“Class, Class...Are you listening?”
..."Yes, Yes!!"

How Can Whole Brain Teaching Impact Our Classroom Environment?

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Context

Miss M's Sixth Grade

As a Pennsylvania State University Professional Development School Intern, a yearlong intensive program where I am paired with a mentor teacher, at a middle school in a large, suburban district setting, my class is self-contained with fourteen boys and thirteen girls. As in most classrooms in our school, we have an extremely diverse student population, which helps create an enjoyable and enriching learning community. One student is from Russia, another is from Greece, and yet another is from Korea. Having these students with different backgrounds adds to the diversity in our classroom and also adds to it in terms of learning styles. There are also a number of students in my classroom whose parents are not originally from the United States. I hope to help these students merge their life at home, which is very much similar to the country where they are from, and their life at school.

As in any classroom, my students all have incredibly different personalities. Our guidance counselors have done a personality test with my students, which was quite revealing. The test consisted of each student rating what described him/her best out of a group of four possibilities. The one that described him/her best was given a four, the next a three, and so on. The columns were then added up and the highest score was the description that best fit that student’s personality. Half of my class is exceptionally active and competitive, fifteen percent is very organized and orderly, fifteen percent is nature-oriented and believes everyone should have a say, and the last twenty percent is very academic and problem solving.

The students in the class are very social and active. At times these characteristics can be useful, but there are times that they can be distracting and harmful to the learning environment. There are several students who struggle with staying on task (i.e. disrupting others doing the
work they are asked to, etc.) and finishing work on time. Behavioral patterns are evident within the class. These behavioral problems include students speaking out when the teacher or other student is speaking, leaving their seats during instruction, and difficulty making good choices with comments to others.

Miss S's 3rd and 4th Multi-age

As a Pennsylvania State University Professional Development School Intern, a yearlong intensive student teaching program where I am paired with a mentor teacher, at a elementary school in a large, suburban school district, my class, a multi-age class is self-contained consisting of twenty-four students; eleven boys and thirteen girls. The multi-age classroom allows for a variation of academic levels and abilities, social interactions, and behavioral issues. Academically we have students who perform at and above grade level and attend enrichment activities, as well as, those who leave the classroom and spend a period of their day in a learning support classroom. There are students who have Individualized Educational Plans for academics and behavioral problems. Instruction is often differentiated to best meet the needs for our range of academic ability levels, due to the multi-age setting. Each one of these students contributes to the class in a unique and special way that makes our classroom a wonderful place to learn.

The social climate of our classroom is an active one! Through community building exercises, small groups of talkative friends have formed. These social interactions can be challenging as a teacher because of the impulse of the students to carry on conversations while a lesson is being taught. This social behavior has caused students to call out during lessons without raising hands, start conversations during independent working times, and have conversations with those around them during whole group instruction. Several students show off-task behaviors such as leaving their seats, not keeping their hands to themselves, carrying on
side conversations, and the need to be reminded of their responsibilities and routines throughout the day. Our class works together in a positive way, the use of language is friendly and encouraging. We have several students in the room who have taken on a teacher like role to some of our struggling students by helping them read or explaining a challenging concept. Overall, this multi-age class has a variety of abilities and needs.

**Main Wondering**

Taking on a more prominent lead in the classroom, we began to take a deeper look at ways to improve our classroom management techniques. Effectively managing student behavior was impeding our ability to teach the content in our curriculum. Our confidence has been tested as leaders in the classroom because of our students' lack of hesitation to talk over us and off-task behaviors as we are instructing. We have been wondering if our classroom environment would be different with consistently varying and varying consistently management strategies.

Through this inquiry we aim to create a learning environment that supports both students and ourselves as teachers. We hope to learn how components of Whole Brain Teaching can help facilitate a place that students and teachers alike could learn, teach, and take risks. We intend to discover ways to incorporate three strategies that impact our classroom environments in a positive way through engagement, cooperation, and consistency. We hope this inquiry will foster learning experiences for our students, ourselves, and other educators. Our current challenges and hopes for the future in our classrooms and practices led us to our main wondering:

*How can Whole Brain Teaching (WBT) impact my classroom environment?*

*What is Whole Brain Teaching (WBT)?*

To understand what our inquiry study is about, one must first understand what *Whole Brain Teaching*, formally known as *Power Teaching*, means. Whole Brain Teaching is as
described by one of its creators, Chris Biffle as, "Lessons that engage students in seeing, hearing, doing, speaking, and feeling ... while they're having lots fun (Pedersen, 2010)."

We became interested in these strategies when we read about how Whole Brain Teaching was said to be "especially successful with teaching challenging kids because they engage the whole brain. When a student's entire brain is involved in learning, there isn't any mental real estate left over for challenging behavior” (Pedersen, 2010). Both of us felt that our students’ behavior was challenging as we were teaching. We felt our students were not getting the most out of our lessons due to the management issues that took instructional time away. From our main wondering came these sub wonderings about Whole Brain Teaching:

**Sub Wonderings**

- How does whole brain teaching affect my teacher presence?
- How does whole brain teaching affect on task versus off task behavior?
- How does whole brain teaching affect student participation?

**Data Collection**

Our data collections were aimed at supporting our main wondering and sub-wonderings. We used a variety of data collection techniques to ensure the validity and accuracy of our final claims. We collected baseline data through student surveys. We continued to collect data through behavior charting, participation charting, reflective teacher journaling, and video analysis.

**Student Surveys**

Our first set of baseline data was our student surveys (Appendix C). Before we implemented any Whole Brain Teaching strategies, we surveyed our students on their feelings and opinions about teacher actions and student reactions as well as student actions and teacher reactions. The student survey included questions directed towards any recommendations the
students had about ways the teachers could help the students become more engaged and focused. Miss M surveyed and collected all twenty-seven student surveys. Miss S was able to survey and collect nineteen student surveys.

**Video Recordings**

Using Flip video cameras and our Macbook camera we were able to video record our classrooms before any Whole Brain Teaching strategies were implemented as well as to record the changes that were happening as we implemented the strategies (Appendix E). Studio code was then used to code the videos for various management related topics such as: (a) expectations set, (b) directions, (c) surprises, (d) attention getting, and (e) following through with set expectations. The purpose of these video recordings was to capture the students’ reactions to the current management strategies in place. Our intention was to use this data to show any changes in classroom behavior before implementing Whole Brain Teaching (WBT) strategies. As we implemented WBT strategies we continued to video record our lessons in order to see if there were changes from the use of the WBT management strategies. We would video tape the lessons to code, take systematic observation notes, and participation charting.

See Appendix B for before and after video analysis.

**Student Participation Charts**

Participation charts were used before, during, and after the implementation of Whole Brain Teaching for us to become aware of any patterns and changes (Appendix D). Moreover, they were used to show the amount of participation before using and implementing Teach/Ok\(^1\), and after using this Whole Brain Teaching strategy. This chart consisted of each students name down the left hand side and then boxes to place the codes in beside them. The codes that we choose to use and focus on were "C" for called out, "H" for hand raised, "X" for properly
participated (raised hand and was called on), and later "t" for taught partner. When observing for participation we marked any and all participation by the students.

