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Classroom management styles and their link to discipline infractions

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Classroom Management Styles and Their Link

To Discipline Infractions

By
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ABSTRACT

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Classroom Management Styles and Their Link
to Discipline Infractions
2000
Dr. Gini Doolittle
School Administration

The purpose of this action research study is to compare the classroom

management styles of academic teachers to the number of in class discipline infractions,

at the Burlington County Institute of Technology Vocational High School located in

Medford, New Jersey. This particular sample involved eighteen academic teachers over a

four-week period.

Interviews involved the building principal, the vice-principals, and assorted

academic teachers. Data were compiled from surveys, personal interviews and the

schools computer data bank. Data analysis consisted of using information collected from

the database, interviews, questionnaires, and review of literature, to identify areas of

improvement in teacher classroom management skills and the teacher training program or

in-service programs offered at the school.

Some teachers may have excellent knowledge in their subject area but lack the

skills for effective classroom management. If we can identify weaknesses and offer

training, we can improve the educational delivery system at this school and facilitate

change.

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In order for a school to be a high performance institution of learning, effective

teacher classroom management skills must be in place and effective. How a teacher

perceives the responsibility for those skills are the crux of the problem in schools today.

The first step to facilitate change is to identify the problem.

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CHAPTER 1

Introduction

<u>Focus of Study</u>

The Burlington County Institute of Technology (BCIT) is a Vocational High School District whose major goal is to provide vocational education and career preparation to students from Burlington County New Jersey. Students graduating from the BCIT acquire the skills needed to enter the workforce and/or continue their education in college or post secondary trade schools. BCIT provides both vocational and academic courses to meet that challenge.

Although BCIT' s main goal is to educate students for the world of work, it is also responsible to have students complete their academic program requirements needed for high school graduation. Academic teachers at BCIT (as well as other schools) have differing attitudes towards classroom management. The focus of this study is to identify teacher attitudes towards student discipline and classroom management. If a teacher doesn't perceive their role in the school to be one of a disciplinarian, than the classroom management skills needed may be a low priority. By identifying the weaknesses in classroom management skill areas, steps can be taken to strengthen those areas of skills by in-service training and/or mentoring with a master teacher.

Schools need to develop quality in-service training plans to provide teachers the opportunity and training to perform at a high level of educational delivery. In this study the intern will seek to identify weaknesses in classroom management skills at the BCIT Medford Campus. The study will look into classroom management issues and attitudes

that will lead to some degree of teacher in-service training as a means to deal with issues that will be identified as a result of this project. It may also serve to modify the existing discipline policy to allow for change in the behavior modification delivery system.

<u>Purpose of the Study</u>

The purpose of this study is to track student referrals for a four-week block in December. The intern will seek to understand the reasons for the infractions to see if they can be related to flaws in the classroom management or discipline/behavior modification systems. Using an action research design, the study may result in recommendations to facilitate a change in attitude and classroom management skills of the identified teachers. Once identified, those teachers will be provided with in-service training and school based mentoring that will result in a more efficient educational delivery system. Success will be determined by fewer discipline referrals from the identified teachers after in-service training and/or mentoring.

Our children need to be able to survive and compete in a global economy. Our schools need to make the children's goals a priority. Schools have to invest more resources toward the completion of these goals. Teachers must gain control of their classrooms to provide a highly efficient learning environment for all children. Every minute a teacher has to spend on student discipline is an educational minute wasted for each member of the class that is there to learn. Every year more students complain about being shortchanged in their educational preparation because of teachers that have poor classroom management skills spend a majority of their time dealing with classroom discipline. American classrooms are frequently plagued by minor misbehavior, which disrupts the flow in classrooms and interferes with the educational delivery. In a 1990

study, Cotton (1990) approximated that one half of classroom time is taken up with activities other than instructional. From a different perspective, administrators see the increasing time spent on student referrals as lost time from more important tasks to which they are assigned. When dealing with referrals for gum chewing or refusing to remove hats in school, one has to wonder why an increasing amount of time is being spent on such trivial matters.

The study will attempt to address current issues facing schools today, and try to facilitate some change to teachers, students and management. If everyone involved could spend less time dealing with discipline issues, education could be more efficient, thus, providing for a high performance school system that produces a student more prepared for the global economy.

Limitations of the Study

This study will deal with the students at BCIT, grades 9 through 12, and will limit itself to infractions that do not require police involvement. The study will look at minor infractions that tend to limit educational time needlessly. In no way does it tend to make light of major infractions by passing them over, they are the subject for another study. The results of this study could be generalized to include other schools in any given school district.

Setting of the Study

BCIT, Medford Campus, will be the site of this study. BCIT is a county Vocational Technical High School offering academic as well as vocational courses of study. BCIT has two locations, one in Westampton, New Jersey, and the other in

Medford, New Jersey. Each school contains grades 9 through 12 and their students are drawn from the 29 different middle and elementary schools encompassing 40 municipalities around the county. At the time of this study there was a major labor dispute, which upon settlement may effect the resources the school has to spend on in-service training and mentoring programs. BCIT Medford Campus enrollment is 840 with students from all socioeconomic backgrounds.

The political climate differs from other schools in the county because of the way the school is organizationally structured. The county freeholders appoint the vocational board. There are no school board elections. A majority of the funding is provided by the state with the balance being provided by the county freeholders. School budgets are not voted on by the taxpayers to provide the needed funding increases. The school is currently funded at a rate that is $3,100 per student less than the state vocational school average. Due to this lack of funding certain areas that would normally be provided for will suffer due to priorities set by the Board of Education and Administration.

Significance of the Study

School discipline is at the forefront of educational issues. Much has been written in research on this topic, but with any educational issue it seems that each district must develop their own system that fits their unique environment. The study will have some transference. The findings may give other school systems possible suggestions or solutions to their particular problems. Of little significance is the fact that a study of this type has never been undertaken at the BCIT school district. The results will foster improved teaching techniques and class management skills. It is the attempt of this study to allow the administration and staff to see the value of using information gathered to

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improve the system rather than simply using information gathered as a negative evaluation device.

Organization of the Study

The organization of this study begins with the introduction in Chapter 1, which states the purpose, limitation setting, significance, and organization of the study. Chapter 2 is a review of current literature and Internet resources. In the review of the literature, the intended goal will be to provide a perspective of the diversity of attitudes teachers and administrators have towards the subject of classroom management. The literature will provide depth to the study and give the reader an idea of the complexity of the issue being studied.

Chapter 3 will include the design of the study. This section addresses five areas related to the research design used for this study. The first area is a general description of the research design used for the study. Second, a description of the development and design of the research instruments actually used in the study. Third, a description of the sample and sampling technique used in the study. Fourth, a description of the data collection approach, and the fifth area is a description of the data analysis plan.

Chapter 4 presents the research findings. This section answers two major questions, "What information was found?" and "What does it mean?" Chapter 5 gives the conclusions and implications of further study. This last chapter of the thesis describes the studies major conclusions, and their corresponding implications. It also highlights the conclusions and implications related to the intern's leadership development and how the organization changed as a result of the study. Finally, it addresses the need for further study. Following Chapter 5 are the references, and biographical data.

