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How Morning Meetings Impact Classwork Productivity

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How Morning Meetings Impact Classwork Productivity

by

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methodologies presented in this work represent the work of the candidate alone.

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Abstract

Research has shown that students who are given social and emotional tools to work with in their school day are better able to learn in all subject areas (Kriete & Davis, 2014). Responsive Classroom offers a program which includes Morning Meeting as an opportunity to teach social and emotional tools. This is a qualitative research project that utilized case study with action based research. This research revealed that Morning Meetings impacted classwork productivity because they helped to identify and meet students' social and emotional needs, which created a sense of belonging and connection. This provided teachers with vital information for targeted intervention and led to an increase in classwork productivity. In addition, classroom rules helped to build trust by creating safety in the classroom and provided teachers with a way to implement a positive behavior plan through positive language built around the classroom rules which led to an increase in behavior.

Keywords: social emotional learning, building community, sense of belonging, establishing trust

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Chapter 1- Introduction

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Identification of Topic and Research Problem

Tommy[1] is in fifth grade and he struggles socially. He may learn to read and graduate. However, what is the likelihood that he will be able to get a job and keep it if he is unable to get along with his co workers? He has had a difficult beginning to his life. His mother died of an overdose and his father was shot. His relatives are doing their best to raise him. He has significant pain that he carries with him both into the classroom and onto the playground. This pain is interfering with his ability to connect with his teachers, peers, and his academics. He is unable to focus or attend to a lesson being taught. With pain and loss at the forefront of his mind, he is unable to offer kind words to teachers or peers. He needs to be taught how to manage his emotions. Educating him on self regulation and giving him tools to help manage his grief could help him from being rejected socially and give him a way to better access his learning in the classroom.

Tommy is not the only student in the classroom struggling with a trauma. Research shows that over half of US adolescents have experienced at least one Adverse Childhood Experience (ACE) (Balistreri & Alvira-Hammond, 2016). The impact of childhood adversity on students is significant and it is imperative that educators help those affected by childhood adversity learn how to lead more functional lives (Schussler-Fiorenza, Xie, & Stineman, 2014). Research has shown that students who are given social and emotional tools to work with in their school day are better able to learn in all subject areas (Kriete & Davis, 2014)

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[1] Pseudonyms are used for all participants in this research in order to preserve their anonymity.

Theoretical Framework

Maslow(1954) suggests that students have social and emotional needs that need to be met before they can begin to access academic content. More and more schools across the country are establishing a social and emotional component to learning that all students could benefit from (Axelrod, 2010). Developing social and emotional skills is foundational to creating the trust that is needed to building a community within the classroom. Teachers need a system to teach these skills in order for trust to be established. In addition, it needs to be taught with the same passion, creativity, purpose, planning and practice as one would teach math or reading. Research shows that children's prosocial skills predict key adolescent and adult outcomes (Bouchard, 2017).

Social emotional intelligence plays a large part in social emotional learning. Research indicates that helping students to improve their self-awareness and manage their emotions and impulses increases their empathy and improves behavior and academics (Coleman, 2006). Social emotional competencies are built through policies and programs that teach children how to establish and maintain positive relationships (Dusenbury et al., 2017). Research further shows that children who are prosocial in elementary school tend to have higher academic achievement and experience greater acceptance by their peers in adolescence (Blake, Piovesan, Montinari, Warneken, & Gino, 2015).

Response to Intervention (RTI)

RTI is a multi-tier approach to instruction. It looks at the many needs students have with both academics and behavior, and looks at targeting intervention in order to meet the needs of 100% of the student population. The goal is to provide all students with research based instruction. Within the system there are three levels. The first level, Tier 1, represents 80% of the students who are able to access the curriculum with universal supports. These are students who are able to

be successful in the classroom with minimal intervention and progress monitoring. Tier 2

represents 15% of students who are struggling with academics or behavior and need more

targeted interventions for specific needs in order to be successful in the classroom. As the

interventions increase from each tier to the next, Tier 3 represents 5% of the population of

students who need intensive, individualized instruction to meet their needs and to be successful

in the classroom.

Social Emotional Learning Programs

One social emotional learning program that is very successful in teaching self regulation

strategies and implementing rules is Toolbox for Learning. In this program, there is a bill of

rights which is one of the first steps of the program. It is a list generated by the students and their

wishes for classroom agreements. They are created and written in the students' own language

then signed by all class members and displayed in the classroom. They ascribe to the theory that

this will create an atmosphere of trust and safety. It creates personal and social awareness. When

the rules/rights are broken there are steps that need to be taken for restoration and time to think

about choices that were made and discussion about what could be done differently in the future.

After the rules have been established, the students are taught twelve different self regulation

tools that they can utilize when they become upset. The twelve tools are: the breathing tool, the

quiet/ safe /place tool, listening tool, empathy tool, personal space using our words tool, garbage

can tool, taking time tool, please and thank you tool, apology and forgiveness tool, patience tool,

and courage tool.

Another social emotional program is Responsive Classroom. It offers a program that can have

an impact on social emotional learning, self awareness and, ultimately, student productivity.

Specifically, it is a social-emotional learning system that contributes to academic learning

throughout the day (Kriete & Davis, 2014). These techniques are part of an evidence-based way

of including a social-emotional component to teaching. Students are better able to self-regulate

and monitor their behavior throughout the day which increases their academic productivity. This

builds their self-confidence and gives them problem solving skills that they can utilize in and out

of the classroom as well as into their lives beyond the school campus. The Responsive

Classroom approach is associated with higher academic achievement, improved teacher-student

interactions, and higher quality instruction (Kriete & Davis, 2014). There are five parts to the

Responsive Classroom Approach in Elementary School: Establishing rules, morning meeting,

energizers, quiet time, and closing circle. For this study, the focus is on the first two parts,

establishing classroom rules and the morning meeting.

Establishing Classroom Rules

One part of Responsive Classroom involves establishing classroom rules with the students.

Students are guided by the teacher, through a classroom rules creation process. The process that

begins with asking students to think about their hopes and dreams. Then, together as a class, they

create three to four rules that will be helpful for them to reach their goals. Those rules are agreed

upon and then written on a poster that is signed by all the students and the teacher. This poster is

prominently displayed in the classroom and referred to often. Once classroom rules have been

established, the teacher can conduct the "morning meeting."

The Structure of the Morning Meeting

"Morning Meetings" from Responsive Classroom are part of a social-emotional learning

system that contributes to academic learning throughout the day (Kriete & Davis, 2014) There

are four parts to the meeting: greeting, sharing, group activity, and morning message. The intent

of the greeting is to set a positive tone for the day and provide a sense of recognition and

belonging. Students are given opportunities to look one another in the eye, shake hands, and use one another's name to say good morning. The sharing portion of the meeting helps students to get to know one another by asking questions that they can all respond to. It also helps them to develop social competencies and introspection by requiring them to think about and articulate their thoughts, experiences, and emotions. It provides an opportunity to practice thinking, listening and speaking skills. In addition, it strengthens their language development and reading success. The goal of the group activity is to build a positive community by singing songs and playing games. The activities foster active and engaged participation. The morning message is a place where the teacher can practice academic skills or review classroom rules.

Morning meetings can be provided daily with everyone in the classroom gathering together as a way to connect. For example, they could have time to greet one another, have a snack, review the schedule for the day, review any upcoming activities, review classroom rules, problem solve, and/or discuss any emotional struggles that they may be having. In discussing each of the four methodologies for social emotional learning, the focus will be on the role of rules, work completion, and usage of self-regulation tools in these pedagogical approaches.

A Gap in Research

While there is plentiful research in support of students' need for social emotional learning, there is little to no research on how Morning Meetings impact classwork productivity and the importance for establishing classroom rules in order to create an environment for social emotional learning to take place.There is a lack of information on teaching, modeling, and reinforcing clear expectations of classroom rules and how that provides the opportunity to building trust and establishing community. When given opportunity to express their emotions and articulate their thinking, students are better able to self regulate and learn. According to a

study by Martin (2007) on building community in the classroom, informed and responsible

citizenship happens when children are provided with opportunities to think for themselves and

contribute to their own learning and behaviour. There is a gap in research in relationship to how

morning meeting specifically impacts student productivity by building community and

establishing self regulation tools. In addition, there is a lack of research looking at social

emotional learning and its connection to establishing clear rules and expectations.

Teaching, modeling and reinforcing rules appears to be an important component to social

emotional learning. In Responsive Classroom strategies, the expectation is to create classroom

rules as a community based on hopes and dreams and then explicitly teach and model and revisit

them continually. This seems to be the foundation that is necessary for all of the other strategies

of RC to work, including Morning Meeting. Part of implementing morning meetings includes

teaching, modeling and reinforcing clear classroom rules.

Statement of Purpose

There are high percentages of children coming into the classroom struggling with some kind

of trauma. Some traumas include:drug or alcohol abuse in the family; physical, sexual or mental

abuse; a parent incarcerated; abandonment or neglect; divorce or separation; mental illness or

suicide. This is an area that needs to be addressed. Students need to be taught the skills

necessary to participate with their peers. In light of these statistics, teaching social and

emotional skills to students has become a matter of equity and social justice. Every student,

regardless of trauma that they have endured, has the right to a free and an appropriate education

that equips them with the 21st century skills necessary to be successful in their lives which

includes a social and emotional education.

Schools need to have social and emotional standards beginning in Kindergarten and extending to 12th grade so that students can be taught the social and emotional skills necessary to be equipped with skills such as critical thinking, problem solving, communication, collaboration, creativity, and innovation. It is only then that educators can say they have offered equity to all students and social justice has been executed in our schools.

The purpose of this study was to look at the impact of a social emotional learning program on classwork productivity. Students have unaddressed social and emotional needs which inhibit their ability to complete daily class work and impact behavior. Morning Meetings were looked as a way to identify and meet those unaddressed needs. This research addressed a Gap in Knowledge in the existing academic literature in that it looked specifically at the effects of morning meeting in a Special Day Class and how it creates a sense of belonging and connection. In addition, there is a lack of research looking at social emotional learning and its connection to establishing clear rules and expectations.

Significance of Study

This study is important for all classrooms. We have a high percentage of students who need social emotional intervention. There has been a culture shift in our country. This is evident when looking at the statistics that 40% of students in any given classroom have at least one ACE and other students having any number of other unidentified social emotional needs. Counselors cannot meet the demands of students in need of counseling. If we are to implement Response to Intervention (RTI) with fidelity and offer all children a free and appropriate education, teachers and administrators need to implement social and emotional teaching into the classroom. Gone are the days when teachers only needed to focus on the three R's-reading, writing, and arithmetic. This work is connected to work we are doing in our district to reach all students. This district has

a focus on increasing the graduation rate. In addition, the district is committed to offering

students learning environments focused on developing effective communication and critical

thinking skills. The Assistant Superintendent for Student Services in Petaluma claims that there

are not enough counselors. In addition, he claims that educators need to do a better job with

universal preventions and early interventions so that the need for counseling is not as high (J.

Smith, personal communication, December 17, 2017).

Any attention to equity and social justice includes special education students. They have a

right to learn and to be explicitly taught social skills in order to form relationships and create

friendships. This is how to become part of a community. Research shows that high rates of

students who dropout are a part of the criminal justice system. According to the Bureau of

Justice, 40% of jail inmates report having a disability (Bronson, 2015). The aim of this research

is to determine if spending the first part of the day on social emotional instruction, such as

morning meeting, could affect the behavior and learning in the classroom. The findings from this

study will be used to improve teaching and learning at the school and district participating in the

study. For example, educators need to be trained in a social emotional learning program. It is

important to have a team of educators, specialists, counselors, and administrators who are able to

assess the needs of students in order to create a plan that meets the needs of the top 20% of

students.

These findings could contribute to social change in that as a community, schools could come

together to provide education and resources to needy families. These programs could afford

students an opportunity to get their basic needs met and engage in an education that could help

them achieve success and reach their educational goals.

Other educators may use the findings from this study to make changes in their schedule to allow time for social emotional learning and time for students to connect with one another and share their lives.

Summary of Methods

This is a qualitative study in which teachers were interviewed, data was collected using point charts, and a pre and post questionnaire was conducted with teachers. It was an action based case study. The research sites were at an elementary school and a junior high school both in Northern California. The setting was in a suburban area where 71% of students are Caucasian and 20% are English learners.

For the morning meeting research, a point chart was used that has three areas for earning points; work completion, following classroom rules, and using self regulation strategies. Each of the four components of the morning meeting addressed specific areas of social and emotional learning. For example, the greeting portion looked at fostering connection. The sharing portion was an opportunity to establish trust and build community. The group activity portion of the meeting took place in the form of snack time and afternoon stretch break and was used as a time to review self regulation tools from toolbox for learning. Morning message was used as a time to review the schedule for the day. In addition, the morning message was used as an opportunity to talk about appreciation for diversity as a way to understand others and ourselves better.

