Implementation of Student-Created Classroom Rules that Decreased Off-Task Behavior in a Second Grade Classroom

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Abstract

Twenty-two second grade students enrolled in a rural Midwest school participated in this study. The purpose of this project was to determine if the implementation of student-created classroom rules decreased off-task behaviors in a second grade classroom. Two instruments were used to gather data. These were off-task frequency occurrence charts, one of which was used to record data three weeks prior to the treatment/intervention and one that was used three weeks after the treatment/intervention. A journal was also used during the implementation of the treatment/intervention to record daily results. Results indicated a decrease in off-task student behavior.
Acknowledgements

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CHAPTER I: INTRODUCTION

As a graduate student and second grade teacher in a public school setting it became apparent that a current class of students appeared to often demonstrate off-task behavior. According to the professional literature reviewed, children will break the rules, forget the rules, and test the limits of the rules (Wood, Porter, Brady, and Forton (2003). As a result of reviewing the professional literature DeVries and Zan, 2003, Hopkins 2005, Bartz and Matthews 2001, Black 2005, Wood, Porter, Brady, and Forton 2003 it became apparent that student-created classroom rules helped to reduce off-task behavior in classrooms. The review of the professional literature revealed several approaches to creating the student-created classroom rules. What appeared to be most beneficial in reducing the off-task behavior was to have the students make the rules themselves.

Statement of the Problem

The purpose of this project was to determine if the implementation of student created classroom rules decreased students' off-task behaviors in a second grade classroom.

Research Questions:

1. According to the professional literature reviewed, how were student-created classroom rules defined?

2. According to the review of the professional literature what were the benefits of student-created classroom rules?

3. According to professional literature, how were student-created classroom rules developed and implemented in an elementary classroom?
4. Did student created classroom rules decrease off-task student behavior in a second grade classroom?

Justification

This topic was of specific importance to the teacher as she had recently entered into a new job position. In addition, the teacher had previously taught at a private school and realized that this particular group appeared to demonstrate more off-task behavior than in the private school. Students were more unruly in the classroom and perhaps needed more structure. She was interested in determining if the implementation of student-created classroom rules would decrease off-task student behavior. The teacher was concerned that the number of off-task behaviors detracted from the learning process. Examples of the off-task behavior were students out of their seats, talking to other students during class, and being distracted with school supplies and other students. The teacher wanted to determine if student-created rules would reduce off-task behaviors, increase compliance with rules and thus allowed for academic success.

Definition of Terms

Elementary classroom - a second grade inclusive classroom.

Student created classroom rules - classroom rules that students would make as a class, with teacher supervision.

Off-task student behavior - “(a) talking without permission, (b) moving without permission, (c) playing with school supplies, and (d) looking around the room” (Schechtman and Leichtentritt, 2004; p. 327).
Limitations and Appropriate Use of Results

This project was conducted with second grade students. The research was limited to this one group of students and was conducted over a six-week period. Due to the limited time period and limited diversity of students, the results may not be generalized to other classroom settings.
CHAPTER II: REVIEW OF LITERATURE

The purpose of this project was to determine if the implementation of student-created classroom rules decreased off-task students’ off-task behaviors in a second grade classroom. In order to make this determination, the teacher developed the following four questions. 1. According to the professional literature reviewed, how were student-created classroom rules defined? 2. According to the review of the professional literature what were the benefits of student-created classroom rules? 3. According to professional literature, how were student-created classroom rules developed and implemented in an elementary classroom? 4. Did student-created classroom rules decrease off-task student behavior in a second grade classroom?

**Research Question 1.** According to the professional literature reviewed how were student-created classroom rules defined?

In the professional literature, there was not a common definition of student-created classroom rules. However, the teacher was able to use the reviewed articles to synthesize a definition from among the authors. DeVries and Zan (2003), Hopkins (2005), Maslow (1943), Bartz and Matthews (2001) in addition to Wood, Porter, Brady and Forton (2003) defined student-rules in various ways. For example, Devries and Zan suggested that student-created rules were a part of the general classroom atmosphere and added mutual respect. Wood, Porter, Brady, and Forton pointed out that rules were there to help everyone succeed, and also gave children the chance to frame ideas with a positive attitude. Wood, Porter, Brady, and Forton described student-created classroom rules as the responsive classroom approach. The three components of a responsive classroom approach were: (a) respect each other, (b) take care of yourself, and (c) take
care of classroom property. These rules acted as guiding principles and reminded students of how they should have behaved in a given situation as defined by DeVries and Zan as well as Wood, Porter, Brady, and Forton.

