 3 represents the student responses from the Pre- and Post-Assessment (see Appendix A). The question in Table 3 identifies if students feel they have a positive relationship with their teacher. This question used a Likert scale of 1 (Not connected at all) to 4 (Very connected). Both the median and mode remained consistent from the

time the Pre-Assessment and Post-Assessment were given. This again, shows that teachers maintained consistently positive relationships with students throughout the study.

Table 3

Student Pre- and Post-Assessment Responses #2

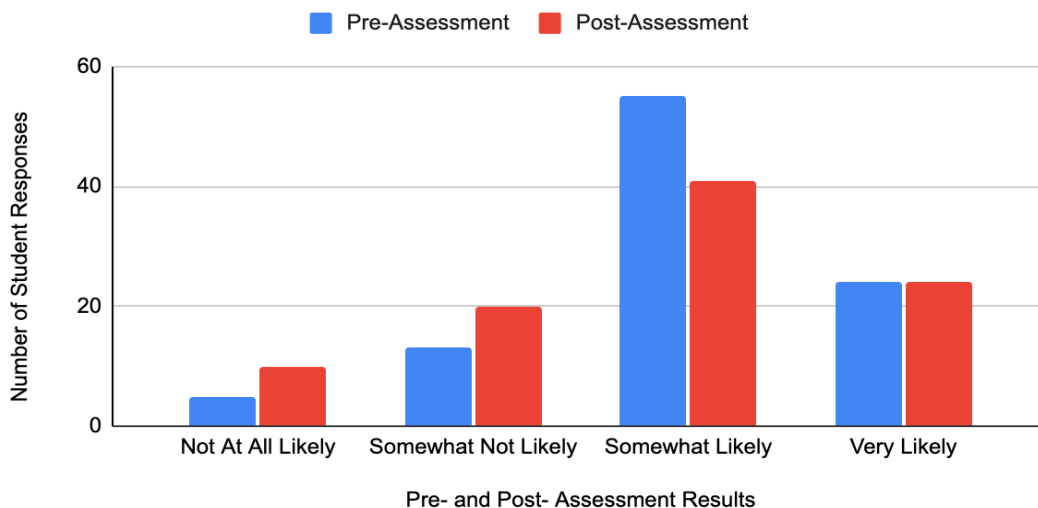
| <u>Positive Relationship</u> | <u>Pre-Assessment</u> | <u>Post-Assessment</u> |
|------------------------------|-----------------------|------------------------|
| Median | 3 | 3 |
| Mode | 3 | 3 |

The question in Figure 5 focuses on how concerned the teacher would be if a student came to class upset. In this question, the students were asked to respond through a multiple choice answer. The results of this question demonstrate more responses for “not at all likely” and “somewhat not likely” on the Post-Assessment versus the Pre-Assessment.

Figure 5

Student Pre- and Post-Assessment Responses #3

If you walked into class upset, how likely do you think your teacher would be concerned about you?



The question in Figure 6 asks students how often the teacher is genuinely interested in how the student is doing. The format of this question was multiple choice. The Post-Assessment results had an increase of “never” answers than in the Pre-Assessment. There were also more responses of “often” in the Post-Assessment when compared to the Pre-Assessment.

Figure 6

Student Pre- and Post-Assessment Responses #4

When your teacher asks how you are doing, how often do you think is she really interested in the answer?



