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ROUTINES AND PROCEDURES IMPACTING THE CLASSROOMS AT URBANA
HIGH SCHOOL

Capstone: Field Study

Submitted to the
Faculty of Urbana University
in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree of
Masters in Education
Division of Graduate Study

by
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Urbana, Ohio
1999

Approved: Advisor



11/14/01

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CHAPTER I INTRODUCTION

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

This study investigated the development of an improved learning climate that is beneficial to both students and instructor. The purpose was to examine the relationship among classroom routine and procedures, student understanding, and student productivity. The findings have been shared with teachers, both experienced and inexperienced.

SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

The study was significant for experienced and inexperienced teachers of all grade levels. The study showed the importance of classroom routines and procedures and its positive effect on the classroom climate. The study examined the importance of routines and procedures in the classroom and how they had an impact on behavior performance. By establishing routines, the study predicted that a classroom will be more productive with less behavior problems and students increasing time on task.

QUESTIONS TO BE INVESTIGATED

The investigation took several questions into consideration.

1. Will classroom procedures and routines improve students time on task ?
2. Will classroom procedures and routines improve student understanding of teacher expectations, resulting in greater cooperation?

3. Will classroom procedures and routines reduce student frustration in relation to the students understanding the teachers expectations?
4. Will classroom procedures and routines reduce teacher frustration concerning reduction of student misbehavior and reduction of students not being on-task?

HYPOTHEISIS OF THE STUDY

The following hypotheses were formulated in this research.

HO:1 The routine and procedures will enable the student to have a specific understanding of what is expected in class both socially and academically, in turn improve classroom behavior .

HO:2 The frustration level of the students will be reduced.

HO:3 The frustration level of the teacher will be reduced.

RESEARCH PROCEDURES AND METHODOLOGY

The study involved the development of a set of classroom routines and procedures. The ideas used for the classroom routines and procedures were acquired from various sources. However, most of these were derived from the program on "Effective Teaching" by Harry Wong. These routines and procedures were established to fit the activities and academics that take place in a high school ninth grade level class.

The study involved high school students who attended a small school with a population of less than 800. The observed group of high school students was made up of ninth and tenth graders enrolled in Pre-Algebra . Fifty of the students were female and

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thirty-five were male with a total of eighty-five students participating in the researchers observational portion of the study. The additional students in the classes of the study's participating teachers were also composed primarily of ninth and tenth graders. Taking into consideration that some students were enrolled in two to three of the classes involving the participating teachers, there were approximately 100 individuals involved in the study.

The procedures and routines were introduced during the first week. They were not introduced all at the same time so that students did not receive too much information at once. As the procedures and routines were introduced, they were practiced by the students. Additional routines and procedures were introduced, as needed, at the appropriate opportunity.

A journal was kept by the researcher only on the students the researcher had in the Pre-Algebra classes. The observations took place over a period of nine weeks to record behavior problems, positive behavior, student time-on task, and students responses to implementations. A questionnaire using the Likert Scale was done to collect students responses to classroom techniques used in the observed Pre-Algebra class. Also, other teachers constituting the same changes in their classrooms were given a questionnaire using the Likert Scale to determine success or failure with routines and procedures in their classroom that they had set in place.

LIMITATIONS AND ASSUMPTIONS OF THE STUDY

The limitations include

1. Only five teachers used the new techniques and were

subjected to a questionnaire.

2. Limited teaching experience.
3. Done only on a high school level.
4. The study was only observed for one nine week grading period.
5. Only trends could be observed.
6. The size of the study involved only 85 students.

Assumptions are as follows:

1. All students had a desire to satisfy the instructor in a productive manners.
2. All students put forth an effort to succeed.
3. There were no Severe Behavior Handicap students enrolled in the class.
4. There were no Learning Disabled students enrolled in the sample population, who may not understand the routines and procedures.
5. Journal recording: was consistent and had a list of behaviors to observe.
6. All teachers involved in the study had the same practices, routines, and procedures.

CHAPTER TWO

RELATED RESEARCH AND LITERATURE

Implementing rules and procedures to reduce the occurrence of classroom behavior problems is one of the most substantial classroom management activities (Borich 447). Routine procedures, like rules, should communicate expectations for behavior. Unlike a rule, routine procedures applies only to a particular type of activity and does not define a general standard for conduct. Procedures are usually learned through participation. (Canelosi 113).