Maslow (1943) determined that young children did better in a system that had a “skeletal outline of rigidity, in which there is a schedule of a kind, some sort of routine, something that can be counted upon, not only for the present but also far into the future” (p. 7). He continued by explaining that children could have expressed this more accurately by having an organized world rather than an unorganized or unstructured one. Applying Maslow to this situation, students in a classroom need a routine or schedule and it must be something that can be counted upon not only for the present but also into the future. Maslow also stated that students could be a part of the process in creating the classroom rules.

Bartz and Mathews (2001) suggested that giving students the opportunity to succeed in smaller tasks that would encourage them to succeed in larger tasks. They proposed that one way of achieving this motivation of going from smaller rules to larger rules, was to seek student feedback and discussion about classroom rules and procedures. By having students define the rules and procedures for their classroom; this would help reduce the number of individual off-task behaviors leading to a better learning environment.

Hopkins (2005) discussed how students want and thrive in a classroom environment in which students know the limits of the classroom in which they feel. He emphasized that students must be guided to making the rules and limit the number of rules. Hopkins also explained that usually the rules proposed by students were very
similar to those rules presented by the teacher. Hopkins examples of student-created rules were: (a) paying attention, (b) turning in assignments, and (c) being prepared for class.

In conclusion, the professional literature defined student-created classroom rules in various ways. Devries and Zan (2003) determined that rule making was part of a general atmosphere of a classroom. In addition, Hopkins (2005) also commented that usually the rules proposed by students were very similar to rules presented by the teacher. Finally, Wood, Porter, Brady, and Forton (2003) pointed out that rules were there to help everyone succeed, and also gave children the chance to frame ideas with a positive attitude. Wood, Porter, Brady, and Forton described student-created classroom rules as the responsive classroom approach. These rules acted as guiding principles and reminded students of what they should have done. All of the literature agreed that student-created rules gave students a chance to express classroom norms. As a result, student-created classroom rules lead to less disruption because students stayed on task. A synthesized definition from the literature would be that student-created classroom rules were rules proposed by the students to help all students succeed.

Research Question 2. According to the review of the professional literature what were the benefits of student-created classroom rules?

The literature reviewed indicated that there were benefits of student-created rules. For example, Black (2005) indicated that students, who created rules for a classroom tended to have fewer discipline problems because students had a voice in classroom decisions. Wood, Porter, Brady, and Forton (2003) agreed that students were far more interested in following rules that they helped to create, it gave students the sense of
belonging in the classroom and students viewed the rules they made to be reasonable and fair.

In addition, DeVries and Zan (2003) stated that students who created the rules were more likely to observe them. They believed that when students participated in the rule making process, this participation supported students’ growth as moral, self-regulating human beings. Hopkins (2005) agreed that when students helped to create classroom rules they thrived in a classroom environment in which they knew the limits and felt safe. Therefore, both DeVries and Zan along with Hopkins agreed that student-created classroom rules helped students’ moral development.

In addition, Black (2005) described that by listening to students during the rule creating process, teachers learned to look at students in a different way and it brought the teacher’s perceptions of the students, as individuals, in a sharper focus. As a result of the teacher’s change in perception, students became less judgmental and more patient. This helped students to succeed. She stated, “Always remember to listen to your students’ voices. Always remember to ask the kids” (p. 41).

Wood, Porter, Brady, and Forton (2003) noted that the student-created rules gave students a sense of security and belonging, especially rules that were reasonable and fair. They also stated that the rules acted as guiding principles and reminded students what they needed to do. Black (2005) also stated that giving the students a voice to create rules led to higher student engagement and higher student achievement because their involvement was heard in classroom decisions. Wood, Porter, Brady, and Forton agreed that the broad rules fostered ethical thinking and the practice of self-control. The rules gave students the opportunity to apply general behavior expectations in various
situations. Bartz and Mathews (2001) agreed and stated that by involving students, in creating the rules, students would also become involved in creation of consequences for failing to observe the student-created classroom rules.