CHAPTER 2

Review of Literature

One of the major areas of concern in schools today is classroom management. As public pressure increases for the American educational system to produce better quality students, so does the pressure for teachers to use class time more efficiently. American classrooms are frequently plagued by minor misbehaviors, which disrupt the flow in classrooms and interfere with the educational delivery. Approximately one-half of classroom time is taken up with activities other than instruction, and discipline problems are responsible for a significant portion of this lost time (Cotton 1990). Accompanying this desire for increased effectiveness is the general societal concern that students are becoming more aggressive and violent as evidenced by recent shootings on public school grounds. Thus, controlling maladaptive and counterproductive student behaviors becomes a critical aspect of the teaching endeavor. Toward this goal, there is a growing interest in disciplinary techniques and methods.

Historically speaking, control within the classroom has never been as complex as it is today for educators in America. Controlling classroom behavior has risen to the level of the importance of the messages that are given within the learning context in a classroom (Edwards, 1994). There are various factors, which contribute to this complex relationship between learning, discipline, and the role that an educator takes in the dynamic. Many espouse that educators are not properly equipped to handle the young adults of today's classrooms (Fuhr, 1993; Taylor, 1987).

Duke (1989) offered the following:

What is known about the organization of orderly schools is that they are
characterized by commitment to appropriate student behavior and clear
expectations for students. Rules, sanctions, and procedures are discussed,
debated, and frequently formalized into school discipline and classroom
management plans. To balance this emphasis on formal procedure, the climate in
these organizations conveys concern for students as individuals. This concern
manifests itself in a variety of ways, including efforts to involve students in
school decision-making, school goals that recognize multiple forms of student
achievement, and de-emphasize on homogeneous groupings.

Ensuring order in the classroom is an integral key in providing "a smooth-running
classroom where students are highly involved in learning activities which are free from
disruption and chronic misbehavior". (Evertson, 1997)

Duffy (1998) found the following:

Successful teachers are those who can strike a balance between being a
disciplinarian and an instructor and manage to elicit the most productive results
from students despite the contrary demands made from those students who create
discipline problems in the classroom. Society wants schools to develop citizens
who think creatively, but they also want orderly classrooms. While it seems
impossible to develop both creativity and order simultaneously the best teachers
seem to balance these round stones.

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Duffy parallels teaching to the balancing of two round stones and although it is possible, many people just can't get the job done. There is much written on behaviors that promote effective classroom management. It is not a new topic. As early as 1966, researchers were studying the behaviors and processes that contribute to a successful classroom. In that year, Thomas Gordon developed a widely used program called Teacher Effectiveness Training or TET. Gordon's program is founded on the belief that student-teacher relationships are the result of their interactions. He suggests that positive classroom management would include the development of a mutually supportive student-teacher relationship. He supports his theory by arguing that using coercive methods of behavior control, teachers can not successfully develop effective learning environments. He suggests that teachers who use authoritarian techniques to manage their classrooms are more likely to create a negative classroom atmosphere, which would promote behavioral problems rather than resolve them. (Kameenui et al, 1995)

In 1968, C. H Madsen, W. C. Becker Jr. and D.R. Thomas reported findings on the study of the effects on classroom behavior:

> An attempt was made to vary systematically the behavior of two elementary school teachers to determine the effects on classroom behavior of Rules, Ignoring Inappropriate Behaviors, and showing Approval for Appropriate Behavior. Behaviors of two children in one class and one child in the other class were recorded by observers, as were samples of the teachers' behavior. Following baseline recordings, Rules, Ignoring, and Approval conditions were introduced one at a time. In one class a reversal of conditions was carried out. The main conclusions were that: (a) Rules alone exerted little effect on classroom behavior,

(b) Ignoring Inappropriate Behavior and showing Approval for Appropriate Behavior (in combination) were very effective in achieving better classroom behavior, and (c) showing Approval for Appropriate Behaviors is probably the key to effective classroom management. (Madsen et al, 1968)

Kathleen Cotton, in her expansive review of literature concerning classroom discipline management, discusses in detail the early work of J.S. Kounin, author of the book Discipline and Group Management in Classrooms, his work published only two years after the Madsen, et al findings. Kounin's studies, she notes, examined the effective and ineffective strategies of classroom management. In his evaluation of effective classroom management, he found key behaviors that contributed to the successful classroom experience. They included:

- "Withitness"--the teacher communicating to the children by his/her behavior that he/she knows what the students are doing and what is going on in the classroom

- Overlapping--attending to different events simultaneously, without being totally diverted by a disruption or other activity.

- Smoothness and momentum in lessons--conducting smooth and brisk pacing and providing continuous activity signals or cues (such as standing near inattentive students or directing questions to potentially disruptive students)

- Group alerting--attempting to involve non-reciting children in recitation tasks and keeping all students "alerted" to the task at hand Stimulating seatwork--providing students seatwork activities that have variety and offer challenge.(Cotton,1990)

Cotton explains that research has shown the validity of Kounin's findings, which have been verified and expanded by as many as fifteen similar practices throughout the last twenty years.

Is "discipline" concerned with preventing misconduct or punishing it? According to Webster's dictionary, discipline refers to both prevention and redemption. Jones (1979) stated "discipline, simply stated, is the business of enforcing simple classroom rules that facilitate learning and minimize disruption"(p. 26). Researcher William Wayson disagrees, he notes that some educators view disciplinary activities as irritating intrusions into school life, which should not be necessary. He quotes educator James Hymes who says discipline is "...the slow, bit by bit, time consuming task of helping children to see the sense in acting in a certain way".

More recently, in the handbook <u>An Educator's Legal Guide to Stress-Free Discipline and School Safety</u>, researchers outline several ways to handle discipline issues. They include but are not limited to: addressing the current situation with the student; identifying the problem; determining what the student believes would help the situation; establishing boundaries while not boxing the student in with unnecessary words (Mazin,et al,1999).

While the aforementioned processes have been effectively applied to classroom management, it is important, considering the changing climate of today's classrooms, that current methods of behavior management take those changes into account.

In July of 1998, President Clinton addressed the American Federation of Teacher's at their national convention. In his address he made reference to the discipline

problems in schools today, suggesting that the lack of discipline in the nation's schools represent "a threat to the strength and vitality of America." (AllPolitics, 1998) He also cited a study that found that 81% of teachers today revealed that it was the student with behavioral problems that occupied most of their classroom time (All Politics, 1998).

Discipline has always been a bone of contention for educators. At the same time, classroom environments have changed considerably over the years, making it even more important for educators to determine what classroom behavioral problems teachers' face today.

In a recent study of high school principals, participants were asked to report specific discipline problems in their schools during the 1996-97 school year. The data that was collected showed that those problems that occurred most frequently were student tardiness, absenteeism, physical conflicts with other students and tobacco use (NCES,1998).

Such infractions are not necessarily new and while considered moderate, they have been found to lead to more severe behavioral problems in this day and age. Diversity in the classroom, student composition and social-economic influences are major factors that contribute to the potential for more severe forms of disciplinary problems. Training programs can and have been developed to address these factors.

In a report by the Georgia *SENATE STUDY COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC EDUCATION DISCIPLINARY REFORM*, researchers outlined the need for training in classroom management skills as well as cultural diversity. They suggested that such training be provided not only to prospective teachers but also to those already in the

profession. The report also cited successful training programs, with Georgia teacher

Anika Jones testifying that methods being used in some schools have improved student

learning opportunities by effectively decreasing discipline problems (Senate, 1999).

