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Elementary Educators' Perceptions of Conscious Discipline as a Management Strategy

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Running Head: ELEMENTARY EDUCATORS' PERCEPTIONS OF CONSCIOUS
DISCIPLINE AS A MANAGEMENT STRATEGY

Elementary Educators' Perceptions of Conscious Discipline as a Management Strategy

Mary Hill

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Spring, 2017

PERCEPTIONS OF CONSCIOUS DISCIPLINE

Abstract

This study explored elementary educators' perceptions of Conscious Discipline as it is implemented in the classroom as a management technique. To gather data, the researcher created a survey that asked about the demographics in the schools, how the teachers view Conscious Discipline, and the teachers' opinions on the Conscious Discipline program as it relates to management in the classroom. The survey was shared via email with a link embedded. The participants consisted of twelve teachers from one Northwest Arkansas school district who taught Preschool through fifth grade in a general education classroom, as well as school counselors and administration such as principals and assistant principals. Most participants had between five and seven total hours of Conscious Discipline training and had attended training within the last five years. The participants' schools were mostly located in suburban areas, with high populations of English Language Learners (ELLs). Their teaching experience ranged from first-year teachers to veteran teachers with thirty-two years of experience. Most participants had between one and fifteen years of experience. Once the data from the survey was collected, each question was analyzed for recurring patterns and themes among the participants' responses. The analysis indicated most educators feel that Conscious Discipline is an effective management technique which teaches students the value of self-regulation. They also indicated the Conscious Discipline management techniques are not difficult to implement and are a vital part of the classroom interaction with students. These findings support the effectiveness of Conscious Discipline as a classroom management strategy.

PERCEPTIONS OF CONSCIOUS DISCIPLINE

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Chapter I: Introduction

Classroom management plays a vital role in education. For many years, teachers have been putting classroom management techniques into practice to keep their class full of students organized and ready to learn. Classroom management can be defined as an organized way of “providing clear directions, rules, and expectation, focusing students’ attention toward learning objectives and preventing instances of misconduct” (Zee & Koomen, 2016). Classroom management has been researched extensively and found to be one of the most important aspects of the classroom climate and student achievement. Because of this, it is important that teachers feel successful in their implementation of classroom management strategies.

Conscious Discipline is a classroom behavior management strategy that aims to give students the ability to regulate their own behavior to minimize discipline issues in the classroom. It does this by integrating social-emotional learning, discipline, and self-regulation skills to give the child control of their own actions as opposed to the teacher regulating the child. Conscious Discipline has gained popularity in the past few years, as it teaches the child how to cope with their own emotions and social learning as a behavior management strategy.

This study aims to discover elementary teachers’ perceptions of Conscious Discipline who have attended Conscious Discipline seminars. The purpose of this research study is to determine the social validity of Conscious Discipline as a behavior management strategy in the classroom setting by sending surveys from SurveyMonkey via email to educators in one school district in Northwest Arkansas who have attended Conscious Discipline seminars in the past five years. The survey measured teachers’ perceptions and attitudes of Conscious Discipline as a management intervention and provide some evidence to explain the strategy’s effectiveness.

Statement of the Problem

Conscious Discipline has been used around the country as a management strategy. It has gained popularity in recent years, especially among early childhood educators, particularly preschool teachers. There have been some studies that look at the usefulness of Conscious Discipline, especially among early childhood educators. However, there is little research that indicates elementary educators have found success with it. This study aims to find the overarching perceptions of Conscious Discipline and determine whether educators feel it is a valid and useful classroom management strategy. Based on teacher's responses to a survey of Conscious Discipline and their thoughts on it, the effect of Conscious Discipline as a management strategy can be measured to determine how it directly or indirectly affects instruction and the classroom environment. By determining the perceptions of Conscious Discipline of teachers who have attended Conscious Discipline focused seminars in the last five years, the effects of the strategy and its usefulness in the classroom setting can be determined.

Significance and Purpose of the Study

This study will benefit elementary teachers as they look for a useful management strategy to implement in their classroom. We want to create a pool of educators who feel confident in their abilities to handle stressful situations in the classroom. By surveying the usefulness of Conscious Discipline in the classroom, we will be able to determine if it is a viable management technique to implement in the classroom context. If a correlation is found between their feelings of the program and their classroom environment, then we will be able to determine the viability (or lack thereof) of the program in the classroom. The purpose of this study is to find the social validity of the program. Social validity can be described as the extent to which a program is considered important and acceptable (Gresham, 1983). Social validity can be used to predict the

willingness of new participants to use the program or intervention and could be used to determine their perceptions of its usefulness. Social validity has three components: (1) the significance of the program's goals, (2) the appropriateness of the procedures used in the program, and (3) the importance of the effects of the program (Caldarella, Page, & Gunter, 2012). All three of these components will be examined in the study.

Organization of the Research Report

This research report is organized into five chapters. The report explores elementary educators' perceptions of the Conscious Discipline classroom behavior management model. Chapter I introduces behavior management in the classroom and an introduction to the study. Chapter II focuses on a review of literature about Conscious Discipline in the elementary classroom. Chapter III explains the methodology of the study including the participants, the survey itself, and how data was collected. Chapter IV shows the results and data from the study. Chapter V discusses the results and provides an analysis of the research as well as limitations of the study.

Chapter II: Literature Review

This chapter describes the research and literature around Conscious Discipline and its effectiveness as a behavior management model. It also discusses the significance of classroom management in today's modern classroom.

Classroom Management

Classroom management is arguably one of the most important aspects of any classroom climate. If the classroom is running smoothly, the teaching of the curriculum will run smoothly as well. There are many types of management strategies. The views on these different strategies differ among researchers as well as among teachers themselves. The management strategy this research focuses on is Conscious Discipline, created by Dr. Becky Bailey. According to their website, Conscious Discipline aims to discipline children with a focus on self-regulation (www.consciousdiscipline.com). When students are taught to self-regulate their own behavior, they will be more aware of what their body is doing, whether good or bad. This is the basis of Conscious Discipline. Not only is teaching social and emotional learning important to explicitly teach to young children, it is also important to reinforce this kind of behavior among older students, especially if they have not been taught as young children.

Factors That Affect Classroom Behavior

There are many aspects to social behavior, including poverty, lack of parental support, and extreme family changes. Students who have these difficulties outside the classroom are at more of a risk of developing poor social connections and may have issues connecting with their peers as well as the adults in their lives, particularly their teachers. They are also at risk of internalizing these issues which could lead to mental strain, putting them at risk for developing

illnesses such as depression, anxiety and withdrawal. These social issues are problematic in the classroom and should be addressed at an early age as well as in later years.