Vygotsky (1978) stated that the gap between a learner’s current or actual development level, determined by independent problem-solving and the learner’s emerging or potential level, of development is the zone of proximal development. This concluded that at any given point in development, there are certain problems that a child is on the verge of being able to solve. In the zone of proximal development, students would have to solve a problem that needed adult guidance to make it successful. The academic instruction could succeed, because real learning would then be possible. The notion of the zone of proximal development implied that a child’s development is determined by the social interaction and collaborative problem-solving. This implied that students who make their own rules were in their own zone of proximal development, when the students have a problem and are working with their peers or adults for a solution. When making the rules students are collaborating to solve a problem within their classroom. Together they will succeed in making a student-created classroom to become academically successful.

Shechtman and Leichtentritt (2004) stated that when learners were involved in the creation of student-created rules, students felt teachers were interested in them and students became effective learners. In addition, they stated that examples of off-task behaviors were (a) talking without permission, (b) moving without permission, (c) playing with school supplies, and (d) looking around the room. When students were
involved they developed a deeper respect for their classmates and teachers when they realized they can learn from one another.

In conclusion, the professional literature stated many benefits of student-created rules. Wood, Porter, Brady, and Forton (2003) agreed that students were far more interested in following rules that they helped to create. In addition, DeVries and Zan (2003) stated that when students created the rules they were more likely to observe them. Black (2005) noted that student-created rules led to higher student engagement and higher student achievement. Finally, Hopkins (2005) agreed that when students that helped to create classroom rules, the students thrived in a class environment in which they knew the limits and felt safe.

Research Question 3: **According to professional literature, how were student-created classroom rules developed and implemented in an elementary classroom?**

According to the professional literature student-created classroom rules were developed and implemented in an elementary classroom in various ways. Hopkins (2005) proposed that the key to creating classroom rules was to keep the rules few and simple and involve the students when rules are made. Black (2005) stated that giving students a voice in developing and implementing student-created rules in classrooms had also given them a voice in other classroom decisions. She further explained that giving students a voice in student-created rules led schools to be more democratic and less autocratic. Black indicated that democratic schools had fewer discipline problems, higher student engagement and higher achievement because the students’ voices were heard in classroom decisions. Wood, Porter, Brady, and Forton (2003) stated that together students developed a preliminary list of rules by asking students what rules students
needed to make their hopes and dreams come true. After the list was made it was reviewed as a class. They also stated that it is very important to emphasize that the rules be posted to help everyone succeed. They further explained that the teacher needed to make the expectations clear and reasonable for students to meet. The authors suggested the teacher model the development of classroom rules by using the following four steps. “1. Name the behavior. 2. Demonstrate the behavior. 3. Ask students what they noticed. 4. Ask student volunteers to demonstrate the behavior.” (p.25). The four-step model would help the students to know what the expectations are and make it easy for the students to meet the expectations.

Maslow (1943) discussed that satisfaction with one’s behavior led to feelings of self-confidence, worth, strength, capability, and adequacy of being useful as well as feeling necessary in the world. This implied that students who created their own classroom rules would feel good about the rules. Maslow also stated that the students would also have better capability of following the rules created due to the desire of achievement, freedom, adequacy, and independence.

Finally, in the professional literature student-created classroom rules were developed and implemented in classrooms to give students a voice. Black (2005) stated that giving the students a voice in developing and implementing student-created rules in classrooms had also given them a voice in other classroom decisions. She explained that giving the students a voice in student-created rules led classrooms to be more democratic and less autocratic. In order to implement the rules, Wood, Porter, Brady, and Forton (2003) stated that together students developed a preliminary list of rules and then they
reviewed the rules as a class. They also explained that it is very important to emphasize that the rules be posted to help everyone succeed.