Many teachers believe they cannot control their students, which they want to be able to do. In 1991, the National Center for Education Statistics reported the results of a 1988 study that found about one-third of all high school teachers felt that they had little or no control over their students (Henson 345).

A desirable teacher attitude is : “As the teacher, I must and will establish and maintain in my classroom the climate necessary for maximum learning. Such an attitude makes students feel secure and is apt to earn more respect for a teacher than an attitude of doubt and insecurity. Teachers must know and accept their responsibility to establish and maintain discipline, because that is a prerequisite to achieving good behavior in most classrooms. Good discipline does not just happen. Students will work more intensively when they know where they are headed and how to get their (346).”

Setting rules, explaining the reasons behind the rules, and correcting the situation when rules are violated, contributed much to the orderly climate necessary for learning (Thomas 75). Research continues to show as a core principle, the key to good discipline is preventing inappropriate behavior in the first place. When it occurs, one needs to deal with it promptly and relatively unobtrusively before it escalates (Davis 115).

Preventive approaches to classroom management assure that children react to the circumstances existing in the classroom at any given time. Therefore, instead of waiting for behavior problems to occur, the teacher can prevent them by providing circumstances that motivate students to behave appropriately. Rules communicate the teacher's expectations regarding student behavior in the classroom (Paine 86).

Principles of good management can be placed in categories of rules and expectations (accountability), classroom activities (start class quickly and keep students engaged), and responses to misbehavior (ignore most minor, follow through with consequences) (Davis 117).

Teachers should establish a few ground rules, but without overdoing it. Rules should come from the teacher as opposed to the student. The main rule or idea is that a few enforced rules can provide strong classroom guidelines whereas, lack of rules can be confusing to most (Devito 48).

These rules and procedures, which should be formulated prior to the first school day of school, become a commitment to applying the ounce of prevention to avoid having provide a pound of cure (Borich 447). According to "The Metamorphosis of Classroom Management," Mayeski states that all classrooms need rules and routines to function effectively. Many research studies in the 1970's and 80's emphasized the importance of

teaching these routines early in the year. Some studies were as explicit as identifying that they should be taught in the first four days while other recommended it be sometime within the first few weeks of school (Mayeske online).

Research shows that there is a close relationship between good management and good achievement, behavior and attitudes (Davis 117) . Classroom management is a set of teacher behaviors and activities directed at engaging students in appropriate behavior and minimizing disruptions. Good management is preventative (Sandford 169).

In the classroom, students are managed through a combination of a teachers instruction and discipline-related behaviors. According to research, effective teachers rely more on instructional behaviors to manage the classroom. This can be accomplished by creating the conditions for a good learning environment and there by increasing the likeliness that discipline problems will be prevented. Effective teachers are effective managers; and effective managers prevent potential problems. (Kindsualter 88). A smooth-running class is the responsibility of the teacher, and it is the result of the teacher's ability to teach procedures (Wong 171).

The way in which the teacher manages the classroom affects the teachers instructional expertise. The students in effective managed classrooms appear to know what is expected of them. They seem satisfied with their progress and they know what to do when they need assistance. The key to successful classroom management is pre-planning (Lemlech).

In a descriptive study done by the Research and Development Center for Teacher Education out of the University of Texas, 2.5 hours of data was collected from a study of 70 teachers at various teaching levels. In this study, they found that the root of a teachers

success or problems in managing a class could often be seen in the first weeks of school. At the beginning of the school year, effective teachers show evidence of careful planning and detailed thinking about procedures and student behavior in their classrooms. In the first days of school, effective classroom managers carefully taught students how to follow classroom procedures (Sanford 56).

Harry Wong also supports this idea. Student success or achievement at the end of the school year is directly related to the degree to which the teacher establishes good control of the classroom procedures in the very first week of the school year. It is the procedures that set the class up for achievement to take place (Wong 169).

Students need to know from the very beginning how they are expected to behave and work in the classroom. Discipline dictates how they are to behave, and procedures and routines dictate how they are to work (Wong 170).

On the first day, a teacher should plan to devote some time to discussing classroom rules and expectations. This is the time to remove student uncertainties and let them know what to expect. There is no better way to begin this process than by referring to the expectations that have either been posted, handed out, or both (Henson 495).

It is important to make procedures and rules consistent with the climate one wishes to promote. Four reasons to have procedures and rules are as follows.