Conscious Discipline

Conscious Discipline weaves social and emotional learning (SEL) into the management model, while also weaving SEL into the academic curricula. SEL “is the process by which children learn to recognize emotions in themselves and others, manage their own emotions, develop empathy, make good decisions, establish constructive friendships, and handle challenges successfully” (Caldarella, Page, & Gunter, 2012). SEL curricula has aimed to teach children to have empathy with their peers as well as with adults starting from an early age. This, in theory, results in lowered behavior problems with the child. In the classroom, this would present itself as explicitly teaching social concepts and allowing the students to act these concepts out in a meaningful context. Students get the most social exposure in school, so ideally, this would be the ultimate context for students to practice their learning.

In 2013, Conscious Discipline conducted an eight-month study to compare the effectiveness of the Conscious Discipline curriculum versus non-Conscious Discipline classrooms (consciousdiscipline.com, 2014). The results were taken from teachers, parents of children in the classrooms, and classroom observers. From this study, they concluded Conscious Discipline significantly affected these areas in the classroom: 1) improved the quality of teacher/student interactions; 2) improved the social and emotional behavior of students; 3) improved the social and emotional behavior of teachers; 4) improved classroom and school climate; and 4) increased student academic readiness. Observers indicated behaviors in the classroom were positively impacted in comparison to teachers’ classrooms who did not use Conscious Discipline. This study suggests the Conscious Discipline curriculum has an overall

positive impact in the classroom as well as outside the classroom. This study aims to determine the effectiveness of Conscious Discipline based on educators' perspectives. Since there has not been extensive research on teachers' opinions of Conscious Discipline as a management model, this study was designed to explore one school district's experience with the curriculum in the Northwest Arkansas area.

According to a study done by Jeffrey S. Rain (2014), Conscious Discipline shows a "significant improvement for both teachers and children" in the classroom setting (Rain, 2014). This study was done over an eight-month period, with 1,386 students participating in the study. According to Rain, social and emotional learning (SEL) had a noteworthy effect on students, and the Conscious Discipline program positively affects students by addressing this kind of learning in the classroom. By teaching self-regulation skills, Conscious Discipline is giving students the tools they need to manage their own behavior and emotions.

Chapter III: Methodology

This study was developed based on teacher responses to a survey on Conscious Discipline as a management style and their feelings of its validity as a management technique. The survey was sent out to surrounding elementary schools in one school district of Northwest Arkansas with permission from the assistant superintendent of the district (see Appendix F). This was done to create research-based data on the validity of Conscious Discipline as a management program in the surrounding community.

Survey

The survey had 29 questions, including three open-response questions asking for educators' opinions of the Conscious Discipline model (see Appendix C). The survey asked how long the educators have been teaching. This was done to determine whether all educators who attended Conscious Discipline seminars see it as a viable option or if it is only popular among certain age groups. They were also asked what grade they currently teach to determine whether Conscious Discipline is viable among all student age groups or if it only shows its usefulness among certain ages. These surveys will be adapted from Caldarella, Page, and Gunter's survey measured preschool educators' perceptions of the program. Because there has not been much research on the social validity of the program among elementary educators, this survey was adapted to fit with educators' perceptions in the elementary field. The surveys given to teachers will measure their responses based on a 5-point Likert scale, as follows: 1 (*strongly disagree*), 2 (*disagree*), 3 (*neutral*), 4 (*agree*), and 5 (*strongly agree*). Two additional open-ended questions were used to determine the significance of Conscious Discipline in the educator's own words. They asked for comments regarding the strengths and weaknesses of the program. The survey was sent out via email and completed online during the academic school year.

Participants

The survey had fifteen participants from one school district in the Northwest Arkansas area who answered the demographic information. Because the survey was only sent to one school district and only to those who had attended Conscious Discipline training seminars within that district, the results yielded only twelve participants who completed the entire survey. The results of the fifteen teachers who participated in the demographic section of the survey are listed here. Fourteen of the participants were female and one was male. 80% of the participants were Caucasian, 13.33% were Hispanic/Latino, and 6.67% indicated they preferred not to answer. Of the fifteen participants, two (13.33%) taught Kindergarten, two (13.33%) taught first grade, one (6.67%) taught second grade, two (13.33%) taught third grade, three (20%) taught fourth grade, two (13.33%) taught fifth grade, one (6.67%) was in school counseling and two (13.33%)

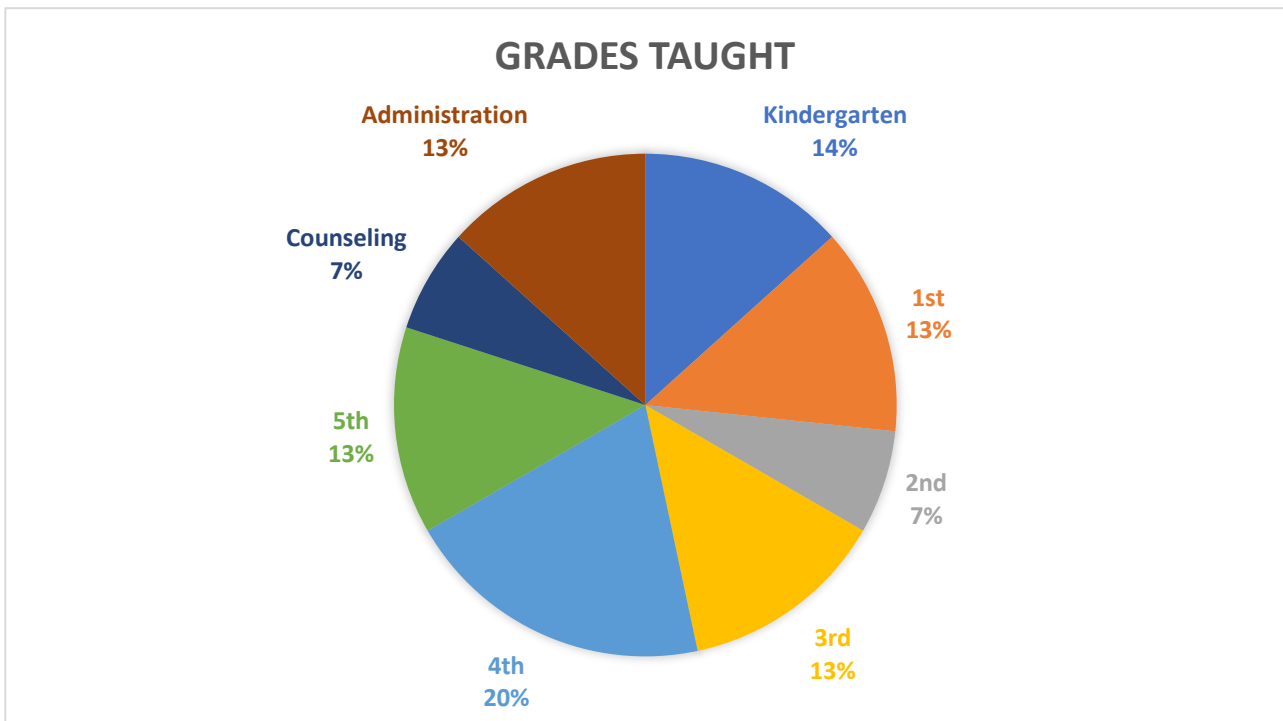


Figure 1: Participants by grade taught

were in administration (see Figure 1). The grade with the most responses was fourth grade. The survey asked participants to specify their highest degree earned. Of the fifteen respondents who

completed the demographic information, 40% indicated they had earned a BA/BS/BSE, 60%