**Systematic Observations**

We collected systematic observation in the classroom and from videos of our lessons (Appendix G). These observations helped us see if there was a change in student behavior over the course of our implementation of Whole Brain Teaching strategies. We made classroom seating charts and then would observe student behavior at predetermined intervals. The behavior codes that we used were "D" for daydreaming/doodling, "C" for called out, "T" talking to a neighbor, "O" out of seat, and a check mark for on-task (which was the absence of all aforementioned behaviors). At intervals our mentors or ourselves would watch the students and write the code that corresponded to the students' behavior at the time.

**Reflection Journals**

After implementing a Whole Brain Teaching management strategy we recorded our thoughts and feelings in our weekly reflective journal. We made predictions and reflected, both before and after implementing a strategy. Looking back at some of these entries we were able to see how our feelings and teacher presence had been changing due to using these strategies.

**Data Analysis**

**Analysis of Surveys**

Our surveys gave us an insight to what our students felt about their own participation as well as what we as teachers could do to present an environment that was ideal for student comfort while participating. Looking at the surveys in Appendix C, one can see that our surveys

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1 When using the Teach/Ok strategy the teacher would give the students a direction. The teacher would give the direction and say, “Teach!” The students would respond with “Ok!” and they would turn to their partner and teach their partner the directions.
have slightly different questions, but concentrate on the same topics of participation and engagement in lessons. We did not use identical surveys because of working with different grade levels. Miss S's third and fourth graders needed lines to write on as well as some of the questions reworded for a third/fourth grader to understand. Despite this difference, we found the student responses were very similar. For example Miss M's first question was, "How much does it bother you if the teacher has to wait for others to be ready? Circle one. Not at all, somewhat, or a lot." Whereas Miss S's first question was the same except there was a number scale from one to five given and they were asked to explain.

When starting to analyze the surveys we chose to tally the results of the questions. We found that 96% of Miss M's students and 74% of Miss S's students are “somewhat bothered”, to “bothered a lot” when the teacher has to wait for others to be ready. The results also showed us 93% of Miss M's class and 100% of Miss S's class did enjoy participating “somewhat” to “a lot” in class.

Lastly, we found that 96% Miss M's class and 84% of Miss S's said if given the opportunity they would like to help teach. Analyzing the surveys we found that many of our students responded by saying their teachers could make lessons more interesting, quiet the class with attention getters more effectively, and provide more opportunities for the students to participate by giving them the opportunity to share their work. What better way to incorporate the information and suggestions provided than by introducing the Teach/Ok Whole Brain Teaching management strategy? Using Teach/Ok students are engaged by seeing, saying, hearing, and doing. The class is divided into two's and each student has a partner. The teacher then presents a small amount of information, claps a pattern and then says "Teach!" The students mimic the teacher by clapping that same pattern and responding with "Ok!" Using this strategy
we noticed improvements in our participation, which inspired another method of data collection, student participation charts.

*Analysis of Participation Charts*

Our intention for this data collection was to begin to find patterns in who was calling out and participating in each of our classrooms (Appendix D). We found we were more intrigued by the way participation increased through the use of the Whole Brain Teaching strategies. Before fully implementing all of our strategies the participation in our classroom was not at its optimum level. In analyzing the results we tallied students who properly participated (i.e. did not call out) at least 75% of the time. Miss M had on average 43% of her students properly participating at least 75% of the time. Miss S had 42% of students properly participating at least 75% of the time. After the implementation of all three strategies (primarily "teach/ok!") the proper participation was up to 96% in Miss M's class and 63% in Miss S's class.

*Analysis of Video Recordings*

Using Flip video cameras and our Macbook camera we were able to video record our classrooms before any Whole Brain Teaching strategies were implemented as well as to record the changes that were happening as we implemented the strategies (Appendix E). When watching our videos we were code and could compare the data from before implementation to after. We found that our body language was more confident, the students responded attention getting and sustaining strategies, and more students participated. After coding the videos in Studiocode we tallied the results and compared them. After coding and comparing we found that the amount of attention getters used had decreased and the number of students responding to the attention getters increased.
Analysis of Systematic Observations

In using this data we were able to analyze it to view the on task versus off task behavior of our entire class (Appendix G). The steps taken to analyze this data to count the number of students that were on task at least 75% of the time. We then looked at the percent of students who were considered on task the entire lesson. We then compared the percent of students who were on task before the implementation of Whole Brain Teaching strategies to those on task after the implementation. In Miss M's classroom the average percentage of students who were on task was 46% before the implementation and 69% afterwards. In Miss S's classroom the average percentage of students who were on task was 63% before the implementation and 70% afterwards. We also noticed that the amount of students that were out of their seat during a lesson decreased dramatically with the implementation of Whole Brain Teaching strategies. Prior to the implementation in Miss M's classroom there was an average of 11 times that students would leave their seats during a lesson. While after the implementation the average decreased to one time per lesson.

Analysis of Journals

Analyzing our reflective journals, we noticed improvements in our confidence and teacher leadership (Appendix F). Before we began using Whole Brain Teaching strategies we journaled about our feelings in the classroom. Prior to the use of WBT our journals discussed feeling frustrated, challenged by our students, and questioning how we could handle those challenging student behaviors. After implementing WBT strategies we again wrote about our feelings, but this time we noticed positive changes. These positive changes occurred in our confidence as teacher leaders and comfort level in managing our students during lessons, transitions, and morning and dismissal routines.
Explanation of Findings: Claims and Evidence

After analyzing our data shown above we were able to make the following four claims that support our main wondering of how Whole Brain Teaching strategies can impact our classroom environment. These claims show the positive impact Whole Brain Teaching has had on the students and us as teachers.

CLAIM A: Students were accountable to respond to the teacher therefore they had to be focused, aware, and ready for any direction given.

Before the implementation of the Whole Brain Teaching strategies, the students were not responding effectively to the management strategies we were using. As our systematic observation shows (Appendix G), both of our classes were more off task than they were on task. Our definition of on task behavior is the absence of calling out, being out of seat, talking to a neighbor, and daydreaming/doodling. For example Miss M's first systematic observation shows 64% of her class were more off task than they were on task and Miss S's was 37% more off task than on. Miss M was also able to look at the amount of times students left their seat because the majority of her instruction takes place while students are at their desks (Miss S for the most part teaches at the carpet so this piece of data is void for her). The same lesson where 64% of Miss M's students were off task, in all students left their seats a total of 18 times. Following the implementation of Whole Brain Teaching strategies (“Class…Yes,” “Hands and Eyes,” and Teach/Ok) there has only been a total of one time of a student leaving his/her seat.