1. Enhance work engagement and minimize disruption.
2. Promote safety.
3. Prevent disturbance to others or other classroom activities.
4. Promote acceptable standards of courtesy and interpersonal relations.

Unless you clearly communicate your rules and apply them consistently, all your work in making them will be meaningless. Consistency is the key reason why some rules are effective and some are not (Henson 481).

CHAPTER 3

PROCEDURES FOR THE STUDY

The objectives of this study were attained using various techniques. The students in the Pre-Algebra class were observed daily over a nine-week grading period by the author. The students fit the following composition. There were a total of eighty-five students in the Pre-Algebra classes of the researcher. Within the eighty-five, there were 35 males and 50 females, 63 ninth graders, 20 tenth graders, and two eleventh graders. Other students included in this study were enrolled in the classes of the teachers that contributed to the study. These students consisted primarily of ninth and tenth graders.

The additional teachers participating in the study taught English, Proficiency Math, General Business, Home Economics, and Algebra. The experience of the instructors ranged from four years to ten years.

Before students started back to school in August, the teachers participating in the study, along with the researcher, met with one another to set up some basic classroom procedures and routines. These procedures and routines were to be used consistently in the classes of the participating teachers. Some teachers needed to make adjustments based on their class make-up, subject matter they taught, and layout of their room.

The routines and procedures were presented by each participating teacher to all the classes involved during the first week of school. Each student was given a copy of these expectations. The instructor went over each routine and procedure and these were

A survey was also distributed among the eighty-five students in the observed Pre-Algebra classes (see appendix C). This was done to conclude if the students had an understanding of what was expected of them behaviorally and operationally. The researcher wanted to determine if the students could detect a correlation of routine and procedures among other classes the students were in that participated in the study.

The research material supporting the use of routines and procedures was selected and collected throughout the nine-week time frame.

CHAPTER 4

INTERPRETATION OF THE RESULTS

The main purpose of this study was to find out if the use of routines and procedures enabled students to have a specific understanding of what was expected of them both socially and academically. In turn, the use of routines and procedures would improve classroom behavior.

The first of three sections, in this chapter, examine the results of the student survey. The second part of this chapter considered the results of the survey administered to the participating teachers. The third section of the chapter explained the researchers findings as a result of daily observation.

Table 1 shows the compiled results of the student survey. The student survey contained three questions that enabled the researcher to gain an understanding of the overall student attitude toward learning and toward school. The students were asked if learning was important to them. The students felt learning was important to them with a mean of 1.85, with one being learning is "always" important to them. There was only a tenth of a point separating the scores between the genders. Approximately 90% of the students surveyed had a strong understanding of the importance of learning.

Males suggested, with a mean of 2.6, that both attitude toward school and attitude toward how easy school varied from "somewhat" to "most of the time." Females found school to be easier than boys did but only by a slight difference with a mean of 2.5.

Females showed an even greater difference in means scores, in comparison to males, on attitude toward school, with girls having a more positive attitude. Females felt that their ability in math was higher, with a 2.6 mean, than the way males, with 2.5 mean, viewed their own ability. There was no relationship or trend found between age and grade level in relation to these questions. The mean scores indicated that the males put forth slightly more effort than the females did. The mean scores were 2 for males and 2.1 for the females.

The researcher, however, felt that the three male students who were seventeen years of age may have affected the mean of the ability and attitudes previously mentioned. But, after reviewing these three questionnaires, there was no consistency found in the data.

As indicated in Appendix B, questions six through ten referenced to the routines and procedures. The mean of these questions ranged from 1.3 to 2. In questions six through ten, the mean for each gender did not vary much. On questions six, seven, and nine, the mean score was identical for both genders.

Questions six and seven were used to determine if the students had an understanding of the expectations the teacher expected of them. The mean score of 1.7 indicates that the students always, or most of the time, had an understanding of what the teacher expected of them when entering the classroom. The students in both genders had a mean score of 1.4 indicating that "most of the time" or "always" the students understood how they should perform in the classroom

Question eight asked if the students understood what was expected of them in terms of keeping notes, taking notes, and doing homework. The females mean of 1.5 was