Positive classroom management requires implementing a definitive method of

disciplinary procedures. While such skills can be learned, utilizing them is not so easy.

Unfortunately, it is this area of classroom management that many new teachers cite their

greatest weaknesses. Very often, this is due to having received inadequate training, or

worse, no training at all. Many institutions of higher education have failed to provide

sufficient classroom management training to future teachers. Teachers who are described

as "marginal" have a negative or questionable impact on student learning. "These

teachers have frequent problems with classroom control, an uncommon number of

disciplinary referrals, and a high rate of student failures and dropouts (Rogus, 1993).

In 1996, North Dakota State University evaluated sixty-seven teacher-graduates

on teacher preparation provided by their course of study. When they were asked the

question "Based upon your professional experience, in what ways could we improve our

program regarding teaching skills?" the most frequent answer was: "Spend more time

discussing methods of discipline and classroom management." (NDSU, 1996)

There are many theories to classroom management in regards to discipline. The

theories focused upon in this study are Authoritarian discipline, Authoritative, Laissez-

Faire Style.

The research concerning authoritarian discipline is supportive of the notion that

this program is effective not only decreasing unwanted behaviors but also increasing

desirable classroom behaviors. In the beginning of the 1990's, the style of authoritarian

discipline had been taught to some 500,000 teachers and espoused the largest following of classroom management techniques to date (Render, Padella, and Krank, 1989).

The key to authoritarian discipline in classroom management is praising the student for nearly every positive action and using a method of increasing severity in disciplining negative behavior (Canter, 1988). Ferguson and Houghton (1992) observed three teachers using authoritarian discipline in their classrooms. Following training, all three teachers increased the amount of contingent praise that they exhibited to their students. Of the 24 students involved, 23 increased their level of on-task behavior.

The use of authoritative discipline with special student populations or in cross-cultural studies has been evaluated to a lesser extent than has authoritative. Efforts to determine whether authoritative discipline is effective in other cultures appears to indicate that it results in improvement in the same types of behaviors, such as increased on-task and decreased maladaptive behaviors in Venezuela (Rosemberg et al., 1990) and Australia (Ferguson & Houghton, 1992).

Although it would appear from the aforementioned research that authoritative discipline is well suited to the educational process, the technique is not without controversy. Parents and teachers alike have expressed concerns. Robinson and Maines (1994) argue that authoritative discipline falls short with regard to instilling respect, dignity, belief, and hope. They point out that children are not involved in the creation of the rules, and, therefore, the rules ignore their rights. Palardy (1996) suggests that authoritative discipline, as well as behavior modification, has significant limitations. Typically both methods yield short-term results and ignore the importance of teaching self-discipline in students. Furthermore, the programs appear to have little transfer value

to settings other than classrooms. Also, problem solving and other advanced cognitive skills may be more difficult to teach in an atmosphere of rigid classroom management (McCaslin & Good, 1992). Additionally, authoritative discipline typically ignores the students' diverse socioeconomic circumstances, according to Morris (1996).

In regard to special populations and cross-cultural studies, boys with high levels of fear demonstrated more depression if they had been exposed to authoritative discipline (Colder et al., 1997). Smith (1992) recommends that children who are homeless as a result of domestic violence not receive authoritative discipline due to the potential for psychological harm. Authoritative discipline may also be detrimental when used with rural children who have been identified as being at high risk for Conduct Disorder (Bierman, 1997). Children in the West Indies (Rohner et al., 1991) and in Nigeria (Ani & Grantham-McGregor, 1998) appeared to have negative reactions to authoritative discipline. Thus, in cultures where authoritative or authoritative punishment might be accepted and promoted, undesirable side effects are still observed.

Lack of discipline or relaxed discipline as demonstrated in Laissez-Faire Style discipline has been blamed for many of today's classroom management problems (Dugan, 1997). Laissez-Faire depends on the student to make the right choices in regards to behavior and the instructor to intervene only when absolutely necessary (Bierman, 1997). This methodology has been tested most rigorously in the political arena and as seeped into the educational system only as a radical method in liberal-minded schools. The benefit of laissez-faire rests in the deconstruction of governing or structured institutions. This works well in political ideology but poorly in classrooms, particularly when students are in their teens.

One of the staunchest opponents of Laissez-faire discipline is Alfie Kohn (Tai, 1997). He contends that teachers typically look to the children as the source of behavior problems rather than reviewing their curriculum or adult expectations and demands. He suggests that this method interferes with moral development in that responsible social behavior is never taught.

Much the same is true of the use of indifference, which has yielded comparable negative results. In fact, increases in negative behaviors typically accompany indifference. Parents who are indifferent report higher frequencies of maladaptive behavior on the Parent Behavior Checklist (Brenner & Fox, 1998). Withecomb (1997) also acknowledges that indifference commonly leads to an increase in aggressive behavior.

There is no evidence that laissez-faire or indifferent discipline is a useful technique in the classroom setting. While there is some support suggesting that authoritative and authoritative disciplines are valuable tools for regulating behavior, they too have drawbacks. All techniques have the potential for producing long-term side effects. Lack of punishment appears to increase aggressive behavior while authoritative discipline offers a training program that ignores moral development and the instilling of compassion and a sense of community. Punishment leads to an increase in aggression, and authoritative discipline improves on-task behavior regardless of special settings or populations and across cultures. Thus, specialized use of these procedures does not seem warranted. Because authoritative and authoritative punishment has been a traditional method of behavioral control in children for centuries, it appears unlikely that it will be totally abandoned by school districts any time in the near future. It is possible, however,

that the basic concepts of authoritative discipline could be expanded to include methods that would counteract the criticism it has received thus far. With the incorporation of inductive techniques, as well as exercises that would generate more portable social skills, authoritative discipline may provide a promising alternative to authoritarian discipline, laissez-faire style and indifferent.

With this in mind, colleges and school districts should recognize the importance of providing training to prospective teachers as well as those teachers that are already in the classroom. Without the tools of effective classroom management, those prospective and currently employed teachers are likely to struggle with discipline management in the classroom.

The goal of every teacher is providing students with the academic knowledge they need to lead successful lives. In order for students to consider their academic instruction meaningful to them, however, it is essential for their teachers to foster in them the attitudes and skills required for such success. With proper and adequate classroom management training, teachers will have the tools that will assist them in working with their students to solve behavioral problems, problems that would otherwise prohibit academic and future success.

Having in place a well-conceived in-service program to help teachers is a crucial step to an effective school. The assistance plan is likely to achieve its goal only if those providing the assistance are genuinely concerned with the well being of marginal teacher(s) with whom they are working and are able to discuss candidly, but kindly, the areas in which a teacher is struggling. Helping the at-risk teacher usually requires

confrontation which, when handled well, leaves both parties stronger. Carried out

ineffectively, it creates new problems for both.

Chapter 3

Design of the Study

The purpose of the study was to analyze different methodologies behind maintaining order with the classroom setting. By analyzing classroom management skills of the participants, an overview of strengths and weaknesses in management styles can be explored. Discipline has always been a bone of contention for educators. At the same time, classroom environments have changed considerably over the years, making it even more important for educators to understand what classroom behavioral problems teachers' face today.

In evaluating the individual and group styles, a postulation on the most effective classroom management program can be made. The importance of instituting an effective program rests in the foundation of the learning experience. Without order and control, the learning environment suffers and the effectiveness of an instructor is limited not by his knowledge or resources but by his classroom management skills.