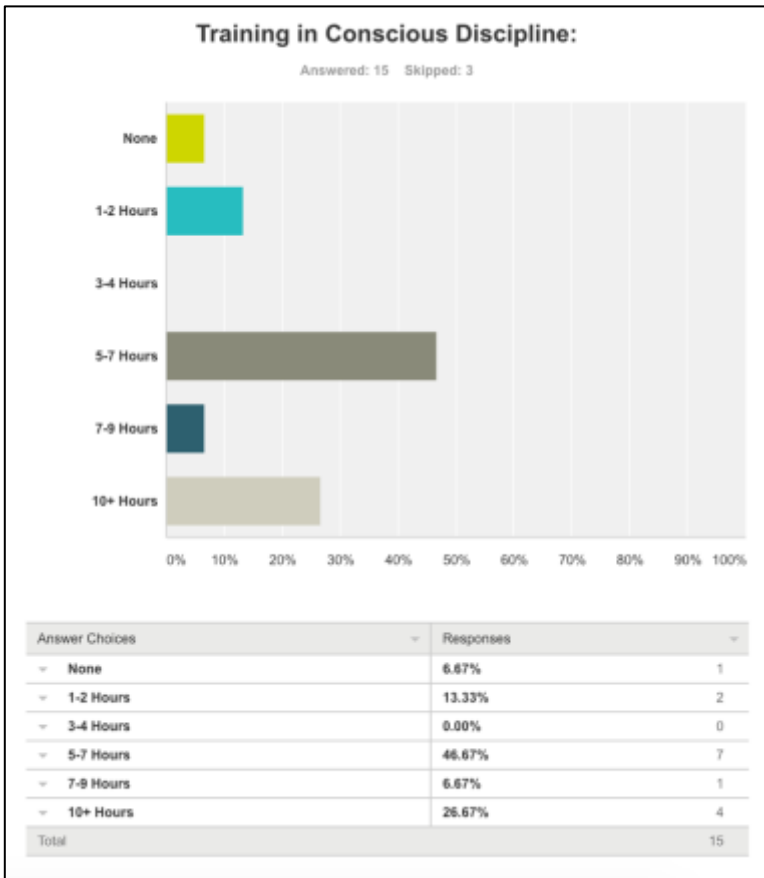


Figure 2: Participants’ training in Conscious Discipline

indicated they had earned a MA/MS/MAT/MEd, and one participant did not indicate their highest degree earned. Experience in teaching ranged from teachers in their second year of teaching to teachers in their 32nd year. Out of the fifteen respondents, 73.3% (eleven respondents) had between one and fifteen years of teaching experience. The survey also asked participants to indicate the number of hours they had attended Conscious Discipline training (see Figure 2). This was done to evaluate the

participants’ extent of Conscious Discipline training based on their responses to the questions about its effectiveness itself. Most of the participants fell in the middle, with almost half of the participants having between five and seven hours of Conscious Discipline training within the last five years. Participants were asked to give a number indicating the years they have used Conscious Discipline management techniques. Almost half of the respondents indicated they had used the techniques outlined in the model only one year (seven respondents, 46.67%). Two respondents (13.33%) indicated they used the model for two years, two respondents (13.33%)

indicated they used it for three years, one respondent (6.67%) indicated they used it for four years, and three respondents (20%) indicated they used it for zero years.

Classroom Demographics

Participants of the survey were also asked to indicate the demographics of their students. They were required to identify the total number of students in their class based on their ethnicity. Since three of the participants do not have actual classrooms (two were administrators, one was a school counselor), only twelve participants completed this question in total. The highest

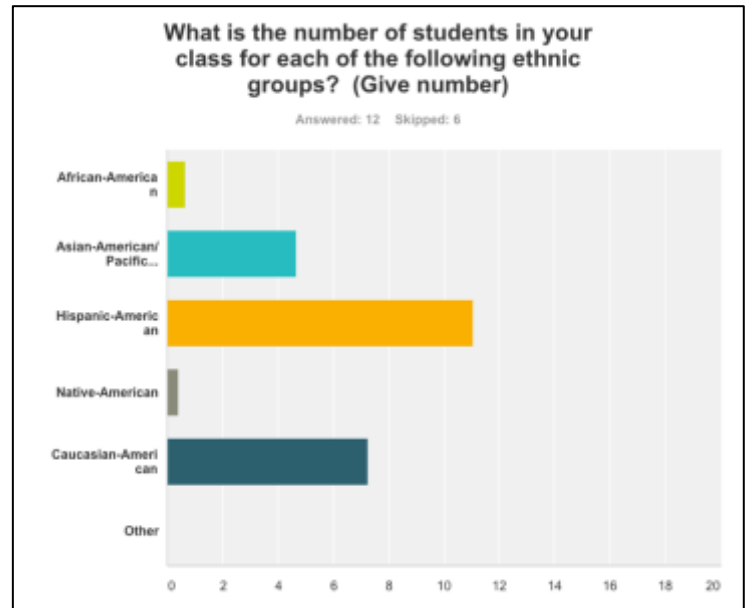
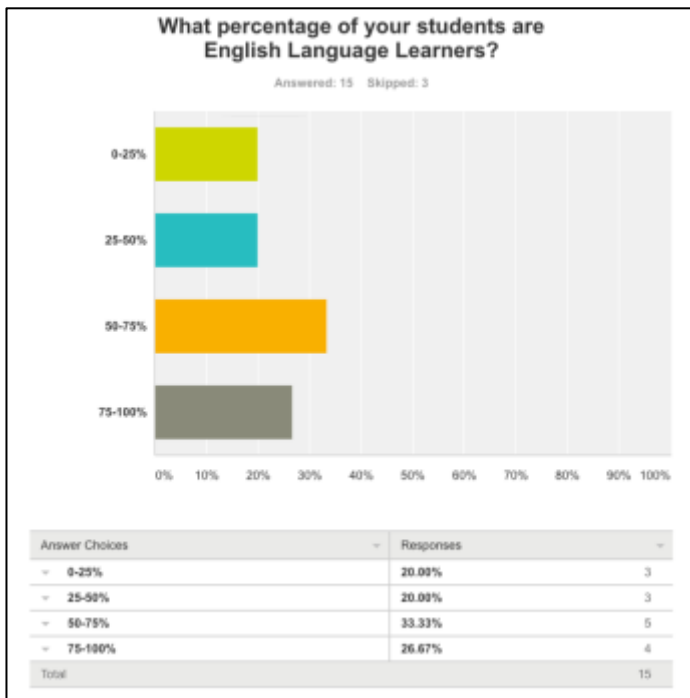


Figure 3: Student ethnicity groups

ethnicity group reported was Hispanic-American (see Figure 3). The smallest ethnicity group reported was Native-American. Participants indicated the percentage of English Language



Learners (ELLs) they teach (see Figure 4).