The teacher answered a pre-program interview series of questions to look at how they build community in their classroom. They were asked to explain if they have a morning meeting, and how they measure classwork productivity. From there a baseline of student behavior and productivity without having implemented morning meeting was implemented. Then, Morning Meetings were implemented. This provided an opportunity to see if there was any differences in

behavior or productivity in connection with the implementation of the morning meeting. The

teacher looked at the students ability to follow classroom rules and how that impacted the other

areas of the morning meeting. There was a post-program interview and disucussed the

productivity with and without morning meetings and any differences that were observed.They

were asked about any examples of student success during morning meetings as well as struggles.

The teacher used an observation protocol sheet to record notes on observations of students and

observable behaviors. Some of the questions were, how do students engage with one another;

how do they follow classroom rules; and, how are behaviors addressed? The teacher observed

how the students problem solved following the guidelines of classroom rules and how behaviors

were addressed.

    This study looked at the effects of morning meeting on social emotional learning in the

classroom. Specifically, the study gathered evidence and looked at how and why Morning

Meetings, which include classroom rules, impact student productivity and help students to

develop skills that enable them to form friendships and establish a community in the classroom

built on trust. Trust is needed in order to encourage students to take risks and share their

emotions. By sharing during the morning meetings, students have an opportunity to feel more

connected to one another. Research indicates that trust is a social reality and the more students

feel connected, the more they are able to trust (Lewis & Weigert, 1985).

        The study tracked how morning meetings provide social and emotional support for

students to be productive in their work. For example, morning meetings were provided daily with

everyone in the classroom gathering together as a way to connect. For example, time was spent

greeting one another, having a snack, reviewing the schedule for the day, reviewing any

upcoming activities, reviewing classroom rules, problem solving, and/or discussing emotional

struggles.   Through the road map of responsive classroom techniques of morning meetings, this study looked at how teaching, modeling and reinforcing clear expectations of classroom rules affected social emotional learning and enabled students to participate in all areas of the morning meeting and ultimately in their academics. This study looked at establishing a baseline of behavior, and student productivity with point charts which contained three areas of examination: following classroom rules, work completion, and utilizing self regulation tools to manage frustration. Three teachers participated in the study. One teacher was from a general education classroom and two others were in a special education classroom. Morning meetings were implemented and researchers collected data and then took away morning meetings for a period of time and then reintroduced them to see if there was a difference in student productivity and what social emotional learning had taken place in terms of self awareness, self regulation, using tools from the toolbox, building community, and following classroom rules.

     Data from the point charts was gathered from the teacher/researcher regarding classroom rules, work completion, and self regulation strategies. This data helped to track the scheduling of the day and what times of day proved more difficult to follow the rules, use tools for self regulation, and complete the work that was required during different times of the day. Space was provided at the bottom of the chart to write comments regarding behavior and schedule changes, etc.

   The sample size of three classrooms did not allow for making quantitatively significant conclusions. Therefore, the study included a qualitative component to the analysis where the point charts were reviewed. There was a space to comment each day so that the teacher was able to chart reinforcement of classroom rules. During observation of the classrooms, the teacher looked for references to classroom rules, work completion, and self-regulation skills being used.

Summary of Findings

This research revealed that Morning Meetings impacted classwork productivity because they helped to identify and meet students' social and emotional needs, which provided teachers with vital information for targeted intervention and led to an increase in classwork productivity. For example, some student's ability to complete classwork rose from 10% to 90%. In addition, classroom rules helped to build trust by creating safety in the classroom and provided teachers with a way to implement a positive behavior plan through positive language built around the classroom rules which led to an increase in behavior.

Furthermore, Morning Meetings impacted classwork productivity because they helped to identify and meet students' basic needs. For example, by spending the first part of the day getting to know students, it helped to identify that students were in need of warmth, food, and a sense of belonging and connection. Morning meetings were implemented to provide an opportunity for students' unmet social and/or emotional needs to be addressed. For example, students had an opportunity to practice how to interact with one another using kind words. Unexpectedly, many basic needs needed to be addressed first. Maslow's hierarchy of needs became foundational in addressing the social and emotional needs during morning meeting. Also, morning meetings provided an opportunity to focus on the basic needs identified at the base of the hierarchy. Fortunately, morning meeting provided an avenue to become aware of what the students lacked. These basic needs were hidden until morning meeting revealed them. Once identified, educators were able to create targeted prevention by communicating specific needs of students with other specialists who interacted with said students. For example, students that had a deep need for attention could get that need fulfilled through the sharing portion of morning meeting and by other educators specifically addressing her when she arrived to class. What was most significant was that students who needed connection and a sense of belonging had those needs met through

the greeting of the teacher first thing in the morning. It became clear that the single most

important part of morning meeting actually started with the greeting first thing in the morning

from the teacher. This research revealed that the impact of the teacher stopping everything the

minute the student arrived and looking the student in the eye and saying, "I am so glad that you

are here today" had a far reach. It changed the relationship between the student and the teacher.

It changed how the students interacted with one another and had a positive impact on the the

entire day.

Summary of Implications

     Morning meetings were implemented to provide an opportunity for students unmet social

and/or emotional needs to be addressed. Maslow's theory supports that everything hinges on

students' basic needs being met. When students were greeted by the teacher first thing in the

morning, they felt a sense of belonging. Research showed that because teachers were able to

identify needs and address needs, productivity was raised. Knowing the specific needs of

students and having ways to meet them was vital information for building community and

providing targeted intervention. By meeting the needs of students and targeting the intervention,

behavior improved and classwork productivity increased. In addition, classroom rules helped to

build trust by creating safety in the classroom and provided teachers with a way to implement a

positive behavior plan through positive language built around the classroom rules.

Chapter 2-Literature Review

Introduction

Educators need to include social-emotional learning in their curriculum and it needs to be explicitly taught and modeled. Research has shown that students who are given social and emotional tools to work with in their school day are better able to learn in all subject areas. Morning meetings from Responsive Classroom are an evidenced based social emotional program that offers students an opportunity to engage with one another through greeting, group activity, sharing, and morning message. By building a foundation of trust through getting to know one another and share struggles, students are afforded an opportunity to release some of the stress that could be weighing on them and makes room in their minds to learn the academic material that the teacher is teaching; thereby, increasing student productivity. By practicing social skills during morning meeting, they have an opportunity to build friendships within the classroom. Students need to be taught social and emotional skills in order to be successful in their lives.

The following paragraphs will look at the contributions of this literature to the field, the overall strengths and weaknesses and the controversy and gap in the research that has been done so far in examining the impact of morning meeting and classroom rules on student productivity and its ability to build community and create a sense of belonging.

The review of existing literature on building community in the classroom will cover three main areas. First, social emotional learning and how it needs to be explicitly taught, modeled and practiced. Second, the needs of students in elementary schools and how counselors are searching for ways to respond in order to meet the needs of students. In addition, the review looks at how establishing trust and building community contributes to academic achievement. Third, the review will examine how positive behavioral interventions and supports impact student learning

and behaviors. Finally, this review will then shift its focus to examine responsive classroom, specifically morning meetings and classroom rules.

Social Emotional Learning

When looking at emotions and needs, it is important to consider Maslow and his reference to a child's hierarchy of needs. In order for students to be taught, their basic needs must be considered in order for them to learn. If they have other needs that preempt their ability to receive instruction, those needs will need to be dealt with first. Maslow believed that humans are motivated by a hierarchy of need. For example, the first consideration is the physiological need of food and warmth. The second is safety and then love and belonging, followed by esteem and then self actualization. He argued that humans have a basic need for belonging (Maslow, 1948). This is important to consider when looking at a classroom where statistically potentially as many as 40% of the students in the classroom have a trauma they are wrestling with (Felitti, 1998). In order to have any success for children to learn how to get along with their neighbor, let alone access the curriculum, basic needs have to be not only considered but addressed. If students' basic needs are not being met, we have a problem in the classroom and it isn't academics. In fact, Maslow believed that until the basic need of belongingness is met, other needs go unsatisfied (Edwards, 1995).

Research reveals the importance of emotional learning in elementary students. Schools need to be aware of the importance of students being taught how to understand and manage their emotions-through both self-awareness and social-awareness. In order for children to succeed in school and after they graduate, they need to be socially, emotionally, and academically competent. Social and emotional competencies are built through policies and programs, that

teach children how to establish and maintain positive relationships, and make responsible

decisions (Dusenbury & Weissberg, 2017).

Research reveals that emotional competence can improve academic achievement. It shows an

increase in academic achievement through social and emotional support. Through examining

both expected and unexpected behavior, as well as self-regulation strategies, students can

benefit. Students need to be given social and emotional support as well as taught and modeled

the social and emotional requirements in the classroom (Dougherty & Sharkey, 2017). Martin

(2007) described the need for community as universal. She further concluded a sense of

belonging and being connected to others makes our lives meaningful (Martin, 2007).

Daniel Coleman (2006) has done research on emotional and social intelligence. He discusses

how emotions are regulated in the brain. He supports the idea that students need to be taught

social and emotional skills. He claims that there is a payoff in behavior and academics as

children are able to increase their self-awareness and confidence, and manage their emotions

and impulses (Coleman, 2006). He discusses how schools throughout the nation are

implementing standard based curriculum requirements for social and emotional learning. Most

specifically, schools are teaching children how to recognize and accurately label their emotions

(Coleman, 2006). When looking at social intelligence, neuroscience has proven that our brain is

designed for social engagement with another person. These neural encounters regulate the brain.

The strongest exchanges we have are with those people whom we spend most of our time.

Furthermore, they directly influence our emotions. These feelings, whether painful or

pleasurable, send out hormones into our bodies. This confirms that when we have healthy

relationships we are healthy emotionally and physically. However, when we have toxic

relationships, it is like poison to our mental and physical well- being. Students need to be

explicitly taught social and emotional skills in order to become aware of their feelings and then

be given a plan on how to manage them. Furthermore, Wentzel (1991) found that socially

responsible behavior helped with all aspects of social competence such as self-regulatory

processes.

This growing body of evidence reinforces a positive link between students' academic

achievement and personal/social development in such areas as emotional intelligence (EI), social

competence, academic enablers, and behavior (Barna & Brott, 2011). Individuals with high EI

have the behavioral dispositions and self-awareness to recognize, process, and utilize emotional

information. EI appears to act as a moderator between cognitive ability and academic

performance as assessed by IQ and grades (Petrides, Frederickson, & Furnham, 2004). When EI

is identified as interpersonal skills, adaptability, and stress management, its presence has a

positive impact on the academic achievement of students as measured by overall grade point

average (Parker et al., 2004).

The Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning (CASEL) has a mission to

make Social and Emotional Learning (SEL) an integral part of education from preschool to high

school. SEL is the process through which children and adults acquire and effectively apply the

knowledge, attitudes, and skills necessary to understand and manage emotions, show empathy

for others, establish and maintain positive relationships, and make responsible decisions (*CASEL*,

2018). Some of the standards include recognizing and accurately labeling emotions and how

those emotions can lead them to act.

Counseling Needs

There is a high need for counselors in both elementary and secondary schools across the

nation. According to the California Department of Education, there is a high ratio of students per

counselor in this state. It averages 945 to 1, compared to the national average of 477 to 1. This

makes California last in the nation (2017). In addition, according to the California Department of

Education, effective counseling programs are important to the school climate and a crucial

element in improving student achievement (2017). In fact, in a monograph written by Harold

Hackney (1990), counselors are now searching for ways to respond differently and more

effectively than they ever have to meet the complex needs of today's students . It is important for

students to receive the help that they need. However, if there are not enough counselors to

provide those services, an alternative plan must be established. Teachers spend more time with

students than any other specialist. There exists a tremendous opportunity for teachers to offer

some type of emotional intervention for students in need. A study by Lee (1993) on fifth and

sixth graders on effects of classroom guidance, suggests a positive link between group guidance

and academic achievement (Lee, 1993).

Furthermore, in an interview with Joe Smith[2], Assistant Superintendent of Student Services for

the participating schools, he states that "regardless of the connection that the counselor makes, if

the adults that are part of the school day experience for our children are not informed about the

challenges/issues/triggers/interventions, the counseling will be meaningless" While we see a

high need for counseling in the school, it does not mean that those needs are to be met solely by

the counselors. Teachers can implement several strategies for intervention in the classroom

throughout the day that could help several of the children in need. Mr. Smith adds that, "we do

not have enough counselors right now to serve our students, and, we need to do a better job with

our universal preventions and early interventions so that the need for counseling is not as high"

(J. Smith, personal communication, December 17, 2017).