This study reviewed data collected from a group of eighteen teacher participants who are employed at the Burlington County Institute of Technology. Through the use of questionnaires, charts, and interviews, participants were asked to evaluate their classroom management skills. This information was used to determine what their management strengths and weaknesses were and to determine their individual as well as group management styles. Data from the study will be used to formulate the basis of a training program that could assist teachers in managing their classrooms more successfully.

Context of Study

BCIT, Medford Campus, will be the site of this study. BCIT is a county Vocational Technical High School offering academic as well as vocational courses of study. BCIT has two locations, one in Westampton, New Jersey, and the other in Medford, New Jersey. Each school contains grades 9 through 12 and their students are drawn from the 29 different middle and elementary schools encompassing 40 municipalities around the county. At the time of this study there was a major labor dispute, which upon settlement may effect the resources the school has to spend on in-service training and mentoring programs. BCIT Medford Campus enrollment is 840 with students from all socioeconomic backgrounds.

The subject of Classroom Management and Discipline has been a concern of mine ever since I was in High School. I would often wonder why I could be so well behaved in one class and in so much trouble in another. I noticed that some teachers didn't have a problem with trivial matters such as chewing gum or wearing a jacket but there were other teachers that could not seem to function if there was gum being chewed or jackets being worn. Teachers had different styles of classroom management. It seemed to me at the time that the teachers should have applied different management styles to deal with different students. I would have preferred that a teacher would take time to talk to me as a person rather than taking the same time to issue a discipline referral. I had more respect for a teacher that reasoned with me and had little respect for the teacher that wouldn't take the time to talk with me.

The instrument for this study was created by the intern, with the exception of the Classroom Management Profile questionnaire and profile definitions, which were adaptations of the parenting styles discussed in Adolescence, by John T. Santrock and developed by several students and director from the Center for Adolescent Studies at Indiana University. I included the copyright material in this paper and in the instrument as it was mailed to participants in the appendix A. The instrument is comprised of three sections. The first section includes a questionnaire to evaluate the participant's prior classroom management training and whether any discipline policies are currently used. The second section contains a questionnaire that will assess each participant's classroom management profile. The final section includes an infractions table where participants will track the referrals of several disciplinary infractions for a four-week period. The data in each participant's chart will be compared to their respective management profile to see if there is any relationship between the two.

Nature of Action Research

The nature of Action Research invites the researcher to look within his own discipline and seek to understand their situation in the context of the educational arena. It encourages the instructor to explore their own teaching style or methods and postulate on a better way of performing their tasks. Action research is a cyclical experience that is ever turning the process of evaluation into a learning experience through application (Wilfred Carr and Stephen Kemmis, 1985). Elliot (1991) gives the following model for action research:

Identify a good idea ---> Reconnaissance --->

General Planning ---> Develop the 1st Action Step --->

Implement the 1st Action Step ---> Evaluate --->

Revise the General Plan ---> Develop the 2nd Action Step ---> Continue through the Cycle

Thus we can see through Elliot's illustration how research leads to planning, planning leads to development of action, and the implementation of the action causes the researcher to evaluate and revise the plan and begin again.

Action Research and the Current Study

The first phase of action research was implemented with the discovery of a need for guidelines in the realm of discipline for classroom management. Upon realizing that various instructors handled discipline with distinctly different methodologies, a need for discovering what is the driving force behind the disparity in discipline ideologies.

The first step to implementing action is having a plan. In order to explore classroom management, a study was developed that forced the participants to engage in their own evaluation of their teaching methods. The questionnaire in itself provided each instructor with his or her own insight into taking action. It is my sincere hope that those that participated in the study will continue with their own exploration. Action research is an excellent tool for a study of this nature because it forces participants to consider their own action and the possibility for further study within their own discipline.

After the questionnaire was planned and implemented the gathering of the information for evaluation was undertaken. Within the realm of action research, this is the crucial stage of discovering the next step within the cyclical model. The evaluation

led to the discovery that classroom management is subject to many variables and must be implemented on a per school, per administration basis. Therefore it behooves each participant within the study to embark upon his or her own action research.

The second step to action research within the realm of the study undertaken is the encouragement of the definition and policy guidelines of classroom management skills at each individual learning institution. What the study discovered is that no one trend, methodology or management technique is applicable across the board. Thus the action research cycle encourages that a new idea be identified and the continuation of research begin again at the top of the cycle, at what Elliot (1991) calls identifying a good idea.

Observations and Data Collection Techniques

The study participants were all teacher employees at Burlington County Institute of Technology. The criteria for participation in the study was an interest in examining the general climate of classroom management skills at the school as well as specific disciplinary issues and how they are managed in the classroom. Participants in the study were all voluntary participants.

Demographic data such as gender, how long a participant has been teaching or what academic degree they held was not gathered or analyzed as the intern did not believe it would significantly influence the outcome of the study. Data that was considered significant was whether the teachers had previous training in classroom management skills, the style of management that they currently employed in their classroom and discipline issues they found specific to their classroom and how they were handled.

<u>Data Collection</u>

This chapter will contain each section of the instrument, a discussion of how it was used and a review the following data: 1) percentages of teacher training and discipline guideline administration 2) the participants' management profiles and their corresponding definitions 3) the relationship between infraction incidents and the participant's classroom management profiles.

The intern was responsible for collecting the data for this study. Collection was made through the inter-office mail and via telephone communication. Those teachers who chose to participate in the study were asked to respond by return inter-office mail, which was provided by the intern. Subsequent communication with those teachers who chose to participate was by telephone and mail with final data collected by mail.

Twenty confirmed participants, fifteen males and six females, were contacted by telephone where the purpose of the study was explained and instructions on using the instrument, which had been mailed to each potential participant, were explained. Telephone contact was made approximately three weeks later and every two weeks thereafter, to confirm participation and to verify that the instrument was being used. Participants were provided with envelopes addressed to the intern to facilitate and assure their final return of the data.

Prior to any data collection, participants were informed, in writing, that participation in the study was entirely voluntary and that no data contributed to the study by any participant would be used to negatively influence the status of the school or it's teachers, either publicly or privately. Participants were also assured that the individual results of their participation would not be revealed to school administration or other

participants, however, they were free to reveal such information themselves if they chose to. The twenty confirmed participants were advised that the instrument for this study would be used solely to evaluate it's potential for training teachers in disciplinary practices as they relate to classroom management and for the development of the intern's master thesis.

Because Burlington County Institute of Technology does not have a school-wide discipline code, teachers were if asked if they had any previous classroom management training and how they introduce any behavioral parameters to their students. They were also asked to note any incidents of disciplinary infractions a four-week period.

In order to determine the participant's classroom management styles, teachers were asked to respond to specific statements pertaining to classroom management. Answers were given to the degree in which the teacher believed the statement was true. There were no correct or incorrect answers. Answers were used to evaluate each teacher's classroom management profile.

Description of Questions and Responses on the Instrument

This section discusses the questions and responses contained in the instrument. The discipline policy section of the instrument will explore prior training and the use of discipline guidelines. The classroom management profile section will assess each teacher's management style. The infractions table will help evaluate the relationship between the occurrence of discipline infractions and their handling and the teacher's management profiles. For each section of the instrument, the questions and the responses will be reviewed and analyzed.