Conclusion

To conclude, the professional literature indicated that student-created classroom rules had given students a voice and had allowed students to go from being silent to engaged. (Black 2005) Hopkins (2005) discussed that students liked rooms with limits and often felt safer in such a classroom. Finally, Wood, Porter, Brady, and Forton (2003) pointed out that rules helped everyone succeed.

The professional literature stated many benefits of student-created rules. For example, Black (2005) indicated that students who created the rules for a classroom tended to have fewer discipline problems. Wood, Porter, Brady, and Forton (2003) agreed that students were far more interested in following rules that they helped to create. In addition, DeVries and Zan (2003) stated that students that created the rules were more likely to observe them.

Finally, the professional literature stated student-created classroom rules were developed and implemented in classrooms to give students a voice. Black (2005) stated that giving students a voice in developing and implementing student-created rules in classrooms had also given them a voice in other classroom decisions. However to implement the rules Wood, Porter, Brady and Forton (2003) stated that together students developed a preliminary list of rules and then they reviewed the rules as a class. They also stated that it is very important to emphasize that the rules be posted to help everyone succeed. Student-created rules led to higher student engagement and higher student achievement.
CHAPTER III: METHODS AND PROCEDURES

The purpose of this project was to determine if the implementation of student-created classroom rules decreased off-task student behaviors in a second grade classroom. To reach this determination, the teacher posed the following four questions. 1. According to the professional literature reviewed, how were student-created classroom rules defined? 2. According to the review of the professional literature what were the benefits of student-created classroom rules? 3. According to professional literature how were student created classroom rules developed and implemented in an elementary classroom? 4. Did student-created classroom rules decrease off-task student behavior in a second grade classroom?

Participants

Twenty-two students participated in the study. The students were enrolled in a classroom in a rural town located in a Midwest state. Twelve students were male and ten students were female. One of the participating students was Hispanic and twenty-one students were Caucasian.

Treatment/Intervention

The purpose of this treatment/intervention was to have students develop classroom rules to determine if off-task behaviors would decrease. However, before the students developed their own classroom rules, the teacher felt the need to have the class discuss how rules functioned in other aspects of their lives. The teacher led discussion was based on the Wood, Porter, Brady, and Forton (2003) four-step model. “1. Name the behavior. 2. Demonstrate the behavior. 3. Ask students what they noticed. 4. Ask student volunteers to demonstrate the behavior” (p.25). The teacher led discussion focused on
other contexts in which rules are developed and followed. The other contexts discussed were the system of governmental rules, the rules of the elementary school, and the present rules used in the classroom. The teacher led discussions about these contexts to demonstrate how rules play a role in all aspects of life and that everyone must follow the rules or suffer the consequences. It was discussed that everyone must follow rules throughout their lives.

To begin the intervention phase of the project, the teacher led a discussion about the government and identified governmental leaders such as the mayor of the city, governor of the state and the president of the United States. First, the teacher explained that these governmental leaders were elected by the people. The teacher explained how a system of government provided order to a group such as nation, state or community. She went onto explain further, why government was necessary in making and enforcing rules. This explanation included that the government provided leadership, services, and resolved disputes.

The teacher then followed-up the discussion with questions such as, “What is the significance of rules and why are they so important to us?” The teacher continued the discussion by asking other questions such as, who makes the rules, which branch of the government enforces the rules, who are the people that provide leadership, and who are the people that resolve the disputes?

After discussing why there are governmental rules, the teacher moved the discussion to why there are rules in school. The teacher led a discussion asking the class questions about rules that they knew about in school. The class responded with no running in the hallway, listen to the teacher or principal, bring your homework back to
school, do not hit other students, do not kick other students, no swearing in school, and respect everyone. The teacher then asked the following question to the class, “Why we need rules in our school?” She hung a piece of poster board at the front of the room titled with the question she had just asked. When the students gave their responses to the question, she wrote them on the poster board. The class generated a number of responses to the question. The responses included that rules were needed so that no one would get hurt (feelings or bodily), no fighting or swearing, no one would get in trouble, so students would act appropriately, to respect other students, so property is not touched, and so other students can learn.