Student Survey

Table 1

Questions to students	Age	Year in High school (circle one)				Mean
		1	2	3	4	
43 Female						
31 Male						
		Always	Most of the time	Sometimes	Seldom	
		1	2	3	4	x
1. Learning is important to me		28%	59%	9%	3%	1.85
2. I find school work easy.		4%	43%	50%	3%	2.55
3. My attitude toward school is positive		12%	39%	39%	10%	2.45
4. My ability in Math is good.		12%	47%	27%	14%	2.40
5. I put forth my best effort in this class.		22%	54%	22%	3%	2.05
6. I have an understanding of what to do when I enter Mrs. Moore's class.		51%	34%	12%	4%	1.70
7. I understand how Mrs. Moore expects me to operate in class		66%	30%	3%	1%	1.40
8. I know what is expected of me in terms of keeping my notebook, taking notes, and doing homework.		58%	32%	4%	5%	1.40
9. I have a clear idea of what objectives are important to learn for each chapter or section we do in math.		34%	52%	11%	2%	1.80
10. I have other teachers that have similar, or the same, procedures and expectations as in this class.		27%	51%	20%	1%	1.95

higher than the males mean of 1.3. Although this indicated a greater understanding in the male gender, an age factor may be notable on this question. The demographics, provided by the questionnaire, indicated that three of the male students were seventeen years of age. This made up ten percent of the male students surveyed. This higher age may imply that these students have taken this class previously and are already familiar with the instructors expectations. The females had only one seventeen year old which was two percent of the total female population in the study.

It was also interesting to have observed that all of the seventeen year old students did not indicate what year of high school this was for them. Many of the sixteen year olds also did not answer this particular part of the questionnaire. One possible explanation was that these students did not know. The grade that a student is in is based on the credits they have and not the actual physical years in high school. The request for this information was confusing to the student. Therefore, the year of school a student was in was not referenced to in drawing any specific conclusions in the study.

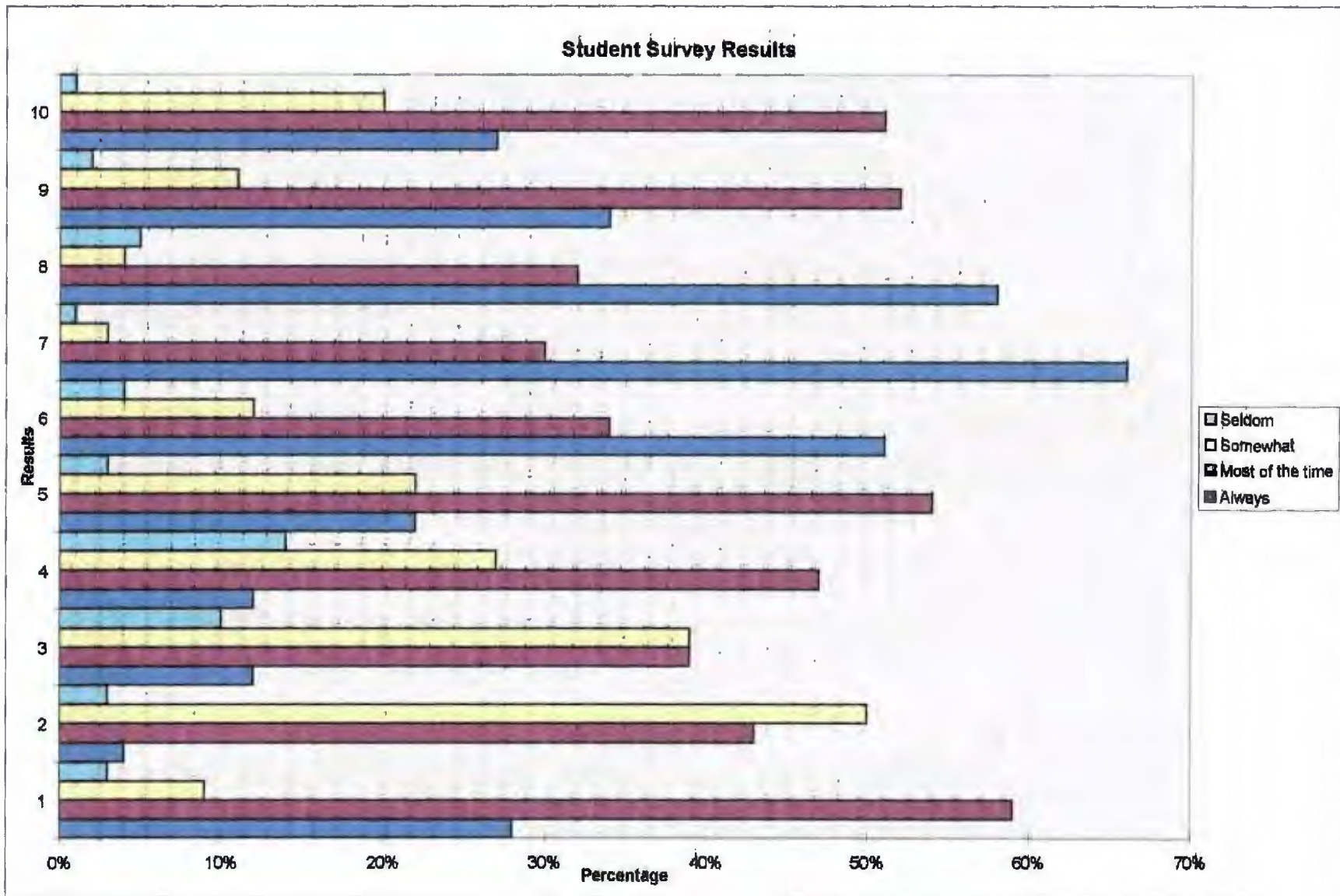
Question nine asked about the students understanding of what was expected of them academically in math. Both genders resulted in a mean of 1.8 designating that they had good understanding. Students recognized that the routines and procedures were used by other teachers that they encountered. The male mean was 1.9 and the female mean was 2. Although the scores are close, the difference may be for the same reason as mentioned earlier, there being a greater number of seventeen year old male students. There were more male students that may be repeating classes from failing them. A comparison of gender mean scores can be surveyed in Appendix D, Chart 1.