We were also able to go back and view our videos from before the use of Whole Brain Teaching and simply see that students were up walking around and talking while we were trying to instruct the class (Appendix E). A strong piece of evidence was our video analysis when we looked at the reactions students had to our use of the Whole Brain Teaching strategies. When we would give a prompt of "Class," "Hands and eyes," or "Teach" students would quickly respond
with the correct reply. When given "teach" students would not only respond with "ok," but also turn to their partner and actively engage in a conversation about the directions or content that was taught. We were able to see that when we gave students a Whole Brain Teaching attention getter they responded more promptly than with what we were using before. The uses of Teach/Ok also showed that students would turn to each other and teach what they were asked to.

We believe that since students were held accountable to respond to the teacher they were more focused, aware, and ready for any direction given. There was less time for students to be off task because at any time they could be asked to respond to the teacher verbally and physically, along with teaching their partner. The students were less off task and out of their seats because they were a part of the lesson and were responsible for the information being taught throughout the lesson.

CLAIM B: Whole Brain Teaching makes lessons more interesting, interactive, and attention sustaining which causes our students to behave more appropriately for our classroom setting2.

Before we began using Whole Brain Teaching we asked our students in the student survey (Appendix C) "What are helpful things that your teachers can do to help you pay attention?" Miss M was told by eight students that they would like lessons to be more interesting, seven would like better attention getters to quiet the class, and five would like lessons to be more interactive. Miss S's surveys showed that the students said helpful things your teachers can do to help you pay attention to a lesson were to make lessons interesting, more opportunities to share, working in groups, and hands on learning. We identified Whole Brain Teaching strategies as a way to accomplish these goals and thus find a way to help students behave.

In looking at our systematic observations we have found that our students are behaving

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2 We choose to define appropriate classroom behavior as students staying in their seats, raising their hands to be called upon, and sitting quietly during lessons.
more appropriately (Appendix G). The first time Miss M systematically observed her class there were only 36% of students more on task than off, where in Miss S's class there were 63% more on task than off task. In the last lesson that each of us systematically observed Miss M found that 64% of her class was more on task than off task and Miss S found that 70% of her class was more on task than off. With the improvement of on task behavior we are able to conclude that Whole Brain Teaching makes lessons more interesting, interactive, and attention sustaining which causes students to behave. We are able to say this claim because students told us in their surveys that if we would make lesson all of the aforementioned descriptors they would behave. Our observations show us that they are behaving so our lessons must in turn be more interesting, interactive, and attention sustaining.

**CLAIM C: Student participation has increased as a result of implementing the Teach/Ok strategy.**

Before the implementation of the Whole Teaching strategies, we were seeing the same hands go up and less than 50% of our class even attempting to participate. When we surveyed our students we were told that twelve out twenty-seven of Miss M's students said they *like to participate in class is to share knowledge, but they do not participate because they are concerned about being wrong and then embarrassed*. Nineteen out of nineteen of Miss S's students responded that they *enjoyed participating somewhat to a lot and that their teachers could call on them more, encourage them to participate, and make lessons more fun in order to make them want to participate more*. The Teach/Ok strategy allows students to share their knowledge with one person before sharing with the whole class. Students are then given the opportunity to test out what they know and thus more confidence and willingness to participate in class (Appendix C).

As our participation charting evidence shows after putting the Teach/Ok strategy into
place student participation increased (Appendix D). Not only were more students participating by turning to their partner and sharing their knowledge, but they were also more willingly to share with the whole class. After students were done turning to their partner and sharing, we came back together whole group and the teacher would ask for volunteers. More hands would go up than before we used the strategy. The number of students who properly participated (i.e. did not call out, but raised their hand and waited to be called on) went from an average of 46% to 96% in Miss M's class and 42% to 63% in Miss S's class. It is through the student survey and participation charting that we were able to take information from students and implement a strategy that in the end increased the participation in our classrooms.

CLAIM D: Teacher confidence and presence increased due to the implementation of Whole Brain Teaching strategies.

Before putting Whole Brain Teaching strategies into practice, we were not as confident dealing with challenging students. One of the founders of WBT, Chris Biffle states on his website that using Whole Brain Teaching Strategies can be most effective with challenging students; "It has taken us a long time to discover that our techniques are especially successful with teaching challenging kids because they engage the whole brain." After researching the website and talking to other teacher mentors we felt this type of management strategy might be the answer to our challenging students and challenges while managing our classrooms.

After looking back through our reflective journals (Appendix F), we were able to notice changes in the way we felt about our teaching experiences and dealing with challenging students. Here is an excerpt from Miss S's journal before implementing WBT strategies.

"I have been trying to set the expectations and keep trying to be seen as a teacher with the class, and it seems like it gets better some days, and then I feel like I have a bad day that just off sets all the good that I had been doing."
Here are some quotes from Miss M's.

"I would have to say that management is always a concern of mine."
"I feel like sometimes I am still handling things like I am a camp counselor and not an intern."
"I feel like a lot of the time my kids don't see me as another teacher in the classroom, but more as my mentor's helper. I know that I am not that and I don't think that Mr. T really treats me like that, but there are times that I wonder. I feel like my students feel very comfortable coming to me about any issue or problem, which is always how I viewed myself as a teacher, but I also think that they view myself as the one in the room they can get away with stuff with."

After comparing these before journals to entries after implementation, we can see that we have felt more confident in front of our students and know that at any moment we do not have to talk over our students. We can effectively receive their attention and teach. Here is an excerpt from another one of Miss S's journals after using WBT:

"Before using the power teaching strategies I would have handled a similar situation by using a clapping attention getter (which is challenging because they are working with their hands) or I would have just tried to yell over the students. Talking over the students is something I know does not work; I do no have their attention, many are not focused on what I am saying, and I have to repeat myself. During that lesson when I needed their attention, I simply said “class, class” and it was answered with a “yes, yes” and then the noise became noticeably quieter. Since using these strategies I feel more confident. I have a tool of my own to use and I am confident that they will respond. If they do not, I can use the same attention getter, but vary it so it appears new to the students. There were times before in my teaching where I simply did not know how to get their attention so I resorted to just talking over and “hoping” they would respect that I was talking and listen."

Here are Miss M’s feelings after implementing Whole Brain Teaching strategies.

"I have also found that because I have my own management strategy that I am using I feel much more comfortable in front of the class. I am no longer wondering what I should
be saying or how I can get the attention of the entire room. I feel like this strategy is mine, even though my mentor has been using it, I was the one who introduced it and have been consistently using it. A student asked at one point, “Hey, who taught you this.” I told her that it was something I had researched and wanted to see how it worked with our class. I feel like I am in control of my classroom and can use any of my Whole Brain Teaching tricks whenever I need them.”

Through journaling as presented in Appendix E, it is clear that our experience in the classroom, managing our whole class, has become a more confident, enjoyable experience and we feel more like leaders in the classroom.

