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What is the result when responsive classroom techniques are used as both a classroom management and character education program without implementing the whole approach?

Lisa Jewell
Rowan University

WHAT IS THE RESULT WHEN RESPONSIVE CLASSROOM TECHNIQUES ARE
USED AS BOTH A CLASSROOM MANAGEMENT AND CHARACTER
EDUCATION PROGRAM WITHOUT IMPLEMENTING THE WHOLE APPROACH?

by
Lisa Jewell

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ABSTRACT

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Dr. David Hespe
Masters of Science in Teaching

The purpose of this study was to determine if six Responsive Classroom techniques can

be used as a classroom management system and character education program, without

implementing the entire approach. The six approaches used were class meetings, stress

the deed not the doer, time-outs, voices of authority, social conferences and logical

conferences. The research was conducted in the researcher's co-teach classroom in a

suburban elementary school. A researcher's journal, teacher and aide interviews, teacher

reflections and student surveys were used to collect data. Results are aligned with the

literature on the subjects of character education and classroom management and the data

collected. The Study determined that Responsive Classroom techniques can be used as a

classroom management and character education program without implementing the entire

approach. Implications for future research are discussed.

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CHAPTER ONE

Introduction

"STOP!!!!" It was the only thing I could think to say when I saw a first grader twisting the arm of his classmate. I got up as quick as I could and ran over to the students to stop what was happening. I was in shock and did not even know what to say to them. Luckily my cooperating teacher stepped in. "Ryan! We're going to the office. I am tired of this!" she said as she led him out of the room. The class stared at me, wondering what I would do; little did they know I had no idea. Do I address the problem? If I do, how do I begin to approach it? Instead I began reading a book to the class to keep them occupied until the teacher came back. All the time I was hoping they would not say anything about what had just happened. Just when the story was ending, the teacher came back. "We know we do not touch anyone else in this class!" she firmly stated. "Yeees" said the class in that monotone voice that says, I know what she wants us to say. "You know if you did you would be sent to the office and get in a lot of trouble", she said. "Yes", the class responded again. And that was the end of it, until after lunch.

After lunch Ryan stood at the door, looking cautiously at the teacher. "Come in Ryan", she said in a firm, unchanging voice. As he approached his desk the teacher said, "NO Ryan, you sit on the carpet. You are not part of our class." As I listened I was a bit shocked. I have always respected this teacher's tough discipline policy, but this time I think it went too far. I was disturbed by this event and thought about it a lot that week. What would I have done as the teacher in the room?

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Purpose Statement

This real life problem combines both ethical and practical aspect, which calls for an approach that combines character education and classroom management. On the topic of character education, teachers are very important and can infuse character education into everything they say (Wheeler, 1997). Even though teachers have the power to guide the direction of character education, it should be the ultimate goal of the program to create independent, critical thinking students (Ayers, 2003). A character education program that deals with all situations in the same way is unrealistic because all situations are different (Ayers, 2003). A good program allows students to feel safe and comfortable; it should be a part of every aspect of the classroom (Ayers, 2003).

Ideas about classroom management have changed over time; now it is thought to be something that students and teachers play an equal role in (Cotton, 2001). Like Character Education, classroom management should produce independent children (Colville-Hall). Another link between the two programs is that they should both provide students with a safe learning environment. Feeling safe in the classroom allows students to learn without fear getting in the way (Wong, 2005). Classroom management is not easy but it is a noble goal to have students to act properly and do the right thing (Cotton, 2001).

So why do we need classroom management and character education programs? Although, strict classroom management plans stop the behavior they do not change it (Sweet, Elkind, 2004). Also, classroom management is one of the hardest skills for teachers to acquire (Veenman, 2004). Students and teachers can be emotional people whose emotions should be addressed, and can be addressed through character education

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(Norris, 2003). When students see, model and practice good character they take those skills with them and practice them independently (Lickona, 1994).

The Responsive Classroom approach attempts to combine classroom management with character education. Studies completed on this approach have found that there is a relationship between the program and its goals (Rimm-Kaufman, 2006). However, the program has not been studied as individual parts. Responsive Classroom is a school-wide program. What if just part of the program was implemented? For this thesis, six of the strategies from Responsive Classroom will be implemented (Teaching Children to Care, by Charney). These strategies are as follows: Logical consequences make sure the consequence for the misconduct makes sense. Time-outs are a way for students to remove themselves so they can regroup and join the class again. Check-ins go with timeouts and ensure that the teacher touched base with the student. Stress the incident not the person helps students address what they dislike, not who. Teaching where rules come from can help students understand the rules better. Class meetings are structured ways to address classroom issues. Finally, conferences with the students help communication and can hopefully diffuse situations before they are out of hand.

Statement of Research Problem and Question

How can a teacher combine character education and classroom management? Even though Responsive Classroom claims that is exactly what it does (Responsive Classroom), can just some of its approaches be applied and have the same effect? Can a teacher implement these strategies independently of the entire school and colleagues? Studies on Responsive Classroom, conducted by Sara E. Rimm-Kaufman (2006) and Dr. Stephen Elliot (1993-1998), focus on its effectiveness on a school-wide scale. But there is

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a gap in the research where it is not known how Responsive Classroom principles work in an isolated classroom that does not have the resources to implement the entire program. Current research also does not address the ways that Responsive Classroom might work as a classroom management approach and not just as a social enhancer.

Story of the Question

A public school teacher's day is packed. It always seems as if the day is never long enough, yet the information that needs to fit into that six or seven-hour period never stops growing. Academic knowledge is not the only thing that needs to be addressed during a typical day. Classroom management is a huge part of the teachers duties, for without it students would not be in a proper environment to learn. In addition, building good character is also important to maintaining a classroom that feels safe, so the students have nothing to worry about except learning. These two tasks are no small undertaking. Each can consume the day and each have to be well thought out to accomplish their respective goals. What if classroom management and character education could work hand in hand? What if the very way you maintained your classroom brought up opportunities to model and practice good character? The combination of these two important ideas could help teachers be more effective and produce well rounded students.

Character education has always been a topic in which I am very interested. I feel like teachers just do not know how to connect it with the daily routine of the classroom. Character education winds up being a lesson taught once a week. The students do not get any lasting impression and it does not accomplish the goal of making students exemplify the traits they are being taught. I know a schoolteacher's day is full of things to do, but

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character education, if done well, can improve the climate of the classroom. This would allow more learning to occur. I believe students should come out of school with more knowledge than what is in their books. Students should leave school knowing how to be good people. Children should be exposed, at a very young age, to the idea of being moral thinking persons. Children spend so much of their life in school; the time should be used to improve all aspects of a person, not just their academics.

As I thought more about character education I started looking closer at an approach called Responsive Classroom. I have been in a school that adopted this approach and I wanted to find out more about it. I began reading a book called Teaching Children to Care by Ruth Sydney Charney. This book focuses on classroom management, done in a way that promotes caring. I began to think, what better way to integrate character education into the daily routine than to combine it with a classroom management approach? One of my other beliefs about teaching is that a good classroom management system must be in place for a class to run smoothly. So if I am going to have one anyway, why not make it a learning experience for the students? From the classroom management techniques, students could gain knowledge about being a good person. They can be active participants and learn from experiences that directly affect their life. Now, when Johnny hits Susie it is not just an event that gets Johnny in trouble but something everyone can learn from. It is not to single anyone out but to help the class as a whole.

I could not think of anything better; the more I read, the more I loved this idea. Although a problem did arise; Responsive Classroom is a comprehensive approach that encompasses every aspect of school. Classroom management is just one part of it. So I began to wonder. What if I began teaching in a district that did not adopt this program?

The idea is for the whole school to be involved. Could I isolate some of the approaches I had read about and just use them in my classroom? Would the program lose its effectiveness if I did not follow it in its entirety? From that moment I realized this was what I wanted to know. Can pieces of Responsive Classroom be implemented to have positive results? I am so impressed with the program but could I really just take the ideas I wanted and not others? What is the result when Responsive Classroom techniques are used as both a classroom management and character education program without implementing the whole approach?

Organization of Thesis

Chapter two will be a review of the literature on the topic. It will cover what character education should be, what classroom management should be, why classroom management and character education are important topics and needed, an overview of Responsive Classroom, and the Responsive Classroom techniques that will be used in this study.

Chapter three describes the methods used in the study. It will go into detail about how, where, when, and who will be involved in the study, the type of data that will be collected, and how the data will be analyzed. The second part of the chapter will focus on where the research will take place and the participants.

Chapter four contains the findings of the study. The data will be reviewed and the study's difficulties and surprises will be discussed.

Chapter five is the discussion portion of this thesis. The significance of the data, the summary of the study and what I learned, the limitations of the study, and recommendations for future research.

CHAPTER TWO

Review of Literature

This chapter discusses character education and classroom management

and their importance in schools, an overview of Responsive Classroom and studies of it,

and Responsive Classroom techniques. The techniques of Responsive Classroom that will

be used in this study will include the following strategies: Logical Consequences, Time-

Out, Stress the Deed, Not the Doer, The Voices of Authority, Problem-Solving Class

Meetings, and Using Social Conferences (Charney, 2002). Each of these approaches will

be explained in relation to classroom management and to character education.

What Should Character Education Be?

The Utah State Office of Education Character Education homepage states,

"Character Education is not one more thing on your plate! It is the plate!!!" (Sweet,

Elkind, 2004). Character education should exist in every part of the classroom, without

exception (Ayers, 2003). While it is important to have a good program in place, the

majority of the responsibility of how effective it is rests on the shoulders of the teacher(s)

(Benninga et al.). Teachers, as well as students, come into the classroom with

predetermined morals and values from previous experiences and their home life

(Norberg, 2006). The teachers show their beliefs in everything they do; it is in the way

they talk, interact, discipline, teach, and model (Sweet, Elkind, 2004). Modeling is an

essential part of character education; it allows students to hear and see what is expected

of them (Benninga et al.). A teacher can use every word he or she says to model good character and reinforce what is being taught about character (Wheeler, 1997).