Although student attitudes show room for improvement. The overall mean scores from the questionnaires indicated that the students have a high understanding of what is expected of them and their understanding of routines and procedures. An overview, seen on Graph 1, designates the results from the student survey and can be compared further by the reader.

The second component of this chapter translates the results of the teacher survey. The teacher survey resulted in some interesting findings. The results can be seen in Table 2. Questions one through four examined whether students received routines and procedures and whether they had a general understanding of the teachers expectations.

The means ranged from 1 to 1.6 on questions one through four. This provided an overall indication that the teachers felt that the large majority of the students received the needed information concerning the routines and procedures and that the students had a strong understanding of what was expected.

A mean of 1.8 attested that the teachers felt that student cooperation had improved. Time on task had improved after the implementation of routines and procedures showing a mean of 2.2. Questions seven through eight proved to be interesting. When teachers were asked if they were consistent in implementing routines and procedures, the mean was 2.4. When the teachers were asked about consistency in taking action toward those who did not follow rules, a mean score of 2.2 resulted. This resulted in an inconsistency between what the teachers think and what they implement. Question nine showed a mean score of 2.0 which indicates that teachers saw improvement in their classroom behavior by using routines and procedures most of the time.



Teacher Survey on Routine and Procedures

Table 2

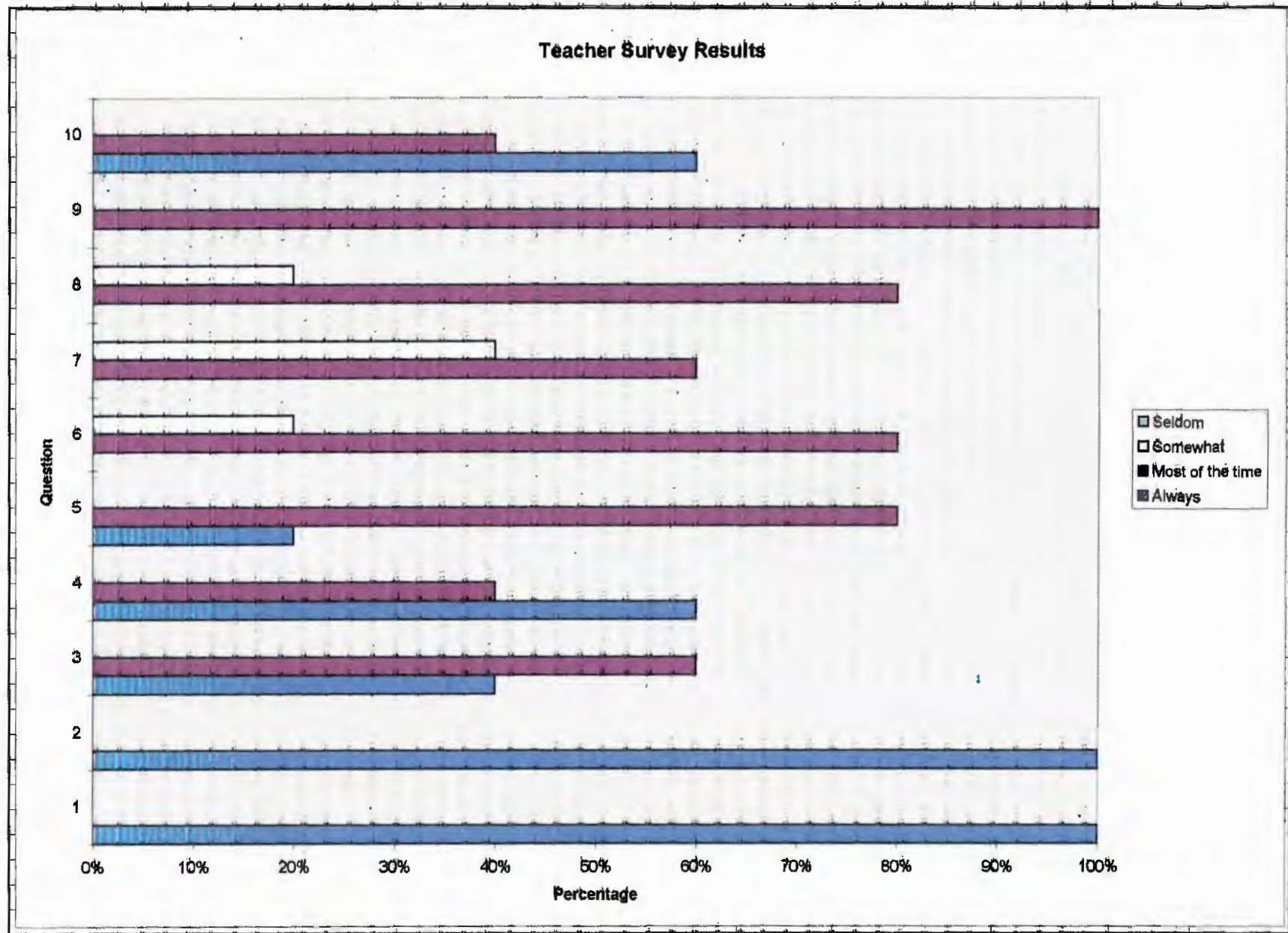
Questions to teachers	Years experience		Average of five years			
80% Female	1	2	3	4		
20% Male	Always	Most of the time	Somewhat	Seldom		x
1. Students in my class receive a copy of classroom routines and procedures	100%	0	0	0		1.0
2. I have a copy of these routines and procedures posted in my classroom.	100%	0	0	0		1.0
3. Students know how to operate in my class.	40%	60%	0	0		1.6
4. Students in my class know what to expect in terms of doing homework, taking notes, and keeping a notebook.	60%	40%	0	0		1.4
