

CULTURE, CLIMATE, AND SCHOOL DISCIPLINE: A FORUM SESSION [5231]

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Forum Summary

Student disruptive behaviors have a rippling effect, influencing the disruptive individual, his and her classmates, the school, and the community (Brophy, 1999). The casualties of these disruptions are school climate and student achievement, which suffer from time off task, conflict, and poor instructional management.

In this context, the forum will focus on the effects of Consistency Management and Cooperative Discipline[®] (CMDC[®]), a comprehensive instructional management program, on the learning environment and on school improvement in two neighboring British secondary schools (grades 7-12) outside the greater London area. The forum will also highlight implementation strategies and areas that are essential for program success both in cross-cultural and intra-cultural context, such as distributed leadership, consistency, sustained commitment and policy development. Participants will be invited to discuss how to foster these strategies.

The Effects of the CMDC program

Of the two neighboring schools in the program, the big school has 70 teaching staff and 1,200 students. The small school has 38 teaching staff and 540 students and is designated by the British government as in “Special Measures” (for behavioral and learning deficiencies). Before the CMDC program was implemented, both schools had lost between 37 percent and 50 percent of their teaching staff. In addition, the big school had low attendance and a room, dedicated for “time out,” filled with students from all levels; and the small school had 4,882 incidence reports for discipline.

In the U.S., multiple school quasi-experimental studies show that CMCD improves climate, achievement, and retention and decreases suspension rates. American pre-post findings show significantly lower discipline referrals and violent acts. In the British schools, the findings come from observations and evaluations from British government inspectors reports (HMI, 2004), *Investors in People: Assessment Report (2003)*, and by researchers at the University of Nottingham. These British findings are summarized below.

Big School (after two years of implementation)

1. Exclusions. The number of students given fixed term exclusions has dropped by one third. The number of students removed from lessons has also declined.
2. Attendance. Levels of pupil attendance have improved significantly and been sustained (from 89 percent in 2000–2001 to 93.1 percent in 2003–2004). The levels of unauthorized absence have also declined significantly.

3. Teacher retention. The turnover of teaching staff has declined year on year from 37 percent in 1999–2000 to 3 percent in 2003–2004.
4. Order and discipline. Teachers, students, and community perceive a more orderly environment. The school is now the most popular and heavily oversubscribed local education agency (LEA) maintained secondary school.
5. Student attainment. Year 9 is the current group that has been exposed to CMCD the longest. SATs results show a significant improvement over 2002–2003.
6. Costs. The resource costs (such as dedicated leadership and management time and adaptation of U.S. materials) have been significant. By all reports (interviews), the benefits have exceeded the costs.

Small School (after 1 year of implementation)

1. The level of incident reports for discipline and violence were reduced by 68 percent from 2002–2003 to 2003–2004.
2. Three inspectors visit the school every three or four months for several days. They have reported significant increases in teaching and learning time after program implementation.
3. Student attendance has reached the school's target of 91 percent. This is an improvement from the low 80s in previous years.

Forum Goals

1. Participants will identify and select the best discipline program for their specific school context and needs.
2. Participants will discuss ways to foster implementation strategies for the optimal success of the school discipline program that they select.

Forum Objectives

1. To provide the participants with data on the efficacy of a U.S. discipline program implemented in two British schools and on the implications for cross-cultural school climate and school effectiveness models.
2. To show participants how the data collected by the U. S. program combined with external inspectors and government evaluators will provide a unique view of the change process.
3. To engage participants in discussing the lessons learned from this cross-cultural project and from effective implementation strategies for program success.

Forum Activities

1. The authors will make a PowerPoint presentation providing data on the efficacy of the CMCD program implemented in England in 2001 and 2002 and in 2005.
2. Participants will be invited to discuss effective implementation strategies needed for program optimal success both in intracultural and intercultural contexts.

Assessment

Participants will be asked to respond to a short questionnaire on a five-point scale for the following three items.

1. I have acquired knowledge about implementation strategies needed for program success.
2. I learned about some specific mistakes to avoid when implementing a new program.
3. I would feel more confident about implementing a school discipline program after my participation in this forum.

Resources

Presentation materials

Reference

Brophy, J. (1999) Perspectives of classroom management: Yesterday, today and tomorrow. In H. J. Freiberg. *Beyond behaviorism: Changing the classroom management paradigm*. Boston, MA: Allyn and Bacon.

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