Classroom Management

The Classroom Management Profile Questions (Appendix A.3) were given to each participant at the beginning of the study. Its purpose was to determine a teacher's style of classroom management. Answers were evaluated by adding the numerical responses from statements 1, 3, and 9 to determine the teacher's score for <u>authoritarian style</u>, responses from statements 4, 8, and 11 to determine the teacher's score for <u>authoritative style</u>, responses from statements 6, 10, and 12 to determine the teacher's score for <u>laissez-faire style</u>, and the responses from statements 2, 5, and 7 to determine the teacher's score for <u>indifferent style</u>.

Outcomes

There were two problems that arose during data collection and included two participants dropping out of the study and one failing to submit all of the requested data. Both were male teachers and the intern feels confident that it did not hinder the study and, while not significant, brought the ratio of male to female teacher participants to 2:1.

It was the intent of this intern to conduct data analysis that compared the training and classroom management styles of the sample group with the number of disciplinary infractions they encountered during a four-week period. Classroom management profiles were assessed by calculating the scores of the classroom management profile questionnaire. Once profiles were determined they were analyzed against the data collected from the infractions table that each participant used to note specific disciplinary infractions that occurred in their classrooms. Mean scores were not used to analyze the

data, rather, the number of infractions logged by each profile group was compared against the others.

It was also the intent of this study to have the largest number of teachers available from Burlington County Institute of Technology participate. Because not all teachers participated, the results of this study are limited as a representation of all teachers at BCIT. The method in which the instrument was administered may also have affected the results of this study, because each participant in the sample very likely completed the instrument under different classroom conditions that were beyond the control of the intern. The study can only assume that responses were truthful and that each participant noted all incidents of infractions. While the instrument was less than scientific and the sample small, the intern believes that the data that was collected and analyzed was adequate to conclude that there is a higher incidence of disciplinary problems in the classrooms of those participants who either had no classroom management training, or were assessed as having a more lenient classroom management profile.

Chapter 4

Presentation of Research Findings

<u>Introduction</u>

All schoolteachers have different classroom management styles. These styles may contribute to the degree in which children are disciplined. Some teachers may see widgets that need to be regimented to fit the mold while others see young individuals that need to be nurtured. This study seeks to examine how a teacher's classroom management style influences classroom discipline problems.

I first became interested in this question when I was a student in high school. I have always believed that I behaved the same in each of my classes, but it became quite obvious that half of my teachers didn't have the same perception due to the number of infractions that I received. Going into this study, I felt that when my colleagues each employed different classroom management styles in their classroom practice since they all had their teacher training at different institutions. I anticipated the study would show that this would manifest primarily in the form the varying number of infractions reported. Some teachers simply demand more of the students than other teachers leading to conflicts between the students and their teachers.

The action research study, after a thorough review of the literature, looked at the teachers' classroom management profiles and the amount of training the teacher received in their undergraduate programs. Thus, my first task was to examine how training might

influence the way classroom discipline was handled. After administering a survey and learning that each teacher had a different classroom management style, I interviewed the administration to get a reference point on how they viewed classroom management skill as it relates to their hiring practices. BCIT believes that whatever classroom management skill a new hire possesses is acceptable as long as they're successful with it when they are hired. This is an area worth looking into, to see how a change in the districts hiring policy could benefit the educational delivery system at BCIT.

Reviewing the current discipline logs, I discovered that academic teachers at BCIT have written far more referrals than the vocational teachers. In a three-month period, from September to November, the 33 academic teachers reported 527 infractions while the 22 vocational teachers reported only 23. Therefore I limited my initial efforts to academic teachers at BCIT Medford Campus. BCIT is a comprehensive vocational high school encompassing grades 9 thru 12 with a student population of 840. For the purpose of this study, I selected twenty participants randomly by picking names out of a bowl.

The survey (appendix A) was distributed to the twenty selected teachers and eighteen of them were returned. The teachers and the teachers association offered no resistance to the study. The teachers were more than accommodating due to my rapport with them over the last 17 years in as much as I served six years as their association president and chief negotiator for the last five contracts. I kept in touch with the participants by phone to keep the survey on their priority list. When I reviewed the project with the administration they acted interested it seeing the results. However, I have a hard time believing that it will change their attitudes about hiring practices. After

all I'm just a worker bee. I have an opinion but getting someone to listen could be difficult due to the bureaucratic structure of the school.

Analysis of Classroom Management Profile Questionnaire

The results of this questionnaire (appendix A) were analyzed to determine a classroom management profile for each participant in the sample. The results in Table 1 may be considered representative of all the academic teachers at the school.

Table 1. Classroom Management Profile Results

Authoritarian Style	5 or 27.7%
Authoritative Style	8 or 44.4%
Laissez-Faire Style	2 or 11.1%
Indifferent Style	3 or 16.6%

The document found in Appendix B, explains each management style, however, participants were not made aware of the styles evaluated or how they scored until the study was completed since I didn't want the teachers to try to predetermine the group they wanted to be associated with. The intern assigned credit for the questionnaire, it's evaluation methods or the style definitions to The Indiana University© all rights reserved (1996), Kris Bosworth-director.

The results of the Questionnaire were also analyzed to determine the classroom management profile for each participant in the sample. The purpose of analyzing the sample, as a whole, was to determine the general climate of management styles at BCIT. While this general analysis may be considered flawed as not all teachers at the school participated in the survey, it does represent 55% of the academic faculty.

Of the eighteen teacher's evaluated, 5 or 27.7% matched the Authoritarian management style, 8 or 44.4% matched the Authoritative style, 2 or 11.1% matched the Laissez-Faire style 3 or 16.6% matched the Indifferent style. As one can see BCIT has a large sample of authoritative style teachers. After talking with Joe Porter the assistant principal at BCIT, he assured me that this is purely by chance since BCIT does not have a hiring policy in place that recruits for this style of teacher. This could be looked at later as a possible suggestion for change. If the administration determines after reviewing the results of this study they are looking for this type of teacher, than they could initiate a change in their hiring practices to screen new hire candidates for this attribute.

Analysis of Discipline Policy Questionnaire

In trying to determine the relationship between classroom management styles as it relates to a teachers discipline policy, I distributed the discipline policy questionnaire to the participants in the study.

The results of the discipline policy questionnaire were analyzed to determine how many teachers had previous classroom management training. The participants were not asked for information about where they went to school or the years of experience they have teaching. The information I was interested in was if they had any previous training in classroom management, do they have a discipline code for their classroom, and how do the student find out the discipline guidelines for the class. In order for teachers to expect certain behaviors in the classroom, the students must have a reasonable expectation of the classroom behavior rules.

<u>Percent of teachers who have had classroom management training.</u>

Question 1. Have you had any previous classroom management training?

Table 2. Classroom Management Training Results

Yes	12 or 66.6% of participants
No	6 or 33.3% of participants

Of the eighteen teachers who participated in the study, twelve responded that they had received previous classroom management training. While participants were not questioned as to where they received that training, three offered that they were trained as substitute teachers at the beginning of their careers and one during teacher-in-service meetings at another facility, but this information was just taken under advisement.

These figures suggest a need for some training for the BCIT teachers and could be incorporated into the in-service programs. The school could also identify teachers who need extra training and work with those teachers individually with the use of mentor teachers. They might also suggest that the identified teachers take courses in classroom management, which would count towards the state mandated 100 hours of training.