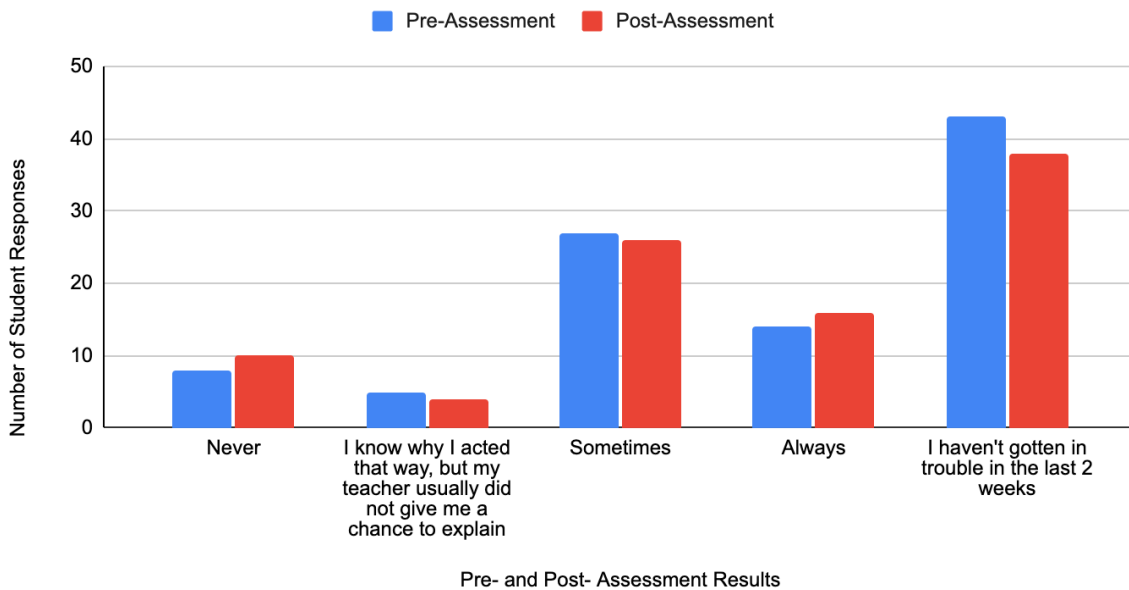
The question identified in Figure 7 asks how often the student was able to explain to the teacher why they misbehaved. The format of this question was multiple choice. On the Post-Assessment, more students responded with the answer of “Never” (10 responses) when compared to the Pre-Assessment (eight responses). However, on the Pre-Assessment, only 41 responded that their teacher “Sometimes” or “Always” gave them a chance to explain their misbehavior, while on the Post-Assessment, 42 students responded that they were “Sometimes” or “Always” given a chance to explain

their misbehavior. Also, the responses of students who knew why they misbehaved but did not get a chance to explain slightly decreased on the Post-Assessment.

Figure 7

Student Pre- and Post-Assessment Responses #5

If/when you have gotten in trouble in class, how often were you able to explain to your teacher why you acted that way?



The data collected during this study allowed the researchers to determine the impact of using the problem-solving approach to student-teacher conflict on the number of office referrals written.

Conclusions & Recommendations

This study investigated the effectiveness of using a problem-solving approach to student-teacher conflict within the classroom. The researchers aimed to lower the use of office referrals with eighth-grade math and social studies students. The researchers used a variety of data collection tools to help identify if the problem-solving approach reduced the use of office referrals. The data collection that was used included a Pre-

and Post-Assessment to gauge classroom culture; Conflict Data Gathering Tool, used after private conversations; Behavior Logs; and a Teacher Reflection Chart.

The data demonstrate that the number of office referrals the researchers wrote for student behavior instances decreased significantly in 2021-2022 (three total referrals) from the rates at which they were written in the 2019-2020 school year (12 total referrals). This finding strongly supports the conclusion that when teachers used the problem-solving approach to conflict, they were able to minimize the number of office referrals needed and therefore reduce the amount of time students were spending out of the classroom for exclusionary discipline. It is significant to note that of the three referrals written during this study, only one included a simultaneous removal from the classroom for that class period. Additionally, none of the three referrals resulted in suspension or other exclusionary forms of discipline which would have removed the student from their classrooms for more time. Furthermore, the three office referrals that were written during this study included two Black students and one White student. This data is representative of the student population in the study, which was almost 60% Black, 8.5% Two or more races, and 23% White, indicating that the researchers did not appear to demonstrate racial bias in their use of office referrals with students of color. This reduction in the use of office referrals is further supported by the data demonstrating a significant decrease over the course of the study in the number of student behavior instances that required a private conversation.

The Conflict Data Gathering Tool (see Appendix B) results seemed to show that the private, problem-solving conversations were well-received by the majority of students. Students overwhelmingly felt that their teacher attempted to understand why

the behavior problem had occurred and felt that both the teacher and student were able to agree on a satisfactory solution to solve and prevent future behavior issues. When compared with the results of the Behavior Log (see Appendix C), it seems that these private conversations not only reduced the number of conversations needed over time but also helped to minimize the need for student removals or referrals to administration for behavior concerns. The Conflict Data Gathering Tool (see Appendix B) offered a unique student perspective, triangulating the data from the Behavior Log (see Appendix C) that demonstrates that the private, problem-solving conversations were incredibly effective in solving and preventing student behavior instances.