5. Student cooperation has improved while implementing these routines and procedures	20%	80%	0	0		1.8
6. Student time-on-tasks has improved since students understand expectations.	0	80%	20%	0		2.2
7. I am consistent about implementing my routines and procedures.	0	60%	40%	0		2.4
8. I am consistent in taking action towards those who choose not to follow rules.	0	80%	20%	0		2.2
9. I see an improvement in my classroom behavior by using routines and procedures.	0%	100%	0	0		2.0
10. I begin my class each day with a posted assignment.	60%	40%	0	0		1.4

The average years of experience of the teachers surveyed was five. This may indicate that inexperience existed in the development of teaching skills as well as implementation of routines and procedures and taking action against those who did not follow the routines and procedures. Gender and the subject matter a teacher taught showed no notable difference in the survey's results. Overall results from the survey can be compared in Graph .

The third component of this chapter addresses the daily observations done by the researcher in the researchers classes. Components that were taken into consideration were positive behavior, negative behavior, student time on task, and the overall responses to the implementation of routines and procedures.

Daily behavior problems resulted in eight detentions throughout the nine week period. These infractions were a result of the students not following the implemented routines and procedures or not complying with the instructor when reminded of the routine or procedure not being followed. Student time on task remained consistent during the nine weeks. Approximately twice a week, per class, the students needed to be reminded of how they were to use their time wisely. The students were reminded of their options in using their class time when their math work was completed. Students continued to be consistent in heading their papers, maintaining their notebooks, and other such daily routines and procedures. There were two to three students per class that showed signs of having difficulty adhering to the routines and procedures. Through observation, this is possibly due to a number of factors; immaturity, lack of organizational skills, negative attitude, or the influence of a poor home life.