Beyond teachers, character education programs should fit the school in which they are used and should be infused in every aspect of the school (Wheeler, 1997). The process that is established is more important than the outcomes at times; sometimes the process needs to be learned and repeated before the outcome is perfect (Norberg, 2006). Lickona (2004) states that character education should teach children to care about what happens and have the skills to make the right decisions under pressure. Character education should allow opportunities for students to problem solve with their peers to come up with a good decision (Ayers, 2003). Situations cannot be dealt with one overarching principal, all situations are different and should be dealt with differently; the advantage is that others can learn from the solutions and compromises that are reached (Ayers, 2003). The classroom as a community is another important factor in character education because it is a way to include every person in the class (Lickona, 2001). The conflict lies in the fact that schools are often concerned with order and structure, whereas character education should be explored (Ayers, 2003). Less rigid schools would allow better character education programs and that is where the connection to classroom management lies. Character education should provide a safe and positive environment for all students and therefore classroom management must be involved to ensure that all students feel safe and accepted (Ayers, 2003).

What Should Classroom Management Be?

Classroom management was seen in the past as an entity in itself; more recently researchers have determined that connecting it with multiple aspects of teaching is

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beneficial (Richardson, Fallona, 2001). Current ideas about classroom management have involved the students as active participants in creating and implementing the programs (Cotton, 2001). The other push in classroom management is to link it with moral character (Richardson, Fallona, 2001). As was mentioned in the last section, character education has also found the purpose and advantage of integrating classroom management; the concepts seem to be in agreement. Like character education, the teacher brings his or her own beliefs and ideas into the subject including beliefs and goals for themselves and their students (Richardson, Fallona, 2001). The responsibility of the classroom management program should fall on the shoulders of the teachers and the students, which allows the students to become independent thinkers (Colville-Hall).

Harry K. Wong (2005), the author of a popular book on classroom management called, The First Days of School, in an interview defines classroom management as the everyday events that exist in a classroom that enable the students to learn from their teacher. Classroom management is not something that can be done once or twice and forgotten about. It is something that must be maintained throughout the day and the entire school year (Colville-Hall, 2000). Classroom management is not just about control but also academic achievement. Students cannot learn in a chaotic and unsafe environment (Wong, 2005). Other research conducted by Cotton (2001) has found that involvement and consistency throughout the whole school, an inviting school environment, clear rules, a good relationship with community members, and setting high goals make for a good school and classroom management. Further, classroom management should have two parts; prevention and strategy implementation (Cotton, 2001). These two parts are essential because it is not enough for a good program to exist, it must be executed

properly; a program can only be as effective as its users (Watt, Higgins, 1999). In addition, children must be taught what is expected of them with the ultimate goal of independence (Cotton, 2001). James Hymes argues that classroom management is tough and it takes time beause it is a lofty goal to help children see what is right and act on those feelings properly (Cotton, 2001).

But Why?

Half of the school day is taken up by activities other than academic instruction; what accounts for a large portion of that time are behavior issues that are big and small (Cotton, 2001). Most teachers are aware of the small issues like bickering, calling out, and not listening to directions; yet the bigger issues deal with school violence. Two thirds of all students who bring a gun into their school feel that they have been bullied at school (Lickona, 2001). Tom Lickona, the Director at the Center for the 4th and 5th Rs, believes the solution to this problem is creating a sense of community between students (2001). Often the solution is thought to be discipline and stricter classroom management programs; typical behavior management strategies change the behavior but do little or nothing to change the character of the students (Sweet, Elkind, 2004). In order to combat school violence and make the school day as productive as possible the marriage of classroom management and character education is needed.

As for classroom management, Veenman (1984) found that a majority of teachers cite disciplining as the toughest skill to master. Classroom management is like any other skill that must be practiced often to become comfortable with (Norris, 2003). Classroom management can be used to resolve the differences among students that often cause conflicts in school; dealing with differences as a class, in a structured way will allow

students to be comfortable and open (Norris, 2003). It is unavoidable that students feel anger but what is important is what is done with that anger; good classroom management programs can turn anger into a positive experience (Norris, 2003).

Students and teachers are people, and people have emotions that must be accounted for when teaching. In order to accommodate emotions, character education can accompany classroom management (Norris, 2003). At a Brigatine, New Jersey elementary school, a character education program has been attributed to a decrease in behavior problems (Broderick, Raymond, 2006). As another, more serious topic, Lickona (2006) sites a lack of character education programs for the increase in juvenile violence. Research has shown that there is a positive relationship between an effective character education program and academic growth over multiple years (Benninga, Berkowitz, Kuehn, Smith). Products of good character education programs exhibit good character traits independent of the program (Broderick, Raymond, 2006). When students have a good model and are challenged by being asked to exhibit good character traits, it becomes part of their personality, which will follow them after they have finished with school (Lickona, 1994). Character Education helps students embrace social and academic learning (Benninga et al.). The lessons learned in character education are useful for any avenue a child's life may lead (Watt, Higgins, 1999).

Responsive Classroom

Responsive Classroom is an approach which has existed since 1981 (Responsive Classroom Official Website). The approach comes out of the Northeast Foundation for Children (NEFC), formed by a group of teachers who believed that acquiring social skills are essential to the academic growth of children (Rimm-Kaufman, 2006). Various

practices and principles encompass the approach. These principles include paying equal attention to social and academic education, understanding that the way in which children learn are important, and knowing that understanding the children and their families is key to teaching them (Responsive). The practices are Morning Meeting, Rules and Logical Consequences, Guided Discover, Academic Choice, Classroom Organization, and Working with Families (Responsive, Fact Sheet).

There have been studies conducted on the effectiveness of the Responsive Classroom approach. The first studies, conducted by Dr. Stephen Elliot spanned from 1993 to 1998 and included three different studies (Rimm-Kaufman, 2006). The first in 1993 was conducted for one year and showed a rise in social skills and a decrease in behavior problems. The next study was in 1995 and the third was from 1996 to 1998. All three of the studies showed a positive correlation between the improvement of social skills and academic test scores (Rimm-Kaufman, 2006).

Rimm-Kaufman (2006), an associate professor at the University of Virginia, conducted a three-year study whose aim was to look at the academic and social outcomes of implementing the Responsive Classroom approach. The study was quasi-experimental and included six schools, all in the same district; three schools implemented the Responsive Classroom approach and three were used as control schools, which did not use Responsive Classroom methods (Rimm-Kaufman, 2006). The teachers in the schools that were using the approach received two training courses, taught by experts in the field (Rimm-Kaufman, 2006). Before reviewing the results it is necessary to remember that the ultimate goal of the Responsive Classroom approach is to combine social and academic improvement in school (Rimm-Kaufman, 2006). Rimm-Kaufman (2006) found that there

was a rise in academic performance in math and reading, teachers valued collaboration more than teachers who did not use the approach, student's attitudes were better towards school in general, teacher's attitudes were positively changed regarding their job, teachers who used the approach were more likely to report having an affectionate relationship with their students, and students were exhibiting better social skills and felt more comfortable (Rimm-Kaufman, 2006). As a consequence of these results the teachers were more at ease about making their classroom a positive and inviting place for students, the students were exhibiting the social skills they had been taught without prompts to do so, and students who experienced the Responsive Classroom approach were less apprehensive when faced with new tasks (Rimm-Kaufman, 2006). In conclusion, the study found that the Responsive Classroom approach more likely than not, accomplishes the goals it sets out to achieve (Rimm-Kaufman, 2006).

Responsive Classroom Techniques

Logical Consequences is the first technique in the program and it is not very complicated. If there is an action, taken by a student, that requires a consequence then the action and the consequence should be related. This allows the student to connect what he or she has done to what results from it (Charney, 2002). For example, if a student destroys a library book then a logical consequence would be that the student could not take out a library book until he or she can prove it will not happen again. In this case, the action and consequence are directly related and the student can learn the correct behavior to gain back the privilege. Teachers use logical consequences to help students learn from their mistakes, not to punish them or hurt their feelings (Charney, 2002). From the classroom management standpoint the students know that they cannot do something that

is against the rules without receiving a punishment for it. This approach maintains order. As a character education tactic, logical consequences are fair, help students make the right decisions in the future and show respect between student and teacher.

Time-outs are a sub topic of logical consequences because sometimes the logical consequence to a behavior is a time-out. For example, when a student is poking another student while seated at the rug, that student has lost the privilege to sit with the class and must go to time-out. Although, time-outs have their own description and teach different character traits, so it is important to look at them as separate ideas. Time outs are very structured; they have a spot (usually a chair in a central place in the classroom), specific duration depending on age and the action, and a specific way to get out of one (Charney, 2002). As a classroom management technique, time outs allow a situation to be dealt with and maintain the flow of the lesson. Time-outs permit teachers to deal with the problem when it occurs and find a more appropriate time to talk about it. The good character traits this teaches is fairness, respect, and self control. It is fair because it is used in the same way for all students (Charney, 2002). It is also a logical consequence for being disruptive. Time outs show that the student has respect for the teacher by listening to her and the teacher has respect for the class by removing a disruptive student so they may learn without interruption. It teaches self-control because students must be able to go and return from a time out on their own.

The second part of a time out is called a check-in. These are simply small conversations between the student who was put in the time out and the teacher. They should be done the same day but at a convenient time (Charney, 2002). Check-ins are

important because they allow the student and teacher to discuss what happened. It shows respect, caring and understanding on the part of the child and the teacher.

Stress the deed, not the doer (p. 247) is the next technique (Charney, 2002). This is important because students tend to put blame on the person who committed the act they dislike instead of focusing on what it was that they disliked. It also is a way to tell a student that you dislike their behavior without conveying the message that you dislike them (Charney, 2002). When managing a classroom this is often the aspect that gets complicated. Students often get on each other's nerves. Teaching the students how to stress their needs and expectations allows them to focus on themselves and not be angry with specific students. This is meant to eliminate tension between classmates. Respect, caring, and self-control are the character traits used in this approach.