**Reflections and Future Practice**

Our teacher inquiry has provided us with an effective way to manage challenging students. When we began this inquiry we had both wanted to focus on looking at different ways to improve our "teacher presence". As we began implementing the strategies, we discovered that Whole Brain Teaching was not only impacting our presence, attitude, and confidence in front of our students, but their behaviors as well! As a beginning teacher, classroom management can be a difficult notion to comprehend. This inquiry allowed us to experiment with different strategies and choose which strategies would work best in our environment. For example we had planned to implement the scoreboard management strategy but decided against it because of our comfort level using it and feeling that the class was not ready to take on this challenge. Our findings showed that Whole Brain Teaching did in fact impact our classroom environment. The impact it had on everyone in our classroom environment was a positive one. Teacher confidence and presence improved along with the students listening, behavior, and participation skills.

In thinking about future practice we both believe that we will be implementing Whole Brain Teaching strategies in our classrooms. We not only saw the impact the strategies had on the classroom environment, but also were able to have fun with it. There was no standing in the
front of the room and wondering what attention getter to use. We simply said, "Class..." and the students responded with, "Yes..." at any given time. We did of course change it up because like the creators of Whole Brain Teaching state management strategies should be "varied consistently and consistently varied." We knew that no matter how we said class students would know how to say yes in a response.

We do continue to wonder how Whole Brain Teaching would affect our classroom environment if it were implemented from the beginning of the school year? Would we have less behavior issues from the beginning or would we be searching for another type of management strategy at this point in the school anyhow? We also wonder what type of affect implementing all components of Whole Brain Teaching would have on our classroom environments? Although we would have loved to use all of the strategies, it was not possible in the time span we were given. If we do begin using Whole Brain Teaching at the beginning of the year maybe we would be able to implement all of the strategies.

In terms of the process of inquiry we found it difficult to gather and analyze the data. When beginning this inquiry we both wanted to focus on ways to improve our "teacher presence." We do believe that it helped us to some extent with this quest; we also thought that it was a bit subjective. We did not feel that we had concrete evidence to use until we sat down and analyzed what we did have. We are now quite thrilled with the outcome, but would think about the end hope for findings, and work backwards from there with our data collection.

Appendices

Appendix A: Inquiry Brief

Context

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The students in the class are very social and active. At times these characteristics can be useful, but there are times that they can be distracting and harmful to the learning environment. There are several students who struggle with staying on task (i.e. not disrupting others doing the work they are asked to, etc.) and finishing work (i.e. turning in work on the assigned due date). Behavioral patterns are evident within the class. These behavioral problems include students...
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The social climate of our classroom is an active one! Through community building exercises, small groups of talkative friends have formed. These social interactions can be challenging as a teacher because of the impulse of the students to carry on conversations while a lesson is being taught. This social behavior has caused students to call out during lessons without raising hands, start conversations during independent working times, and have conversations with those around them during whole group instruction. Several students show off-task behaviors such as leaving their seats, not keeping their hands to themselves, carrying on side conversations, and need to be reminded of their responsibilities and routines throughout the day. Our class works together in a positive way, the use of language is friendly and encouraging.
We have several students in the room who have taken on a teacher like role to some of our struggling students by helping them read or explaining a challenging concept. Overall, this multi-age class has a variety of abilities and needs.

**Rationale**

We feel that it is not only important to be able to teach the content we are given, but also able to manage our classroom in an effective, productive way. We know that without a well-managed classroom, it is impossible to effectively teach students any type of content. Nolan and Levin’s Principles of Classroom Management support this idea by stating “some teachers spend as much as 25 to 80 percent of their time addressing discipline problems” and “to be a successful teacher, one must be competent in influencing appropriate student behavior to maximize the time spent on learning” (Levin, Nolan 2010). We have had a wealth of experiences working with students whole group, small group, and on individual levels. We have found however that there are times when students do not always look to us as teachers in the classroom. There are times that we have heard students make comments such as, "Oh she is just the intern." We believe that some weaknesses in our classroom management have led to these comments and attitudes. We have also found that students do not hesitate to talk over us and simply walk around while we are instructing. We are interested in improving our role as a leader in the classroom because we have noticed the negative effects and unwanted behaviors, such as talking over us, leaving seat, and not turning in work on the assigned due date, that result as a lack of our teacher presence. Not only is it affecting our teaching, but it is affecting our confidence when teaching as well. We have also found that not having a strong teacher presence has cut into the instructional time we have to teach because we are constantly managing student behaviors. We have been wondering if things would be different in our classrooms with consistently varying and varying consistently
management strategies. One way we would like to try to do this would be the “Class…Yes…” attention getter that is a component of Whole Brain Teaching. There are times when we will say, “Class” and expect the response of “Yes” from the class, but we will also be using “Class, Class…” and expect to receive the response of “Yes, Yes…” from the class. We have also been wondering if the different management styles play into the students' motivation and off-task behavior. Therefore, our inquiry project is based on the following wonderings.

**Main Wondering**

How can we strengthen our teacher presence in the classroom?

**Sub Questions**

How does the implementation of various management strategies affect...

-...students' motivation?
-...students' attitudes?
-...students' time on task?

How does subject matter or time of day influence student behavior?

How can teacher presence support our students’ needs?

**Data Collection Ideas**

1. Observations/field notes: Mentors and interns will take notes on classroom activities and results of the strategies we implement. The notes will include:
   - students speaking out when we are speaking
   - the strategy that was used
   - the time of the day and
   - any student or teacher behavior that impacted the strategy

2. Systematic observation: Interns, mentors, professional development associates will collect baseline data based on the number of times students call out during a lesson, teacher must repeat directions/expectations, and students leave their seats during instruction and measure the change that occurred after the management strategy was implemented.

3. Interns will survey students about their thoughts on classroom management, off task, and
motivation before and after the implementation of the classroom management strategies.

4. Interns will observe and interview other teachers and their classroom management techniques.

5. Journaling will reflect on the success of attempted management styles and their effectiveness.

6. Video Recording: Mentors and professional development associates’ will videotape different lessons and activities in order for the intern to later analyze how the management strategy was applied.

**Timeline**

**February:**

**February 8th-12th**
- Collect baseline data on student behavior while teaching
- Observe other teachers (Park Forest Elementary)
- Develop student surveys

**February 15th-19th**
- Continue to collect baseline data and take observation notes; focus on times directly after recess and specials
- Research different management strategies
- Continue to observe other teachers
- Develop student surveys

**February 22nd-26th**
- Continue to collect baseline data and take observation notes; focus on times directly after recess and specials
- Research different management strategies
- Continue to observe other teachers
- Distribute student surveys

**March:**

**March 1st-5th**
- Research different management strategies
- Continue to collect baseline data and take observation notes; focus on times directly after recess and specials
- Begin to implement one new strategy

**March 8th-12th**
- Continue to research and plan for different management strategies
- Compare two classes’ surveys
- Organize notes and data that has been collected
March 15th-19th
- Implement another strategy in each classroom
- Continue to collect the data and see how it is changing with the implementation of strategies
- Begin to analyze collected data and develop claims; look for differences between times of the day