The teacher then moved the discussion by asking another question, “Why do we need rules in our classroom?” In much the same manner as before, the teacher led a discussion about why rules were needed in the classroom. The students responded that class rules were needed so that everyone behaved, everyone listened everyone would learn and get good grades. These responses were written on another piece of poster board posted at the front of the room next to the other. The teacher then asked the class who was in charge of making sure that the rules were enforced. The students responded back with answers such as, the teacher, the principal, and the students themselves.

The teacher once again moved the discussion by posing the following question to her students, “What rules were already established in the classroom?” She wrote their responses on a third piece of poster board hanging at the front of the room. The students responded with answers that included listen to the teacher, no talking on top of the teacher, no fighting, be kind to others, keep your hands and feet to yourself, listen to your quiet captain (the students have one person within their cooperative groups that remind
the others in that group to keep their voices down), and treat others they way you would
like to be treated. Then the teacher posed the fourth question to the class.

As before, the students' responses were written on a separate piece of poster
board hanging in the front of the room. The question the teacher asked was, "What rules
do you think we need in the classroom?" The students completed a list of responses that
included, no talking, be nice to others, be patient, and say appropriate things. The teacher
continued with another question, "Why do we need these rules?" As the students
responded, she wrote their answers on the poster board. The student responses to the last
question included, so everyone listens, so people are good, so everyone learns, so no one
gets hurt, and so they are followed (meaning the rules). The teacher then asked her last
question, which she wrote at the top of the fourth poster board, "What we should do with
these rules?" As the students gave their responses, she wrote them on the poster board.
The student responses included listen/follow them (the rules), and follow them so you do
not lose recess, listen so you do not have to turn a card.

Finally, as the last step, the teacher posed a final question to the class. The
question was, "What rules would be good for us in our classroom?" She had one final
piece of poster board hanging in the front of the room, which she headlined with that
question. As the class gave their responses, she wrote them down. After the rules were
written down, the class voted to approve or disapprove of each rule. In order to approve a
rule, the class decision had to be unanimous. The students unanimously approved the
rules. The student-created rules were: keep your temper down or else you will go to see
the principal, keep your hands and feet to yourself or else you will have to move your
desk to the hall, no running in school or the classroom or else you will go to the
principal's office and write 100 times *I will not run in school*, listen to the teacher or else you will pull a card, use 6-inch voices (lower voices) or else you owe the teacher one recess, no touching or taking others things or else you to a red card, no copying others work or else you got a red card and the teacher *takes your paper*, if you get two red cards in one day you will go to the principal's office for two days and miss all the recesses for those two days, and no talking or else you have to write fifty times *I will not talk*.

The student-created rules and consequences were implemented the next school day. To help students learn and remember the rules, they were copied on to a new piece of poster board and hung in the classroom. In addition, students received a copy of the new classroom rules on a regular size of paper to read and refer to at their desks (see Appendix A for the list). The rules were made on a Friday and implemented the following Monday.

**Instruments/Protocols**

The instruments used to collect data for the project were called an off-task frequency occurrence chart and journal (see Appendix B for the chart). The chart contained four characteristics of off-task behavior as cited in Shechtman and Leichtentritt (2004). The four characteristics were (a) talking without permission, (b) moving without permission, (c) playing with school supplies, and (d) looking around the room. After a student in the class displayed one of these behaviors, the teacher made a tally mark by the characteristic behavior on the chart. The teacher completed six off-task frequency occurrence charts, one for each week of the project's implementation. Three were dated for the three weeks before the treatment/intervention was implemented and three were dated for three weeks after the treatment/intervention was implemented. She tallied the
off-task behaviors throughout the day to keep an accurate count of how the students were behaving.

The teacher also kept a journal after the treatment/intervention had been implemented. The journal entries were descriptions of whole class behaviors. These descriptions included, time that the behavior occurred, how many times students discussed the student-created classroom rules in addition to a general description of class behavior or circumstances that may have affected behavior on the particular day such as assemblies, weather, and vacation days. This data helped the teacher to give a fuller description of student’s behavior during the three-week treatment/intervention phase of the project.