The Voices of Authority (p. 265) explains the origins and purpose of rules in every situation (Charney, 2002). Sometimes rules are there because they keep order and others safe. The origins for rules come from many different places. Sometimes they come from the principal, the school board, the state, or the teacher. Knowing that people make rules allows students to fight for change where they see fit; it also allows them to understand the purpose (Charney, 2002). As a classroom management technique this is helpful because the students see that some rules are beyond just the classroom and that rules serve a purpose. Voices of authority can teach any character trait depending on the rule which is being addressed. For example, explaining that the rule to walk in the hallway can teach courtesy and order; the rule, to give everyone a turn, can teach fairness.

Problem solving class meetings with the entire class are used to address problems that are occurring that affect the class as a whole or a problem that involves a specific

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child but can teach the whole class a lesson (Charney, 2002). These meetings are structured and have rules to keep them in order. The ultimate goal is to resolve problems. The solution should not be given to the students; they should be given the chance to come to a solution as a class (Charney, 2002). This is a classroom management technique that provides an appropriate time to discuss classroom issues and have a teacher overseeing the resolution to a problem. Once again all the good character traits can be utilized and taught through this technique. The classroom incidents and teacher observations determine the direction in which these meetings go.

The final Responsive Classroom technique is called Social Conferences (p. 305); which are between a student and the teacher (Charney, 2002). The teacher uses "I noticed..." (p. 308) statements to address problems (Charney, 2002). The student is also allowed to speak about what he or she sees. Just like a class meeting, the student and teacher come to some sort of conclusion about the situation that they can both agree on (Charney, 2002). The teacher shows respect and caring for the student by listening to his or her opinion and taking it into consideration. There is also understanding and acceptance between the teacher and student. Self-control and honesty may play a role in these conferences also. As a classroom management technique, problems can be dealt with quietly and without embarrassment or resentment.

All of these techniques are integrated into the everyday functions of the classroom, which is a key to a successful classroom management system (Norris, 2003). Some proven classroom management techniques include clear consequences that relate to the behavior, fair rules applies fairly, students taking responsibility for their actions, and a teacher that is aware of his or her classroom (Cotton, 2001). All of the strategies apply

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directly to the Responsive Classroom techniques mentioned. Clearly defining

expectations allows the students to prevent bad behavior by simply following the known

rules (Cotton, 2001). In every Responsive Classroom strategy the expectations are clearly

outlined before any activity begins, this way the students know from the beginning what

is unacceptable behavior.

Lickona (1994) believes that good character can be promoted through disciplining

in a moral way, as the Responsive Classroom techniques suggest. Other schools have

used a "window room" with great success. This room allows students to go there if they

need to relax or if their teacher needs a break from them; this technique has been very

effective for this school (Colville-Hall). This is the same concept as time-out except time

out is based within a classroom while the window room was school-wide. Class meetings

are a popular character education strategy that is used to solve problems that arise in or

outside of school (Babin, 2002). Class meetings teach students how to resolve conflicts

and allow students to ease their fears and concentrate on school when the meeting is over

(Lickona, 1994). Class meetings are useful for classroom and individual student problems

(Davis, 1997). Experience and discussion are good ways to learn about good character

traits (Sweet, Elkind, 2004). All of the Responsive Classroom techniques are experiences

and many involve discussion, if not right away, eventually.

Lickona (1994) believes there is a need to be a class that thinks about the good of

everyone. The idea is to ask, would you want this done to you (Lickona, 1994)? The way

in which students fell about their classroom affects how they learn (Norris, 2003). The

combination of classroom management and character education, like in Responsive

Classroom, attempts to make the classroom a safe and happy place for students to learn (Charney, 2002).

CHAPTER THREE

Methodology

General Methodology

This is a qualitative, teacher research study. According to the book, <u>Becoming a</u> <u>Teacher Through Action Research</u>, there are five points that are involved in a reliable qualitative study: drawing from multiple perspectives, information about setting and situations, process of collecting and analyzing data, researcher's viewpoint, and reflection (Phillips, Carr, 2006).

To begin, qualitative research should draw from many perspectives and resources. This works well for this study because I will be using the viewpoints of character education, classroom management, Responsive Classroom, my own thoughts, and the thoughts of other teachers. I will be using triangulation, which involves observations, interviews, and artifacts.

Detail is needed about the setting and the situations, which is compiled from a large amount of data. The research for this study relies heavily on the situations and events that occur and the data I plan on collecting describes the situation as completely as possible. My data collection will follow a rubric. This rubric will address the six aspects of Responsive Classroom discussed in Chapter two.

The researcher's viewpoint is important in a qualitative research study. My perspective plays a huge role in the direction of this study. It is my beliefs that have shaped the research question and the study design. This thesis does not set out to be

indifferent and then conduct a study to find a result. I posed a question and I want to find out what happens when that question is explored in a systematic way.

Reflection is the last part of a reliable qualitative research study. Reflection will be a part of my data analysis. My research will rely heavily on my interpretations of the data and therefore my reflections themselves. For the purpose of this study, reflection is very important. I will be asking the students and teachers, in addition to myself, to reflect on experiences and their thoughts. A large part of this study has to do with how the opinions of the participants shape the way the question is answered.

Explanation of Study/Timeline/Materials

Responsive Classroom techniques are aimed at maintaining the classroom and teach good character. The good character traits that will be used for this study include fairness, respect, caring, good decision making skills, understanding/acceptance, honesty, and self-control/regulation. The measure of maintaining the classroom will also coincide with these traits. There are six Responsive Classroom techniques that will be used in this study, they include Logical Consequences, Time-Out, Stress the Deed, Not the Doer, The Voices of Authority, Problem-Solving Class Meetings, and Using Social Conferences (Charney, 2002). Each of these techniques is explained in chapter two. Each Responsive Classroom technique can be related to both classroom management and character education. There are studies on the effectiveness of Responsive Classroom, yet there is a gap in the research. Responsive Classroom is a school-wide approach. What if some techniques were separated out and used in one classroom; what would be the result? That is the question this thesis will examine. Are the techniques of the Responsive Classroom

approach so strong that they can stand on their own, without the support of the rest of the approach and school-wide support?

This study will be conducted during March and April of 2007 at my pre-service placement. During that time it will be necessary to introduce and explain the six techniques thoroughly. It is important that they are taught as close to Responsive Classroom rules as possible, to ensure the study is testing the correct techniques. During this time I will implement the techniques and then collect, compile and analyze the data.

Data Sources

I will be collecting data in many different ways. For observations I will be keeping a journal that will be used to write down any information that pertains to the study, as the rubric in Appendix A indicates. Situations that involve logical consequences, time-outs, stressing the issue not the person, voices of authority, class meetings and social conferences will be documented. After each entry I will write down which technique was used and how it was scored on the observation rubric. The rubric uses a scale from 0-2. Each technique has a different description for each point on the rubric. Zero means the technique was not successful and two means the technique was successful. Basically I am looking for situations involving student behavior and interaction. I want to see what happens when students misbehave and how the class treats each other. I will also ask the teacher for her opinion about these situations that occur in her classroom.

I will be giving a survey to the students about the classroom meetings. They are first graders so the survey will be simple and ask what they like and what they do not like about the Responsive Classroom strategies and there will be part for them to explain why

(survey is attached in Appendix B). The students will fill out the survey after the classroom meetings are conducted. If there is not time for the students to complete the surveys directly after the meeting the students will fill them out as soon as possible, no later than that day. I will conduct an interview with the teacher and classroom aide to find out their feelings. The interview will be made up of specific questions but have a part for the teacher and aide to comment about what they think is important (See interview protocol in Appendix C). These interviews will be conducted before any of the Responsive Classroom techniques are explained or implemented.

All data collected will be kept anonymous. The student artifacts will be coded with numbers and only known to the researcher. The teacher and aide will have pseudonyms to mask their identity. All names and places will be changed. The researcher will keep the data in a secure location and be the only one to have access to it. The research will be kept for a minimum of three years and disposed of properly after that period of time.

Data Analysis

The rubric is based on the six aspects of Responsive Classroom that will be used in the study. Each specific issue can be ranked zero, one or two. Two points means that the technique used was very effective, one point means it was somewhat effective and zero means it was not effective. By looking at each technique and how effective it was, the researcher can come to conclusions about the individual techniques and the program as a whole. Besides the rubric I will use the teacher and aide's interviews and reflections to assist when interpreting the data from the rubric. Basically I am looking at the data to see if the six Responsive Classroom techniques I will implement will have similar affects,

as seen when the entire approach is implemented. Will these strategies provide a good character education and classroom management program?

Study Setting

The school in which I am student teaching and the location of my study, I will call South State Elementary. The study was conducted in a first grade classroom. The school contains preschool through fourth grade. The township contains four elementary schools, one middle school and one high school. The town is transitioning from a rural to a more suburban area since it is close to a major city. The average income for families in the town is fifty thousand. The school contains mostly Caucasian students. It has advanced technology for both teachers and students to use.

Participants

The study will include the students, from the class, that have the consent form signed and returned by their parents. There are twenty eight students in the class and twenty four students returned the consent form. Every student participated in the activities and responses but the students who did not return the consent form will not be included in this study. No student was forced to complete any activity. The students are between the ages of six and eight. The classroom teacher in the classroom and the one-on-one aide will also be participating in the study. Both are female and responded to interviews and reflections. Thirteen of the participating students are female and eleven are eleven. There is one student who is classified as hearing impaired and has a cochlear implant. Another student is classified as learning impaired and has in-class support during language arts. One student is being tested by the Child Study Team. Four of the students receive English as a Second Language services. Two students receive in class

support for math. Seventeen of the students are Caucasian and two are African American. There are five students who have another language spoken at home. There is one student from each of these ethnicities, Korean, Polish, Honduran, Indian and Romanian.