March 22nd-26th
- Implement another strategy in each classroom
- Continue to collect the data and see how it is changing with the implementation of strategies
- Continue to analyze data between classes and begin writing paper

March 29th-April 2nd
- Implement another strategy in each classroom
- Continue to collect the data and see how it is changing with the implementation of strategies
- Continue to analyze data between classes and continue writing paper

April:

April 5th-9th
- Continue to collect data
- Continue writing/revising paper
- Develop and give final student survey

April 12th-16th
- Continue writing/revising paper
- Draft due April 16th

April 19th-23rd
- Revise paper
- Begin preparing for presentation

April 26th-30th
- Continue revising paper
- Continue preparing for presentation

May:

May 3rd-7th
- Final Paper due May 2nd
- Continue to prepare for presentation, share with other interns

May 8th
- Presentation at PFE

Appendix B: Annotated Bibliography

This book's primary focus is on different techniques for challenging students in the classroom. The book goes on to explain how to manage students who are aggressive, defiant, or who have attention problems. One of the strategies this book offers is to diffuse the time bomb. It states that by not engaging in the power struggle the teacher is not only avoiding an argument, but also actually creating a relationship with the student. Both of our classrooms have students that fit this profile so this will be a useful source. Our hope is that this source will help us understand student behavior and management techniques to help us better the view of us as teachers in our classrooms.


This test is an overview of the different elements of Whole Brain Teaching. It is very simple and an easy read, which helps it function like the Whole Brain Teaching dictionary. We hope to use this book to learn the basics of Whole Brain Teaching and how we can implement them into our classroom. The book also focuses on those challenging behavior students. Our hope is that it will give us more tools to dealing with students who need extra support.


Chris Biffle is one of the founders of Whole Brain Teaching (formerly Power Teaching). In this particular video Biffle is teaching a group of college students the six basic Whole Brain Teaching strategies. The video is extremely explicit and beneficial for us because we will be able to use it as a starting stone to what the strategies should look like in our classroom. We feel that this will help us with our inquiry as we try different strategies, primarily Whole Brain Teaching, and begin to develop our claims on management strategies that support our role as a teacher in the classroom.

This video is of a sixth grade teacher using Whole Brain Teaching in her classroom. She is using it not only for teaching the order of operations but also for managing her classroom. We hope to use the idea of gestures with the concepts we are talking about to help with the sub question of on task versus off task behavior. The teacher in this video is a great role model for how to incorporate Whole Brain Teaching in our classroom.


This video clip is of Chris Biffle, founder of Whole Brain or Power Teaching explaining how to begin implementing the management strategies of power teaching into one's classroom. It also gives tips on what to say when introducing this teaching style and why it works. This is one of eight short lessons explaining the key components of setting up and using this strategy. All eight videos will aid in our research and implementation of power teaching.


This particular paper is about three Fs that we, as teachers, could incorporate into our classroom. The three Fs are foundation, field, and flow. The paper gives us yet one more option for a management style we could implement in our classrooms. This management style gives a very well laid out design to how a teacher should manage his/her classroom, but it does allow spots for him/her to add individual personality. We hope to combine some management strategies to find what best fits us along with what best works with our students.


This text helps teachers at any level deal with students who are a challenge because of their behavior. It offers the reader to think about how they as a teacher can impact a student's learning and behavior. The "whole-brain" behavior management discusses ways in which to help the most challenging children become successful.

This book gives tips and suggestions on how to create a "calm, nurturing, and effective learning environment". It focuses on different topics and routines that educators can do during the school day as well as before and after the children are at school in order to maintain and effective classroom. The chapters that will be most helpful to us focus on time management, classroom disruptions, and relationship building.


This text provides the reader with ways to prevent and fix challenging behavior problems. It asserts that tested methods that have been successful in the classroom and provides strategies for maintaining appropriate behaviors. Teachers at any grade level and experience level can use and apply ideas from this book in to their classroom.


This video is yet another video of Whole Brain Teaching being used in an actual elementary classroom. It is an excellent example of how Whole Brain Teaching increases student-to-student teaching, which we hope, will increase student motivation and on task behavior. It gives us a great look at what Whole Brain Teaching can look like in our classrooms and also how we can use it to most benefit our students. We hope that this video will be a good resource to us as we are in a sixth grade and three, four multi-age classroom and this video is of fifth grade.


This books is about moving from a teacher-directed model of compliance from students to a more student-directed model where students act the way they do because it is better for the community. It points out that the teacher-directed model will only elicit compliance for a short period and then students will act however they feel like. In the end Kohn offers five keys to classroom management that every teacher should include in his/her classroom. We hope that this book will not only help us with yet one more resource for classroom management, but also hone in on positive reinforcement that can be included in our rooms.

This book teaches and explains a variety of principles of classroom management. It aids teachers in preventing disruptive behavior and bring on appropriate behavior. This book provides examples of different scenarios from actual classrooms and gives teachers decision-making options to choose which options best fits their individual classroom. Each chapter provides pre-reading questions that one can journal and reflect on different ideas/principles.


This management book offers thorough explanations of a variety of explanations and suggestions on how to build community and address behavioral problems in the classroom. This book explains that children who experience a sense of their community in their classroom and school are more likely to want to follow the expectations and rules of the classroom. This book offers templates for behavior plans, scripts for conversations with students and parents, and consequences/reward ideas for student behavior.


A graduate student wrote this paper on how to incorporate Whole Brain Teaching into a classroom to create a more engaged learning environment. We hope that this resource will help us understand ways to use Whole Brain teaching to not only help us with classroom management, but also student on-task behavior and motivation which are our sub-questions.


This book provides a multitude of management ideas for use in our classrooms. Most of the
ideas have pre-made charts and checklists to help aid us when trying to implement new techniques. We believe that this book will be incredibly useful when looking for new and varied management activities to implement into our classrooms.


This website gives a description and background of what Whole Brain Teaching is, how it was started, and how to start it in your classroom. Each part of whole brain teaching is listed and described so that the teacher will know why and how to use it in his or her classroom. This website offers videos, games, and a forum to discuss how whole brain teaching can and is used in different classrooms.


This book offers writing, discussion, and art activities to help build respect, responsibility, and caring towards others. As we try different management techniques we can use activity ideas in this book to further support our community and classroom rules/expectations.


This textbook on educational psychology has several sections on classroom management. Each section provides information about the set up of the classroom, ways to manage student behavior, and describes ways to take the educational theory and provide ways to implement the practices behind the theories into everyday classrooms. We can use this source in our inquiry by selecting and incorporating the different ways to manage student behavior.


This book tries to highlight the keys to great teaching. One of the most important aspects is how a teacher invites students to cooperate and make choices on a daily basis. Its biggest focus is on the teacher, student, and the relationship between the two. This is another book that we hope helps us to find more ways for effective classroom management and with our roles as leaders in the classroom.
Whole Brain Teaching. Retrieved February 4, 2010, from Classroom Power
website: http://classroompower.com/

Classroompower is a website designed to help teachers understand and become Whole Brain Teachers. It gives wonderful quick synopsis of how to implement the basics of Whole Brain Teaching. It also has many different videos along with facts about different ways to use Whole Brain Teaching in your classroom. It is our hope that the strategies suggested will help us implement Whole Brain Teaching and in the end also help us answer our sub questions of how Whole Brain Teaching may affect student motivation and on-task behavior.