Procedures

Before the study was implemented, the teacher contacted the school principal in person to describe the study and ask for permission to conduct the study in her classroom. In the teacher’s weekly newsletter, she explained to parents or guardians the purpose of the study before starting. In the newsletter, it stated that the teacher was involved in a Masters of Arts Educational program. It also stated the purpose of the project. The newsletter was then sent home with the students. There were no objections from the parents when the teacher had spoken to each of them in person or over the phone. Then with the approval of the principal and the parents or guardians of the students, the teacher implemented the project.

The off-task frequency occurrence chart was used to keep track of off-task behaviors in the second grade classroom. The teacher made tally marks on the off-task frequency occurrence chart in between lessons when the students transitioned from
subject to subject. If she had noticed any of the off-task behaviors during the previous lesson, she would then make a tally mark in that box for that behavior.

At the end of the school week the teacher would add up the tally marks for each behavior and mark it on the bottom of the charts to keep track of how many times off-tasks behaviors happened that week. At the end of each day, the teacher would record in the journal her observations that pertained to the student-created classroom rules. These observations included students’ behaviors, comments, and other events that happened during the day. At the end of the week, the teacher reviewed the entries and looked for commonalities among the entries.

Time Line

The use of the first off-task frequency occurrence chart began on February 19, 2007. The teacher tallied marks for three weeks on each week’s chart before implementing the treatment/intervention. The treatment/intervention was then implemented into the classroom on March 12, 2007. The teacher continued to tally off-task behaviors on the weekly frequency charts until March 30, 2007. The intervention concluded on March 30, 2007.

Data Analysis

In order to analyze the data from the off-task frequency occurrence chart the teacher counted the number of tally marks that were recorded on the off-task frequency occurrence charts. The sums of the students’ off-task behaviors before and after the treatment/intervention were compared.

The teacher entries in the journal were analyzed. The journal was used to describe events and situations that occurred during and after the implementation of the
treatment/intervention phase of the project. The entries were analyzed by sorting them to see if any patterns of behaviors, events, or situations emerged. These patterns could help to triangulate the results of the off-task frequency occurrence charts.

Conclusion

The action research project was begun after all the procedures were in place in February 2007 in order to answer the fourth research question. "Did student-created classroom rules decrease off-task student behavior in a second grade classroom?"

Procedures and instruments needed to collect data were developed and implemented. Before the treatment/intervention, the teacher collected data using off-task frequency occurrence charts. After the treatment/intervention, the teacher collected data using off-task frequency occurrence charts and a journal. Following the data gathering, an analysis was conducted. From the analysis of the data, the teacher could determine the results of implementing student-created rules in a second grade classroom.
CHAPTER IV: RESULTS

The purpose of this project was to determine if the implementation of student-created classroom rules decreased off-task student behavior in a second grade classroom. The research questions were 1. According to the professional literature reviewed, how were student-created classroom rules defined? 2. According to the review of the professional literature what were the benefits of student-created classroom rules? 3. According to professional literature, how were student-created classroom rules developed and implemented in an elementary classroom? 4. Did student-created classroom rules decrease off-task student behavior in a second grade classroom?

The reviewed literature defined student-created classroom rules in various ways. Black (2005) provided that student-created classroom rules gave students a voice in the classroom. When students had a say in making the classroom rules, they tended to follow them. She also stated that when school leaders genuinely sought out and appreciated student ideas, there were likely to be improvements in school environments. Furthermore, Devries and Zan (2003) determined that rule making was part of a general atmosphere of a classroom. Finally, Wood, Porter, Brady, and Forton (2003) pointed out that rules were there to help everyone succeed, and also gave children the chance to frame ideas with a positive attitude. Wood, Porter, Brady, and Forton described student-created classroom rules as the responsive classroom approach. These rules acted as guiding principles and reminded students of what they should have done. Therefore, from this understanding of the literature, the class as part of a social studies lesson on government developed student-created classroom rules.
Data Results

The teacher used two instruments to collect data before and after the treatment/intervention phase of the project was implemented. The first instrument used to collect data was the off-task frequency behavior chart. The second instrument was a daily journal kept by the teacher that contained observations about students' behaviors related to the student-created classroom rules.

Off-task frequency charts

To answer the fourth research question the teacher conducted an action research project. The question was, did student-created classroom rules decrease off-task student behavior in a second grade classroom? For the purpose of this study, the teacher collected data that would be analyzed as a class unit and not as individual students to determine if, as a whole students' off-task behavior decreased after they created their own rules for appropriate behavior in the classroom.