CHAPTER FOUR

Review of Data

Timeline of Data Collection

All data was collected during a seven week period, from March 12, 2007 to April 27, 2007. The data collection began with the interviews of the classroom teacher and aide. On the first day the students were introduced to the surveys and the class meetings. Each technique was introduced as a problem, pertaining to that technique. There was little to plan out because the entire study hinged on events that occurred naturally within the classroom.

Interviews

Before I began my research I thought it was important to see how the teacher and one-on-one aide felt about the character education program and classroom management system that existed in the classroom. I also wanted to determine their feelings on the strategies I would be using. I decided to interview the aide because she interacted with the entire class and was present at times that the teacher and I were not, like specials, lunch and recess (indoor and outdoor). She also might approach the issues instructionally as the teacher, but from a different perspective. She does not influence the class as much but assists in classroom management functions. I decided to interview them and not give them a survey to fill out so I could understand where they were coming from and ask them to clarify if I did not understand their answers. It also allowed me to clarify or

explain questions they did not understand. I interviewed them separately so neither would be influenced by the other's responses. The questions and answers are as follows:

1. What is the current character education program and how is it implemented?

   Teacher response: "We have a character trait for each month. It is said on the morning announcement accompanied with a quote that relates to it. Just recently we were introduced to family meetings. I have not conducted any yet. We were briefly introduced to them at a faculty meeting."

   Aide response: "I am not really sure of the exact program. I know there are character traits that are used and assemblies."

2. What is the classroom management system in place? How effective do you think it is?

   Teacher response: "For the class I have a system that uses gumballs. When the class is good they receive a gumball. When they misbehave they lose a gumball. For individuals I use a ticket system. It works the same way the gumballs do but on an individual level. When the class gets to fifteen gumballs they receive a prize. Sometimes I determine the prize and sometimes the students and I come up with a prize together. The students have prize day where they can exchange their tickets for prizes, homework passes, lunch with the teacher and other prizes. I think it works very well for this class. Even at the end of the year they are still motivated by these two systems."

   Aide response: "The teacher uses tickets and gumballs. The tickets are for each student and the gumballs are for everyone. The students love getting these

things and are very disappointed when they lose them. I think it works because the students respond to it."

3. Are logical consequences used when an unacceptable behavior is exhibited?

   Teacher response: "I do make an attempt for the punishment to fit the crime but I do not specifically think of logical consequences every time I need to discipline. Sometimes it is very difficult to match the behavior with the punishment."

   Aide response: "I think (teacher) does a great job of making the consequences makes sense."

4. Do you feel the students are kind to each other?

   Teacher response: "I have a very caring class but of course there are times when the students are not kind to each other. It is normal for first grade. In my opinion it is not excessive and they are more caring than anything else."

   Aide response: "The students are kind most of the time but I see them at lunch and recess. It is hard when they are left with little structure. They can be rude and even mean sometimes. I see how those problems sometimes spill into the classroom and disrupt it."

5. What happens when students are unkind to each other?

   Teacher response: "I try to explain why what they did was unkind and make them apologize. Different things are done depending on how severe the behavior was. Sometimes it is just a simple misunderstanding and they are just acting like seven or eight year olds and sometimes it is meant to be mean. Obviously those two situations need to be dealt with differently."

Aide response: "The aides try to deal with the problems out side but sometimes I feel that they are just ignored. In the class I think (teacher) does a wonderful job of dealing with issues that arise."

6. Does the classroom management system allow for problems to be handled in the least disruptive way possible?

Teacher response: "My hope is to always deal with problems without disrupting the class, but sometimes that is not possible."

Aide response: "I think so, when the teacher takes away a ticket it is quick and allows her to keep going. The gumballs are the same thing, they are quick and still get the point across."

7. What are your feelings on:

Logical Consequences?

Teacher response: "I think they are a good idea, they reinforce why the bad behavior was bad."

Aide response: "I like it, I think they are already used in the class."

Time-outs?

Teacher response: "I am not fond of these in the context I have seen them used. Maybe used differently they would be ok." (Interviewer question: How have you seen them used?) "I have seen them used as a way for teachers to remove a student they cannot control. This solves nothing and removes the student from the learning environment. If the student is acting out because he or she is having difficulty with the material, separating them only teaches them to misbehave to get out of the situation."

Aide response: "I think sometimes it would be a good idea so the students can calm down."

Stress the deed, not the doer?

Teacher response: "I think this would cut down on hostility between students but it may be difficult with children this young."

Aide response: "It would be nice to tell them what is bothering them instead of who, but sometimes who is the bigger problem. I do not know how you would get around that all the time."

Voices of authority?

Teacher response: "It is good for students to know the sources of the rules. I would just worry it may take too much class time. You would have to come up with some system to cut off discussions if it cutting into teaching time."

Aide response: "I am not sure if the students are old enough to grasp this concept. I guess trying it out would be the best way to figure out if this was a good idea for this age."

Problem solving class meetings?

Teacher response: "I think they are a good idea. I am just not sure first graders are mature enough to handle them. I would also be concerned with using too much class time."

Aide response: "I really like this. I think it gives the students a place to just talk about things that are on their mind."

Social conferences?

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Teacher response: "It would be nice to talk one-on-one with students to come up with a solution to stop behaviors that get them in trouble."

Aide response: "I love this idea. It is a good way to discuss student's actions with them."

Research Journal/Teacher Reflections

My research journal was used throughout the entire study. In this journal I wrote about the situations that were dealt with using the six Responsive Classroom techniques utilized in this study. I wrote about the event, what was done about it and where the end result would fall on the rubric. The journal is dated and also includes what was talked about in our problem solving classroom meetings and my thoughts on how the meeting went. This was just a way to keep track of all the events that related to the study. There are some gaps in the journal where I was absent or my cooperating teacher had taken over the class for state testing. I was the only one to use the journal and to decide what would fall into the six techniques I was focusing on. I was usually not able to fill out the journal as an event happened because of my duties as the teacher. Instead I would make little notes and complete the journal after school daily.

To accompany this journal I also had teacher reflections. They were filled out when the teacher or I thought that there was a large issue that would benefit from the teachers thought on it. The form had an area for the issue, how it was dealt with, what the outcome was and the positives and negatives of the situation. There are a few lines for the teacher to respond after each area. These blank forms were left in the classroom where both the teacher and I had access to them. The teacher could simply take one or I could ask her to fill one out. She then returned them to me and they were put with the research

journal. To make sure these reflections can be seen in context I will add them after the issue in the journal. Students' names are replaced with numbers below to maintain their confidentiality. Significant entries in the journal and teacher reflections are as follows:

March 12

I have been observing the class to see what I can bring up at our first class meeting. One thing I thought we could work on is getting jackets and backpacks in the afternoon. There is only a small space for many children. Many students wind up being pushed, fall down and get hurt. I thought this was a good place to start. I did not want to start too big because I wanted to also focus on the process of the meeting.

Before the meeting we filled out a survey about how the students feel about school, I wanted them to get used to the form and have a base for the students' feelings.

When I began the meeting I explained the rules, which are as follows:

- One person talks at a time.

- Only the person holding the frog should be talking.

- No putdowns.

- What we say stays within our class.

- This is a serious time, not a silly time.

- If you cannot stick to any one of these rules you will be asked to leave the meeting and return to your seat until you think you can join the group again and act properly.

After I explained the rules I talked about how I was concerned about what was happening in the closet at dismissal. I did not want anyone getting hurt or things being

ruined. I then opened the discussion up to the class to see what solutions we could come up with.

Many students spoke and we came up with a few solutions:

- If there are too many people in the closet some people could wait on the side until there was a space for them.

- When something falls pick it up.

- If something is on the ground do not step on it.

- If there is someone who has accidentally fallen help them up. (Observation Rubric-Class Meetings: 2)

There was some silliness during the meeting. 18 was acting silly and laughing and 7 was making inappropriate comments. I asked 18 to stop which he did. I told 7 that his comments were not appropriate for this meeting. 7 once again made a comment that was just said to make others laugh, I asked him to return to his seat and come back when he felt he could act serious. He sat for a few minutes and came back and made no comment for the rest of the meeting. (Observation Rubric- Time-outs: 2)

The students where then asked to return to their seats and fill out a survey about how they feel about class meetings.

At the end of the day I had a social conference with 7. I asked if he knew why he was asked to leave the meeting today. 7 said he was not acting the right why. I asked if there was anything he could do. He thought he could act more serious and listen to what his classmates were saying and add good solutions to the problems.

Teacher Reflection: (I asked the teacher to fill one of these out on the incident with 7, during the meeting)

Issue: 7 was not taking the class meeting seriously and made multiple comments that were not constructive or related to the topics being discussed.

How was it dealt with?: Miss. Jewell removed him from the situation and later spoke to him about his outcome.

What was the outcome?: From what I was told he said during the social conference, he understand what he did. It will be a matter of time before I think we will know if he really internalized what happened or if he will act this way again.