Appendix C: Student Surveys and Results

Miss M’s Survey 6th Grade:

Student Survey

1. How much does it bother you if the teacher has to wait for others to be ready? Circle one.

   Not at all   Somewhat   A lot

2. Think of a time during a lesson that you were confused.

   a. Tell me what happened.

   b. What were you thinking during the lesson?

   c. How did it feel when you were confused during this lesson?
3. What are helpful things that your teachers can do to help you pay attention?

4. How much do you enjoy participating in class? Circle one.

   Not at all   Somewhat   A lot

5. Share as many reasons as you can think of for why you participate in class.

6. What stops you from participating in class?

7. If you are not interested in a lesson do you want to talk instead of listening to what is being taught? Explain your answer.
8. If you have the chance to “help teach” the lesson by writing on the board or sharing your work, does the lesson become more interesting or fun? Circle one.

No          It might, I’m not sure          Yes

a. Explain your answer.

Miss M’s Survey Results:
Student Survey  Miss M - 6th

1. Not At All  Somewhat  A lot
   1  1 1

4. Enjoy Participating
   Not At All  Somewhat  A lot
   1  1 1

8. No  It might  Yes
   1  1 1

3. Helpful Things
   * Not get off topic 111
   * Make more interesting 111
   * Interactive 11
   * Process
   * Visuals
   * Examples
   * Quiet Class 11 (Attention Getters) 11
   * Fun 111
   * Punish 11
   * Make jokes 11
   * Raise Hands 1
Miss S's Survey 3rd and 4th Grade:

1. On a scale of 1-5, how much does it bother you if the teacher has to wait for others to be ready. (1 = not at all, 3 = somewhat, 5 = a lot)

1  2  3  4  5
Explain how you feel:
_________________________________________________________________________________________________________
_________________________________________________________________________________________________________
_________________________________________________________________________________________________________
_________________________________________________________________________________________________________

2. Are you ever confused about what you should be doing during a lesson? If so explain.
_________________________________________________________________________________________________________
_________________________________________________________________________________________________________
_________________________________________________________________________________________________________
_________________________________________________________________________________________________________

3. What are helpful things that your teachers can do to help you pay attention to a lesson?
_________________________________________________________________________________________________________
_________________________________________________________________________________________________________
_________________________________________________________________________________________________________
_________________________________________________________________________________________________________

4. On a scale of 1-5 how much do you enjoy participating in class? (1= not at all, 3 = somewhat, 5=a lot)

1  2  3  4  5

5. What are some of the things teachers can do that make you to want to participate in class?
_________________________________________________________________________________________________________
_________________________________________________________________________________________________________
_________________________________________________________________________________________________________
_________________________________________________________________________________________________________

6. If you are not interested in a lesson do you want to talk to friends instead of listening to what is being taught?
7. If you have the chance to “help teach” the lesson by writing on the board or sharing your work, does the lesson become more interesting or fun.”

NO It might, I’m not sure YES

Explain your answer:

_________________________________________________________________________________________________________
_________________________________________________________________________________________________________
_________________________________________________________________________________________________________
_________________________________________________________________________________________________________

Miss S’s Survey Results:

1. On a scale of 1-5, how much does it bother you if the teacher has to wait for others to be ready.  (1 = not at all, 3 = somewhat, 5 = a lot)

1:
-It doesn’t bother me just let her take her time
- I know that I learn quickly and that people learn at their own pace, so I don’t mind.

2:
-It’s not the worst thing in the world cause teachers still have lots of work to do, just like us
- I don’t really care all that much
- it just doesn’t matter to me

3:
-I just don’t really mind waiting a little impatient
-sometimes it bothers me mostly when she is about to say something important and I can’t really hear what is being said. If she only has to wait for a little while then I'm okay with it.
- I feel like they don’t respect the teachers at all
- because sometimes we are in a really good lesson and you cant get to it

4:
-In reading people get loud and we have to wait forever for them to get quiet
-for the people that are talking are wasting our time and their time
- well it can be hard to wait but if you wait you can read a book
- It is really annoying but it also depends on what we get to do while we wait for them to be ready
- When we have to stop it takes up time when we are doing something more fun
- I am very patient but it is starting to annoy me

5:
- I feel frustrated
- It takes more time out of the day
- Very board

2. **Are you ever confused about what you should be doing during a lesson?**
   **If so explain.**
   - Sometimes I forget what to do
   - I’m not confused at all
   - No I listen carefully
   - Not confused
   - No because I listen and listen and I do it when the teacher says so
   - Well if I’m confused I know just listening you might hear something you didn’t know already
   - Sometimes because I don’t get the idea
   - Sometimes, but not often cause they usually ask questions at the end for people who don’t understand
   - No not really. Sometimes I don’t understand but once I figure it out I’m ok.
   - Yeah
   - Not usually
   - Sometimes because it is not always explained very clearly
   - Yes because sometimes people are trying to talk to me
   - Sometimes I just have to be reminded
   - If I enjoy the lesson I get it but if I don’t get the lesson I am not enjoying
   - No
   - No
   - If I ever get confused I would ask the teacher a question so I’m not confused
   - I am usually not confused unless I didn’t hear a part

3. **What are helpful things that your teachers can do to help you pay attention to a lesson?**

   - Make more interesting
   - Make it exciting
   - I already pay perfect attention
   - To tell me
   - They could tell us to come to the board and show how we know the answer
   - Speak up so you can hear
   - Put us in groups and let us try to figure it out or problem solve
   - Maybe if we don’t pay attention we could get a certain punishment
   - When the teacher helps you can learn more
   - If I didn’t hear what ever we were doing I would like them to repeat it again
   - They should stop talking or clap
   - Give an example
   - Make it more fun like instead of answering questions and writing papers we could make things
with our answers like domino books
-make the lessons more fun and interesting
-fun things
-talk louder
-less instruction
-sometimes we may not listen because we might think we already know it but if you make fun
activities to go along with it and a hard paper we might listen better
-I think they should just keep doing what they are doing

4. On a scale of 1-5 how much do you enjoy participating in class?
(1= not at all, 3 = somewhat, 5=a lot)

5. What are some of the things teachers can do that make you want to participate in
class?

1:

2:

3:
-Call on me more
-let us choose our groups for the lessons
-make it more interesting! Add little things here and there to make it more interesting
-encourage us

4:
-make the work more fun
-make the lessons fun
-more field trips and make lessons funnier
-do stuff together in class