The teacher used the off-task frequency occurrence chart for a total of six weeks, a chart was used before implementation of the treatment/intervention and a chart after implementation of the treatment/intervention. She made tally marks on the chart beside four off-task behaviors. Those behaviors were developed from a list of four off-task behaviors cited by Shechtman and Leichtentritt (2004) that included: (a) talking without permission, (b) moving without permission, (c) playing with school supplies, and (d) looking around the room.

Before the implementation of the treatment/intervention, the number of recorded off-task behaviors were tallied and added together. These behaviors were monitored daily for three weeks. There were a total of 1,118 recorded tally marks for talking without
permission, a total of 509 recorded tally marks for moving without permission, a total of 249 recorded tally marks for playing with school supplies, and a total of 608 recorded marks for looking around the room. The sum of these four the off-task behaviors was 2,484 before the implementation of the treatment/intervention.

After the implementation of the intervention, the numbers of recorded off-task behaviors were tallied and added together. These behaviors were monitored daily for three weeks. The break down of the four categories of off-task behaviors were: 445 recorded tally marks for talking without permission, a total of 111 recorded tally marks for moving without permission, a total of 127 recorded tally marks for playing with school supplies, and a total of 183 recorded tally marks for looking around the room. The teacher added the all these tally marks for a total of 866 off-task behaviors after the implementation of the treatment/intervention.

The numbers of off-task behaviors from before and after the implementation decreased 1,618 after the implementation of student-created classroom rules. Figure 1 summarizes the number of off-task behaviors before the treatment/intervention and the number of off-task behaviors after the treatment/intervention.
When the number of off-task behaviors are compared to the before and after the treatment/intervention phases of the project, there is an appreciable decrease in those behaviors identified in the literature.

**Journal**

The teacher also kept a journal after the treatment/intervention had been implemented. The journal entries were observations of student behaviors related to the student-created classroom rules. The students commented 31 times over the three-week period to other students about following the student-created classroom rules. The comments made by students included many students reminding other fellow students to follow the rules.

**Summary**

The implementation of student-created classroom rules in the teacher’s classroom resulted in an appreciable decrease of inappropriate off-task behavior during the intervention phase of the project. The recorded numbers decreased appreciably after the
student-created classroom rules were developed and implemented. The number of off-task behaviors from before and after the implementation decreased 1,618 after the implementation of student-created classroom rules. The students had commented 31 times over the three-week period to other students about following the student-created classroom rules.
CHAPTER V. DISCUSSION

Introduction

The purpose of this project was to determine if the implementation of student-created classroom rules decreased students’ off-task behaviors in a second grade classroom. In order to make this determination, the teacher developed the following four questions. 1. According to the professional literature reviewed, how were student-created classroom rules defined? 2. According to the review of the professional literature what were the benefits of student-created classroom rules? 3. According to the professional literature, how were student-created classroom rules developed and implemented in an elementary classroom? 4. Did student-created classroom rules decrease off-task student behavior in a second grade classroom?

Meaning of Findings

The findings clearly indicate that the implementation of student-created classroom rules in the teacher’s classroom resulted in an appreciable decrease of inappropriate off-task behavior during the intervention phase of the project. Throughout the literature, student created rules were explained and discussed by the authors. Upon review of the literature, the teacher developed a list of off-task behaviors based on the work of Shechtman and Leichtentritt (2004) that included: (a) talking without permission, (b) moving without permission, (c) playing with school supplies, and (d) looking around the room. In this project, the numbers of off-task behaviors decreased appreciably after the student-created classroom rules were developed and implemented.
Student-Created Rules

The student-created rules were suggested to be apart of the classrooms general atmosphere. The student-created rules would also add mutual respect between the teacher and the students. It was noted in the literature that student-created classroom rules were there to help all students succeed, and also gave students the chance to frame ideas with a positive attitude. The three components of a responsive classroom approach were: (a) respect each other, (b) take care of yourself, and (c) take care of classroom property. The student-created rules acted as guiding principals and reminded students of how they should have behaved in a given situation as defined by DeVries and Zan (2003) as well as Wood, Porter, Brady, and Forton (2003). It succeeded in the teacher’s classroom due to the students taking charge and control of the rules. They took ownership of the rules and responded to the consequences when the rules were broken.