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[2] Pseudonyms are used for all participants in this research in order to preserve their anonymity.

Social and emotional learning programs implemented in the classroom by teachers could help students with that sense of belonging that is so high on the hierarchy of need. SEL taught in the classroom could foster connectedness, building community, social skills, self-awareness, and self-regulation. All schools could benefit from implementing social emotional learning into part of their day.

Positive Behavior Interventions and Support

An important step to including a social emotional component to the school day includes implementing positive behavior interventions and supports. Some of these interventions could include a check in and check out (CICO) time of the day to provide an opportunity for students to share concerns that could be weighing on them. The goals of CICO are to increase the opportunities adults have for prompting students to engage in positive behavior, provide behavioral feedback to the student at predictable times throughout the day here develop a meaningful adult-student relationship through positive interaction, and communicate behavioral challenges and successes with families daily (Martens, 2013). In this study, morning meetings will provide a daily opportunity for CICO during different parts of the meeting time such as greeting and sharing.

Another positive behavior intervention is implementing Mindfulness in the classroom. In a study on the Behavioral Impacts of Mindfulness for Elementary School Students, results showed that Elementary school students are dealing with several issues at home and in their communities that cause stress. Many times stressors are brought into the classroom that affect learning and behaviors and ultimately student productivity (Harpin, 2016). The purpose of the study was to show the impact of a Mindfulness curriculum on elementary students' prosocial classroom behaviors, emotional regulation, and academic competence. Students who received the

intervention were able to increase prosocial behaviors and regulate their emotions. In addition, it

helped with student productivity in comparison with those who did not receive the intervention

(Harpin, 2016).

    Furthermore, teachers found that it improved prosocial behaviors, emotional regulation, and

academic performance. Students spoke of how mindfulness helped with emotional regulation. In

particular, it appeared to help with emotional and behavioral regulation in both their personal

lives and at school (Harpin, 2016) What is most important to note is that mindfulness can meet

several of the social and emotional needs that many students have and counselors are unable to

meet. Mindfulness becomes a real possibility to implement in the classroom because it is

something that a teacher can easily add to the day. Furthermore, it has been recognized as a

Social-Emotional Learning (SEL) and Positive Behavioral Interventions and Support (PBIS)

strategy(Sugai & Simonsen, 2012). In addition, PBIS is a framework that has at it's foundation a

continuum of evidence-based interventions that maintains academically and behaviorally

important outcomes for all students (Harpin, 2016).

    Toolbox for Learning, is a positive behavior intervention which focuses on teaching students

self regulation strategies. Dovetail learning in association with WestEd Health and Human

Development, results showed that after implementing and teaching Toolbox self regulation tools

students showed a growth in social and emotional behavior in addition to improved resiliency

(Program, Health & Human Development , 2011). Building unity in the elementary school

classroom directly contributes to building community. This is done through increasing positive

social interactions between and among students. Toolbox for Learning offers self regulation

strategies such as the breathing tool, the empathy tool, the apology and forgiveness tool. It also

provides a self reflective sheet that can be filled out by students that asks introspective questions

such as "when I did _____ I felt_____. What tool could I use and how would that change

things?" These strategies help teach students to think about their actions and to become more

aware of their feelings and how to manage them. This helps students to develop a sense of

belonging and control over their environment by using strategies from the Toolbox Project

(Collin, 2003). Toolbox strategies are something that could be integrated into the morning

meeting. The results from a study by Piatt-Jaeger in 2011, revealed positive results overall and

demonstrate that unity and community within schools and classrooms is possible with the

Toolbox project (Piatt-Jaeger, 2011).

In a study that looked at social and emotional learning (SEL) programs involving

kindergarten through high school students, findings revealed that SEL participants had improved

social, emotional, and behavioral skills (Durlak,Weissberg, Dymnicki, Taylor & Schellinger

,2011). In addition, the findings stated that there is evidence that SEL programs benefit students.

Policy makers, educators, and the public can help children by supporting the incorporation of

evidence-based SEL programming into standard educational practice (Durlak, Weissberg,

Dymnicki, Taylor & Schellinger, 2011).

Responsive Classroom

Responsive Classroom is a social emotional learning program that has PBIS at its foundation.

It has been established that students need to be taught social and emotional skills in order to

understand and manage their emotions. One program that has been endorsed to provide that

teaching is called the Responsive Classroom Approach. According to CASEL, Responsive

Classroom is one of the most well-designed evidence based social and emotional learning

programs.This evidenced based, social emotional learning program has six core beliefs:

1)Teaching social and emotional skills is as important as teaching academic content; 2) How we

teach is as important as what we teach; 3) Great cognitive growth occurs through social interaction; 4) What we know and believe about our students, individually, culturally, developmentally informs our expectations, reactions, and attitudes about those students; 5) How we work together as adults to create a safe, joyful and inclusive school environment is as important as our individual contribution or competence; 6)Partnering with families -knowing them and valuing their contributions is as important as knowing the children we teach (Kriete & Davis, 2014).

Cognitive growth occurs through social interaction. Therefore, Responsive Classroom addresses the need for social skills to be taught. The program focuses on students' social and academic development, teaching skills such as cooperation, responsibility, empathy and self control. These skills are taught both directly and indirectly through morning meetings, classroom rules, academic choice, and organized play.

Research regarding responsive classroom and student-teacher relationships reveals that training affects student-teacher relationships and increases teacher's implementing of RC practices (Baroody, 2014). The Journal of School Psychology examined the Responsive Classroom approach and social emotional learning. They looked at the effects of teacher training and the quality of implementation. Furthermore, they looked at how teachers used the intervention practices after training. It is helpful to consider the fidelity of implementation in order to gain a clear understanding of what really works. In this study, researchers attempted to separate the influence of training from the implementation to establish the improvements in classroom relationships. What the study revealed was that there was a direct correlation between fidelity of implementation and greater teacher and student interaction (Abry, Rimm-Kaufman, Larsen, & Brewer, 2013).

When looking at Responsive classroom as a classroom management strategy, research shows that it increases student development and fosters respect toward others and learning. The responsive classroom tools provide a way to promote and sustain community which decreases discipline problems in the classroom providing teachers with more time to create lessons. RC classroom strategies begin with creating classroom rules as a community based on students' hopes and dreams. This wish list creates the foundation for the classroom agreements. They are created and written in the student's' own language then signed by all class members and displayed in the classroom.This is the needed foundation for building trust and safety and creating personal and social awareness. When the rules/rights are broken, they can be referred to throughout the day. Instead of the teacher being the enforcer, the teacher becomes the facilitator of the classroom/school agreements. From there the teacher is expected to explicitly teach, model, and revisit the rules continually. This is the impetus from which all of the other strategies of RC are formed.

Classroom Rules

Teaching rules and skills is at the foundation of creating a program where students can be afforded the opportunity to learn 21st century skills that will afford them the equity they deserve to be successful in the workplace. It will give them tools to use to navigate themselves through challenging situations.

Establishing classroom rules that are created in the classroom gives students a voice in the discussion about class rules that will help them see the rules as a framework for a shared vision of the classroom. It provides the necessary "buy in" that students need to create a desire to follow the rules they have created together. Teaching is personal and it involves beliefs and values about learners and learning. According to Martin (2007) it is about winning hearts and minds.

A change of philosophy is needed in order to move to the creation of a real learning community in the classroom-not just a change in instructional strategies (Martin, 2007).   In addition, part of the requirements of the classroom rules are that if a rule is broken, it must be fixed, requiring self reflection and self awareness. It affords the student the opportunity to practice the skill of restoring relationship with others.

    Research shows that when rules are in place along with clear behavior expectations and then reinforced, a positive outcome will follow. In a 2016 study using data collection of office referrals, research showed that intervention leads to a decrease in office referrals (Anyon, Nicotera & Veeh, 2016). With evidence-based practices in classroom management such as classroom rules and structure, students strengthen academic and social behaviors. Consistently enforcing rules and behavioral expectations, increases desired behavior. Those rules need to be posted and explicitly taught to students. Often times, teachers post store bought or created posters and never refer to them again. By posting, teaching, and reviewing expectations, especially social skills, and providing feedback, students reduce off-task and disruptive behavior (Simonsen, Fairbanks, Briesch, Myers & Sugai, 2008).

   Classroom management is a critical part of education especially when looking at students with special needs and how they require direct instruction of appropriate behaviors. Specifically, they need an instructional approach to behavior management. When looking at developing classroom rules, it is important to consider the importance of establishing routines and procedures, in order to increase the academic expectations of the student (Emmer & Stough, 2001). All students need to have a clear understanding of what is expected of them in order to thrive in the classroom both socially and academically (Horsch, Chen & Nelson, 1997)

Morning Meeting

Establishing and enforcing the classroom rules in Responsive Classroom is foundational to the execution of all components of their program, including the morning meeting. Morning meeting provides students with an opportunity to build relationships in the classroom through four areas: greeting, sharing, group activity, and morning message.

Morning meeting takes from 20-30 minutes each day. The purpose of morning meeting is to create an environment for respectful and engaged students who are learning in a climate of trust; merging social and emotional learning; building connections among teachers and peers; and creating respectful interaction and a sense of belonging and significance (Kriete & Davis, 2014).

 Morning Meetings can create an opportunity for students to develop social skills that can be used later in all areas of their lives. Research shows how morning meetings give students the opportunity to practice 21st century skills through social activities. These tools of problem solving, critical thinking, empathy, collaboration, creativity and respect can help them in the future (Allen-Hughes, 2013). Specifically, students can build community which contributes both to their social emotional and academic learning. Morning meetings contribute to building a safe environment where trust can be built. Through this arena of guided social communication and interaction, academics and behavior can improve. The four aspects of morning meetings will be described below for their facilitation of social /emotional learning.

The first component of morning meeting is the greeting time which is used for students to greet one another by name and welcome one another. The goal of greeting is to set a positive tone for the day; provide a sense of recognition and belonging; and to help students learn and use everyone's name (Kriete & Davis, 2014). Most importantly, the greeting provides an opportunity to practice social skills such as eye contact, shaking hands, and using a person's name. By using a person's name it also shows respect and positive personal regard; these are at the foundation of

establishing trust and building community. For example, each morning a different type of

greeting is chosen. One day students may be asked to greet one another with a handshake where

they will practice looking one another in the eye. The next day, they may be asked to greet one

another in another language. Each student and teacher will go around the room greeting one

another with the "greeting" of the day. This is a quick greeting it does not require a large amount

of time.

The sharing portion of Morning Meeting is for students to share news or information about

themselves and respond to one another, by articulating their thoughts, feelings, and ideas in a

positive way. The goal of sharing is to help students get to know each other; develop social and

emotional competencies; teach thinking, listening and speaking skills; and to strengthen language

development and reading success (Kriete & Davis, 2014). Many times all four components of the

morning meeting are all done in the morning. However, there are times when spreading the four

components out over the course of the morning can be beneficial. For example, sharing can be

done during snack time around the table. Group activities could include opportunities for

mindfulness or other tools for self awareness and self regulation. Sharing time provides an

opportunity for check in check out (CICO) and offering positive personal regard. By sharing

personal information and responding to one another trust is built and empathy is fostered.

Furthermore, sharing creates self awareness. Self awareness is what is needed in order to identify

feelings. Students can be given an opportunity to identify their feelings so that they can begin to

manage those feelings in a healthy way that does not hurt themselves or others.

Group Activity

The group activity is for the whole class to reinforce learning and build class cohesion with a

goal of the group to build positive community. Also, the hope is to foster active and engaged

participation which would heighten the class's sense of group identity. Students have fun while

becoming more competent and this enhances learning of the curriculum content (Kriete & Davis,

2014). The group activity can also include mindfulness activities or toolbox activities to help

build community and friendships. Snacktime occurs in the morning before recess. It can be a

great time to implement a group activity which could be helpful to building community and

cultural awareness. Group activity can also be used as a time to review and practice self

regulation strategies through games. Spending time teaching and practicing self regulation tools

helps students to develop a sense of belonging and control over their environment by using self

regulation strategies (Collin, 2003). Toolbox strategies are something that could be integrated

into the morning meeting. The results from a study by Piatt-Jaeger in 2011, revealed positive

results overall with social emotional awareness and self regulation. Research showed that

students were better able to demonstrate unity and community within schools and classrooms

when using self regulation strategies from toolbox for learning (Piatt-Jaeger, 2011).

Morning Message

    Finally, the morning message is for students to discuss a daily note from the teacher. In

addition, students practice academic skills (Kriete & Davis, 2014). Furthermore, the teacher can

use this as a way to encourage students with positive messages or ask introspective questions.