<u>Percent of teachers with classroom discipline codes</u>

Classroom discipline codes are important if students are expected to know what the teacher expects when it comes to their behavior in the classroom. Students cannot have a reasonable expectation without understanding the rules of the classroom.

Question 2. Do you have a current code of discipline for your classroom?

Table 3. Discipline Code Questionnaire Results

Yes	7 or 38.8% of participants
Yes, and plan to revise it	3 or 6.6% of participants
No, but plan to have one	6 or 33.3% of participants
No, and do not plan to have one	2 or 11.1% of participants

When looking at Table 3, it became evident to me that the number of teachers who currently have discipline policies closely matches the numbers who do not, with 10 or 60% answering Yes and 8 or 40% answering No. Of those who answered No, 2 or 25% plan to have a policy in the future and 6 or 75% do not. They felt that if the school didn't require one they didn't have to do one. After talking with the teachers that answered no, 6 of the respondent are planning to develop one because they think it might be a good idea. Of those who answered Yes, 3 or 33.3% plan to revise the policy they currently use. Comparatively, the 10 participant's who answered Yes to this question also answered Yes to having had previous classroom management training. All who answered No to having had previous training answered No to having discipline policies as well. This suggests to me that there is some interest on the part of the teachers to improve their educational delivery systems. It is also an excellent opportunity for the administration to take the lead and help the teachers to develop and implement a discipline policy for their classrooms.

The administration at BCIT should work individually with those 8 teachers who answered no and show them the benefits of having a discipline policy and help them develop one for use in their classroom. This would have a positive effect on educational delivery with more being time spent on task and less time spent on discipline. Also, the

time administrators spend helping develop these policies may save them time in the future by not having to deal with as many discipline problems as they do currently.

Percentages for how discipline guidelines are administered.

Although having a discipline policy is important to classroom control, so too, is the manner in which it's implemented. If a teacher just passes out a set of rules, he/she can't be sure that the students actually read the rules or that they fully understand them.

Question 3. How do you introduce discipline guidelines to your students?

Table 4. Guideline Administration Survey Results

No information	7 or 38.8% of participants
Student Handbook	2 or 11.1% of participants
Discussed in class	9 or 50% of participants
Home mailing	0% of participants
Other	0% of participants

Similar to the result of the discipline policy question, the number of participants who administered discipline guidelines to their classroom in some form, coincided with the number of participants who had previous classroom management training. Only one participant without prior training administered discipline guidelines to the classroom and that was in the form of the student handbook. Teachers that had discipline codes all delivered these to the students in the form of classroom behavioral guidelines. In talking to the teachers in the study, none of the teachers evaluated the students understanding of the rules.

Not so surprising was the fact that teachers who had received prior training felt that giving students guidelines for class conduct was important to the smooth operation of their classroom. This seems to be part of the university training they received, just as objectives are important to delivering a lesson. Some teachers see this step as a preventative step, to save them time in their future classes by having to deal with less discipline.

I believe the discipline infraction numbers will significantly decrease if BCIT adopts a policy addressing this issue. I would suggest that the school form a discipline committee to expand the study to include all the teachers in the district, then the committee could make recommendations to the board once the study was complete.

Analysis of Infractions Table Data.

An infractions table (appendix D) that listed several disciplinary infractions was also distributed to allow participants to chart infractions for a four-week period. This chart was then compared to each teacher's classroom management profile to see how he or she would relate.

Table 5. <u>Results of Infraction Data:</u> Results of the data collected from the infraction table as they relate to the management profiles of participating teachers

GROUP 1 = Authoritarian		GROUP 2 = Authoritative	
Sexual Harassment	0	Sexual Harassment	0
Tardy	4	Tardy	2
Abusive Behavior Towards Teacher	0	Abusive Behavior Towards Teacher	0
Abusive Behavior Towards Classmate	2	Abusive Behavior Towards Classmate	1
Foul Language	5	Foul Language	3
Total = 11		Total = 6	

GROUP 3 = Laissez-Faire		GROUP 4 = Indifferent	
Sexual Harassment	0	Sexual Harassment	0
Tardy	6	Tardy	4
Abusive Behavior Towards Teacher	3	Abusive Behavior Towards Teacher	4
Abusive Behavior Towards Classmate	6	Abusive Behavior Towards Classmate	3
Foul Language	6	Foul Language	6
Total = 21		**Total = 17**	

Because of the low internal reliability of the instrument, no data analyses were conducted for the mean scores of this section of the instrument. The totals were viewed as a result of the different types of classroom management styles. In Group 1,the authoritarian, we see 11 total infractions. These may be a result of resistance on the part of vocational students towards this type of authority but when viewed against Group 3,the laissez-faire, and Group 4, the indifferent, we see that students do view some authority as necessary in the classroom environment. The type of authority preferred by vocational students seemed to be the authoritative style as evidence by the lowest incidence of infractions. Group 3 and Group 4 showed the highest incidence of infractions due to the lax environment of the classroom management styles used.

Looking at the sum totals of each specific infraction for each group, it can be determined that all groups reported no events of sexual harassment. The authoritarian (group 1) and the indifferent (group 4) scored similarly for events of tardiness while the authoritative (group 2) scored lowest and the laissez-faire (group 3) scored the highest. For events of abusive behavior toward the teacher, groups 1 and 2 show no events recorded while groups 3 and 4 show similar occurrences with scores of 3 and 4 respectively. Occurrences of abusive behavior toward classmates was unusually high in group 3 compared to the other 3 groups. And finally, foul language scored highest in the list of infractions. This could be due to the nature of the students, noting that when the

disciplinary infractions were reviewed at the assistant principals' office, there wasn't one write up for foul language from a vocational instructor. This is strange, because as I walk about the school, I hear foul language coming from the shops. The instructors seem to tolerate this behavior in the shop setting. Since a good majority of the shop teachers come right out of their trade areas, they haven't had formal teacher training. This includes formal classroom management training. It's not that the students don't exhibit the behavior, they're just not punished for it in their shop classes. Again this indicates to the administration the need for training, either in-service or mentoring, for the academic as well as the vocational teachers.

The vocational shops may have a more lax classroom management style or perhaps the students could be too busy working to get in trouble. This could be revealed in a further in-depth comprehensive study. I found it remarkable that groups 3 and 4, profiles which are assessed as lenient, scored highest overall, and particularly in noting foul language as a disciplinary infraction. The conclusion can be drawn that, while groups 3 and 4 are considered the more lenient of the profiles, such leniency lends itself to an increase in incidents of disciplinary infractions in the academic classroom.

Actions

When the data were analyzed I sent a synopsis (appendix C) to the teachers for their review. It is hoped that by viewing the results, the teachers will take the first steps towards self-improvement and possibly sign up for an in-service program in this area when it is offered. I also took the results to the assistant principal so we could brainstorm

some possible solutions. He was familiar with the topic because he had previous experiences in this area and felt there was a correlation. He would have liked to pursue this issue, but he was never allotted the time to research the problem. He felt it provided a good base line from which to work. We discussed the use of the districts in-service program as a possible step towards dealing with the problem of classroom management but felt it would be tough to teach old dogs new tricks. He reminded me that people are resistant to change, especially teachers. If Teachers were to change it would probably have to be it the form of a directive. Before the district would issue a directive they would have to be thoroughly convinced that my research findings had merit.