That afternoon some students waited when the closet was full but others engaged in the same behavior that we talked about during the meeting. Once I reminded the students about our meeting many more of them started to show respect to their classmates and their belongings. (Observation Rubric- social conference: 1)

March 13

17 yelled at 14 for taking a center he should not be doing. 14 got very upset and started yelling back at 17. I intervened and found out what was happening. It was ok for 14 to that center so I explained what the misunderstanding was. 17 apologized but 14 was still upset. I took him aside separately and asked him why he was still upset. He said that 17 was mean to him. I wanted to know what about it hurt his feelings and he said that he did not like being yelled at. I asked what he could do next time, instead of yelling back. He said that he could tell the other person that it was not nice to yell and then figure out what they could do to solve the problem. (Observation Rubric-Stress the Deed...: 2)

At the end of the day most of the students conducted the same behavior in the closet. Students were pushed and knocked down and many items where on the floor and stepped on. (Observation Rubric- Class Meetings: 0)

March 14

12 constantly calls out in class. He consistently tells me what he is doing when I am engaged in teaching the whole class. Many times he will raise his hand and just say what he is thinking before I call on him. I have informed him that I will not answer any comment he makes unless he raises his hand and is called on. (Observation Rubric-Logical Consequences: 1)

14 was putting scissors in his mouth and 12 told him he should not do that. 14 got very upset and started yelling and crying. When I went over 12 told me what 14 was doing. I asked 14 if that is how scissors are used, he said no. I also asked him why he thought 12 told him not to do that, he responded by saying it was not safe. As a result I took away 14's scissors and told him he could come to me when he thought he could us them properly. Later that day he came to when we had another cutting activity. I returned the scissors and he used them properly for the rest of the day. (Observation Rubric-Logical Consequences: 2)

At the end of the day there was not enough time for a class meeting so with the last few minutes I thought we should review what we talked about at the class meeting. The closet was not much better and I think we should discuss what we can do to help us remember the solutions we came up with. Some students reviewed what we said in the meeting and I told them it was good that they remembered what we talked about but some students needed a better reminder. 18 thought it would be a good idea to write them and post them next to the closet. I did so and then we had to pack up. The closet was much better and the students were patient while getting there things. (Observation Rubric-Class Meeting: 2)

March 15

7 and 16 have been sitting next to each other since March 9th. Both of them are normally very good students. Since they have been sitting next to each other they have been a persistent disruption. I spoke with them today and told them if they would like to stay sitting next to each other something would have to change. I asked them what they thought could be done. 7 said that they should stop telling jokes and pay more attention when they need to. 16 agreed with this. (Observation Rubric-Social Conferences: 2)

12 is not calling out as much but he has not stopped the behavior. He is continuing to raise his hand but not wait to be called on. I spoke to him again today and asked what we could do to help him from calling out. He could not come up with anything. I asked if it would help if he had some one-on-one time with me at the end of the day to tell me all the things he wants to tell me during the day. He thought this was a good idea. (Observation Rubric-Social Conferences: 2)

March 16-21

I was absent from student teaching during this time for a death in the family. The teacher conducted a family meeting on death while I was out to explain to the students where I was and what I was experiencing.

March 22

I had been out for four days where I had been full time teaching. The class was very considerate when I came back. Many students came up to me to apologize and ask how I was. 2 was especially affected and told me she knew why I was out. When I asked her why she said she did not want to say because it would make me sad. I told her it was okay to talk about it. Even though I was not there I seemed as if the class meeting the day

before was effective. The teacher told me that the class was very concerned and asked some great questions. I asked the teacher to fill out a teacher reflection.

Teacher Reflection:

Issue: Miss Jewell was out for days because of a death in her family. The students were very concerned and continually asked me what was wrong. I wanted to address the situation in a setting where the students could hear what was going on and they could voice their feelings.

How was it dealt with?: We had a class meeting where I told them what was going on with Miss Jewell and asked them what they knew about death.

What was the outcome?: Students had little knowledge about the subject and really only associated death with sadness and black. I did my best to explain away misconceptions they had and explain what Miss Jewell had been going through. In the end I think the students were very receptive to the topic and had a better understanding of it when the meeting was complete.

Positives/ Negatives of the situation: I think it was a good experience overall. The students were very mature and understanding. I was glad we could have a real conversation about the topic. I thought the meeting was very effective. (Observation Rubric- Class Meeting: 2)

<div align="center">March 23</div>

The aide in the classroom is concerned about some behavior that is occurring on the playground. Some students are excluding others and making mean comments.

13 got in trouble on the playground for banging two students heads together while playing a "game".

The entire first grade was addressed by the disciplinarian in the school. They have been having a lot of trouble with rudeness and incidents of students being upset and hurt during recess.

Unfortunately the policy is that things that occur on the playground are dealt with by the aides not the teachers in the class. It is meant to alleviate some of the problems that the teachers have to deal with because they are not there so it is even more difficult to deal with. Although some of the issues are spilling over into class time. I would like to have a class meeting about these issues as soon as possible.

<center>March 26</center>

Three students were working on their centers and commented that they did not want a certain classmate to sit by them. I talked to them and asked what they were bothered by. The three students talked and decided that they did not like how she was mean to them. I asked them what they could do about that besides excluding her. They decided that they could ask her to stop the behavior they do not like or to just move away instead of hurting her feelings. They apologized and continued working on centers next to each other. (Observation Rubric- Social Conferences:2 and Stress the Deed...: 2)

<center>March 27</center>

I have been trying to fit in a class meeting about being kind and accepting to one another and I did not want to have to wait any longer to address the problems that the class has been having. So after their morning activities I have allotted time for a class meeting.

We reviewed the rules from last time and the issue of the closet. I asked them how they thought they were doing with that. They came to the conclusion that they were still

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messy but once the rules were up they could remember them more. They think they are now doing a much better job (Observation Rubric-Class Meeting: 2)

We then moved on to address the problem of being hurtful to other classmates. I brought up that we can hurt people in two ways, we can hurt their feelings or physically hurt them and both are bad and painful. I asked the students their thoughts on this. Everyone wanted to talk; some students told stories about how they were hurt or how someone they know was hurt. Some students gave their opinions on why it is not good to hurt anyone in anyway. 13 brought up a situation his older brother was experiencing. His brother was being bullied and did not know what to do. I opened it up to the class to see what we can do. The students came up with ignoring it, telling an adult, or telling the bully what they did not like and why to was not nice. The students really responded to the situation so I decided to give them some more situations for them to work through. We went through two or three more and even though the students could have gone a lot longer we needed to wrap it up. I ended by telling the students I was proud of how well they did but the only way to show it was to be kind and remember what we said in the meeting. (Observation Survey-Class Meeting: 2)

After lunch the students filled out their survey.

After the meeting I approached 7 and told him how much I appreciated that he was so well behaved at this meeting and made serious comments that added to the meeting.

March 28

After our talk 7 and 16 still sit next to each other and have not been disruptive at all. They have actually become more helpful than before and are very attentive. I praised them for doing such a great job.

The closet is being kept much neater and when it begins to get messy a few students will go over and keep it neat. At the end of the day more students will sit aside and wait for fewer students to be in the closet. Fewer and fewer students are getting hurt.

March 29

21 had broken her right arm and was in a cast. She was forced to write with her left arm and it took her a long time to do so. Her cast has been off for weeks and she is still taking an unnecessarily long amount of time to complete her work. I thought it may be her getting the strength back in her arm but I have asked her if it hurts or is still healing and she says it is not. I am beginning to suspect that she is taking advantage of the flexibility we allowed her to have when she broke her arm. I spoke with her. I asked her what she thought was going on. She did not think anything was wrong and she was doing her work the way she should be. I told her to return to her work and think about it. (Observation Rubric-Social Conference: 0)

12 has begun to realize when he is talking out. When he does forget he immediately apologizes and raises his hand to wait to be called on. Some afternoons he comes and talks to me about whatever he wants.

March 30

21 has picked up the pace on her work. She is working like she used to, quickly and properly. She did not come to me or admit that anything was wrong or that she was

going to change her behavior. I praised her on her work and she smiled and said thank you. She worked diligently all day. (Observation Rubric-Social Conference: 2)

<center>April 2-9</center>

The school was on spring break during this week.

<center>April 16</center>

Although 14 has been using his scissors properly since March 14, today he was pretending to cut his hair and the student next to him. I took his scissors away again and told him since this was his second time getting them taken away and playing with them, he would have to do more to prove to me he could use them the right way. At the end of the day He asked if he could have his scissors back and I told him he needed to prove to me more that he knew how to use things properly. He said he was sorry and I told him that I just did not want him to hurt himself or anyone else. (Observation Rubric-Social Conference: 1)

We also had another class meeting today. We did not have anything new to talk about but I wanted to go over what we had talked about in our last two meetings and anything else the students wanted to bring up. 14 usually has a difficult time standing still at meetings so I have made sure to stand next to him at this meeting. Immediately he begins to squirm, so I stand behind him and put my hand lightly on his shoulders so he can have somewhere to focus.

We reviewed keeping the closet clean and being kind to others. The class decides that they are doing much better with the closet but can do a little better at being nice to one another. I asked them what they think I can do to help them remember to be kind to one another. The students came up with these ideas:

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- Take a ticket when they are not kind.

- They have to apologize to the people whose feelings they hurt.

- They have to try to do something nice for that person or people.

- Have the teacher remind them, if the teacher thinks they are forgetting.

- If the whole class is not being kind, take away a gumball.

I agreed with them and thought they did a nice job of coming up with solutions.

I asked if anyone had anything else they would like to bring up or ask. Almost every student spoke at least once, and many spoke more. They brought up how they feel about these meetings, some stories about being kind, the closet and various comments on those topics. (Observation Survey-Class Meetings: 2)

I had to ask 3 to leave to leave the meeting because he spoke while others were speaking. I asked him to leave and come back when he was ready. He came back very quickly and apologized to the girl for talking while she was talking. (Observation Survey-Time Outs:2)

We had to stop because we had other things to do and some of the students wanted to continue. Other students seemed to think the meeting lasted too long and were happy to see it over.

April 17

26 has begun interrupting teachers during their lessons. I spoke to her about it and asked her what she thought we could do about it. She could not come up with anything. I asked her if she thought she was disrupting the lessons and teachers. She thought sometimes but not that much. I asked her to think about it and I will try to help her notice if she interrupts. (Observation Rubric-Social Conference:1)

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April 18

We did a project that involves scissors. 14 asked if he could have his scissors back. I told him this could be his way to show me that he could use them the proper way. I would give them to him just for this project. I gave them to him and kept a close eye to make sure he was using them the proper way. He was careful the whole time and only used them when he needed to and in the right way. I told him he could keep them in his desk. (Observation Rubric-Logical Consequences: 2)

I asked the teacher to fill out a Teacher Observation to see what she thought about this ongoing situation.

Teacher Reflection:

Issue: 14 continually used his scissors improperly.

How was it dealt with?: Miss Jewell used logical consequences and took them away. Each time it took longer for him to earn them back.

What was the outcome?: After two instances of the scissors being taken away he seems to understand what happened. Even though he repeated the behavior it was a month in between incidents.