Students can offer to share parts of their history with one another on their own successes and

trials. This also provides a way for students to feel that sense of belonging that Maslow describes

that they are looking for. Most importantly, the morning message time can also be used as a time

to review the daily schedule and highlight any possible changes in the daily routine for the

student. Knowing what is coming next can help students to feel more secure and can establish

safety and trust in the classroom.

Building Community in the Classroom

Additional research reveals that Morning Meetings are a means to develop classroom community. The four components of morning meeting: greeting, sharing, group activity, and morning message, require the involvement of all students both physically and emotionally. This creates an opportunity for building community (Bruce, Fasy, Gulick, Jones & Pike, 2006).

Research has shown that students who are given social and emotional tools to work with in their school day are better able to learn in all subject areas (Kriete & Davis, 2014).The concept of morning meetings from Responsive Classroom are part of a social-emotional learning system that contributes to academic learning throughout the day (Kriete & Davis, 2014). These techniques are part of an evidence-based way of including a social-emotional component to teaching. Students are better able to self-regulate and monitor their behavior throughout the day which increases their academic productivity.This builds their self-confidence and gives them problem solving skills that they can utilize in and out of the classroom as well as into their lives beyond the school campus (Newswire, 2014). Further research reveals the importance of creating connections within our schools. Schools need to be a place of stability and continuity in a child's life. Establishing trust and building classroom cohesion leads to whole school community building (Nicholas, 1997).

When social and emotional learning (SEL) is a part of a student's day, they have the opportunity to learn valuable skills to use in and out of the classroom and beyond their school years. Research shows that those skills in self-regulation, self-monitoring, and social skills promote positive behavior and academic achievement. Classroom management was what was used to align school procedures with SEL (Norris, 2003).

Social Benefits of the Morning Meeting

Research shows that there are social benefits of the morning meeting. For example, it creates

a space for social and character education in the classroom. In his research, Allen-Hughes

(2013) discusses the need for these skills to be taught to students.Those social abilities are

necessary 21st century skills (Allen-Hughes, 2013). Morning Meetings afford a teacher

opportunities to practice social skills which are specifically targeted toward increasing 21st

century skills.

Research indicates that morning meeting can improve students' social skills. One study

looked to see if it would reduce aggressive behavior and off-task behavior. This study found that

students were positively influenced and their social skills had improved (Court, 1995). Social

skills which are taught during morning meeting can improve student behavior. Social skills

taught during morning meeting can help students learn self-regulation. These are the social skills

that are necessary for success in school and in life. Furthermore, emotional competence can

improve academic achievement. Students need to be given social and emotional support as well

as taught and modeled the social and emotional requirements in the classroom (Dougherty &

Sharkey, 2017).

Responsive Classroom Approach and Academic Achievement

In looking at the contribution of the Responsive Classroom (RC) approach on children's

academic achievement from the results of a three year longitudinal study in the finding from this

study indicates an increase in academic achievement using the RC Approach. The research

further revealed the possibility that classroom rules play a significant part in the success of

students whose teachers practice morning meetings and have clear classroom rules that are

modeled and reinforced daily (Rimm-Kaufman, Fan, Chiu & Yu, 2007).

Classroom Rules and Structure

   Research reveals that with evidence-based practices in classroom management such as

classroom rules and structure, students strengthen academic and social behaviors. Establishing

expectations or rules increases desired behavior. Those rules need to be posted and explicitly

taught to students.

   Classroom management is a critical part of education especially when looking at students

with special needs and how they require direct instruction of appropriate behaviors. Specifically,

they need an instructional approach to behavior management. When looking at developing

classroom rules it is important to consider the importance of establishing routines and procedures

in order to raise academic expectations of all students (Emmer & Stough, 2001). All students

need to have a clear understanding of what is expected of them in order to thrive in the classroom

both socially and academically (Horsch, Chen & Nelson, 1997).

   After reviewing the academic literature, this study looked at the gap in knowledge regarding

students with special needs and the use of a social emotional learning program to address basic

needs in order for them to achieve academic and social development. Specifically, the study

examined the first two practices of Responsive Classroom which are establishing classroom rules

and morning meeting. Establishing, teaching, and reviewing the classroom rules, is foundational

to the morning meeting. Students need explicit instruction in what the expectations are and a

teacher who will implement and follow the rules. The social and emotional skills they learn can

facilitate their ability to understand their emotions and to know what to do with them. Most

importantly, the study looked at how morning meetings could help meet the basic needs of

special needs students and the impact of morning meeting on student productivity. With the

enforcement of rules and expectations, during morning meeting students practiced social skills

and increased their ability to connect with their peers and teacher. Furthermore, during a portion

of the morning meeting students looked at toolbox for learning to learn about self-regulation

strategies. By looking at the impact of morning meetings, the study examined if students were

able to experience positive social relationships and if they experienced an increase in their ability

to access curriculum by having their needs identified. In addition, the study looked at how by

identifying their needs the teacher could more accurately target interventions and therby increase

academic productivity and behavior.

Chapter 3 Methods

Research Questions

 Research shows that social emotional learning needs to be a part of teaching within the

classroom. Teaching reading, writing, and arithmetic will not work if social and emotional needs

take precedence. Research shows that morning meetings can help facilitate building community

within the classroom. The purpose of this study was to explore how morning meetings impact

student productivity. Three research questions guided the study. First, what is the impact of

morning meeting on social emotional learning throughout the day? Second, how does morning

meetings establish trust and build community in the classroom? Finally, how does the explicit

teaching of classroom rules and teacher consistency in upholding classroom rules affect students

behavior?

   Part of Morning Meeting includes establishing classroom rules. The study looked at how

students were able to follow the classroom rules and how that affected other areas of the morning

meeting and student productivity. There are four areas of morning meeting: greeting, sharing,

group activity and morning message. For this study, the four areas of focus were on the

following: 'greeting' as a way to connect with other students in the classroom ; 'sharing' as a

time where students can have an opportunity to be heard by their teachers and peers. Students

asked questions of one another and were invited to share their lives with one another; 'group

activity' was used to review self-regulation strategies; and morning message was used as a time

to discuss the daily schedule and to discuss upcoming events.

Description and Rationale for Research Approach

   In a constructivist worldview, knowledge is constructed through discourse and is constructed

rather than received (Bazeley, 2014). It is formed in the context of individual histories and social

interaction (Schwandt, 2000). There was an opportunity to engage with other teachers on how

they conduct morning meetings. Therefore, the design for this qualitative study involved

individual, semi structured interviews. Through the process of interaction and conversation, in

this dialogic circle, we were able to come up with specific strategies for addressing student needs

that improved behavior. This was information that could be shared across settings. Together we

were able to generate meaning from our discoveries. The design for this qualitative study

involved individual, semi structured interviews.

This research used a mixed-methods approach. First, this worldview informs the approach to

research and that makes this a qualitative study. Also, students were observed in a natural setting

and the researcher gathered and employed multiple methods of data collection (Creswell, 2014).

In addition, the teacher kept a notebook for reflection. However, this research also used point

charts which were used in the classroom to record and gather data which is a quantitative

approach. Surveys and interviews both before and after the implementation of morning meetings

provided information on who was conducting morning meetings and what if any impact was

made on classwork productivity after implementation of morning meeting. For example,

students were given daily point charts and behavior charts that were initially completed by the

teacher and then once the students understood how to complete them, they filled in the points

that they had earned in each rotation. The teacher signed off on the charts to insure that they

were correct.

This is a case study with action based research. The approach used was descriptive and

contained inferential questions and exploratory sequential mixed method in order to look at

classroom results and findings using point charts and behavior reflection sheets. Interviews and

observations of other teachers and classrooms were also used. This gave more information

beyond the focus classroom.

Research Design

   The participants in the study were primarily from a Special Day Class (SDC) 4th-5th grades;

a general education class 4th grade and an 8th grade Resource Specialist Program class. The

participating schools were from an Elementary School and a Junior High School in Northern

California. The SDC class and general education fourth grade class were from an elementary

school in California. It is a suburban school with 56% of students being male; 71% caucasian;

22% receive free or reduced lunch; 20% are English learners; and 13% are disabled. The fourth

grade class had twenty three students. Three boys are on medicationf for ADHD, two of them

have 504 plans. One girl has a 504 for her juvenile arthritis.Two students receive RSP services,

one for reading the other for reading and math. Two students receive speech and language

services. One of those students is a selective mute who also receives services from the school

psychologist. In addition, at another school site, the class participating in the study were eighth

graders in a Resource Specialist Program . There were nineteen students in the eighth grade RSP

class. The range of disablities included Speech and Language Impairment, Other Health

Impairment, and Specific Learning Disability. The RSP 8th grade class came from a junior high

school where the student population at that school is made up of 428 students: 47.8% of the

students are Caucasian; 48.7 receive free and reduced lunch; 17% of students have limited

English proficiency; and, 15% are learning disabled (EPI, Department of Education, 2018).

   In the SDC class four participants' major language is not English. The language spoken is

Spanish. Therefore, they were provided with copies of translated documents. In the special day

class there were students with special needs including learning disabilities, Autism Spectrum Disorder, sensory impairments, and intellectual disabilities.

Participants were asked if they would like to participate and were told that they could quit at any time. Participant consent forms were given to faculty and staff, students, and parents requesting their participation in the research study. Student assent forms were hand delivered and explained to students-after prior parental consent forms were signed and returned. Participant consent forms were also obtained across sites. Parental consent forms were provided in Spanish as appropriate. For the Sampling Procedure, a letter was written explaining the research to parents. The parental consent forms determined which students would receive the student assent forms; students were only approached if parents had provided consent. Students were given copies of the assent forms and the researchers also read these documents aloud and explained them to students. After receiving consent, a meeting was held and all parents and children were informed of the steps to the study.

This qualitative study involved individual, semi structured interviews with teachers from various grades and two school sites. Interviews were conducted before, during, and after implementation of morning meetings. The questions that were asked before implementation of morning meeting were: How community was built in the classroom; whether or not the teacher conducted morning meetings; and, the current baseline for student productivity. During the morning meeting students were observed using the point charts to track behavior and work completion. After implementation of morning meeting and then observing taking it away, post interviews were conducted to ask the following questions: Student classwork with and without morning meeting; changes in students in regards to morning meetings; and, examples of success as well as struggles with morning meeting.

The research aligned with the beginning of the school year in order to collect data on

behavior before the implementation of the morning meeting. Students were observed before,

during, and after implementation of morning meeting. A baseline of behavior and work

completion was established during the first few weeks of school. Interviews and surveys were

given and information was recorded. Students had point charts where they could earn three

possible points per rotation. For example, they could earn one point for work completed; one

point for following classroom rules; and one point for using a self regulation tool to help keep

them at baseline when frustrated. Student point charts were completed daily and they could earn

a prize from the prize box at the end of each month based on how many points they had earned.

The point charts were also used to record data.

Data Collection Procedures

For the Morning Meeting research, a baseline of student productivity was established

conducting the class for three weeks without morning meetings. All classes participated in this

part of the study. Next, student productivity was measured by adding up daily point charts during

those three weeks. This was done with guidance by the teacher and aides in the classroom.

Students were given a chart that had three areas in which to earn points for each rotation time.

The areas were: work completed, following classroom rules, and using self regulation tools.

They got one point for each section: Yes=1 point No= 0 points. For example, during math

rotation if they completed the work that was expected they earned one point. If they followed the

classroom rules, that would be another point. If they used self-regulation tools when they were

frustrated or angry, that would be another point. They would then earn a total of three points for

that rotation. If they completed their work, and were disrespectful to their peers or teachers, they

would earn two points for that rotation. There is also a space at the bottom of each point chart for

comments. This is a place where additional information was given regarding the specifics of the

day regarding behavior and work completion. After each rotation (ie. morning meeting, silent

reading, math, exercise, writing), students entered one point under each of the these three

headings: a) work completed b) followed classroom rules and c) used a self regulation tool.

   After introducing morning meetings for three weeks, student productivity was measured by

adding up daily point charts during those three weeks. Then, morning meetings were taken away

for one week. Initially, the plan was to take morning meeting away for two weeks. However,

there was too much disruption for students and teachers to continue not having morning meeting.

Point charts continued to be used and points were given as in the previous weeks. Change in

behavior or student productivity was noted and included by adding up daily point charts during

the week without morning meeting. Post interviews with teachers were conducted.

   Once the morning meeting program had started, classroom observations of all students in all

classes began. Each teacher observed their own students in their own classrooms. There were

three classrooms in all. Each teacher took notes on their own classrooms. Notes were taken on

what was observed in the classroom, including the student's schoolwork completion; ability to

follow class rules; and use of self regulation tools during each rotation work session. The

observation protocol, called daily point chart forms, was used to record information on the

identified goal with each participating student during each rotation of work.