Change in this district has to come from the top down. The secret to making change happen at BCIT is getting the top people to come up with the idea for change. There is a definite bureaucratic structure at BCIT that's also resistant to change. The teachers are just worker bees in the system. In order for change to occur people must be willing to try. Caring, daring and sharing are not at home at BCIT. If the research shows the students would learn more because there were less discipline infractions, maybe they would listen.

The research indicates that vocational students are more comfortable with the authoritative classroom management style. If the administration agrees with this finding then they need to embrace this theory and adopt a district policy to work towards the goal of a uniform classroom management policy. The assistant principal requested a copy of the research findings so he can move it up the ladder and make a presentation to the building principal. He's willing to give it a shot since it benefits the students. I will make sure he gets a copy and hopefully create the first step towards making a meaningful

change in the district. A uniform district classroom management policy would make it easier for students to understand what's expected of them in each classroom. Enforcement of the policy may be a problem if all the administrators don't buy in on the solution of a district wide classroom management policy. All I can ask of the district to do is think over the preliminary findings and go further with the research.

Chapter 5

Conclusions, Implications and Further Study

It was the intent of this study to have the largest number of teachers available from Burlington County Institute of Technology participate in this study. Because not all teachers participated, the results of this study are limited as a representation of all teachers at BCIT. The method in which the instrument was administered may also have affected the results of this study, because each participant in the sample very likely completed the instrument under different classroom conditions that were beyond the control of the intern. The study can only assume that responses were truthful and that each participant noted all incidents of infractions. While the instrument was less than scientific and the sample small, the intern believes that the data that was collected and analyzed was adequate to conclude that there is a higher incidence of disciplinary problems in the classrooms of those participants who either had no classroom management training, or were assessed as having a more lenient classroom management profile.

This study is best viewed as the preliminary test of an evaluation program for classroom management training. As such, it reveals the limitations and complications of such an evaluation procedure; however, this intern has developed from it several concepts that may work to improve the quality of future classroom management training programs.

Those concepts include developing a well-researched and reliable instrument of evaluation, one that would be relevant to the type of institution, student population and

composition, socioeconomic influences and overall training experience of teacher population. While the administration and participation of this instrument was entirely voluntary and therefore limited in it's reliability, the successful application of such an evaluation would do better to be mandatory, which would more likely insure accurate responses and record keeping for evaluation.

Implications for Classroom Management

It was expected that this study would demonstrate some of the strengths and weaknesses of the teachers' current classroom management skills at Burlington County Institute of Technology. The initial assumption of the study was that the teacher's would have been able to make improvements in the way they handled disciplinary infractions in the future based on this study's results. In turn, this might have contributed to improved discipline management on a school-wide level. In retrospect, the improvements in classroom management at Burlington County Institute of Technology do not lie in the results of this study, rather, this study should serve as a pilot evaluation of classroom management training needs. As such, it offers those teachers that participated in the study a basis for improving their own classroom management skills.

Suggestions for Further Study

As noted previous, this study can serve as a pilot study. This study was limited to twenty academic teachers at BCIT. To conduct a thorough evaluation with classroom management at BCIT, a complete study should be under taken first to include all teachers, academic and vocational. From that study the district can formulate a needs assessment of the percentage of teachers that need to institute effective classroom management procedures or modify their current procedures. The district could then

formulate a committee to research different types of classroom management styles available in educational literature. The committee could then present the classroom management style they find to be the most appropriate for their district to the staff. The district could then institute Board policy addressing classroom management. With a policy in place the administration would have direction with management procedures being used in the classroom.

With the establishment of Board policy the teachers, students and parents know what the expectations of the teachers and students are in the classroom. The district policy will be printed in the teacher faculty manual and the student handbook to be disseminated at the start of each school year. With this information provided to all, the teachers will have the responsibility to use this classroom management style in the classroom. The administration will have the responsibility to enforce the policy established. This policy will provide for an equitable method of dealing with discipline problems in the classroom.

As noted earlier, this pilot study concluded that an authoritative approach is best suited for the schools needs. If the whole school mandatory study produced similar results then the district would need to institute change to help those teachers not currently using this style of classroom management. Effective school in-service programs can serve to facilitate this change. In-service programs can't be a panacea or one-shot cure. The in-service program needs to part of an overall professional development plan. Teachers, identified as being weak in classroom management, need to be involved in an improvement plan. In this improvement plan, the weak areas would be identified with a plan of action to address each item.

This plan can be used in conjunction with the teachers annual Professional Improvement Plan required be the State of New Jersey. The administration and/or teaching mentor would closely monitor the improvement plan. The mentors act as coaches for the targeted teacher, guiding them along a projected path.

At the end of each improvement plan there needs to be a re-evaluation to ensure the changes took place. If the desired changes didn't meet the goals of the improvement plan, the plan must be re-evaluated to see why it didn't work, changed and re-implemented.

In the long term, I would suggest BCIT look at their hiring practices. If the students perform better with the authoritative type of classroom control than the school needs to hire teachers experienced with this type of classroom management skills. The district could also require a mandatory workshop training session for all new teachers hired prior to the start of the school year. During this workshop training session the new hires would receive training explaining the classroom management style outlined in the district policy.

The administration has the power to interview and hire teachers that will best suite the organization. If the students in the organization perform better with authoritative classroom management then the administration needs to formulate questions to address this during the interview. The administration has the ability to select the new hires with the personal attributes that will compliment this style of classroom management.

As a result of this study I have a newfound admiration for researchers. The time and effort to put together a project such as this is immense. Leaders need to make time to

research different topics to stay current and be agents of change. The leaders of the organization must then lead the organization to change.

This pilot study has helped me to see that when a district looks to fill a position, they shouldn't be blind to the many attributes a teacher has to possess. To be a successful leader you must surround yourself with successful people. The results of this study will become part of my vision. When I become an administrator I'll use my position to hire successful people. It has always been my philosophy that a person of authority must do everything possible to hire the best people to produce the best product. The product of the school is the students' education. There is nothing more important than a student's education.

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APPENDIX A

Research Instruments

A 1. COVER LETTER DISTRIBUTED WITH INSTRUMENT

This is the cover letter that was provided to potential study participants.

You have been selected to participate in an evaluation of the classroom management skills of teachers at Burlington County Institute of Technology. The purpose of the evaluation is to determine the extent to which classroom management is applied and it's effectiveness in managing disciplinary infractions in the classroom.

This study is being conducted for the purpose of formulating a training program that would address potential classroom management skills needed in the classroom and as the basis of this intern's master thesis project. Burlington County Institute of Technology administration has not initiated this study and has no involvement in its conduct. No data collected from the study will be used to negatively influence the status of BCIT or it's teachers, either publicly or privately.

To accomplish this study, I am asking you to complete two short questionnaires on classroom management. In addition, I am asking you to complete an infraction sheet for a period of four weeks. On this sheet you will note how any one of the infractions listed is handled as they occur.

If you are interested in participating in this study and receiving a synopsis of the results of the evaluation, please fill out the form on the last page of this letter and submit it in the pre-addressed, stamped envelope. After receiving your affirmation to participate, I will contact you by telephone to discuss any specific questions you may have. For more information on this study, please go on to the next page for Participant Rights and Study Information.