Journal

The teacher also kept a journal after the treatment/intervention had been implemented. The journal entries were observations of student behaviors related to the student-created classroom rules. The students commented 31 times over the three-week period to other students about following the student-created classroom rules. The teacher felt the reason behind the 31 student comments was that students took ownership of the rules and wanted to succeed in making the student-created rules work.

Summary

The purpose of this project was to determine if the implementation of student-created classroom rules decreased students’ off-task behaviors in a second grade
classroom. Two instruments were used to decrease the off-task behavior; (a) off-task frequency occurrence chart, and (b) a journal kept by the teacher.

The first instrument was the off-task frequency occurrence chart. The chart contained four characteristics of off-task behaviors as cited from Shechtman and Leichtentritt (2004). The four characteristics were: (a) talking without permission, (b) moving without permission, (c) playing with school supplies, and (d) looking around the room. The other instrument was a teacher kept journal. The other instrument was the journal. The journal entries were descriptions of whole class behaviors. These descriptions included, time that the behavior occurred, how many times students discussed the student-created classroom rules, and a general description of class behavior or circumstances that may have affected behavior on that particular day such as assemblies, weather, and vacation days. The results of developing and implementing were that the number of off-task student behaviors decreased appreciably during the intervention phase of the project.

Recommendations

At this time, the teacher did not feel the need to change any of the procedures with the six-week study. A recommendation would be to implement the student-created classroom rules for a longer period of time to find out if students’ would continue to enforce the rules or would the teacher eventually have to enforce the rules. In such a short period of time the rules may have still been new to the students but after a period of time would the newness of the rules begin to fade.
Another recommendation would be to try student-created classroom rules at the beginning of a school year. The question would be if the rules had the same affect or would it just be something new and eventually the excitement of them wear off?

Conclusions

In this study, which was conducted over a six-week period in the spring semester of a classroom in a rural town located in a Midwest state, student-created rules were implemented with the purpose of decreasing off-task behavior in a classroom. Results indicated that the implementation of student-created classroom rules in the teacher’s classroom resulted in an appreciable decrease of inappropriate off-task behavior. The recorded numbers dropped appreciably after the student-created classroom rules were developed and implemented. The teacher believes that the appreciable decrease in off-task behaviors may be attributed to the selection of appropriate strategies that were presented in the literature.
References


Our Classroom Rules

1. Keep your temper down or else you will go to see the principal.

2. Keep your hands and feet to yourself or else you will have to go to your desk in the hall.

3. No running in school or the classroom or else you will go to the principal's office and write 100 times I will not run in school.

4. Listen to the teacher or else I'll pull a card.

5. Use 6-inch voices or else you owe the teacher one recess.

6. No pushing or taking others things or else you go to a red card.

7. No copying others work or else you go to a red card and the teacher takes your paper.

8. If you get two red cards in one day you will go to the principal's office for two days and miss all recesses.

9. No talking or else you have to write 50 times I will not talk.
Our Classroom Rules

1. Keep your temper down or else you will go to see the principal.

2. Keep your hands and feet to yourself or else you will have to move your desk to the hall.

3. No running in school or the classroom or else you will go to the principal’s office and write 100 times I will not run in school.

4. Listen to the teacher or else you will pull a card.

5. Use 6-inch voices or else you owe the teacher one recess.

6. No touching or taking others things or else you go to a red card.

7. No copying others work or else you go to a red card and the teacher takes your paper.

8. If you get two red cards in one day you will go to the principal’s office for two days and miss all recesses.

9. No talking or else you have to write 50 times I will not talk.
Off Task Frequency Occurrence Chart

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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Moving without permission</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>school supplies</td>
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<tr>
<td>Looking around the room</td>
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Appendix B
### Off Task Frequency Occurrence Chart

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<tr>
<td>Moving without permission</td>
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<td>Playing with school supplies</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Looking around the room</td>
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