   Upon the completion of the implementation of the morning meeting program, post

interviews were conducted with the other teachers to follow up on student progress throughout

the morning meeting program. The hope was to link student progress specifically to reveal the

impact of the four parts of morning meetings on student classwork productivity. The four parts of

the morning meeting were reviewed to see any contribution toward building community and establishing trust.

First, classroom rules were formulated and agreed upon by the class. They were posted throughout the classroom and were referred to throughout the day. There was a space included on the observation protocol/point chart for comments and points to be earned during the day for following the classroom rules. This helped to give information about the social emotional learning that was taking place during morning meeting. It also gave information regarding establishing trust and building community, and how well students were able to follow classroom rules and what, if any, part that played on student work productivity.

For Data Recording Procedures, a protocol for recording observations was used in this qualitative study. In addition, comments were added to the bottom of point charts which helped when coding the data and looking for themes.   Interviews were conducted in an unstructured open ended manner during which time notes were taken. Interviews were conducted using an interview protocol.   Field notes were recorded during observations as an observer in class as well as the classes of other teachers.

Research Positionality

In qualitative research, the role of the researcher is as the primary data collector. Every attempt will be made to be objective. However, there could be some bias within each classroom from the teachers and their students. There was a dual relationship between researcher and participants in that the teacher was researching students her class For example, biases about morning meetings that could have affected how the data was interpreted were that the students are with their teachers everyday .Therefore, their opinions may be less objective in evaluating or giving them points on certain days based on personal knowledge of them.This knowledge could

have shaped the way students were viewed and how the data collected was interpreted (Creswell, 2014). This study used a qualitative approach with a constructivist worldview. Because case studies are one of the most appropriate ways of examining individuals and activity systems, this study executed a case study in action based research design including observation of behavior. The findings come from a case study of the teacher's own classroom and the surveys were used to triangulate the data. The teacher analyzed the participants in the study over time and looked at data through observation during specific times of morning meeting. Through inductive and deductive data analysis, qualitative research was conducted to look at patterns, categories, and themes. This allowed for movement back and forth to find evidence to support various themes. This study has an emergent design in that the initial plan changed or shifted as discoveries were made. For example, as more of the basic needs were seen to be more significant than originally thought, those needs were addressed and evaluated to see how, once addressed, they impacted classwork productivity.

Action-based data collection allowed the opportunity to focus on the daily activity of the participants (Wiebe, Elden, Durepos, Gabrielle, Mills & Albert, 2010). Furthermore, because action based research looks at who does what and why, it provided the opportunity to look at morning meetings specifically to see how students were responding to the different parts of the morning meeting. In addition, in action based research, any form of data may be collected, including interviews, observations, and documents (Wiebe, Elden, Durepos, Gabrielle, Mills, Albert, 2010). Therefore, in this study there were surveys given before morning meetings began in order to discover which teachers were currently implementing morning meetings. From there, it was determined who should be asked to further participate in the study. Those teachers answered pre and post program interview questions.

Data Analysis

In coding the data, similarities were reviewed across codes to find themes that responded to the research questions. After organizing and preparing the data for analysis, and gaining a general sense of the direction and meaning of the information, one interview was chosen to create codes that were put in a qualitative codebook. This was a place to put definitions for codes and keep track of multiple codes.

In coding the data, it was important to look for similarities across codes to find themes that responded to the research questions. The interviews and point charts in addition to journal notes were also coded. The themes that were identified included: meeting social and emotional needs, targeted intervention and classroom rules.

Themes were identified within the data that were coded in order to form connections. In looking at the interpretation of the findings, and possible lessons learned, new questions needed to be asked. For example, what is the significance of the first contact of the day? What impact does the greeting by the teacher have on the student first thing in the morning? How does that impact the student's sense of belonging? This study continued to organize and analyze all of the data from the point charts looking for any patterns that emerged. In looking at all four parts of the meeting and at the different times of day and any other comments that were made on the student's point charts other themes were considered. For example, in looking at morning meeting's ability to meet social and emotional needs, the study revealed the importance of the greeting in that it provided a sense of belonging and the sharing portion provided connection. This led to another theme of targeted intervention and prevention that could be shared across settings. In addition, this led to classwork productivity. The final themes were looked at through the implementation of classroom rules and how they made the children feel safe and how that led to an increase in behavior.

Validity and Reliability

This qualitative research design utilized an interactive approach. Therefore, it is important to note that this was an inductive study where the data was examined to look for patterns and to see what was similar. The primary goal was to look at the data inductively and to discover something that was hidden in the data.

Multiple validity strategies were incorporated in the study. By using different sources of information, themes were identified and from there a detailed description of the findings were provided. Triangulation, by its very definition uses a variety of methods to triangulate data, method, and theory to bolster accuracy and reliability (Cho, 2006). Themes and patterns in the data were analyzed to see what they had in common and how the results could offer possible theories that are understandable and then were provided in a detailed description of the findings. Triangulation provided the opportunity to increase validity and reliability by verifying facts through a variety of data sources (Cho, 2006).

In order to increase validity, action-based data needs to be collected at different times, places, and participants (Wiebe, Elden, Durepos, Gabrielle, Mills, Albert J., 2010). Therefore, data was collected at different times and in different ways as well as in different locations throughout the study. For example, data was collected daily in an SDC elementary school class for 4th-6th graders. In addition, data was collected in a fourth grade general education class. Finally, data was collected in an 8th grade Resource Special Program class.

To further the validity, peer debriefing was used to provide an objective assessment of the project at the end of the study (Creswell, 2014). In addition, it increased the accuracy of the study. Furthermore, transcripts were checked to make sure that findings were supported through data in transcripts; and that codes hadn't shifted (Creswell, 2014).

Chapter 4- Findings

This research revealed that Morning Meetings impacted classwork productivity because they helped to identify and meet students' social and emotional needs, which created a sense of belonging and connection. This provided teachers with vital information for targeted intervention and led to an increase in classwork productivity. In addition, classroom rules helped to build trust by creating safety in the classroom. This provided teachers with a way to implement a positive behavior plan through positive language built around the classroom rules which led to an increase in behavior.

Meeting Social and Emotional Needs

Getting to all parts of the morning meeting was challenging. It took a great deal of time in preparation and planning. Many days there were times when the group activity would need to come at a different time of the day other than in the morning. Initially, the thought was that the greeting portion of morning meeting would be a time for students to connect with each other. However, it became clear that before that could happen the greeting at the door between teacher and student needed to be intentional and purposeful. By doing this, it sent a significant message of sense of belonging to the student which directly affected the rest of the morning. This was evident in how the moods of students changed during the course of the day and how they began to treat other students with more kindness. In addition, they began to engage more with their classmates. This proved to be the most significant finding. Students need to know that they matter and that first point of entry between student and teacher is more impactful than can possibly be measured. It has a ripple effect for the student in how they interact with their teachers and peers.

The sharing portion of the meeting was initially thought to provide a place for students to be seen and heard. However, the study revealed that sharing provided students with an opportunity to receive positive attention from peers and teachers. The morning message was set to be a time to review the daily schedule and provided students with a sense of security in knowing what was coming. It was helpful to have a set time of day to do this. Having a visual schedule where students and educators could review any changes in the daily schedule was helpful to keep students regulated throughout the day.

Greeting Creates Sense of Belonging

The greeting portion of morning meeting helped students to feel welcomed in to the classroom and created a sense of belonging. For example, what was most important was that the teacher was ready to greet the students when they arrived. This was important because it was the beginning point of connection for the student and the teacher. It had a domino effect on the rest of the day for the student. It was a moment when a clear message could be sent from the teacher to the student. That message being that the student matters; their presence in the classroom matters. The greeting portion of the meeting provided an opportunity for positive input.

It was especially noticeable with Student #1-Sam, a fifth grader, who arrived early every morning. He had a bus that dropped him off forty five minutes before school started. Most days, he waited outside and when the teacher arrived he would rush in from the cold. However, when the teacher started arriving ten minutes before he did, she was able to turn on the lights and heater in order to be ready for him when he arrived. This began to make a noticeable difference. This was a student who initially began his day barely speaking and complaining of a headache every day. During this early morning time with the student, the teacher was able to learn about why he was taking the bus, and that he had no time for breakfast. The need for food and warmth

speaks to Maslow's theory of basic need for food, warmth, and clothing. These were areas that the teacher could address. She began to make arrangements for food. What made it better was that it came at the first part of the day. It provided a positive interaction between this student and all members of the classroom. For example, he began talking to his classmates, rather than sitting by the window and looking out as he had done previously.

Educators, have no idea what a child may have been through that morning when they arrive to the classroom. Morning meetings can help to address unmet needs students could be wrestling with. In order for children to learn how to get along with their neighbor, let alone access the curriculum, basic needs must be addressed. As Sam felt welcomed and the sense of belonging and connection had begun with his teacher, he began to trust the teacher and began sharing more about what was going on at home or what was bothering him in the classroom. This seemed to lighten the weight he was carrying and he began to engage with others and to access the curriculum. It opened the door for other needs to be uncovered. Much of the information learned about students came from different moments of discussions during or after morning meetings and over the course of the study.

For example, Sam, has had a series of traumas in the home. First of all, his uncle had been living with the family. Unfortunately, he was drinking heavily and causing problems in the home. Eventually, the family was evicted from the apartment. The student now lives in a new apartment where he says there are neighborhood boys who beat him up every day after school. He worries daily about his mother who is sick. He is frustrated that he has to take care of his family because his mother is too sick to clean the house. Therefore, he says that he has to help with babysitting, cleaning, and cooking. When he first started the year, he was unable to offer any kind words to himself or others. From August to September there were twenty-five entries

on his point chart describing his defiant, combative behavior, which included the use of unkind words toward peers and himself. He ripped, stabbed, and crumpled his papers. Most days he would spend sitting near the window and gazing outside. He refused to participate in any academics and complained of a headache each day.

His behavior improved after reinstituting morning meeting. For example, he stopped complaining of headaches and he was able to engage in his academics. He still used unkind words although it was less frequent. In addition, his desk was moved closer to the teacher and paraeducators so that they were able to help him as soon as he raised his hand. Furthermore, the classroom has opened early in the morning so that when he arrives, he can come directly into a warm classroom and complete work on his homework if necessary. Morning meetings provided an opportunity for him to feel safe enough to share some of his struggles. These conversations included details about his living situation. This information helped in conversations with the family and helped us to identify more clearly his needs so that as a team we could come up with interventions for the home and the classroom. For example, many times he came to class hungry. Therefore, we made sure we had snacks available for him in the morning. In addition, we were able to speak directly to the fact that if he lost points during one rotation, that did not mean that his day was over. When he needed to be told that he had not earned full points for a rotation because he didn't follow the classroom rules, he was reminded to use kind words toward himself as well and he was better able to handle remain at baseline. He has now learned how to mark his own behavior sheet with less than perfect scores and is able to complete the next rotation of classwork. Whereas before he would have lost most of the day.

In looking at the findings from Sam and Betty, students' positive engagement with their teachers and peers helped to build confidence and increased communication. This

communication helped to build trust and the students began to share. That foundation began to

build a community which all lead to an increase in classwork productivity. Increased

communication between teachers, counselors, students, and families provided connection and

helped to create community. During the greeting portion of the meeting, students were able to be

greeted by the teacher and one another. This created a sense of belonging and connection.

Students were made to feel that they were valued and important and welcomed into the

classroom.

Sharing Provides Connection

   Morning meetings provided a way for teachers to get to know students better which furthered

connection. During the sharing portion of the meeting other needs were uncovered. As

previously mentioned, student #1 shared that he was hungry because he had not eaten breakfast.

Another student revealed that she was tired from playing video games and communicating on

social media all night. Sharing time began to reveal that many of the students had basic needs

that were not being met. The process of sharing led into other parts of the day. During snack

time, one student leaned over to the teacher to say that he was being beat up after school by a

few neighborhood boys. Before the implementation of morning meeting, this student was very

quiet. After morning meeting implementation the student began to share more during sharing

time. He began to feel safe enough to share his struggles. In all cases, the students' parents and

the counselor were contacted in order to have a conversation about the needs the children

presented.