Please know that your assistance would be greatly appreciated.

Thanking you in advance,

A 2. PARTICIPANT RIGHTS and STUDY INFORMATION

Your participation in this study is entirely voluntary. If you choose not to participate in this study, it will not affect your employment with Burlington County Institute of Technology and your decision to decline any involvement with the study will not be recorded.

Enclosed you will find several documents. Please fill out the two questionnaires as accurately as possible. The infraction tables are provided for you to chart how you handle each discipline infraction that may occur throughout the period of four weeks. As you complete each questionnaire and chart, I am requesting that you do so without consulting other teachers. While your agreement to participate will not be revealed to school administration or other teachers who participate, the decision to reveal your participation to either is solely up to you.

Thank you for your participation.

A 3. Classroom Management Profile Questions

Please read each statement carefully and respond with a numerical answer to each statement according your actual or hypothetical classroom experience.

1 = Strongly Disagree
2 = Disagree
3 = Neutral
4 = Agree
5 = Strongly Agree

P1. If a student is disruptive during class, I assign him/her to detention, without further discussion.___

P2. I don't want to impose any rules on my students.___

P3. The classroom must be quiet in order for students to learn.___

P4. I am concerned about both what my students learn and how they learn.___

P5. If a student turns in a late homework assignment, it is not my problem.___

P6. I don't want to reprimand a student because it might hurt his/her feelings.___

P7. Class preparation isn't worth the effort.___

P8. I always try to explain the reasons behind my rules and decisions.___

P9. I will not accept excuses from a student who is tardy.___

P10. The emotional well-being of my students is more important than classroom control.___

P11. My students understand that they can interrupt my lecture if they have a relevant question.___

P12. If a student requests a hall pass, I always honor the request.___

A 4. Discipline Policy Questions

Have you had any previous class management training? _____

Do you have a current code of discipline for your classroom?

_____1. No, but plan to have one
_____2. No, and do not plan to have one
_____3.Yes
_____4. Yes, and plan to revise it

How do you introduce discipline guidelines to your students?

_____1. No information
_____2. Student Handbook
_____3. Discussed in class
_____4. Home mailing
_____5. Other (explain)

APPENDIX B

Definitions

Classroom Management Profile Definitions

Authoritarian Style

The authoritarian teacher places firm limits and controls on the students. Students will often have assigned seats for the entire term. The desks are usually in straight rows and there are no deviations. Students must be in their seats at the beginning of class and they frequently remain there throughout the period. This teacher rarely gives hall passes or recognizes excused absences. Often, it is quiet. Students know they should not interrupt the teacher. Since verbal exchange and discussion are discouraged, the authoritarian's students do not have the opportunity to learn and/or practice communication skills. This teacher prefers vigorous discipline and expects swift obedience. Failure to obey the teacher usually results in detention or a trip to the principal's office. In this classroom, students need to follow directions and not ask why.

Authoritative Style

The authoritative teacher places limits and controls on the students but simultaneously encourages independence. This teacher often explains the reasons behind the rules and decisions. If a student is disruptive, the teacher offers a polite, but firm, reprimand. This teacher sometimes metes out discipline, but only after careful consideration of the circumstances. The authoritative teacher is also open to considerable verbal interaction, including critical debates. The students know that they can interrupt the teacher if they have a relevant question or comment. This environment offers the students the opportunity to learn and practice communication skills.

Laissez-faire Style

The laissez-faire teacher places few demand or controls on the students. "Do your own thing" describes this classroom. This teacher accepts the student's impulses and actions and is less likely to monitor their behavior. However, this overindulgent style is associated with student's lack of social competence and self-control. It is difficult for students to learn socially acceptable behavior when the teacher is so permissive. With few demands placed upon them, these students frequently have lower motivation to achieve.

Indifferent Style

The indifferent teacher is not very involved in the classroom. This teacher places few demands, if any, on the students and appears generally uninterested. The indifferent teacher just doesn't want to impose on the students. As such, he/she often feels that class preparation is not worth the effort. Things like field trips and special projects are out of the question. This teacher simply won't take the necessary preparation time. Sometimes, he/she will use the same materials, year after year. Also, classroom discipline is lacking. This teacher may lack the skills, confidence, or courage to discipline students. The students sense and reflect the teacher's indifferent attitude. Accordingly, very little learning occurs. Everyone is just "going through the motions" and killing time. In this aloof environment, the students have very few opportunities to observe or practice communication skills. With few demands placed on them and very little discipline, students have low achievement motivation and lack self-control.

APPENDIX C

Reports

Synopsis of the Study

This is the synopsis of the results of the study, which was mailed to each participating teacher.

Dear Participant,

The following is a synopsis of the study in which you participated:

Of the eighteen teachers who participated in the study, twelve responded that they had received previous classroom management training. While participant's were not questioned as to where they received that training, three offered that they were trained as substitute teachers at the beginning of their careers and one during teacher-in-service meetings at another facility.

The number of teachers who currently have discipline policies closely matches the number who do not, with 10 or 60% answering Yes and 8 or 40% answering No. Of those who answered No, 2 or 25% plan to have a policy in the future and 6 or 75% do not. Of those who answered Yes, 3 or 33.3% plan to revise the policy they currently use. Comparatively, the 10 participant's who answered Yes to this question also answered Yes to having had previous classroom management training. All who answered No to having had previous training answered No to having discipline policies as well.

Because of the low internal reliability of the instrument, no data analyses were conducted for the mean scores of infraction section of the instrument.

Looking at the sum totals of each specific infraction for each group, it can be determined that all groups reported no events of sexual harassment. The authoritarian group (group 1) and the indifferent group (group 4)scored similarly for events of tardiness while the authoritative group (group 2) scored lowest and the laissez-faire group (group 3) highest. For events of abusive behavior toward the teacher groups 1 and 2 show no events recorded while groups 3 and 4 show similar occurrences with scores of 3 and 4 respectively. Occurrences of abusive behavior toward classmates was unusually high in group 3 compared to the other 3 groups. And finally, foul language scored highest in the list of infractions. The intern found that groups 3 and 4, profiles which are assessed as lenient, scored highest overall, and particularly in noting foul language as a disciplinary infraction. The conclusion can be drawn that, while groups 3 and 4 are considered the more lenient of the profiles, such leniency lends itself to an increase in incidents of disciplinary infractions.

The data collected on how infractions were referred was not analyzed, as there was almost no variance in participant responses, indicating that almost all infractions were handled in the classroom.

While the instrument was less than scientific and the sample small, the intern believes that the data that was collected and analyzed for this study were adequate to conclude that there is a higher incidence of disciplinary problems in the classrooms of those participants who either had no classroom management training, or were assessed as having a more lenient classroom management profile.

Your personal classroom management profile is:
The definition of that profile is:

Thank you for you participation

APPENDIX D

Collection Instruments

Infractions Collection Form

	Ignored	Handled in the classroom	Handled outside the classroom	Referred to the Office	Detention	Suspension
tardy	0	0	0	0	0	0
disruptive behavior	0	0	0	0	0	0
abusive behavior toward teacher	0	0	0	0	0	0
abusive behavior toward another student	0	0	0	0	0	0
foul language	0	0	0	0	0	0
sexual harassment	0	0	0	0	0	0

Biographical Data

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High School	Woodrow Wilson High School Levittown, Pa.
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