In the participants' classrooms, 20% (three respondents) had 0-25% ELLs, 20% (three respondents) had 25-50% ELLs, 33.33% (five respondents) had 50-75% ELLs, and

Figure 4: Percentage of English Language Learners in participants' classrooms

26.67% (four respondents) had 75-100% ELLs. All participants indicated they had between 0-25% Gifted and Talented students (see Figure 5), and all participants also indicated they had between 0-25% Special Education students (see Figure 6).

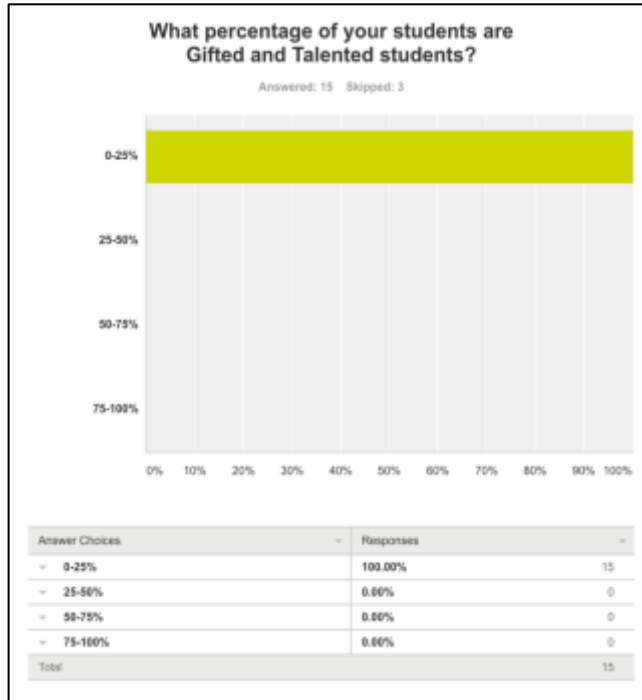


Figure 5: Percentage of Gifted and Talented students in participants' classrooms

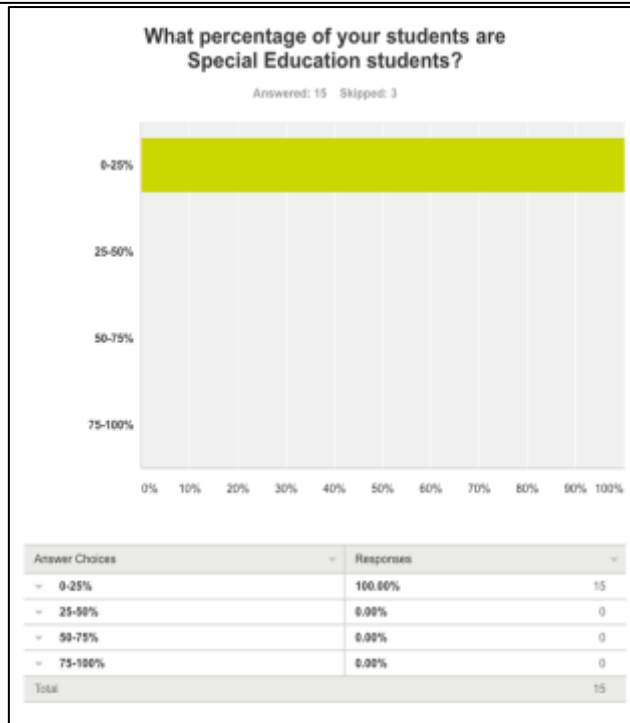


Figure 6: Percentage of Special Education students in participants' classrooms

Confidentiality

The University of Arkansas Institutional Review Board granted permission to conduct this study (see Appendix A). Participants were required to answer a question at the beginning of the survey which indicated implied consent. At the beginning of the survey, participants saw a statement of implied consent before they began the survey (see Appendix B). Participants were required to click either “Yes, I have read the above statement and agree to the terms” or “No, I have read the above statement and do not agree to the terms”. This assured the participants were fully aware of their participation in the study and gave their consent. All data will remain confidential. Those who chose to participate in the study were not asked for their name so anonymity was maintained. The Arkansas school district involved was also never mentioned by name and will therefore remain anonymous.

Data Collection

This study was created to explore and interpret educators’ ideas and opinions on Conscious Discipline, a behavior management curriculum by Dr. Becky Bailey. The survey was created using SurveyMonkey and the link was sent to participants via email. The survey was distributed to 46 participants, with eighteen who started the survey but only twelve who completed the survey in its entirety. A description of the purpose of the study was included with the email, along with contact information if participants had questions about the survey (see Appendix E). The survey opened on March 13, 2017 and closed on April 10, 2017. Twelve responses were collected during this time. The email (see Appendix E) was sent to 46 participants on March 13, 2017 and a follow up email, (of the same content) was sent on April 3, 2017. The last participant sent in their responses on April 10, 2017.

Evaluation Instruments

Participants were given the link to the self-created survey via email (see Appendix E). The survey consisted of 29 questions, including the implied consent question participants were required to answer to start the survey itself (see Appendix B). There were six multiple choice questions, one check box question, four short answer questions, thirteen Likert scale questions, and four optional comment box questions (see Appendix C). Participants were asked to answer all questions and had the option to leave additional comments in the comment boxes at the end of the survey.

Data Analysis

All answers to every question were compiled and analyzed to find the frequency of the answer choices. The data was then analyzed to find recurring patterns and trends based on participants' responses.

Summary

This chapter discussed the survey, the participants, the data collection method, and the evaluation instruments. The next chapter discusses the results of the survey data.

Chapter IV: Results

This chapter gives an analysis of the data from the surveys collected via SurveyMonkey. The purpose of this study was to explore elementary teachers' thoughts and opinions on the Conscious Discipline model as a behavior management strategy.

The survey opened on March 13, 2017 and closed on April 10, 2017. Twelve responses were collected during this time. The email (see Appendix E) was sent to 46 participants on March 13, 2017 and a follow up email, (of the same content) was sent on April 3, 2017. The last participant sent in their responses on April 10, 2017. Although the survey link was emailed to 46 participants, only twelve participants completed the entire survey. Those twelve participants completed 29 questions. Of those 29 questions, seven were about personal demographics, four were about classroom demographics, thirteen were about their perceptions about the Conscious Discipline program (using a Likert scale), three were short answer and one gave the option to provide additional comments. These questions explored the perceptions and opinions on the Conscious Discipline curriculum and gave participants the opportunity to answer questions pertaining to their personal thoughts on the program itself. To examine the data, the frequency of each answer was assessed. The data was examined by the frequency of answers and their personal opinions (based on the short answer and open-response questions).