Positives/ Negatives of the situation: I really think 14 is learning his lesson. I do not think he is maliciously defying what he is told. I think this is working for him. Even though he had to miss out on some cutting projects I think it really reinforced the lesson.

April 19

(there is no entry for this day)

April 20

Today was Career Day and many parents came in to talk about their jobs. The

students were well behaved and adapted well to the very hectic day. They were respectful

to the parents that came to talk. We spoke about this day before the parents came. We

talked about how we can show respect and that we are listening. The students came up

with the following suggestions:

- Raise your hand when you want to talk.

- Ask good questions.

- Look at the person who is speaking

- Help the parents if they need help.

- Sit quietly and do not play with things at your desk.

(Observation Rubric- Class Meeting: 2)

April 23

We are preparing for our class show. Much of the day is spent on stage practicing.

This is a new situation and the students are taking a little time to get used to it. We have

limited time to practice so I had a small talk with the students about being respectful and

quiet while on stage. They need to listen for directions and practice being quiet for when

the show comes.

April 24

7 and 13 are in the back of the stage and can be heard from the floor. I went up to

ask them if they knew why I needed to come up there. They said it was because they

were loud. I wanted to know what that does not show respect. They said because other

people are talking on the stage and they need to be quiet so people can hear them. I told them to please remember that. (Observation Survey-Social Conferences:2)

<center>April 25</center>

We could not practice on the stage today because there was another class who had already schedules the stage that day. Some of the students were upset. I explained to the students that it is only fair that the class who scheduled the stage gets to have it. If we said they could not have it and we went, then someone could do the same thing to us when we schedule the stage. I asked the students to pretend they were the other class. I asked them if they understood how that would feel and most of them agree it was fair. (Observation Rubric-Voices of Authority:2)

<center>April 26</center>

Today was the day before the show and in the morning 9's mother wrote a note about how she is not acting her normal self, did not want to eat and did not want to talk. I have also noticed her normal bubbly personality was different. I talked to her to try to find out what was wrong. After a short conversation I found that she was nervous about the show. She had stage freight. I had not thought about this before but I was then concerned that many more children may be feeling the same way. For this reason I wanted to have a class meeting to address the problem. Even if it only helped 9 it would be well worth the time. We had the meeting on the stage because we had already reserved it and I thought it would be appropriate. First I asked how many students have ever been scared of something. When I first asked the question only, the teacher, the aide, a few students and I raised our hands. Once the students saw it was ok every student raised their hand. We went around the circle so everyone could share when they were scared. I asked how many

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students were scared about the show, once again everyone raised their hand. The teacher, aide, and I explained how even we were scared and that it is was normal to feel that way, but we were also excited. Then I asked what we can do to feel better. The class came up with the following answers:

- You can just do it and it is ok.

- You can talk about it with someone and you will feel better.

- You can practice so you will do well.

- You can think of something else.

I asked if they thought these ideas would help. Many of the students raised their hands. I then asked if this helped them feel better about the show, many students again raised their hands. (Observation Survey-Class Meeting: 2)

Teacher Reflection:

Issue: The class was nervous about our upcoming show.

How was it dealt with?: Miss Jewell conducted a class meeting that addressed being scared and feelings about the show.

What was the outcome?: Many of the students seemed more relaxed and comfortable knowing that their fellow classmates felt the same way they did. I think this was a wonderful way to address this issue.

April 27

This was the day of our show and my last day. It was a very hectic day but we had no problems at all.

Student Surveys

Problem solving classroom meetings are a major part of the study and can include all other aspects. For example, a situation that required a student conference or logical consequence would be discussed in a class meeting. Therefore, the student surveys reflect all of the techniques being used and not just the class meetings. Within the meetings other techniques are used, too. During class meetings the students were exposed to time-outs, and other techniques.

To conduct a class meeting I would gather the students in a circle. It was often difficult to find a spot for twenty eight students to sit in a circle. During the first class meeting the rules were explained. The rules were that only one person spoke at a time (the person holding the frog), this is a serious time, not a silly time, no one should be put down for any reason, and if you cannot act properly I will ask you to go to your seat and return when you feel you are ready to join our conversation again. Sometimes I brought up topics that we came up with solutions to, other times the students brought up topics. I needed a way to assess how each student felt about the class meetings. I created a simple survey for the students to complete once we had finished the meetings. The top of the paper has a place for the students to put their number, which was assigned to them for the purposes of keeping them anonymous for this study. There are three faces with one word under them. There is a smiling face with the word happy under it, the next face was neutral with a few question marks under it and the third face is a frowning face with the word sad under it. Under the faces there are lines that start with "because". Every time the students were to fill out this survey I briefly described what they were to do. First they were asked to write their assigned numbers on the top of the paper, then they were to

color in the face of how they felt about the class meeting and finally they could justify their choice by writing why they felt that way. The students were asked to draw on the back of the survey until everyone was finished so there was no pressure to finish. I always waited until every student was drawing to collect the papers and I was the only one who ever looked at these surveys. I never commented on them or corrected a student; I explained to the students that nothing they wrote down would be wrong because it is about what they thought, so it was not a matter of right or wrong. The survey responses are as follows:

Student Survey #1

Topic: How do you feel about school?   3/ 12/07

I wanted to ask the students about their feelings on school. I thought it was important to see how the students viewed their time. I can use this to compare to how the students react to the surveys after the class meetings. This survey does not have anything to do with the six techniques of Responsive Classroom since I have not started to implement any of them by this time. This survey would provide some baseline data and a way for me to introduce the concept of surveys to the students.

Student Number	I feel…	Comment:
1	happy	I have a lot of friends. I like being with my friend. I love my friends.
2	??????	Miss. Jewell makes me happy sometimes.
3	sad	People are mean to me and they don't like me.
4	happy	Because on Saturday I feel happy.
5	happy	I have lots of friends at school and friends help me

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		a lot. The teachers are nice to me.
7	happy	I treat people good. People treat me good too! The people I know are good to me at school and other places like home. I am nice to people everywhere. My friends are nice to me everywhere. I am very happy at school and home. Every day my friends make me happy.
8	happy	I feel happy because I help other people.
9	happy	I feel happy because everybody is nice.
11	sad	I feel sad because I have no friends or nothing.
12	?????	I feel this way when I lose tickets and when I do not lose tickets.
13	happy	I have friends in my classroom. My friends help me and I help them.
14	sad	I don't like school.
16	happy	People are nice to me and the way they treat me is the way I treat them. They are helpful and respectful and I hope they help me when I need them.
17	happy	It is very, very, very fun in school.
18	happy	I love Mrs. (teacher) and Miss. Jewell and the class.
19	happy	I have friends in class.
20	happy	Everyday I am happy. I am happy to go to school.
21	happy	I just feel happy all the time because I am nice.

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22	happy	I feel happy because I got all different rings.
23	happy	I like school because it is lots of fun.
24	sad	I can't watch rated R movies.
26	happy	I am happy in school because I love school. I love school because it is fun.
27	happy	The people are nice and happy.
28	happy	The people are very nice.

Happy: 18   ??????: 2   Sad: 4

Student Survey #2

Topic: How did you like the first class meeting?   3/12/07

For this first class meeting I wanted to introduce the students to the concept of class meetings and the rules. It was unlike anything they had ever done before.

1	OK	It was ok.
2	OK	
3	OK	I was squished.
4	liked	
5	OK	I was squished and it was a good idea to have class meetings.
7	liked	It was fun for me. It was so, so, so fun. Why do the black crayons go missing?
8	liked	I liked it a lot because it was fun.
9	liked	It is very cool.
11	liked	I liked it.

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12	liked	I like class meetings because you can talk about feelings.
13	liked	Because it could solve problems.
14	liked	
16	liked	It was fun but sort of it was fun for me. I liked it very much, (student) was so, so, so, so funny.
17	liked	I liked it because it is fun.
18	liked	It is cool. I liked it. It is fun.
19	OK	Because there was questions.
20	liked	I feel like happy.
21	liked	Because it was fun.
23	OK	It was ok.
24	disliked	It tells you things.
26	liked	I like math meetings because it is fun and it is the best.
27	OK	Because it helps us fix problems.
28	liked	Because it is so much fun.

Liked: 15   OK: 7   Disliked: 1

Student Survey #3

Topic: How do you feel about the class meeting? (hurting people physically and emotionally, cleaning the closet)   3/27/07

1	happy	I loved it. I liked the idea.
2	happy	I like it and well.

3	sad	
4	happy	I did not want to get hurt or put down.
5	happy	It is a very good idea to have a clean closet.
8	happy	I feel happy because I like it very much.
9	happy	I was happy.
11	??????	Some people were good and bad.
12	happy	It is cool and you can talk about your feelings.
13	sad	(Student) kept on touching my hair and she was sent back to her seat.
14	sad	There were so many problems.
16	??????	I feel a little happy and a little sad.
17	happy	I have fun in school.
18	happy	I know what to do.
19	happy	It's fun.
20	happy	Be nice to others because they will be your best friend again. When you will be nice again.
21	happy	It was fun.
22	happy	I like it a lot.
23	?????	It was ok. I like it a little bit. It was a little boring.
24	happy	I like it.
26	happy	I think that it helps everyone.
27	happy	It was very fun.
28	happy	We learn a lot.

Happy: 18   ??????: 3   Sad: 3

Student Survey #4

Topic: How did you feel about the class meeting (are the things we talked about being

done?)?   4/16/07

1	liked	I like it a lot because I see everybody following the rules.
2	OK	But everybody hurts my feelings.
3	liked	We are fixing problems. I like that a lot.
4	liked	I like it because it is good. I like it so much.
5	OK	Because it helps people be good students and we solve some problems that we need to work on like cleaning the closet and making it neat.
7	liked	Because it is all of us in a circle, it was cool.
8	liked	I like it a lot because it is fun and it is the best.
9	liked	I was happy.
11	OK	Just a few people were bad.
12	disliked	Today it was very long.
13	disliked	Because (student) is touching me and everyone is being silly. And everyone is getting hurt.
14	disliked	
16	OK	Because I don't know.
17	disliked	Because the closet is very messy.
18	liked	I know what to do.