Particularly because this study was conducted at the start of a school year following two years of interrupted schooling due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the researchers noticed a more significant number of behavior instances with students than in previous years. This could be due to the fact that the eighth-grade students' last uninterrupted school year was in their fifth-grade year (2018-2019). The researchers met throughout the study and used the Teacher Reflection Chart (see Appendix D) to document progress and plan additional misbehavior prevention strategies as needed. Some strategies the researchers began to focus on implementing starting in Week 3 included giving students explicit task and behavior expectations, modeling behavior expectations, and assigning classroom jobs to students. Although these strategies may be seen more often in an elementary classroom than in a middle school classroom in a typical, pre-pandemic year, the use of these strategies actually proved to significantly reduce the behavior instances. After Week 3 was when the researchers began to see a

significant reduction in the number of behavior instances requiring a private conversation.

The Behavior Log (see Appendix C) data represents a spike in student behavior instances needing intervention in the weeks before and after scheduled holiday breaks (Weeks 5, 6, and 9). This increase in behavior instances is shown across all three measures- private conversations needed, student removals, and office referrals written. Although this increase in behavior instances surrounding scheduled breaks from school may not be surprising to any educator, this observation does prompt the question of what can educators do to support students even more during these times?

Throughout the study, the researchers noticed many limitations that can be grouped into study length of time, data collection, and referral use. First, the researchers strongly believe the study would have yielded more accurate and powerful data if it had lasted longer than the nine weeks the researchers used. The study also began at the beginning of the school year, within three weeks of the start of the year for one teacher and five weeks for the second teacher. During this time, the researchers both agreed that the way students view the teacher early on in the school year is similar to the “honeymoon phase.” That is, many times behavior issues are not fully seen until after the first three to six weeks of school starting. Two or three months into the school year, however, students may begin to view their teacher as more strict than at the beginning of the school year. Unfortunately, the study ended in this window of time, which may have impacted student responses on the Classroom Culture Post-Assessment (see Appendix A).

Second, the researchers identified that there could have been modifications made to the data collection to help identify the effectiveness of the problem-solving approach. Administering the Classroom Culture Assessment Tool (see Appendix A) again halfway through the study could have helped the researchers identify areas of weakness in the quality of the teacher-student relationships, and then focus more intentionally on those areas for the remainder of the study. This, in turn, could have yielded more positive growth in the quality of student-teacher relationships by the time the Post-Assessment would be administered. The researchers also acknowledged that the Conflict Data Gathering Tool (see Appendix B) was not administered following every private conversation a student had with the teacher, potentially skewing the data. As classroom teachers, the researchers acknowledged that for the sake of students engaging with instructional time, it was best to use professional judgment when having students complete the Conflict Data Gathering Tool (see Appendix B).

The Pre- and Post-Assessment (see Appendix A) proved to have many limitations. The researchers noticed little to no change in the results when comparing the Pre- and Post-Assessment. This could have been due to the short length of the study or the timing of the year when the Pre- and Post-Assessment needed to be administered. If completing this study again, the researchers would also modify the Pre- and Post-Assessment question answers. As the researchers analyzed the data from the Pre- and Post- Assessment, it was noted that some answers could have been combined. For example, the question that asks "If/when you have gotten in trouble in class, how often were you able to explain to your teacher why you acted that way?" The options of answers to this question were: never; I know why I acted that way but did

not get a chance to explain; sometimes; always; and I have not gotten in trouble in the last two weeks. The researchers agree that the answers of “never” and “I know why I acted that way but did not get a chance to explain” are very similar and could have been combined into one answer for simplicity for the students responding to the assessment. The researchers also noted that students may have selected the answer of “I have not gotten in trouble in the last two weeks” for many reasons, and therefore this should be removed as an answer choice.

Lastly, the researchers identified limitations involving referrals. With some behavior instances, there was no option for a private conversation due to the severity of the behavior or due to administration involvement. Though private conversations seemed effective for many students, it was not effective for every student. Some students were hesitant to share or refused to participate in the conversation.

Due to the success of the use of explicit instruction with students in the classroom, the researchers will continue using this strategy. With the number of interruptions due to COVID-19 throughout the last two school years, explicit instructions seemed to reduce the number of behavior instances that were observed in the classroom. If the problem-solving approach was to be implemented school-wide, the researchers suggest presenting “Problem-Solving Conversation Guidelines” (see Appendix E) to all staff to ensure consistency with the conversations. This could be presented in a staff meeting as a tool to help classroom teachers have brief conversations with students as a way to help solve minor behavior instances within their own classrooms.