   Morning Meetings provided students with an opportunity to share which created a

connection. Furthermore, morning meetings provided social and emotional learning tools for

students so that they could access the curriculum. These tools came in the way of teachers and

students becoming more aware of their needs and the choices they made to address them. For example, student #2 had a history of elopement. Before coming to this school, this fifth grade student had struggled with elopement and several suspensions at her previous school. She came into the classroom in mid October when morning meetings were in full swing. In the first week, she had some struggles with transitions which were easily corrected with the enforcing of our classroom rules and coming up with strategies that could help her. To this day she has never eloped. Morning meetings helped educators to devise strategies helped her. They were better able to come up with targeted intervention for her behavior plan that helped with transitions. For example, she needed less verbal interaction when asked to transition. Therefore, sticky notes were put on her daily schedule with her different appointments. She had a sticky note that said, "Speech 1:00pm" and was told that she could earn three possible points for transition: one point for being on time, one point for working once she arrived, and one point for returning promptly. We discovered that if we set the timer and then pointed to her sticky note and walked away she had success with transitions.

The following week, as part of the research design, morning meeting was removed and she immediately had problems. For example, over the following two weeks she received five office referrals and one suspension for refusing to follow directions. The educators, principal, and counselor were at a loss and were set to meet with the behavior specialist the next week. Time was then spent on looking at what morning meeting had offered her and what it provided that was giving her the support she needed. It soon became obvious. She loved to talk and enjoyed telling stories of her weekend and telling jokes. Morning meeting had provided a natural opportunity for her to share. She needed to connect with others by talking and having others listen. She had things to discuss and ideas she wanted to share. Unfortunately, during the

absence of morning meeting, her need for engagement manifested itself in a negative way. She was getting attention by not following directions.

Group Activity- Self Regulation Strategies Improve Behavior

During the group activity of morning meeting students had a chance to review self regulation tools from the Toolbox for learning. Every week they reviewed a different tool. For example, the first week they reviewed the breathing tool. They practiced using it and wrote about it in a journal. Each day if a student was struggling or frustrated, they were asked what tool could they use to help them. This gave them a choice and it made them more aware of their own emotions. Morning Meeting helped students with self regulation which led to improved behavior, which contributed to an environment more conducive to learning. Furthermore, the group activity helped students with self regulation which led to improved behavior and contributed to an environment more conducive to learning.

Neuroscience has proven that our brain is designed for social engagement with another person. These neural encounters regulate the brain. The strongest exchanges we have are with those people whom we spend most of our time. Furthermore, they directly influence our emotions. Because of the social emotional learning that morning meeting offered through greeting, sharing and group activities, students were able to increase their self regulation. For example, because Sam was greeted first thing in the morning, he began to greet others in the morning as well rather than saying unkind words to other students. In addition, because he was taught self regulation tools, and had the opportunity to practice using them, he was able to use self regulation tools such as the breathing tool and use it when he felt frustrated. Initially he struggled with using kind words toward others and himself and when frustrated he would call himself "stupid" or others, "donkey." Many times when frustrated he destroyed projects he was

working on. In fact, from October to December there were nine entries of disrespectful behavior

on his point chart. After implementation of morning meetings, the entries reduced by 64%.

Instead of crumpling up his paper and stabbing it, he was able to raise his hand and ask for help.

His classwork completion rate rose from 10% to 90%.

During the first week of taking morning meeting away, Sam was sent to the office for

punching a classmate. In addition, he wrote 0's across his point chart. He appeared to be very

hard on himself and when he thought he had made a mistake of any kind, he took it very hard

and struggled to get back to baseline and complete his assignments. The morning meeting had

been providing him with an opportunity to get his basic needs met. It was at this time that we

realized he was more hungry than we had realized. Part of morning meeting was held around the

snack table. It was our opportunity to share and eat. It also provided an opportunity to have a

group activity of eating together. Some of what was met for that student during morning meeting

was the time to be together and eat and share. It was what he needed for building community.

Within in two days of reinstituting morning meeting, he was receiving comments on his behavior

chart of "had a great day!"

Whenever someone was unable to follow a classroom rule they had to complete a self-

reflection paper, as the requirement in the classroom is "if you break it, you need to fix it."   The

self reflection paper was a way to help "fix" what was broken in relationship. It asked the

following questions: What happened?; what are you feeling about what happened?; If anyone

else was part of what happened, how do you think they feel?; What tool could you have used that

would have made a difference? Student #1 spent a great deal of time at the beginning of the year

filling out self reflection papers coupled with offering an apology to other students or teachers

that he had impacted. Through these self reflections, and the time spent during morning meetings

discussing and sharing feelings and words with one another as well as continued reminders of

following classroom rules, he was able to better identify and therefore regulate his own emotions

and reactions. This supports the theory that social emotional intelligence plays a large part in

social emotional learning.

Targeted Intervention

The morning meeting experiment revealed that the specific social emotional needs of students

could be met during greeting and sharing time. By seeing what those needs were teachers were

able to more specifically implement targeted prevention and intervention. For several of these

students whose needs would be in the top tier of the RTI model which accounts for 5% or less of

the student population. Those students are the students who need intensive targeted individual

intervention. For counselors and teachers at times those 5% of students can take up a large

percentage of the day. In an interview with Assistant Superintendent of Special Services, Joe

Smith[3], he said that in his previous job as a principal he spent 95% of his time with those 5% of

students. Now that he oversees the counselors in the district, he voices the complaint of

counselors that they are, "performing triage" and that, "there are more counseling needs than

there are counselors." (J. Smith, personal communication, December 17, 2017).

When educators can create connections within schools, students are able to trust and schools

become a place of stability and continuity in a child's life. Establishing trust helps to build

classroom community. Furthermore, teachers can then take this information and share it with

other educators and specialists. For example, student #2, Betty, was in need of attention. The

parents and team of educators who were working with her (i.e. the speech and language

pathologist, the general education teachers, the principal, and the yard duty) were all encouraged

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[3] Pseudonyms are used for all participants in this research in order to preserve their anonymity.

to front load their time with her in a positive way. For example, they were asked to intentionally

greet her and to connect with her in a positive way by asking her a question and giving her an

opportunity to share. In addition, morning meetings were reinstituted and quickly proved that her

need for attention was being met through her ability to connect with her peers during the greeting

and sharing portion of morning meeting. By greeting her and giving her a chance to feel

welcomed and valued in the classroom she felt a sense of belonging. This began a process of

building community in the classroom and with other students and teachers. Ultimately this

provided vital information to target intervention and prevention which has led to her continued

success. Other teachers and service providers have reported that she is doing well in her

transitions and notice a change in that she is following directions and no longer getting stuck.

She is able to participate in the activities they are asking of her. This has led to an increase in

classwork productivity. When looking at the goals of Response to Intervention(RTI) model or

Multi-Tiered System of Support (MTSS) the most important goal of these systems is for

educators to work together to help create an opportunity for all students to achieve the Common

Core State Standards through individualized student needs for all academic, behavioral and

social success.

     Furthermore, once morning meeting was reinstated, she was back on track. It was also noted

that this helped the family as well in that they were offered a new insight of how to help their

daughter with similar struggles they were having with compliance at home. Also, this

information helped the counselor in that the teacher was able to provide some specific data that

could facilitate their meeting time.

   The targeted intervention that morning meeting helped to identify, provided increased

schoolwide communication and increased school-family communication in that educators were

better able to specifically identify and communicate the needs of students across settings. For

example, the teacher was able to speak with the speech and language pathologist and the

homeroom teacher to explain that this student needed to be given an opportunity to connect

through sharing. When given the opportunity to share stories about her weekend or to tell a joke,

the student was able to get the attention she was seeking in a positive way. The teacher was able

to identify and offer interventions to meet the child's need for connection through sharing and

story telling. Furthermore, the parents were informed of this discovery and were better able to

make specific adjustments at home to further support this child's need for structure and for

opportunities to share her day at home. These discoveries helped the student to connect and

communicate better at school and at home.

Increase in Classwork Productivity

Morning Meetings impacted classwork productivity because they helped to identify and meet

students' social and emotional needs which provided teachers with vital information for targeted

intervention. Morning meetings increased communication between teachers, counselors,

students, and families which impacted classwork productivity because they provided teachers

with vital information for targeted intervention necessary for optimal learning which was shared

across settings**.** That communication provided connection and created community. This provided

the necessary information for targeted intervention and implementation of strategies for

prevention. The results show that Morning Meeting helped with identifying student needs that

could influence how a teacher would respond to emotional needs and create targeted prevention

and/or intervention based on what was uncovered. This led to an increase in classwork

productivity. In the SDC class, homework completion rate went from 57% in September to 93%

completion rate in March. Classwork completion rate went from 19% in September to an 85%

classwork completion rate in March. In addition, students had a 75% increase in sustained

attention. For example, students began the year with being able to focus and attend to a whole

group lesson on writing or math for only one to five minutes. Now they are able to focus on a

lesson for fifteen to twenty minutes. They were encouraged to follow classroom rules and use

self regulation strategies to help them be successful during a lesson.

In looking at other classrooms, the RSP eighth grade teacher who did not have a regular

morning meeting said that she measures classwork productivity based on the percentage of work

submitted and accuracy. Before morning meeting the baseline for classwork productivity was

50%. After implementation of morning meeting classwork productivity went up to 90%. Then,

when she took away morning meetings it went down to 50%.

The fourth grade teacher reported that she and the students got more out of morning than she

thought they would and she plans on continuing meetings. For example, she reports that with

morning meeting the class had better collaboration and there was an increase in focus and

content. In addition, she felt that morning meetings helped them come together as a group.

When the morning meeting was taken away, she saw a decrease in focus and work completion.

Some of the successes she saw as a result of morning meetings were during the table teams

brainstorming sessions. She began to see shyer students begin asking questions and voicing an

opinion. When she first started morning meeting, she struggled to get them to share with each

other. Now, she reports they are very talkative and supportive of one another. Morning meeting

has provided an avenue for building a community in the classroom which contributed to the

increase in work completion and she will continue implementing morning meeting.

Classroom Rules Build Trust and Create Safety

   With evidence-based practices in classroom management such as classroom rules and structure, students strengthen academic and social behaviors. The classroom rules impacted classwork productivity because they created a feeling of safety for students and this led to improved behavior.   The classroom rules were especially helpful for student #1, Sam. During the first few weeks of morning meeting, he talked about his frustration with his classmates during work time. He struggled greatly with patience and appeared to be easily frustrated with any work presented to him that he did not understand immediately. He would not ask for help. Instead, he ripped up his paper or stabbed holes in it and then sat beside the window looking outside and refused to talk to anyone. He called other students names like, "baby" or "donkey" or "fat". He was unable to speak kindly to his peers and yelled at them to, "move" or "shut up." He threw books, chairs, and pencils in the classroom. In the first few weeks of school, he received an office referral for not being respectful. He threw pencils, called students names and mocked the teacher. He refused to complete classwork and he refused to take tests. He often complained of headaches. When consistently presented with the classroom rules to be kind, safe and respectful he began to understand that all students were being held to this same standard he began to feel safe. One day this was seen when he came quietly come up to the teacher and explained that he had seen a student from the class being treated unkindly by another student during recess. However, the biggest change in his ability to abide by the classroom rules came after he had begun getting breakfast first thing in the morning. From there he was able to learn about the classroom rules. Initially, it was difficult for him to lose even one point on his point chart during a rotation. If he was told that he had lost a point he would write 0's all over the paper. Now, he is able to write in the appropriate points. In addition, initially he was unable to write an apology when he had broken a classroom rule and now he can.

A daily point chart and a behavior chart were used to track how students were able to follow the classroom rules. There was also a place on the chart to record social, emotional and academic changes. The students were given an opportunity to complete their own charts. They had a chance to earn three points per rotation. One point for completing their work, one point for following the classroom rules of being kind, safe, respectful, and serious students. There was also space on the page to make comments. The point chart provided a place to record notes and create a strategy of what to do when a student's behavior is off track. For example, when looking at a rotation that was challenging, it was helpful to isolate where the struggle was coming from. This influenced schedule changes and seating changes which led to an increase in productivity and behavior. For example, after reviewing the point charts and looking at behavior it became clear that some students needed to have certain subjects at the beginning of the day and some students needed to move their seating so that they could be more successful. When student#1, Sam, was moved closer to the teacher and away from other students, his behavior and classwork productivity improved. When that was addressed, and he was still struggling with stabbing his paper, it became clear that this was now only happening during math. Therefore, the level was changed and a guided lesson was taught to this student with two other students. He was able to find success as were the other students in the group. However, it was clear that all of the other basic needs had to be met first in order to identify the academic needs. In other words, he needed the safety of the rules so that he could trust. He needed the trust before he could tell us that he was hungry. He needed the food before he could get to the classwork. In addition, self reflection sheets provided a strategy of what to do when a student's behavior was off track. It provided students with an opportunity to practice self-reflection and self-awareness. With the classroom

rules in place, they provided a base of where to go to when emotions could be escalating. They

provided a "go to" and "a what to do when" solution for educators and students.