19	liked	Because it is getting better.
20	liked	I do like people that mean to other that is feel sad. When people your feeling.
21	liked	You should be nice to others.
22	liked	
23	OK	Because it was ok.
24	liked	It was fun.
26	liked	We said a lot of good things.
27	OK	A lot of people got to talk. We talked about a lot of good things.
28	OK	Because we learn a lot.

Liked: 14   OK: 7   Disliked: 4

Student Survey #5

Topic: How do you feel about the class meeting (stage freight)?   4/26/07

1	liked	Because I am not scared any more.
2	disliked	I still have stage freight.
3	liked	We are not afraid of the stage anymore.
5	liked	Because it made me feel much better and it might be fun. The people will clap very loud.
7	OK	It was not the best and not the worst.
8	liked	I liked it because it was fun.
9	liked	It is fun.
11	OK	Because after was good.

12	liked	It was fun.
13	liked	It got everybody feeling better.
14	liked	
16	disliked	I did not like it, it was hot.
17	OK	I was bored.
18	liked	I liked it because I had fun.
19	OK	Because it is good.
20	liked	Like never be scary because I watch the movie every night.
21	disliked	It wasn't fun.
22	liked	Because you can't be scared.
23	OK	It was hot and ok.
24	liked	I like it because I do not get stage freight.
26	liked	I thought it helped my friends.
27	OK	It was boring.
28	liked	Because it make me much better. I like it on the stage.

Liked: 14   OK: 6   Disliked: 3

Study Difficulties and Surprises

One difficulty I encountered throughout the study was the time restraints. I had to wait for the study to be approved. Also, a school day never simply goes as planned. There is always something that takes away from what is planned. There was two weeks of state testing while I was there, assemblies, trips, fire drills and much more. I did not want to

take away educational time and usually waited until there was some down time to conduct the classroom meetings. Although there were times when I thought that the issues in the class were affecting the students ability to learn, I felt it was important to take time to work those issues out. Sometimes there was a pressing issue that needed to wait a few days to be addressed with the class, simply because of lack of time.

I did not come across many surprises while conducting my research. One complicating factor that does stand out though is the fact that the school was attempting to integrate the class meetings into their character education program. It was nice to be in a school that supported what I was doing. It was also good to compare notes with other teachers to see how the meetings were going in their classrooms.

Another surprise was the lack of interest on the part of the parents. Most of the parents in the class are very active in the school and what happens in the class. When I sent out my consent forms I thought I would be faced with many questions and concerns. Just the opposite happened, all but four of the consent forms were signed within days and no one seemed concerned at all.
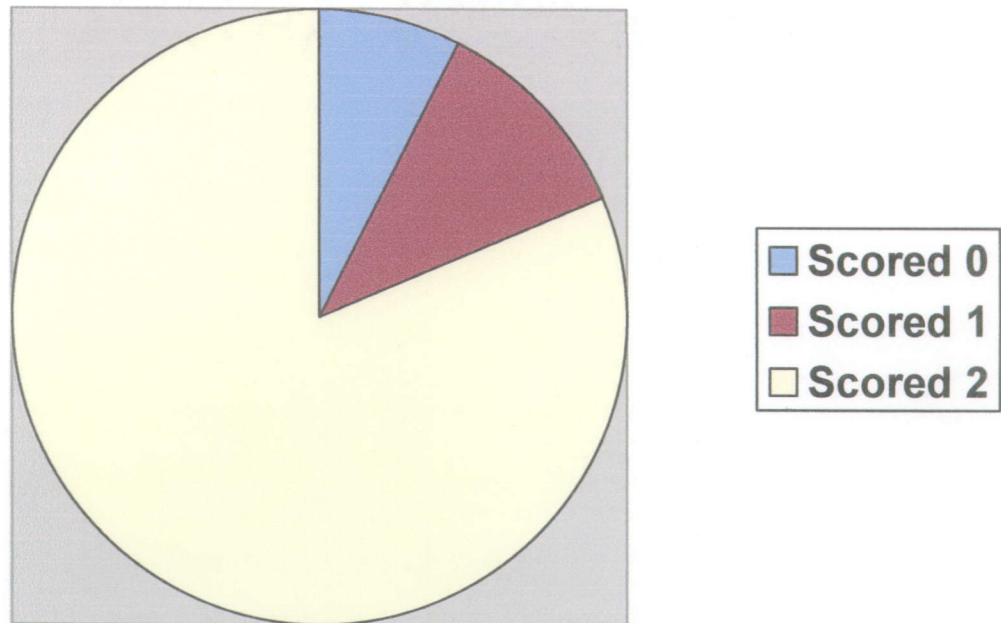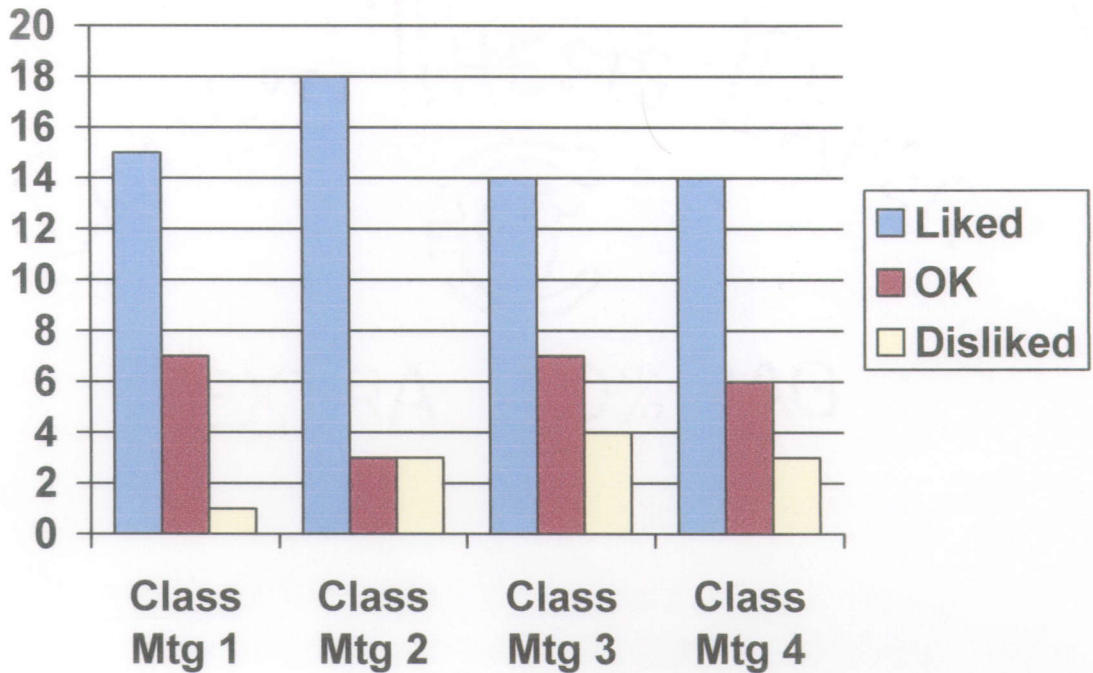
Chart 1: Observation Rubric Scores

Chart 1 shows all the observation surveys results. Most of the outcomes received a score of two, while far less received a score of one and fewer a score of zero. Therefore I perceived most of the results as effective in accomplishing what they were meant to do.

Chart 2: Results of Student Surveys per Meeting

The Observation Rubric and how it is used depends solely on the perception of the person scoring it. I felt it is also important to see how the students felt about the techniques being used. Not only how they felt was important but how that compared to what I thought. When scoring the class meetings I thought all of them were successful. Each once received a two on the observation survey; and Chart 2 indicates how the students felt about each one.

Chart 3: Compilation of Student Survey Responses
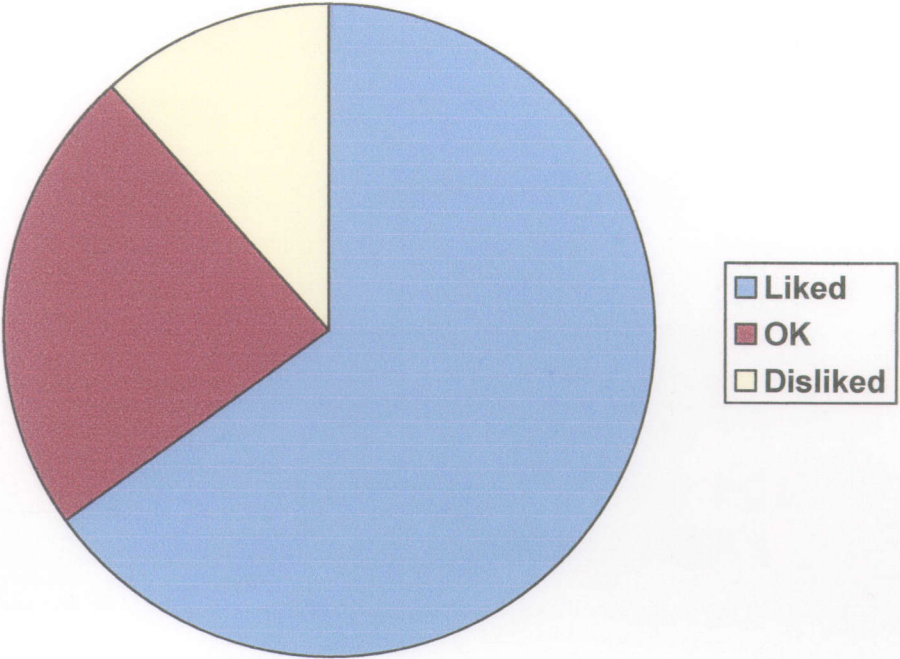
The following graph is a total of all the class meetings and student responses to them.