This chapter is grouped based on the content of each question on the survey itself. It is organized into four sections: Conscious Discipline in participants' classrooms, participants' opinions on Conscious Discipline, Conscious Discipline and students, and open response questions. Each section is described below under each subheading.

Conscious Discipline in Participants' Classrooms

This section includes questions organized based on what Conscious Discipline looks like in the participants' classrooms. The questions are as follows, per paragraph, in order: 1, 4, 6, 10 (see Figure 7).

To gauge teachers' overall opinions on the Conscious Discipline curriculum, questions were posed to participants relating to social and emotional learning (SEL) in the classroom. Since SEL is so vital to the Conscious Discipline program, the participants were asked to scale their response to the following statement: "Social and emotional skills should be taught in elementary school, among all grades." The results showed 58.33% of participants strongly agreed and 41.67% agreed with this statement.

Next, teachers were asked to indicate if Conscious Discipline plays an important role in the student-teacher interaction. 50% of participants agreed; 33.33% strongly agreed; and 16.67% were neutral.

To measure opinions on the effectiveness of Conscious Discipline based on social and emotional learning in the school setting, the statement "Conscious Discipline improves my students' social and emotional functioning at school" was posed to participants and they were asked to place their opinion on a scale. 58.33% of participants agreed; 33.33% strongly agreed; and 8.33% were neutral.

To measure opinions on the effectiveness of Conscious Discipline based on social and emotional learning outside of the school setting, the statement "Conscious Discipline improves my students' social and emotional functioning at home" was posed to participants. 41.67% were neutral on this statement; 33.33% agreed; 16.67% strongly agreed; and 8.33% disagreed.

Participants' Opinions on Conscious Discipline

This section includes questions organized based on participants' specific opinions on Conscious Discipline as a behavior-based curriculum. The questions are as follows, per paragraph, in order: 2, 3, 4, 7, 11, 12 (see Figure 7).

Next, teachers were asked to scale their opinion on the Conscious Discipline curriculum. The question stated, "I like the Conscious Discipline program aspect of management." 50% of participants agreed; 33.33% strongly agreed; and 16.67% were neutral. Figure 8 shows the distribution of answers based on the scale.

Then teachers were asked to scale their opinion on the following statement: "Conscious Discipline should continue to be used every year among all grades." Of the twelve responses, 41.67% agreed; 33.33% strongly agreed; 16.67% were neutral; and 8.33% disagreed.

Participants were then asked if they thought Conscious Discipline was to be used daily among the elementary grades. 41.67% strongly agreed; 41.67% agreed; and 16.67% were neutral.

To see if teachers agree Conscious Discipline is a viable management strategy in all situations, participants were asked to scale the following statement: "I use Conscious Discipline with children outside of school (e.g., my children, nieces/nephews, grandchildren, etc.)." 41.67% agreed; 25% strongly agreed; 16.67% were neutral; 8.33% disagreed; and 8.33% strongly disagreed.

Next, participants were asked to scale their response based on the following statement: "Conscious Discipline takes too much time to implement." 50% disagreed with this statement; 25% were neutral; 16.67% strongly disagreed; and 8.33% agreed.

Similarly, participants were asked to scale their opinion on this statement: "Conscious Discipline is difficult for me to implement." 50% disagreed with this statement; 25% were neutral; 16.67% strongly disagreed, and 8.33% agreed.

Conscious Discipline and Students

This section includes questions organized based on participants' opinions on Conscious Discipline based on their students' responses to the model. The questions are as follows, per paragraph, in order: 8, 9, 13 (see Figure 7).

To determine the students' opinions on Conscious Discipline, the statement "Students like doing Conscious Discipline activities" was posed. 50% of participants agreed with this statement; 25% strongly agreed; 16.67% were neutral; and 8.33% disagreed.

Participants were then asked to scale a response to the following statement: "Students spontaneously use the skills taught, even after the Conscious Discipline activities are completed in class." 58.33% agreed with this statement; 16.67% strongly agreed; 16.67% were neutral; and 8.33% disagreed.

To determine if teachers believed that Conscious Discipline helps their students become better learners, the participants were asked to scale the following statement: "Conscious Discipline has helped my students become better achievers." 25% of participants strongly agreed with this statement; 33.33% agreed; 33.33% were neutral; and 8.33% disagreed.

Open-Response Questions

Participants were asked to answer three optional short answer questions, in addition to another response that gave the option for additional comments. The questions consisted of: 1) How did you first hear of the Conscious Discipline management technique? 2) In what ways does your school or district support Conscious Discipline practices? 3) In what ways do you

believe Conscious Discipline has benefitted student achievement in your classroom? 4)

Additional comments. Since these short answer questions were optional, eleven participants answered the first question; ten answered the second question; nine answered the third question, and only two gave additional comments. The following section gives a general overview of participant answers. The questions are as follows, per paragraph, in order: 14, 15, 16, 17. (see Figure 7).

To determine the origin of participants' first contact with the Conscious Discipline management model, the following question was posed to participants: "How did you first hear of the Conscious Discipline management technique?" Of the eleven responses, six participants indicated they first heard of it from their school counselor; two went to Conscious Discipline training; two had personal references; and one heard about it through her preschool colleagues.

To see how Conscious Discipline affects students as far as academic achievement goes, the following question was posed: "In what ways do you believe Conscious Discipline has benefitted student achievement in your classroom?" The nine responses to this question were varied, but a few trends became clear based on participants' responses. Most educators believed the program impacted their students in a positive way (one respondent). Teachers felt students become self-aware and take ownership of their behavior through the Conscious Discipline program (three respondents); the emotional needs of students are met when the Conscious Discipline model is implemented (three respondents); teachers "respond instead of react" to behavior challenges in the classroom (one respondent). One respondent stated he or she was not sure how it has benefitted his or her students in the classroom.

To determine how participants' schools and districts support the Conscious Discipline program, the following question was posed: "In what ways does your school or district support

Conscious Discipline practices?” A clear trend was seen based on the ten responses received. Nine of the participants claimed their school offered training or professional development using the program. This included a book study. One participant indicated their administration supports the program and his or her school has schoolwide implementation and participation.

Only two participants provided additional comments. One participant indicated it was important to read the entire book and curriculum before implementation. This participant indicated the program is incredibly effective but will not be as effective if teachers pick and choose what they want to use in the classroom setting. Another participant indicated it had “changed [his or her] life” and he or she uses it with his or her own children. This participant indicated the choice element of the program is effective and it gives room for intelligent conversations with children.

Participant Sub Population

The sub populations based on grade level, number of years teaching, student demographics, ethnicity, or gender did not seem to have any kind of effect on the answers given by participants. This shows educators, as a whole, believe that Conscious Discipline is an effective behavior management model, despite student demographics and educator demographics.