5:
-encourage me
-I really liked the experiments in science, so maybe they could do more of that
-fun things
-if you have fun teachers like Mrs. Hartman and Miss Szott it automatically becomes fun.
-make it fun, make activities, experiments
-they can help but try to do it by yourself
-I don’t know, I like participating
-Let us come up and show our work.
-more opportunity to participate
-they do a lot of fun activities and I like to learn so it’s not hard to participate
-always want to participate

6. If you are not interested in a lesson do you want to talk to friends instead of listening to
what is being taught?
Explain your answer:
I would listen
- Not often because I’m usually interested
- Nope normally I pay attention
- I would keep listening
- no because I might miss something important
- No because you’re most likely to do work after a lesson so if you don’t pay attention, you won’t know what to do
- no because then it disrupts the lesson
- not usually because the lessons are usually fun
- usually because it becomes really boring and from a kid’s point of view if it is boring and not interesting then you move on
- No even if I know the answer the teacher might tell me something new
- no I mean sometimes I know what is being taught. I like to give my mind a little refresher
- no if I am not interested I just sit in silence
- No! because I still want a good grade
- No because I want to get an education
- once you already know what your supposed to do and the teacher is just going over what you are supposed to be doing then I think you can
- I would listen anyway and maybe I would learn something that I didn’t know. So you should listen anyway
- no because I do not want to get in trouble
- No because in some lessons people get to write on the board or do fun things

7. If you have the chance to “help teach” the lesson by writing on the board or sharing your work, does the lesson become more interesting or fun.”

NO
- I don’t like to write at all no matter what
- I don’t like sharing my work that much
- because the teachers already know what to do

It might, I’m not sure
- It depends if everyone’s listening to me, or if they’re talking
- it depends on the lesson
- I don’t know
- I never thought about it
- it might I’m not sure I don’t really get called up a lot

YES
- because then you would get to do something instead of filling out papers like this one. Plus it depends on the lesson
- you are proving to your teacher that you can do stuff
- because you can talk to your friends
- I think it does because the whole class can admire your work and writing on the board is just plain fun
- because you get to write on the board that’s really fun and you get to show what you know to the class
-I like to share things I id and I like to write on the board
-It lets us interact and learn easier
-It would be really fun for me
-I get to do something
-I love to write so writing on the board would make it more fun sometimes
-because then you get to see peoples work

Appendix D: Student Participation Charts

Miss S’s Participation Chart:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>4-13-10 Science Participation before Teach/OK</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Alice</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hannah</td>
<td>H</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adilee</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gabby</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emily</td>
<td>H</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Addie</td>
<td>X</td>
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<tr>
<td>Samantha</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hayley</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Claire</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Olivia</td>
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<td>Beth</td>
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<td>Shea</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Katrina</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bryan</td>
<td>C</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Justin</td>
<td>L</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gavin</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Zach</td>
<td>H</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quinn</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jadon</td>
<td>H</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ryan</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jackson</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jacob</td>
<td>X</td>
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<tr>
<td>Gabe</td>
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<tr>
<td>Coleman</td>
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<table>
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<tr>
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<th>Participation after Teach/OK</th>
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<tr>
<td>Alice</td>
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<tr>
<td>Hannah</td>
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<td>Adilee</td>
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<td>Gabby</td>
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<td>Claire</td>
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<td>Olivia</td>
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<tr>
<td>Coleman</td>
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</tbody>
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C - called out  X - properly participated  L - left seat/ was moved by teacher
H - hand raised  O - off task - talking, drawing, not facing forward
Miss M’s Participation Chart’s

C = Called Out
H = Hand Raised
X = Proper. Particip.

Science March 25, 2010
10:22 - 11:12

\[ \frac{7}{23} = \text{properly participated at least } 75\% \text{ of time} \]
\[ = 31\% \]
Appendix E: Video Analysis

Miss M:

*Note: Appendix includes the Studiocode analysis of four lessons when not using and then using the Whole Brain Teaching strategies. These tables show the number of times the teacher attempted to gain attention, the number of times of the students responded with attention, and the amount of students who participated in the attention getting strategy.
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<th>Lesson A</th>
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<th>Pre-Whole Brain Teaching strategies</th>
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<tr>
<td></td>
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<td>Number of Attention-Getters Used (before students responded)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Response of Students to Attention Getters</td>
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<td>Actively participating in Attention Getters (out of 25 students present)</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Response of Students to Attention Getters</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Response of Students to Attention Getters</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Actively participating (out of 27 students present)</td>
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</table>

<table>
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<th>Lesson D</th>
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<th>Post-Whole Brain Teaching strategies</th>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Response of Students to Attention Getters</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Actively participating (out of 27 students present)</td>
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</table>
Miss S

Video Analysis

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<td>Positive Reinforcement</td>
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Appendix F: Journal Excerpts

Miss M’s

January 9, 2010 Journal

I know that we aren’t supposed to start formal Inquiry updates until next week, but I have been thinking about a couple of things and would just like to get them down on paper. I would also like to do something with the way my students view me as a teacher and what I could do to improve that.

I felt incredibly confident coming into this experience because I felt that the PDS experience would allow for me to develop into the type of teacher I dream to be. At this point, I don’t know how long it will take for me to start on that path because right now I am not where or who I thought I would be in the classroom.

January 30, 2010

I would have to say that management is always a concern of mine. I want the students to use the materials for answering my questions, not to doodle or write notes to each other on.

February 13, 2010 Journal

Secondly, I did not think that I would need to repeat myself upwards of seven times during a fifteen minutes period to sixth graders. Was I assuming too much of what they would be able to do or were they simply testing me, because I am the intern and my mentor was not right next to me while I was requesting their behavior to be a certain way.

I feel like sometimes I am still handling things like I am a camp counselor and not an intern. Although I feel like aspects are certainly similar, I also think that being an intern is more formal and should be treated more delicately.
March 6, 2010 Journal

I feel like a lot of the time my kids don’t see me as another teacher in the classroom, but more as my mentor’s helper. I know that I am not that and I don’t think that Jeff really treats me like that, but there are times that I wonder. I feel like my students feel very comfortable coming to me about any issue or problem, which is always how I viewed myself as a teacher, but I also think that they view me as the one in the room they can get away with stuff with.

April 17, 2010 Journal

I have also found that because I have my own management strategy that I am using I feel much more comfortable in front of the class. I am no longer wondering what I should be saying or how I can get the attention of the entire room. I feel like this strategy is mine, even though my mentor has been using it, I was the one who introduced it and have been consistently using it. A student asked at one point, “Hey, who taught you this.” I told her that it was something I had researched and wanted to see how it worked with our class. I feel like I am in control of my classroom and can use any of my Whole Brain Teaching tricks whenever I need them.

Miss S’s

September 26, 2009 Journal

"Throughout the lesson I noticed a few children talking but did not say anything to them because I was focused on keeping my mind on what I was teaching and did not want to stray for fear that I would loose my place and freeze. I never realized how many things there are to think about other than the lesson itself.