CHAPTER FIVE

Discussion

Stance on Research Question

Responsive Classroom techniques can be used as a classroom management and character education program without implementing the entire approach. I have found that my data supports this conclusion. Many of the techniques require the students to identify and find solutions to problems. The teacher and aide had some concerns, which they expressed in their interviews. The teacher believes that while class meetings "are a good idea." She is "not sure first graders are mature enough to handle them." This is something I wanted to pay attention to when I began to introduce the students to the techniques. As was seen in the first class meeting, the students were able to come up with four good ideas about keeping the closet clean. Related to the closet, although it may not have been solved the first time, we revisited the subject and made improvements. The students evolved their solutions. They decided to post the rules next to the closet. That was an idea that was developed by a student and helped the rest of the class. This was a classroom management issue and at some times a character education issue. Not only was the messy closet time consuming but it also caused some bickering. The solutions that the class came up with improved the situation greatly.

The class meetings also addressed other issues. Being kind to each other was an issue that actually originated outside of the classroom but spilled over into class time. Often this is a problem because I did not actually witness what occurred but needed to

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deal with it. Class meetings and Stressing the Deed Not the Doer allowed me to deal with the situation in a productive way. Once again the students came up with multiple ways to deal with the problem. Weeks later we addressed the problem again and the students then came up with consequences for their behavior. So even though the meeting did not correct the behavior immediately, it did lead to steps that helped the problem. Behavior management and character education are things that need to be worked on constantly. As long as the process used helps accomplish an ultimate goal, it is productive.

Part of character education is being able to talk about tough issues. Death is something that is hard to talk about with anyone, especially children. Even though I was not a part of the class meeting about death, I saw what resulted from it when I came back. The students expressed sympathy and understanding towards me. The meeting also allowed the students to ask questions and clear up any misconceptions they may have.

The final class meeting was very interesting. It was conducted because the teacher and I thought it would be important to address the topic of stage fright, since we were putting on a show that week. A class meeting provided a good forum for the teachers to make the students feel comfortable with the topic. I felt the meeting was successful, and after reading the student responses I know many of them felt the same way. Some of the students responses were: "They liked the meeting because I am not scared anymore", "we are not afraid of the stage anymore", "it made me feel much better and it might be fun", "It got everybody feeling better", "I thought it helped my friends and because it made me much better". The purpose of the meeting was to help students and from those responses it did just that. It is also important that what I though about the meeting was confirmed by the students.

Sometimes problems were dealt with quickly and without incident. This allowed a problem from getting out a hand and more complicated solutions being required. One great example of this is when student 21 broke her arm and then was not performing up to her ability. One simple conference solved this problem. She just needed to know that I knew what was going on and I wanted her to do her best. The interesting part was during the conference I thought it had been ineffective. She did not admit to anything being wrong, I believe she was just embarrassed. It only took one day for her to remedy the problem. The social conference obviously worked.

Time-outs were not used often but they worked like they are meant to every time. The students always left the situation without incident and came back when they were ready to participate and act appropriately. There was no issue that required a child to be removed multiple times. Also, the students acted properly when at their desk.

Most of the character education and classroom management issues that were dealt with only needed to be revisited one or two times. Only one issue with a specific student was ongoing. Student 14 was having problems correctly using his scissors. They were removed from him several times. Each time they were returned he used they properly for a period of time before having another issue. He has a disability that makes it difficult to use scissors properly. I think that may contribute to the problems he is having. Sometimes misbehavior is an outlet when something is frustrating. He still needed to know that his behavior was unacceptable. The teacher, from her reflection, and I both thought that using logical consequences was helping to stop the behavior. In this situation, logical consequences and an intervention that helps him use scissors better can solve this issue.

Finally, these techniques were also used as a preventative measure. Before career day the students spoke about how they should act when the parents were speaking about their careers. The students were excellent, even though it was a very hectic day.

I thought the techniques were very successful, but what did the students think? If the two of these opinions do not match then the techniques are not as successful. As you can see from chart two and three, most of the students really enjoy the meetings and techniques being used. That says that the students thought the techniques were as successful as I did.

Relating the Findings to the Literature

Related to character education, the literature states that it should allow students to problem solve with peers to discover solutions (Ayers, 2003). The techniques used in this study do just that. During class meeting, students work together to come up with ways to approach and deal with problems that are occurring in their classroom. Another aspect of character education is making the students feel safe (Ayers, 2003). That is another idea that these techniques cover. Students should feel safe in expressing how they feel in an environment that is free of judgment from peers and adults.

Modern thinking on classroom management is that the students should be very involved (Cotton, 2001). Responsive Classroom focuses on the involvement of the students, through social conferences, class meetings and time-outs. The students are not just told what needs to be done but they are expected to realize what may be the problem and brainstorm ways to work it out. The literature also says that classroom management should contain a part for prevention and intervention (Cotton, 2001). Many of the techniques can be approached from both ways. For example, classroom meetings were

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used in both ways. When there was an issue with the closet, it was dealt with; when I thought the students may be nervous about the show, we had a meeting about it before it was too close to the show.

Limitations

The students without a returned consent form came from families that were difficult to contact. They were also the families that were not as involved with the school. If there was more time I would have attempted to contact these families and obtain their consent. There were situations that needed to be omitted from this study because the parents did not give consent for their child to be used in the study.

I was limited on time and resources. I only had seven weeks to implement the program. These weeks were towards the end of the year when routines had already been established and practiced. I was also limited to my one classroom. I was student teaching so I had many responsibilities and was unable to expand the research past the classroom I was in. Although the school supported what I was doing, they were also new to the idea and trying to work it into next year.

The study relied heavily on the situations that occurred in the classroom; so even though I had planned to use six strategies, I only used Stress the Deed, Not the Doer and Voices of Authority once each. There were just more situations that involved the other four strategies. I did not want to influence the classroom in any way, just to use these techniques.

Recommendations for Future Research

I would recommend a future study that is on a larger scale. In a school wide or even district wide study the approaches could be used more often and in varying

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classrooms. I would like to know what the result is when this study is conducted in a classroom that has unsuccessful classroom management system and/or character education program as opposed to one that has a functioning system. A larger study could also focus on teacher influence, class personality and other factors that accompany a larger study with multiple classrooms, teacher and possibly schools.

I also think it would be a different perspective to see how these approaches work in a special education setting. Inclusive classrooms and self-contained classrooms usually have different dynamics and approaches to situations. Self-contained classrooms often combine multiple grade levels, ages and abilities. The interactions between these varied students could produce some interesting data.

It would be wonderful to be able to take longer in developing the techniques as a class instead of them being dictated to the students. Even though the techniques have specific guidelines the students can still be a part in developing and working through them.

The study could also be conducted for many years so students can be tracked and data collected on the long term affects of this approach. Literature says an effective character education program changes or maintains the good character of a student (Sweet, Elkind, 2004). If the techniques accomplish this goal, data could confirm that with this long term study. Responsive Classroom also aims to improve academics (Rimm-Kaufman 2006). This could also be studied with a long term data collection.

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APPENDICIES

Appendix A: Interviews

Teacher / Aide Interview:

1. What is the current character education program and how is it implemented?

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

2. What is the classroom management system in place? How effective do you think it is?

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

3. Are logical consequences used when an unacceptable behavior is exhibited?

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

4. Do you feel the students are kind to each other?

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

5. What happens when students are unkind to each other?

_____
_____

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

6. Does the classroom management system allow for problems to be handled in the least disruptive way possible?

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

7. What are your feeling on:
Logical Consequences?

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

Time-outs?

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

Stress the deed, Not the doer?

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

Voices of Authority?

_____

Problem solving class meetings?

_____

Social Conferences?

_____

Appendix B: Teacher Reflection

Teacher Reflection:

Issue:_____

_____

_____

_____

How was it dealt with?_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

What was the outcome?_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

Positives/negatives of the situation:_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

Appendix C: Observation Rubric

Responsive Classrooom Techniques	2 Points: Very effective	1 Point: Somewhat Effective	0 Points: Not Effective
Logical Consequences	The "punishment fit the crime" and the student stopped the behavior without a problem. The student also showed an understanding of what made the behavior unacceptable.	The student either does not stop the behavior or does not understand why the behavior is unacceptable.	The student does not stop the behavior and fails to understand why the behavior is unacceptable.
Time-Outs (Breaks)	The student entered the time-out with little to no disruption to other students and returned calm and did not exhibit the same types of behavior that required him to be removed and relax.	The student leaves and/or returns with some disruption to the class. The student may engage in the behavior that required him/her to be removed.	Student leaves and/or return with a lot of disruption to the class and engages in the behavior that required him/her to be removed in the first place.
Stress the Deed, Not the Doer	The student(s) show an understanding of what was bothering them instead of who was bothering them. The student(s) deal with the issue and the problem is resolved without hurting anyone's feelings.	The student undertstands what bothers him/her but still holds specific student(s) responsible. The situation may not be fully resolved.	The student does not acknowledge what bothers him/her, only who bothers him/her. The situation is not diffused.
Voices of Authority	The students understand the origin of rules they they have to follow even if they do not agree with them. Students also know how to contest those rules in a positive way.	The students understand the origin of the rules but cannot understand why they need to be in place.	The students do not understand the origin of the rule(s).
Problem-Solving Class Meetings	The class recognizes the problem and formulate solutions which they can all agree to follow. No one's feelings are hurt and no student is singled out.	The class can recognize the problem but fail to come up with workable solutions on their own.	The class cannot recognize there is any problem at all.
Social Confrences	The student acknowledges the problem and comes up with solutions, along with the teacher. The student and teacher come to an agreement and the student follows that agreement.	The student acknowledges the problem, comes up with solutions but does not follow the agreement between student and teacher.	The student does not acknowledge there is any issue at all.

OBSERVATION RUBRIC

Appendix D: Student Surveys

Student Survey

Topic: _____

How did you like it?

Liked   OK   Disliked

Why?_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

Topic: _____

I feel...

Happy   ??????   Sad

Because_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____