Question	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
1. Social and emotional skills should be taught in elementary school, among all grades.	0%	0%	0%	41.67%	58.33%
2. I like the conscious discipline program aspect of management.	0%	0%	16.67%	50%	33.33%
3. Conscious discipline should continue to be used every year among all grades.	0%	8.33%	16.67%	41.67%	33.33%
4. Conscious discipline is an important part of my teaching interactions with students.	0%	0%	16.67%	50%	33.33%
5. Conscious discipline should be used daily among the elementary grades.	0%	0%	16.67%	41.67%	41.67%
6. Conscious discipline improves my students' social and emotional functioning in school.	0%	0%	8.33%	58.33%	33.33%
7. I use conscious discipline with children outside of school (e.g., my children, nieces/nephews, grandchildren, etc.)	8.33%	8.33%	16.67%	41.67%	25%
8. Students like doing the conscious discipline activities.	0%	8.33%	16.67%	50%	25%
9. Students spontaneously use the skills taught, even after the conscious discipline activities are completed in class.	0%	8.33%	16.67%	58.33%	16.67%
10. Conscious discipline improves my students' social and emotional functioning at home.	0%	8.33%	41.67%	33.33%	16.67%
11. Conscious discipline takes too much time to implement.	16.67%	50%	25%	8.33%	0%
12. Conscious discipline is difficult for me to implement.	16.67%	50%	25%	8.33%	0%
13. Conscious discipline has helped my students become better achievers.	0%	8.33%	33.33%	33.33%	25%

Figure 7: Participant answers to survey questions

Chapter V: Discussion

Since behavior management is so important in the classroom, it is vital to examine teachers' own perspectives of the effectiveness of certain management programs. This study was implemented to do just that. Conscious Discipline is a research-based program which aims to give students the tools they need to regulate themselves. It does this by teaching students how to deal with emotional stress. Conscious Discipline has an emphasis on social and emotional learning (SEL) and teaching students how to cope with their own behavior and emotions.

This study aimed to explore educators' perceptions of the Conscious Discipline program as a behavior management model in the classroom. The results of the study show most educators have a positive paradigm of Conscious Discipline and those who use it daily in their classrooms have experienced its effectiveness. These results were from an online survey via SurveyMonkey and analyzed to find patterns in each answer based on the frequency of each answer.

This chapter indicates the results and their implications based on participant responses via the online survey. This chapter is organized based on the previous chapter's structure: Conscious Discipline in participants' classrooms, participants' opinions on Conscious Discipline, and Conscious Discipline and students.

Conscious Discipline in Participants' Classrooms

To gain an understanding of educators' main opinions on the Conscious Discipline management model, participants were asked to scale how important social and emotional learning (SEL) is in the classroom setting. Since Conscious Discipline has an emphasis on SEL, it was important to establish the participants' opinions on SEL itself. The results indicated all participants either agreed or strongly agreed with this statement. On the same token, most educators agreed or strongly agreed that Conscious Discipline has improved their students' SEL

in the classroom setting. However, when asked if Conscious Discipline improves their students' SEL at home, the participants' answers were varied. Half of the participants agreed it was improved at home, while 41.67% were neutral and 8.33% disagreed. This may be because the educators who answered the survey do not have first-hand information on what goes on in the home, particularly with student behavior. They are not able to observe these behaviors, so this question could be difficult to answer.

Participants' Opinions on Conscious Discipline

To assess participants' opinions on the Conscious Discipline model participants were asked if they liked the model itself. 73.33% either agreed or strongly agreed they liked the model. No one disagreed with this statement and only 16.67% were neutral. This shows teachers who have been trained in the curriculum often have positive opinions on the program itself. 75% of teachers agreed Conscious Discipline should continue to be used throughout all elementary grades. Similarly, 83.34% agreed Conscious Discipline should be used daily. This shows educators believe in Conscious Discipline's effectiveness as a behavior management model. Most participants indicated they use Conscious Discipline techniques outside of the school setting, among the children they encounter personally on a day-to-day basis. One respondent indicated he or she uses Conscious Discipline with his or her own children. When respondents indicate this, it shows they really believe in its viability as a behavior management program, because they are using the strategies with their personal contacts. Also, most respondents indicated Conscious Discipline was easy to implement and does not take much time to implement. This is important because it indicates that educators believe in the program as a quick, easy, and effective way to handle behavior challenges inside and outside the classroom setting.

Conscious Discipline and Students

To determine how the Conscious Discipline program affects students, participants were asked if students enjoyed the Conscious Discipline activities. Most educators (75%) agreed the students liked participating in the activities outlined in the Conscious Discipline program. Most educators (75%) also indicated the students will use the strategies outlined in the program without prompting. This shows since the students enjoy the activities, they are more likely to do the activities without the teacher encouraging them to do so. Teachers also indicated Conscious Discipline has had a positive impact on student achievement in their classroom. Over half of the participants (58.33%) agreed their students are positively impacted by the program. However, 33.33% did indicate they were neutral on this aspect, while 8.33% disagreed. This shows although most participants feel their students were positively impacted, some participants still felt Conscious Discipline either did not affect students regarding achievement and some did not feel it affected students either way. Teachers possibly feel this way because they cannot determine without a doubt Conscious Discipline is the reason for their students becoming higher achievers.

Open-Response Questions

Many respondents indicated their schools and district offer professional development training for Conscious Discipline. This shows the schools and district highly support the implementation of Conscious Discipline in the classroom as a behavior management program. Many participants first heard of the program through these means, which shows the participants in this survey were intrigued enough by the program to study it themselves and implement it into their own classrooms. Participants also indicated Conscious Discipline affects their students in a positive way when asked how Conscious Discipline has benefited student achievement in the

classroom. This goes together with question thirteen, where over half of the respondents (58%) indicated their students have become better learners through the implementation of the program. Many participants indicated because Conscious Discipline has a huge emphasis on social and emotional learning (SEL), it allows the students to become the director of their own emotions and behavior, which significantly decreases behavior challenges in the classroom. This agrees with the literature and recent research on Conscious Discipline.

Conclusions

According to the results of the survey, educators tend to agree Conscious Discipline is a viable behavior management model to use in the classroom setting. There was no significant difference based on differences in teacher demographics. Most teachers agree students benefit from the program and teachers tend to have a positive opinion on the program. Despite the educators' grade levels taught, most participants agreed Conscious Discipline has positively impacted students. Since some of the participants were counselors or part of administration, these respondents encounter students across multiple grade levels. The results indicate most educators agree Conscious Discipline is an effective management program, no matter the age.

This study also found many educators believe that Conscious Discipline positively impacts the students' social and emotional learning (SEL) in the classroom, based on many participants' open-response answers. This agrees with Rain's research which states Conscious Discipline significantly improves students' SEL within the classroom (Rain, 2014). The results of the study suggest most educators who have had training in the Conscious Discipline program agree with its effectiveness as a management model.