Teacher Survey on Routine and Procedures



Students had an overall positive response to the implementation of routines and procedures, which was also indicated by the student survey. If an assignment was not posted, as a part of their daily routine and procedures, they would immediately bring this to the instructors attention.

CHAPTER 5

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

A majority of the students felt that learning was important. Students, however, put less emphasis on, or had a lower attitude toward school and their ability in math. If attitudes of students toward school could be improved, so might the views of the student toward routines and procedures.

The teacher survey produced findings that showed the implementation of routines and procedures improved classroom behavior. In part, this supported hypothesis HO: 1 which states that routines and procedures will improve classroom behavior. Teachers, however, exhibited an inconsistency in implementing them. The results in this study indicated to the participating teachers that consistency is the key factor in implementing routines and procedures. If inconsistency could be improved upon, then the behavior of the students may improve even more thus reducing teacher frustration.

The student survey resulted in a findings that help to further prove hypothesis HO: 1 since the survey indicated that routines and procedures helped students gain an understanding of what was expected of them.

The data collected through daily observation, along with the supporting research, indicated that when classroom management is controllable, the frustration of teaching is greatly reduced. Also, when a student knows what to expect, their frustration level decreases. These conclusions supported hypothesis HO:2 and HO:3 that are directed to student and teacher frustration levels.

The data collected could provide the foundation of a teacher workshop. If teachers integrated on their classroom routines and procedures, students would be provided with consistent classroom guidelines and consistent implementation of these guidelines. This could result in better classroom management and consequently behavior problems would subside. It would be ideal for all school systems provide teachers with the tools to integrate and share ideas of implementation and consistency with one another.

Suggestions for further research include a similar study involving all teachers within a particular school system. Daily data accumulated by each teacher may prove to be not only invaluable to the participating teacher by showing them how important consistency is, but to the overall improvement in behavior of a school system. Further research may also accumulate more detailed demographics to see if there may be a correlation between behavior and maturity rate along with the acceptance of routines and procedures. Demographics may also help determine if a students background or the composition of their family has any significance in accepting routines and procedures and consistency.

Further research may also include a larger use of the teacher population providing a more broad range of experience. Questions used for the students and teachers would also include open ended questions so that a more detailed understanding could be gained from their responses.

The literature collected on classroom management supported the use of introducing routines and procedures and most important, being consistent. It takes consistency and ongoing classroom management to make the implementation of routines and procedures work successfully.

APPENDIX A
DAILY OBSERVATION SHEET

Daily Observation			
	Behavior comments	Time-on-task/comments	Student responses
Date			
1			
2			
3			
4			
5			
6			
7			
8			
9			
10			
11			
12			
13			
14			
15			

APPENDIX B
TEACHER SURVEY

Teacher Survey on Routine and Procedures

Questions to teachers

____Female

Years experience _____

____Male

	Always	Most of the time	Somewhat	Seldom
1. Students in my class receive a copy of classroom routines and procedures	1	2	3	4
2. I have a copy of these routines and procedures posted in my classroom.	1	2	3	4
3. Students know how to iperate in my class.	1	2	3	4
4. Students in my class know what to expect in terms of doing homework, taking notes, and keeping a notebook.	1	2	3	4
5. Student cooperation has improved while implementing these routines and procedures	1	2	3	4
6. Student time-on-taks has improved since sudents understand expectations.	1	2	3	4
7. I am concsistent about implementing my routines and procedures.	1	2	3	4
8. I am consistent in taking action towards those who choose not to follow rules.	1	2	3	4
9. I see an improvement in my classroom behavior by using routines and procedures.	1	2	3	4
10. I begin my class each day with a posted assignment.	1	2	3	4