Though there are limitations to this study, the researchers recommend implementing the problem-solving approach to student behavior concerns in the classroom. First, because this strategy helped reduce the number of behavior instances needing an office referral, the researchers plan to informally continue the problem-solving conversations as a first-tier intervention to behavior concerns in their own classrooms throughout the remainder of this year and in future years as well. The researchers noticed that throughout this study, they were more mindful of how important it is to keep students in the classroom and reduce the use of exclusionary discipline. The researchers felt that this mindset helped them write fewer office referrals. This is not to say that the researchers felt they could not write a referral or that they had to solve every student behavior issue without the intervention of administration. Rather, conducting this study challenged the researchers to find in-the-classroom solutions to minor misbehavior issues for which the teachers would have written referrals in previous years. Thus, conducting this study has provided the researchers with an effective tool to use in solving and preventing minor student behavior instances in the classroom.

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Appendix A

Classroom Culture Pre- and Post Assessments

Classroom Culture Pre-Assessment

Students, please answer the following questions as honestly as you can. This will help your teacher improve our classroom community. Completing this feedback form is completely voluntary and you may quit at any time.

Adapted from Panorama Education.

1. I feel that my teacher is respectful towards me. (2 is "somewhat disagree." 3 is "somewhat agree.")

Mark only one oval.

| | | | | | |
|-------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|----------------|
| | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | |
| Strongly Disagree | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | Strongly Agree |

2. If you walked into class upset, how likely do you think your teacher would be concerned about you?

Mark only one oval.

- Very likely
 Somewhat likely
 Somewhat not likely
 Not at all likely

3. When your teacher asks how you are doing, how often do you think is she really interested in the answer?

Mark only one oval.

- Always
 Often
 Sometimes
 Never

4. Do you feel that your teacher would be happy to see you again after this school year?

Mark only one oval.

- Not at all
- Probably not
- Probably
- Yes, absolutely

5. If it were possible, would you be excited to have this teacher again in the future?

Mark only one oval.

- Not at all
- Probably not
- Probably
- Yes, absolutely

6. Do you have a positive relationship with your teacher for this class? (2 is "kind-of connected." 3 is "somewhat connected.")

Mark only one oval.

| | | | | | |
|----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|----------------|
| | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | |
| Not connected at all | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | Very connected |

7. How much do you feel like you have the skills and abilities to be in this class?

Mark only one oval.

- Not at all
- A little bit
- Somewhat
- Quite a bit
- I do not feel like I have all of the skills and abilities to be in class, yet; but I am gaining the skills and abilities to be in class.

8. Do you enjoy attending this class?

Mark only one oval.

- Super excited... it's my favorite class!
- Ehh, this class is okay.
- Not at all...

9. If/when you have gotten in trouble in class, how often were you able to explain to your teacher why you acted that way?

Mark only one oval.

- Always
- Sometimes
- Never
- I haven't gotten in trouble in the last 2 weeks
- I know why I acted that way, but my teacher usually did not give me a chance to explain

10. I think the work we do in this class is...

Mark only one oval.

- Too hard
- Just right- not too hard and not too easy
- Too easy
- Other: _____

11. I think the work we do in this class is...

Mark only one oval.

- Super interesting & relatable
- Eh, it's ok. Not exciting but not super boring either
- Boring- not interesting & I don't relate to this content at all
- Other: _____

12. Do you have any additional comments about any of the questions on this survey?

Appendix B

Conflict Data Gathering Tool

Conflict Data Gathering Tool

Thinking about the conversation you just had with your teacher, please answer the following questions as honestly as you can. Completing this feedback form is completely voluntary and you may quit at any time.

1. I feel that my teacher attempted to understand why the problem occurred.

Mark only one oval.

| | | | | | | |
|-------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|----------------|
| | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | |
| Strongly Disagree | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | Strongly Agree |

2. Explain your response to the question above.

3. I feel that my teacher and I agreed on a solution that will work for both of us.

Mark only one oval.

| | | | | | | |
|-------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|----------------|
| | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | |
| Strongly Disagree | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | Strongly Agree |

4. Explain your response to the question above.

Appendix E

Conversation Guidelines

Problem-Solving Conversation Guidelines

- “Can you tell me what happened?”
- “Is there anything else that I may need to know about the situation that I do not currently know?”
- “What caused the issue at hand (Why did this happen)?”
- (Consider or ask) “Was this [activity/lesson] too hard or too easy for you?”
- “How could the situation have been handled differently to make the outcome better?”
- “What would be a good solution to the issue?”
- “In the future, how should this situation be handled (by the teacher or student)?”
- Reminders:
 - Don’t get caught in a conversation where a school counselor or school social worker would need to be involved.
 - Don’t ask students to repeat emotionally sensitive details or stories of trauma that may upset them.
 - If a student seems emotionally upset as you are asking “why” the misbehavior occurred, pause the conversation and finish another time or refer the student to the appropriate support staff.