Since many participants indicated their schools offered professional development and a book study for Conscious Discipline, this may indicate these schools are in the process of

implementing or have already implemented Conscious Discipline as a schoolwide discipline program. If this is the case, the teachers would not have had a choice in the way they discipline in their classroom. Because of this, Conscious Discipline may not be liked by everyone in the school and this could be why many did not participate in the survey.

One participant seemed to disagree with Conscious Discipline's curriculum based on his or her responses. 8.33% (one person) often disagreed with the Conscious Discipline questions posed to participants. This could be for many reasons. This participant may not have agreed with Conscious Discipline as a management model and he or she may have had to implement this program in his or her classroom without his or her complete approval. Another possibility is this participant may not have had complete information about the topic of Conscious Discipline. They may not be fully trained or have the complete knowledge of the program in its entirety.

Limitations

One major limitation of this study was the sample size. Because only one school district was selected and an even smaller sample was selected within that district (because only teachers who had Conscious Discipline training were emailed the survey link), only twelve participants completed the survey in its entirety. A larger sample size would have hugely impacted the statistical significance of the results from the study. Also, the survey was optional and therefore did not require participants to complete the survey if they even opened the email at all. This shows many educators who were emailed the link did not open the survey and therefore did not participate. By emailing this link out to more participants, the sample size would have increased and the statistical significance would have had a much larger impact on the findings. Most educators who participated in the survey agreed with Conscious Discipline's curriculum. Teachers who received the email and did not participate may not have supported Conscious

Discipline and therefore chose to opt out of the survey. This possibility may have limited this study significantly.

Another limitation was the survey itself. This survey was adapted based on a survey distributed by Caldarella, Page, & Gunter (2012) who obtained the survey from the Department of Counseling and Special Education at Brigham Young University (2012). Although many of the questions were similar, some questions were added into the survey to gain an understanding of the perceptions of Conscious Discipline. This specific survey has not been tested for reliability or validity. It also is limited because the participants in the study are self-reporting, which could affect the validity and reliability as well. This study also did not include observations or interviews of the participants, which is a further limitation of the results from the survey. If the survey had been open for longer, more results may have been obtained and gained a higher statistical significance as well.

Self-reporting is always a risk when one creates surveys for participants to complete. When one answers a question on a survey, they must interpret the question, understand what it is asking, and then answer the question based on the information the question asks for (Widhiarso, 2014). If the question asks about the participant's attitude, the participant must retrieve a previously formed attitude from memory. They form a judgement based on their previous attitudes or opinions on the subject from earlier notions or situations. Because of this, the respondents who participated in this study may not have been one hundred percent truthful in their answers. Some participants may not have a full and complete understanding of the program itself and therefore would be unable to give accurate responses to most of these questions. It is safe to say participants most likely had self-reporting bias in their answers because no

observations or interviews were conducted in these participants' classrooms. Therefore, there is no way to know for sure if the participants were being completely truthful.

Implications

The results of the survey indicate Conscious Discipline is an effective management technique within the classroom. Schools and districts are starting to implement the program widely, and the curriculum has gained popularity in recent years. Teachers believe social and emotional learning are important in the classroom and Conscious Discipline is a reliable resource to teach this to students.

Recommendations

Further research could be done by testing the reliability and validity of this survey. Also, a larger sample size from multiple districts across multiple grades could be distributed to find a statistical significance among participant responses. Other studies could be done separately to explore administrator, student, or parent perceptions of Conscious Discipline as it relates to students inside and outside the classroom setting. Interviews from schools who have implemented the program schoolwide may also be an interesting study for further research into the opinions of educators, especially those who are required to implement the program but do not necessarily believe in the curriculum itself.

Appendix A

Institutional Review Board Approval Memorandum



UNIVERSITY OF
ARKANSAS

Office of Research Compliance
Institutional Review Board

March 3, 2017

MEMORANDUM

TO: Mary Hill
Marcia Imbeau

FROM: Ro Windwalker
IRB Coordinator

RE: New Protocol Approval

IRB Protocol #: 17-02-453

Protocol Title: *Elementary Educators' Perceptions of Conscious Discipline as a Management Strategy*

Review Type: EXEMPT EXPEDITED FULL IRB

Approved Project Period: Start Date: 03/03/2017 Expiration Date: 03/02/2018

Your protocol has been approved by the IRB. Protocols are approved for a maximum period of one year. If you wish to continue the project past the approved project period (see above), you must submit a request, using the form *Continuing Review for IRB Approved Projects*, prior to the expiration date. This form is available from the IRB Coordinator or on the Research Compliance website (<https://vpred.uark.edu/units/rscp/index.php>). As a courtesy, you will be sent a reminder two months in advance of that date. However, failure to receive a reminder does not negate your obligation to make the request in sufficient time for review and approval. Federal regulations prohibit retroactive approval of continuation. Failure to receive approval to continue the project prior to the expiration date will result in Termination of the protocol approval. The IRB Coordinator can give you guidance on submission times.

This protocol has been approved for 50 participants. If you wish to make *any* modifications in the approved protocol, including enrolling more than this number, you must seek approval *prior to* implementing those changes. All modifications should be requested in writing (email is acceptable) and must provide sufficient detail to assess the impact of the change.

If you have questions or need any assistance from the IRB, please contact me at 109 MLKG Building, 5-2208, or irb@uark.edu.

Appendix B

Implied Consent Introduction to the Survey

Elementary Educators' Perceptions of Conscious Discipline as a Management Strategy

Welcome to My Survey

My name is Mary Hill and I am an Elementary Education Major at the University of Arkansas. I am working on an honors thesis to explore elementary educators' perceptions of the Conscious Discipline behavior management model. To do this, I am conducting a survey of elementary educators. If you can, please take a few minutes to fill out this short survey. It should not take longer than 10 minutes. Your thoughts are incredibly valuable and would be a great help. By taking this survey, you are agreeing to allow me to use your answers as data for my research. Your participation is completely voluntary and refusing to participate will not adversely affect any other relationship with the University or its researchers. I appreciate you taking time out of your busy day to complete this survey and thank you for your help!

If you have questions or concerns, you can contact Mary Hill by email at mchill@uark.edu or Dr. Marcia Imbeau, my thesis advisor, by email at mimbeau@uark.edu. If you have questions or concerns about your rights as a research participant, please contact Ro Windwalker, the University's IRB Coordinator, at (479) 575-2208 or irb@uark.edu.

*** 1. Do you agree to the above terms? By clicking Yes, you consent that you are willing to answer the questions in this survey.** 

Yes, I have read the above statement and agree to the terms.

No, I have read the above statement and do not agree to the terms.

Appendix C

Survey Questions

I. Demographic Information

Please check the box that describes you.