APPENDIX C
STUDENT SURVEY

Student Survey

Questions to students

____ Female

Age ____

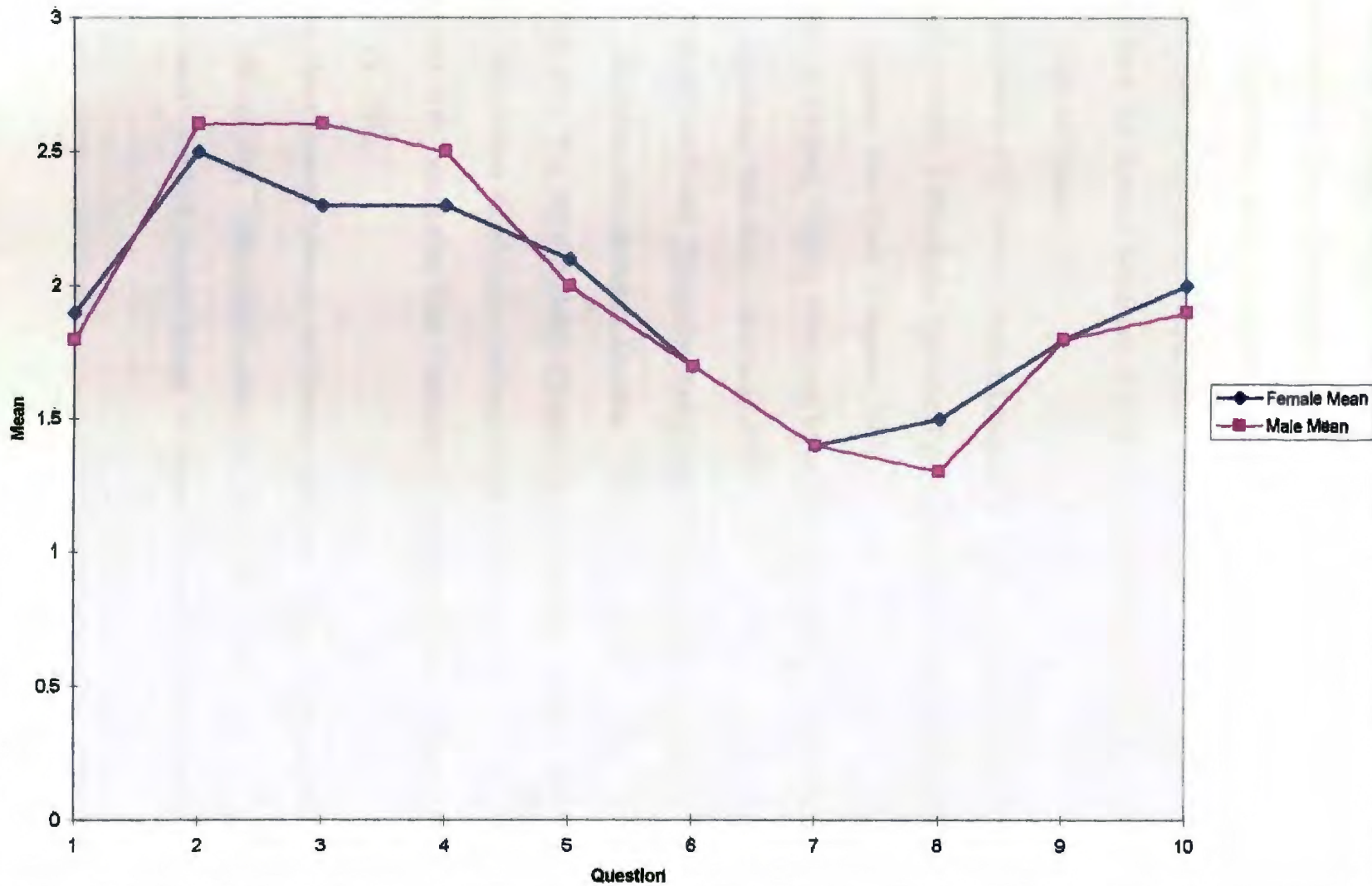
____ Male

Year in High school (circle one) 1 2 3 4

	Always	Most of the time	Somewhat	Seldom
1. Learning is important to me	1	2	3	4
2. I find school work easy.	1	2	3	4
3. My attitude toward school is positive	1	2	3	4
4. My ability in Math is good.	1	2	3	4
5. I put forth my best effort in this class.	1	2	3	4
6. I have an understanding of what to do when I enter Mrs. Moore's class.	1	2	3	4
7. I understand how Mrs. Moore expects me to operate in class	1	2	3	4
8. I know what is expected of me interms of keeping my notebook, taking notes, and doing homework.	1	2	3	4
9. I have a clear idea of what objectives are important to learn for each chapter or section we do in math.	1	2	3	4
10. I have other teachers that have similar, or the same, procedures and expectations as in this class.	1	2	3	4

APPENDIX D
FEMALE/MALE SURVEY MEAN
COMPARISON

Mean Comparison



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