If I could change anything about the experience I would change how nervous I was. Had I not been so anxious I would have been able to focus more on what I was saying and what the kids were saying than relying on my “cheat sheet notes” that I had in front of me. I also would have liked to change how I approached the talking situation. I knew I should have addressed it but I did not know what to say! Management is something that I would consider my weak spot. I have struggled with it at various summer camps that I worked at and now in the classroom, I just don’t know what to say! I have been observing my mentor and have been taking notes, but just like lining the kids up..it is a lot harder than it looks! At the end of the year I hope that I have grown in these two areas!"

January 29, 2010 Journal

"I also worry and am concerned about the inquiry project and teaching in the classroom. I have been trying to set the expectations and keep trying to be seen as a teacher with the class, and it seems like it gets better some days, and then I feel like I have a bad day that just off sets all the good that I had been doing. It was suggested that I speak to the class as a whole group the next time they are being disrespectful with talking and not listening when I am teaching. I am going to write down what I would say to them and then have it ready in the back of my mind when the
moment arises. This way they hear it coming from me and realize that I recognize their behavior.

March 19, 2010 Journal

*My journal this week is made up of my thoughts from throughout the week as I have implemented a few power teaching strategies. I organized them by date.

3/13/10

As I have been reading up about power teaching and watching the different videos on Chris Biffle’s You Tube channel, I thought it might be a good idea to write down my predictions on how implementing the power teaching management strategies will go in my classroom.

The first step I am taking is to give the class a survey that asks seven questions that deal with student participation, engagement, and talking out. I will use the data and information from these surveys to get a feel for how the students feel about the talking out and time it takes to get started with a lesson that I teach. I think that the students will state that they feel frustrated when it takes a long time to get started and the majority of students will circle “yes” for the last question that asks if a lesson would become more interesting or fun if they have the opportunity to be involved by writing on the board or sharing their work.

On Tuesday during morning meeting I am going to introduce the class..yes. Here are my directions and expectation plans for Tuesday:

1. Today I'm going to share with you a new attention getting strategy that I've been wanting to try and I think as a class we are ready to begin using it today.

2. When I say "class" you will all say together "yes": Class..yes.

3. However I say class; that is how you say yes. Class class...yes yes. (practice by using it in a low voice, practice it by saying classity class...yessity yes)

4. I will explain that whenever I use this after they say the final "yes" they are to stop talking, I should not have to use more than one class/yes pattern in a row.

5. We will together practice one last time and then move into a greeting.

As I introduce this I think that the class will follow quickly and that it will be taught with no problems that I can anticipate. They might be silly and laugh at it when we practice it in a low voice or use the “classity class” version. If this happens I will just use the basic class..yes or class class...yes yes during the first week. As this becomes more routine I will experiment with different tones or versions. It is something I will just have to feel out with my class.

The biggest thing that I need to do to be successful with the class/yes is to make sure that I carefully lay out the expectation that they must be quiet after they say the final yes and that it should not have to be used more than once. If I do have to use it more than once or use another attention getter after the class/yes..then a consequence is going to happen (taking away minutes of recess)

Reading in the power teaching book on page 18 it suggests that when students respond quickly several times in a row, a positive mark was given to the students. I might consider using some type of reward or system for when they follow directions.

After I introduce the class/yes the next step is to introduce the “hands and eyes” strategy. This strategy is used when students respond to the class/yes and then immediately drift off into an off task behavior. After using class/yes, I will say “hands and eyes”. At this time students
should fold their hands on their desk and look at me. This strategy will give me a visual of who has their hands on their desk and looking at me or who is engaged in other behaviors or distractions.

These are my directions for introducing “hands and eyes”

I will review how we have been using class/yes and introduce "hands and eyes"

1. There will be times that after I say class and you respond yes I will say "hands and eyes"
2. when you hear me say hands and eyes you will repeat back to me "hands and eyes"
3. when you say this back to be you should look at me and fold your hands on your desk (if at your desk) or fold them in your lap if moving around the room.
4. We will practice the class/yes followed with a "hands and eyes"

It is my hope and prediction that this will become a successful attention getter in my classroom and that the students will enjoy it because it can be used in a variety of ways so that it does not get old or over used. Teachers can also change it up by instead of saying class/yes other words or phrases such as “park..forest” could be used.

3/16/10 Introduction of Class…yes

Introducing this management strategy went very well. I stuck exactly to my plan and used a few different examples. The class caught on quickly and enjoyed the new attention getter. I feel this way because I used the clapping attention getter and a few students told me “you should use class,class.” I did notice talking and a few silly remarks after the students said “yes” throughout the day. I am going to have to be consistently reminding them that after they say yes, they stop talking and look at me. I think that once I introduce the “hands and eyes” it will give them another reminder that they are to look at me and stop talking.

3/19/10 Introduction of Hands and Eyes

I introduced this during morning meeting and approached it in the same way as introducing class/yes. I told them that it was used in a very similar way and whenever they hear me say hands and eyes they are to fold their hands on their desks and they look at me. I did think that some of them feel it is a bit “young” but it is a really good indicator for me of who is on task for me and who is not. I will need to keep practicing with them and really make it clear that after they say yes, I should be able to say hands and eyes because they are completely quiet.

Overall I am really pleased with the introduction of these two management strategies. I will continue to use them and even add to them by using some of the other power teaching strategies that I am looking at which ones I would like to use and how I would implement them. One strategy that I am looking to use is the scoreboard…I just need to come up with a way that it could fit and that I feel comfortable using.

March 26, 2010 Journal

This week I have continued to use the class/yes and hands and eyes power teaching strategies. I was just thinking today about the improvement of my teaching just from using these strategies. I was thinking today about my science lesson on potential and kinetic energy. This
lesson included an experiment where the students worked in groups. There were various times when I needed the attention of the whole class to either give directions or suggest more ways to complete the experiment. Before using the power teaching strategies I would have handled a similar situation by using a clapping attention getter (which is challenging because they are working with their hands) or I would have just tried to yell over the students.

Talking over the students is something I know does not work; I do not have their attention, many are not focused on what I am saying, and I have to repeat myself. During that lesson when I needed their attention, I simply said “class, class” and it was answered with at “yes, yes” and then the noise became noticeably quieter. I am in the stage where I keep reminding the students that after their last “yes” they are to completely stop talking. I love using the hands and eyes because it gives them the direction of looking at me. This is another reminder that they should be looking at me paying attention when I am teaching or have something to say.

Since using these strategies I feel more confident. I have a tool of my own to use and I am confident that they will respond. If they do not, I can use the same attention getter, but vary it so it appears new to the students. There were times before in my teaching where I simply did not know how to get their attention so I resorted to just talking over and “hoping” they would respect that I was talking and listen. I know that I can use class yes at any time, change my voice (quiet, loud, funny serious) and the pattern and the students will say it however I say it. I like that if I say it in a serious voice they will have my same tone and get to almost “talk back” to me in the voice that I use. I can let them be silly or serious when ever I want…or in other words, I feel in control. =)
Appendix G: Systematic Observation Behavior Charts

Miss M’s
Miss S's