Improved Behavior

Morning Meetings impact classwork productivity because they improve behavior**.** Morning

Meeting helps students with self regulation which leads to improved behavior which contributes

to an environment more conducive to learning. Furthermore, they help students with self

regulation which leads to improved behavior and contributes to an environment more conducive

to learning. For example, the mother of Student #3, a fifth grade girl, died of an overdose when

she was younger. It is not clear where the father resides; however, she is being raised by

relatives. Many students assume that she speaks Spanish because of how she looks. However,

she does not. Therefore, she is struggling to find a place where she can fit in. She has been raised

on a farm and came to school wearing boots and wrangler jeans. According to the relatives

raising her, they needed to buy her all new clothes because she thought that the other students

made her feel somewhat conscious of what she was wearing. At the beginning of the school year

she struggled to find friends. Before implementation of morning meeting, during the months of

August through September she had received thirteen behavior comments of disrespect or

unkindness on her point charts. For example, many times she would laugh at other students and

make fun of them. Some of the words she said to students were: "you are fat; you are ugly." In

September, a letter was sent home to parents for being disrespectful to teachers by mocking them

and rolling her eyes. By the end of September, a parent conference was needed. Several other

teachers and students had expressed concern about her disrespectful comments to other students.

After morning meetings began, her behavior began to show improvement. In October through

December she received seven behavior comments on her point chart where she was being

disrespectful and had refused to do any class work. That was an improvement of 46%. In

November, she began to receive positive comments on her behavior chart regarding her efforts to

be kind and respectful to her peers and teachers. In March, she has been able to use the self

regulation tools she has gained from morning meetings in order to remain calm and express her

needs to her teachers and other students. This has resulted in an increase in behavior. She has

reduced the number of disrespectful behavior comments on her point chart for disrespect toward

teachers and peers by 52%.

Conclusion

    In conclusion, this research revealed that Morning Meetings impacted classwork productivity

because they provided social emotional learning that allowed for students to have their basic

needs met which in turn allowed for more specific and targeted intervention and led to an

improvement in behavior. The classroom rules created safety and provided teachers with a way

to model the expected behavior and to have a reference point for guidelines and boundaries. The

classroom rules also provided teachers with a way to implement positive language in the

classroom. Morning meeting helped provide connection between teachers, students, counselors

and families by providing insights into students needs that could be shared across settings, with

other teachers and service providers as well as parents.The connection they provide between

teachers, students, counselors and families created a great team of communication and provided

the student with a great sense of belonging in the classroom. The information generated from the

morning meetings helped with more targeted intervention which helped students maintain

baseline and increased their ability to self regulate. Teachers were able to more accurately

provide the interventions that students most needed. This was conducive for a more peaceful

classroom which helped reduce stress on students and teachers. This could help lessen the

likelihood of teachers burning out. In addition, it could help prevent students from getting

suspended. Furthermore, it has a direct benefit to lessening the load on counselors and potentially

reduces the caseload for counselors.

Chapter 5- Implications

Morning meetings were implemented to provide an opportunity for students unmet social and/or emotional needs to be addressed. Maslow's theory supports that all humans have a basic need for connection. This research revealed that Morning Meetings impacted classwork productivity because they helped to identify and meet students' basic needs, which helped to establish trust and build community. Unexpectedly, many basic needs needed to be addressed first. Maslow's hierarchy of need became foundational in addressing the social and emotional needs during morning meeting. Furthermore, morning meetings provided an opportunity to focus on the basic needs identified at the base of the hierarchy. For example, through the greeting portion of morning meeting, students were made to feel welcomed into the classroom and this met the need a sense of belonging.

By identifying what needs students had, teachers were able to use aspects of morning meeting to meet those needs. Knowing the specific needs of students and having ways to meet them was vital information for building community and providing targeted intervention. By meeting the needs of students and targeting the intervention, behavior improved and classwork productivity increased. In addition, classroom rules helped to build trust by creating safety in the classroom and provided teachers with a way to implement a positive behavior plan through positive language built around the classroom rules.

Implications for the Academic Literature

Maslow believed that humans are motivated by a hierarchy of need. For example, the first consideration is the physiological need of food and warmth. The second is safety and then love and belonging, followed by esteem and then self actualization. He argued that humans have a basic need for belonging (Maslow, 1948).   Maslow believed that, until the basic need of

belongingness is met, other needs go unsatisfied (Edwards, D,. 1995). During morning meeting

the teacher learned that these basic needs became foundational to implementing any part of the

morning meeting. While many educators may be aware of Maslow and his theories, they may not

be giving them the importance they deserve in the classroom. This research revealed that

students basic needs must be understood and must be met in order for children to form

relationships with their teachers and peers. These connections create a sense of belonging and

allow a community to begin being formed. Margaret Martin described the need for community as

universal. She further concluded a sense of belonging and being connected to others makes our

lives meaningful (Martin, 2007).

In a study done by Dr. Felitti through Kaiser Permanente, as many as 40% of the students in

the classroom have a trauma they are wrestling with (Felitti, 1998). While research shows that

40% of students are dealing with a trauma, there are other students and teachers for that matter,

struggling with other issues as well. Through morning meeting sharing time, students were able

to discuss things that they were bothering them. For example, one student said that he was being

bullied by neighborhood boys. Another, student discussed a difficult morning she was having

due to the fact that her grandmother needed to bring her to school because she couldn't wake up

on time for her parents to take her to school due to the medication she was needing to take. Then,

another student shared that he was late for school because his dad got mad at him and called him

a jerk. It was so important that the student had a moment with the teacher to share that burden.

The teacher was able to listen and offer empathy and kindness.

Wentzel (1991) demonstrated that socially responsible behavior almost entirely mediated the

relationship between grades and other aspects of social competence (i.e., sociometric status, self-

regulatory processes). When morning meeting was taken away, many students began to struggle

with social competence. Most specifically, students wrestled with self regulation. It was helpful

to look at what different parts of the morning meeting had been helping students. It became clear

that many students needed that immediate connection in the morning and others needed an

opportunity to share and gain attention from their peers. Students need to be given social and

emotional support daily. In addition, they need the social and emotional requirements of the

classroom to be taught and modeled (Dougherty & Sharkey, 2017). For example, when students

were taught how to use self regulation tools, and given the opportunity to practice them, their use

of them increased. It is important to note that the social emotional learning needs to begin with

the teacher. The teacher needs to model self regulation in the classroom. It is important for

students to realize that everyone has emotions and everyone has times of frustration or

disappointment. If the teacher can use the social emotional learning tools she is teaching, the

students will be more likely to practice them as well. For example, during times of frustration in

the class, the teacher would stop the class and say, "I am feeling frustrated, I am thinking about

what self regulation tool I could use. I think I need to take a deep breath. Please join me." From

there the students had an opportunity to stop whatever they were doing and practice taking a

deep breath. This also helped students to realize that nobody is perfect-even their teacher. This

supports the theory that social emotional intelligence plays a large part in social emotional

learning. Research indicates that helping students to improve their self-awareness and manage

their emotions and impulses, increases their empathy and improves behavior and academics

(Coleman, 2006).

   Because the students were taught self regulation tools, they became more self aware and were

able to self regulate using one of the tools that they had been taught. The most often used tool

was the breathing tool and the time away tool.

Research shows that Toolbox self regulation tools can help students to develop a sense of belonging and control over their environment by using strategies from the Toolbox Project (Collin, 2003).

The research revealed that Morning meeting helped to build social emotional competencies which helped to teach children how to establish and maintain positive relationships (Dusenbury, et al., 2017). As the year progressed more friendships began to form in the classroom and students began to play during recess and outside of school. In addition, these positive relationships helped to foster an environment more conducive to learning and students became less resistant to academics that were challenging. This was especially evident during math when students initially were very reluctant to being taught new concepts and a recent test revealed that all students have increased by at least one grade level in math since the beginning of the year. This reinforces a positive link between students' academic achievement and personal/social development in such areas as social competence, academic enablers, and behavior (Barna & Brott, 2011).

What is new in my findings that hasn't been discussed before is the importance of the first point of contact in the morning with the student. Teachers can spend a great deal of time planning a wonderful lesson that is engaging and meets all of the standards required. Yet, it is meaningless if students are not able to access it. The continual complaint is that teachers have no time to implement even one more thing such as a social emotional learning program. However, the simple act of a warm welcome can change the course of child's life and that only takes a minute. In fact, I would argue that is the single most important moment of the day.

Another finding that has not been discussed before is the combination of using classroom rules in conjunction with self regulation tools for a positive classroom management program.

Children are better able to follow classroom rules when they are taught and offered strategies and tools in which to do so.

Implications for Classroom Teachers

Classroom Rules

The initial question in the research was to look at how the explicit teaching of classroom rules and teacher consistency in upholding classroom rules affected students behavior. Part of Morning Meeting includes establishing classroom rules so the study looked at how students were able to follow the classroom rules and how that affected other areas of the morning meeting and student productivity. What was not expected was the amount of time that would be needed for establishing classroom rules. Initially, a large part of the morning meeting time was spent on making sure that all students, aides, and teachers knew the classroom rules. Then the teacher needed to be sure to use the classroom rules as a way to redirect students and use positive language. The classroom rules were helpful to provide positive language. In addition, they provided a necessary consistency between all educators working with the students. For example, if a student was off task, all educators could use the same language and say, "show me what it looks like to____" and fill in whatever was necessary from the classroom rules. They could instruct students to: "show me what it looks like to follow directions, be safe, be kind, or be respectful." In addition to needing time to agree upon what the rules would be, they also needed more time than expected to practice following the rules. Therefore, it is important to take into consideration to give more time initially to the implementation of the classroom rules knowing that they will provide a necessary foundation for implementing the four parts of the morning meeting to follow.

Greeting

The findings were different from what had already been said in that originally, one of the four areas of focus was on: 'greeting' as a way to connect with other students in the classroom. And, what was revealed was that the first person the student needed to connect with was the teacher. It was particularly impactful to one student who arrived early and was waiting outside in the cold forty minutes before class started. The teacher began arriving ten minutes before he did so that she could warm the room and be ready to welcome him in. This began to change this student. Originally, he would come in with his head down and complain of a headache within the first thirty minutes of arrival. As the teacher began to see the change in him, she began moved the 'greeting' portion to first thing when students arrived. This began to change the behavior of many of the students. The greeting portion of morning meeting was still helpful in students connecting with one another. However, what stands out in the research findings is the importance of the teacher spending the first few minutes of the morning making a connection with the students the minute she saw them. That moment was very significant and seemed to set the tone in a more positive direction for the rest of the day. Other students who would normally come in somewhat grumpy or tired, began to hold their heads up and smile more. Therefore, it is important to note that the first greeting of the day is paramount to creating a sense of belonging to the student. Furthermore, the teacher needs to be ready to greet each student when they first walk in the door. It sends a message to the student that they matter. The sense of belonging that Maslow refers to is more significant than can be measured as it seemed to change the direction of the students from that moment on. It could be seen to change the relationship with the teachers, the students the rest of the day in other classes. To know that they matter has the potential to change everything.

Sharing

  The 'sharing' portion of morning meeting was initially thought to be a time where students could have an opportunity to be heard by their teachers and peers. This was true in that students asked questions of one another and were invited to share their lives with one another. However, what also was revealed through this study was that some students needed the sharing time as a way to receive positive attention. This became a strong way to provide targeted intervention to one student who had come to the classroom initially struggling with elopement. While she has never eloped during the time she has been in this class, several times a week she got "stuck." Most times what that looked like was when she was asked to transition to a non preferred task, she refused. In worst case scenarios, this escalated to her remaining wherever she was at the time of the initial request. Several times it occured in the middle of the playground. She refused instructions from the yard duty. Then the yard duty called the teacher. The teacher called the principle. The principle was called and again, she refused to move. Finally, the counselor was called and eventually she followed the counselor into the office. However, it was at this time that morning meeting had been removed. Upon reflection, it became apparent that during the sharing portion of morning meeting she was getting a lot of attention. By refusing to follow directions she was getting the attention that she craved. Unfortunately, the attention was negative. However, for her, that didn't matter. The next week morning meeting was reinstituted and time was spent updating all of the teachers and specialists that the student worked with and encouraging them to front load their interactions with her by giving her attention. The focus of giving her positive attention was implemented across settings. In other words, targeted intervention was instituted on providing this student with something she needed-attention and connection, or a sense of belonging. Each morning the teacher invited her to share about her evening and called on her to answer questions. Also, more time was given to paying attention to

other cues she sent about needing attention that could be given in a positive way. Since that time, there has been no further incidents of her getting, "stuck." Therefore, it is important for educators to remember that the sharing portion of morning meeting can meet a variety of social emotional needs for students and it is important to allow time each day for each student to be heard.