1. Gender
 - a. Male
 - b. Female

2. Ethnicity

<input type="checkbox"/> Black or African American	<input type="checkbox"/> Hispanic or Latino	<input type="checkbox"/> White/Caucasian
<input type="checkbox"/> Asian or Pacific Islander	<input type="checkbox"/> American Indian or Alaskan Native	
<input type="checkbox"/> Prefer not to Answer	<input type="checkbox"/> Other (_____)	

3. Years of teaching experience _____

4. Years Using Conscious Discipline Management Strategies _____

5. Highest Degree Earned

<input type="checkbox"/> BA/BS/BSE	<input type="checkbox"/> MA/MS/MAT/MEd	<input type="checkbox"/> Professional Diploma
<input type="checkbox"/> (Sixth year/Ed. Spec.)	<input type="checkbox"/> Ph.D./Ed.D.	<input type="checkbox"/> Other (_____)

6. Training in Conscious Discipline
 - a. None
 - b. 1-2 hours
 - c. 3-4 hours
 - d. 5-7 hours
 - e. 7-9 hours
 - f. 10+ hours

7. Grade level now teaching _____

8. What is the number of students in your class for each of the following ethnic groups?
(Give number)

_____	African-American
_____	Asian-American/Pacific Islander
_____	Hispanic-American
_____	Native-American
_____	Caucasian-American
_____	Other

9. What percentage of your students are English Language Learners?
 - a. 0-25%
 - b. 25-50%
 - c. 50-75%
 - d. 75-100%

10. What percentage of your students are Special Education students?
 - a. 0-25%
 - b. 25-50%
 - c. 50-75%
 - d. 75-100%

11. What percentage of your students are Gifted and Talented students ?
- a. 0-25%
 - b. 25-50%
 - c. 50-75%
 - d. 75-100%

II. Conscious Discipline Perceptions:

This section is designed to provide information on the perceptions and actual practices of classroom teachers based on the Conscious Discipline model. Please use the following response scale to indicate the way you feel about Conscious Discipline management techniques. Please provide a rating for each item indicating your views on the Conscious Discipline Model.

Response Scale

- 1 – Strongly Disagree
- 2 - Disagree
- 3 - Neutral
- 4 - Agree
- 5 – Strongly Agree

1. Social and emotional skills should be taught in elementary school, among all grades.

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---

2. I like the conscious discipline program aspect of management.

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---

3. Conscious discipline should continue to be used every year among all grades.

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---

4. Conscious discipline is an important part of my teaching interactions with students.

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---

5. Conscious discipline should be used daily among the elementary grades.

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---

6. Conscious discipline improves my students' social and emotional functioning in school.

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---

7. I use conscious discipline with children outside of school (e.g., my children, nieces/nephews, grandchildren, etc.)

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---

8. Students like doing the conscious discipline activities.

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---

9. Students spontaneously use the skills taught, even after the conscious discipline activities are completed in class.

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---

10. Conscious discipline improves my students' social and emotional functioning at home.

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---

11. Conscious discipline takes too much time to implement.
 1 2 3 4 5
12. Conscious discipline is difficult for me to implement.
 1 2 3 4 5
13. Conscious discipline has helped my students become better achievers.
 1 2 3 4 5

COMMENTS

Please provide any comments you believe will help us understand Conscious Discipline techniques used in your own classroom.

How did you first hear of the Conscious Discipline management technique?

In what ways does your school or district support Conscious Discipline practices?

In what ways do you believe Conscious Discipline has benefitted student achievement in your classroom?

Additional Comments:

*This survey is a modification of a survey originally created by the Department of Counseling and Special Education, Brigham Young University, 2012.

Appendix D

Sample View of Survey via SurveyMonkey

Elementary Educators' Perceptions of Conscious Discipline as a Management Strategy

Conscious Discipline Perceptions

This section is designed to provide information on the perceptions and actual practices of classroom teachers based on the Conscious Discipline model. Please use the following response scale to indicate the way you feel about Conscious Discipline management techniques. Please provide a rating for each item indicating your views on the Conscious Discipline Model

Response Scale
1 - Strongly Disagree
2 - Disagree
3 - Neutral
4 - Agree
5 - Strongly Agree

13. Social and emotional skills should be taught in elementary school, among all grades.

Strongly Disagree Disagree Neutral Agree Strongly Agree

14. I like the conscious discipline program aspect of management.

Strongly Disagree Disagree Neutral Agree Strongly Agree

15. Conscious discipline should continue to be used every year among all grades.

Strongly Disagree Disagree Neutral Agree Strongly Agree

16. Conscious discipline is an important part of my teaching interactions with students.

Strongly Disagree Disagree Neutral Agree Strongly Agree

Elementary Educators' Perceptions of Conscious Discipline as a Management Strategy

Comments

Please provide any comments you believe will help us understand Conscious Discipline techniques used in your own classroom.

26. How did you first hear of the Conscious Discipline management technique?

27. In what ways does your school or district support Conscious Discipline practices?

28. In what ways do you believe Conscious Discipline has benefitted student achievement in your classroom?

29. Additional Comments:

Prev Done

Appendix E

Sample View of Email Distributed to Participants

Hello,

My name is Mary Hill and I am an Elementary Education Major at the University of Arkansas. I am working on an honors thesis to explore elementary educators' perceptions of the Conscious Discipline behavior management model. To do this, I am conducting a survey of elementary educators. If you can, please take a few minutes to fill out this short survey. It should not take longer than 10 minutes.

You can access the survey [here](#), or paste this URL into your search bar: <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/M8YH5ZJ>

Your thoughts are incredibly valuable and would be a great help. Your participation is completely voluntary and refusing to participate will not adversely affect any other relationship with the University or its researchers. I appreciate you taking time out of your busy day to complete this survey and thank you for your help!

If you have questions or concerns, you can contact Mary Hill by email at mchill@uark.edu or Dr. Marcia Imbeau, my thesis advisor, by email at mimbeau@uark.edu. If you have questions or concerns about your rights as a research participant, please contact Ro Windwalker, the University's IRB Coordinator, at (479) 575-2208 or irb@uark.edu.

Thank you for your time and consideration!

Mary Catherine Hill
mchill@uark.edu
Elementary Education
University of Arkansas

Appendix F

School District Approval Letter

Springdale Public Schools
P.O. Box 8
Springdale, Arkansas 72765
Phone (479)750-8800 Fax (479)750-8813

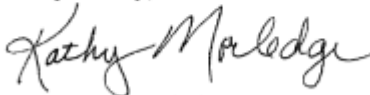
Kathy Morledge
kmorledge@sdaile.org

February 6, 2017

To Whom It May Concern:

I have reviewed Mary Hill's proposal and am aware that she wishes to conduct an honors project entitled, "*Elementary Educators' Perceptions of Conscious Discipline as a Management Strategy*" with elementary educators in the Springdale Schools in Springdale, Arkansas. This study has been approved by her thesis adviser, Dr. Marcia B. Imbeau, Professor in the Department of Curriculum and Instruction. Ms. Hill has my permission to conduct this study pending approval of the University of Arkansas Institutional Review Board Committee.

Respectfully,



Dr. Kathy Morledge
Assistant Superintendent for Teaching and Learning, PK-5

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