Group Activity

Initially, group activity was to be used to practice self-regulation strategies and play games. This portion of the morning meeting was the most challenging to get to on a consistent basis. Mostly, time constraints prohibited trying to fit in all four components of morning meeting in the morning. Initially, a large part of the time was spent on establishing classroom rules. However, once the group activity was moved to a different part of the day, there was more success. For example, group activity was achieved by eating snack together and by creating a stretch break during math time where we could implement mindfulness and play other games. In addition, morning message was also used as a time to review self regulation tools. Therefore, it is important to remember that the four components of morning meeting do not all need to take place in the morning. Educators need to be creative in finding ways to meet the goals of what the group activity provides for students which is a way to connect with each other in a fun way during the day.

Morning Message

Initially, morning message was to be used as a time to discuss the daily schedule and to discuss upcoming events. This did happen and it proved to be very calming and organizing for both the students and educators. In addition, morning message was also used as a time to review self regulation strategies. Students were able to self regulate and stay at baseline more often when they knew the schedule for the day. For educators, this means that they are more able to

reach the top tier of students and implement academic learning that may otherwise not be possible.

Many teachers voiced that they feel overwhelmed with what they already have to do in a day and that it would be difficult to implement morning meeting. While implementing all components of morning meeting could be challenging for teachers, it is important to note that there are many ways to incorporate the four different areas for engagement. In addition, they do not need all four components of Morning Meeting to benefit students. For example, if all they did was implement greeting students first thing in the morning and spend some part of their day where students could share, they could make an impact on students feeling connected and create a sense of belonging.

It is important to greet students when they first come in the door as this provides a great opportunity for connection and creating a sense of belonging. This has been said in research many times. However, most times teachers are very busy in the morning and are not ready to receive their students when they arrive. It seems like a small thing. However, the implications of it are significant. A warm personal greeting may be the one thing that could turn the entire day around for a student.

In addition, sharing provides another opportunity for students to connect with one another because it helps to build a community where students can feel that they belong. Some students need more attention than others. Sharing provides a simple way that students can be in the spotlight. It also provides a way for them to receive positive attention rather than seeking negative attention. This can be done in simple ways throughout the week. It can be incorporated into the curriculum that is being taught, such as "what did you enjoy about that passage?" or as a way for students to share something about themselves, "what did you do this weekend?" or share

something that is important to them, "what pets or hobbies do you have?' Also, discoveries can

be made about the students' needs during sharing time. For example, when students share about

their weekend or homelife, teachers can learn valuable information for further questioning.

Policies to be Implemented at School Level

    Policies that should be implemented at school are a school wide positive behavior plan that

includes a mandate that teachers be ready to greet students in the morning. In addition, the

research around Response to Intervention suggests that the top 5% of students need the most

intervention. Therefore, it would be important for the principal, all teachers, service providers, as

well as lunch and recess supervisors to know the names of those students and their needs. This

way a community could be built to meet the needs of these students. A committee could be

formed and they could meet weekly to discuss how each child was doing and what to look for.

Plans could be made to incorporate social skills for them. For example, they could be partnered

with other students so that they would not be left alone during lunch and recess. Furthermore,

if each site has a team that regularly tracks academics, behavior, and attendance, educators could

better manage each student and provide for students' individual needs. As the team looks at the

individual student when they are at the beginning of their struggle, they would be better equipped

to identify the 'why;' antecedents, root causes, events, circumstances, etc. The team then could

create a plan to address the 'why' and assign a 'case manager' or lead person that has the best

skill set/relationship to initiate and oversee the plan. This person could report back to the team

on a regular basis. Educators need to be experts at identifying needs, creating an intervention

plan, and connecting the student/parent/family to resources. This helps students to complete

classwork and helps to ease the caseload of counselors.

Schools could benefit from further investigation into the effects of bringing basic needs

education and resources to educators and parents. In addition, it would benefit schools to further

investigate having targeted response to intervention teams that have a specific protocol they

follow that tracks specific students in specific areas such as academics, behavior, and attendance.

From there, the team of educators and providers could intervene in a proactive way. This could

help to meet the basic needs of all students, create a sense of belonging, and help students to

connect with their educators and their peers.

Policies to be Implemented at District Level

Policies that should be implemented at the district level are for educators to be trained in a

social emotional learning program. Districts need to insure that there is a team at each school

location that has a mix of educators, specialists, counselors, and administrators that know what to

look for in terms of student need and then help create a universal action plan that will meet the

needs of the top tier of students. This could become a great way to integrate a systematic plan of

prevention.

When asked what is the most important part of his job, Joe Smith[4], Assistant Superintendent

of Student Services reported that it was, "supporting sites in developing and implementing

support strategies for students in the top two tiers of the intervention triangle; targeted and

intensive." He further explained that, "regardless of the connection that the counselor makes, if

the adults that are part of the school day experience for our children are not informed about the

challenges/issues/triggers/interventions, the counseling will be meaningless." What educators

may not realize is that schools are not funded to provide mental health counseling. He reports

[4] Pseudonyms are used for all participants in this research in order to preserve their anonymity.

that, "we need to do a better job with our universal preventions and early interventions so that the need for counseling is not as high."

These findings could contribute to social change in that as a community, schools could come together to provide education and resources to needy families. These programs could afford students an opportunity to get their basic needs met and engage in an education that could help them achieve success and reach their educational goals.

Policies need to be implemented at the district levels for identification and implementation of strategies for the top 20% of students in need of additional support. If educators can offer more targeted intervention by identifying specific needs, prevention can be more readily implemented and used as valuable information for when a counselor is needed.This leads to prevention counsel rather than reactive counsel. Morning meetings can help to provide the information necessary for targeted intervention. The team or community of educators within a district could implement those interventions and open up communication about what is working for students. This could reduce stress, help students, and lessen the load for counselors.

Limitations of the Study

The limitations of this study are that this class is from a lower socioeconomic background which is not representative of the entire school site. Therefore, it does not match the more affluent demographics of the school which is more affluent. In addition, there were times that it was difficult to fill out the point charts.This limited the study in that some charts were not able to be used as they were incomplete. In order to have accuracy, charts were needed to be filled out throughout the day at multiple times throughout the day. It was important to include point chart time in the day so that the charts could be completed as accurately as possible. Furthermore, these students were students from the teacher's classroom so bias and positionality may have

affected the findings. For example, because the teacher knew some students from previous years, there may have been times when the behavior was more easily forgiven when classroom rules were not followed. With another semester to collect data, there could be more consistency with other classroom's implementation of morning meetings. For example, more frequent regular check ins and more time spent reviewing data over a longer period of time would contribute to findings.

Chapter 6-Conclusion

The problem originally identified in this study was that students have unaddressed social and emotional needs which inhibit their ability to complete daily class work. Morning meetings impact student classwork productivity because they provide a platform where basic social and emotional needs can be met. In answering the specific research questions synthesized by findings and discussion chapters, this study has revealed that by meeting the basic needs of students such as hunger, warmth, safety, connection, and a sense of belonging, students are more able to engage in learning.

Based on the answers to the research questions, in order to solve the problems previously identified, educators need to know that morning meetings are not necessarily the place where things are discovered. Rather, it is the place where actions can be implemented to meet specific basic needs for students. Morning meetings served a purpose for some in terms of a need for attention or connection or a need to be heard. For others, it began a stirring of thoughts or feelings that were later expressed individually.

Educators need to know that it is imperative that every educator at every site needs to know the needs of the top tier of students needs at every school. Every educator at said site should know the name, face, and needs of each of those children. In addition, each site should have a plan in place where they come together on a regular basis (weekly, monthly, quarterly) to discuss the needs of each child and specific targeted intervention for social emotional needs as well as academic needs. For example, the team could look at both classroom and playground needs.For example, the first question might ask, "do they have lunch and do they have someone to eat lunch with?

Schools could benefit from further investigation into the effects of bringing basic needs education and resources to educators and parents. In addition, it would benefit schools to further

investigate having targeted response to intervention teams that have a specific protocol they follow that tracks specific students in specific areas such as academics, behavior, and attendance. From there, the team of educators and providers could intervene in a proactive way. This could help to meet the basic needs of all students, create a sense of belonging, and help students to connect with their educators and their peers. Schools can benefit by coming together to identify those students at the top tier and by creating a targeted preventative intervention plan based on those needs that can help those students be successful in the classroom and on the playground. By implementing these preventative targeted strategies, schools can meet social, emotional, and academic needs of students and ease the stress on students, teachers, parents, and counselors.

Schools can benefit by coming together to identify those students at the top tier and by creating a targeted preventative intervention plan based on those needs that can help those students be successful in the classroom and on the playground. By implementing these preventative targeted strategies, schools can meet social, emotional, and academic needs of students and ease the stress on students, teachers, parents, and counselors.

Students can benefit from the four components offered through morning meeting. First, students could increase their ability to complete classwork by being greeted by their teacher when they first arrive to give students a sense of belonging. Next, students could increase their ability to complete classwork by having an opportunity to share their feelings or to gain the attention in a positive way. Also, students could increase their ability to complete classwork by reviewing the daily schedule first thing in the morning and by having an opportunity to practice self regulation strategies.Finally, students could increase their ability to complete classwork by having an opportunity each day to engage in group activities with their classmates that are fun.

Morning meetings provided a sense of belonging which created a bridge for teachers to engage with students. The significance of this finding is that morning meetings provide teachers an opportunity to discover if students are coming to their classroom with basic needs that need to be addressed. Many times it easy to forget to start with the basics. In addition, there could be many reasons that a student could arrive to school hungry. It could be because they are poor and do not have the food or resources to know how to get food from the school. It could be because they are busy or were in a hurry that day and did not get a chance to feed their child. California is a very expensive place to live. Many families are living in multi family dwellings. One of the students in this class shared that he and his brother are sleeping in the kitchen of their home. Often times this student arrived to school tired. He claimed that the man living with them needs to leave for work early and comes into the kitchen to prepare food and it wakes him up. This child has several basic needs that need to be met before we can address other social and emotional needs of managing his anger, let alone see an improvement in class work productivity.

The insights discovered were that even if a teacher does not have regular morning meetings, it is important for all teachers to find a way to really know their students. It is not enough to teach curriculum and ignore the whole child. Students have needs that are prohibiting them from gaining the best education they could. Teachers need to take the time to know what the needs are and provide solutions. Parents and students need to be educated about what they need in terms of basic needs and the importance they play on the child's academics. In addition, they need to be given the resources necessary to make that happen. With the high percentage of poverty in this area, it has become a crucial factor into the success of our students.

Students have unaddressed social and emotional needs which inhibit their ability to complete daily class work that can be addressed in simple ways that do not take a lot of time. For example,

if educators only spent a few minutes each day greeting, sharing and reviewing the schedule for the day students could greatly benefit. Students also benefit from classroom rules where the educators use them to provide positive language and encouragement for redirection. When students are given clear expectations and are encouraged with positive encouragement and feedback, they can improve behavior.

Educators need to know that classroom rules, as part of a positive behavior system, provide safety in the classroom and help to provide emotional regulation for students and teachers. However, the single most important thing that this research revealed is the importance of making sure that students experience a sense of belonging in the classroom--that they feel welcomed by their teacher the moment they walk through the door. They need to know that they matter and that it matters to their teacher that they are there. One thing that can easily be done is for teachers to ready themselves each morning to greet every student with kindness and convey the message that they are happy they are there. Sometimes, educators spend a great deal of time on their lesson plan all the while forgetting that what a student needs most is to connect with their teacher. No lesson plan, no matter how great will ever take the place of a student's need to feel that they belong. Teachers need a schedule that they follow with consistency every day, they need to spend the first part of their day greeting students and letting them know what the expectations for the day are both in terms of academics and behavior. This provides security in knowing what is expected of them so that they can be more successful and they can rest in knowing what is coming.

Finally, while the research shows that high percentages of students are struggling with some kind of trauma, many other students are doing their best to manage other stressors in their lives. In addition, many educators are also managing stress. Morning meeting is needed as much for

teachers as for students. It doesn't take much to throw off the peaceful balance of a classroom.

While 40% of students may have a significant trauma, there are many other in the classroom

dealing with uncovered stresses. For example, many students could have experienced a recent

death, family illness, loss of a job, new baby in the home, or recently moved. It cannot be easy

for students to know how to manage the day to day stresses of life, homework, social navigation,

and many with a learning disablility on top of it. Most teachers do not feel that they can add one

more thing to their day. However, if a teacher could spend the first few minutes of the morning

and offer a word of kindness and encouragement to a student, it could change the way a child

feels about their teacher and their peers. This could influence how they feel about themselves and

how they treat others. Learning to treat themselves and others with kindness could change the

world we live in. And, it can all begin with a simple greeting of, "Good morning! I am so glad

you are here today."

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