

Classroom Management That Works

Lauren Cleve

Crissman Elementary

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Abstract

The purpose of this study was to find the best classroom management strategies to use when teaching in an elementary school setting. I wanted to conduct the best possible management tools for a variety of age groups as well as meet educational standards. Through my research I found different approaches in different grade levels is an important factor in reading students academic needs. Using different data collection tools: Active observing, teacher survey, specialist survey, semantic differential questionnaire, a goal checklist, email interview, student portfolios, student journaling and student self-assessment I was able to gather evidence of best practices. when it comes to classroom management. Student journaling and student self-assessments were the two areas of management that I found most effective. Using these two forms of data really helped me get a better hold on how I can reach students needs and wants in the classroom. When students took a hold of their own learning good behavior increased.

Introduction

The demographics of this school are a suburban area of mainly Caucasian students. We have less than ten percent of African American and Hispanic students. All students come from a middle class life style background and the majority of parents are middle class working citizens, who are college educated. My building receives parent support and we have a great parent-teacher association. My school is unique because we work as a family and a community; teachers, students and parents are closely involved with one another. The environment of my school is a student's home away from home.

As an educator I have dove head first into a whole new world of teaching. This is my second year as a full time elementary education teacher at Crissman elementary in Utica, Michigan Community Schools. My first year of teaching I taught second grade, and this year I took on a new position as a full time Media Center Specialist, teaching grades Kindergarten through sixth grade. I also teach two life skills classes with students who have metacognitive problems, one where students are working at a preschool through first grade level. The second class is at a second grade through third grade level. There are six hundred and forty-two students in the building. As an educator I am constantly learning and growing. There is never a dull moment when it comes to teaching. I learn something new each day and I am always revising my skills. I have not mastered all areas of teaching, but I do have strengths in various areas and weaknesses that I am trying to master. One of my weakest areas when it comes to teaching is classroom management. I start the year strong and students' behavior is always appropriate. As the year moves on I notice a change in behavior

problems. I am researching to see if the problem is me being a classroom manager, the student's behaviors changing due to growth and time, or if it is a mix of the two.

Investigating methods for classroom management will provide me with new techniques to practice and help me become a stronger classroom manager.

When creating my research questions I had what Mills (2001) states in mind, "Develop questions that will breathe life into the area-of-focus statement and help provide a focus for your data collection plan" (p.61). My research questions are: 1.What teaching strategies must be in place to reach students with a variety of skill levels? (What do I, as teacher, need to know and put into practice? Is this where the off-task behaviors begin?) 2. What learning strategies/classroom procedures are necessary for students at each grade level? 3. How will I monitor achievement of skills?

Variables that might be problematic to my project are that goals for students may be at all different skill levels. Student goals may not be obtainable because they do not align with curriculum standards or students may be unmotivated to create goals for technology because he or she has little interest in this area. Student attendance is another variable, because I only meet with each class once a week, if we are working on a project and a student is absent, they become one week behind. Another variable that is problematic is that my district does not follow any curriculum when it comes to technology. I solely base my lesson plans off of Michigan State Standards and grade level content expectations.

Review of Literature Resources:

(2012) *Behavior management forms*. Teach Forms. Retrieved from

<http://www.teachervision.fen.com/classroom-discipline/resource/6283.html>

This website will be very useful to my research because it gives resources of various classroom management behavior methods. It comes with links I can print off. One of the resources I would like to try is the Behavior Analysis log. I would use this to find what exact classes and students I am having behavior problems with. This source also has several different examples and links to other resources, such as, books and articles.

(2012) *Teacher tips: classroom management strategies*. Teacher Certification Degrees.

Retrieved from <http://www.teachercertificationdegrees.com/resources/teacher-tips-classroom-management-strategies/>

This website provides me with a target area focused on different strategies of classroom management for older students. It goes through areas of fair and effective discipline, developing positive classroom management, student discipline and achievement and relationship strategies to use with older students. For older students it provides an article on fair and effective discipline. This is an area I would like to explore on this sight because it matches my research question of using techniques at different ages. It also gives tips on motivating students at the elementary school level which I would like to explore in my research.

Charles, C.M., (2002). *Building classroom discipline*. (7th ed.). Boston, MA: A Pearson Education Company.

The book *Building Classroom Discipline* offers great examples of other teacher's classroom discipline methods. It provides eleven different examples where I can see my problem through another teacher's lens. Some of the examples I would like to explore are win-win discipline, this is broken down into first find the type of disruptive behaviors occurring then gives tools to work on this problem area. Another area of focus in this book is discipline as self-control, where it goes into the area of classroom management on rewards and punishment. It also provides me with examples of promising practices that may help me solve my own classroom management struggles.

Fish, C.R. & Trumbull, E. (2008). *Managing diverse classrooms: how to build a students' cultural strengths*. United States: ASCD.

I chose this text about managing diverse classrooms because it gives me a challenge and causes me to get an alternative view on my research project. It provides me with a new way of thinking about classroom management. I never thought to take the perspective of looking about student's culture background as a link to classroom management. Making connections to student's culture backgrounds may help answer some misbehavior from specific students. Getting to know my students through a different lens will help me explore more research through a different lens.

Kratochwill, T. (2012). Classroom management: Teacher's modules. *American Psychological Association*. Retrieved from <http://www.apa.org/education/k12/classroom-mgmt.aspx>

This article discusses the broad sense of classroom management. It is filled with seven different modules that contain valuable information and various views on classroom management. The two modules I found most interesting were the dos and don'ts of classroom management, this section gave a great list of methods that do work and don't work. I could already relate it to myself. This will be a huge benefit for my research. I also found the module on why classroom management works to see this system in a new light.

Lorain, P. (2006). Handling disruptive students: A delicate dance for any teacher. *National Education Association*. Retrieved from <http://www.nea.org/tools/handling-disruptive-students.html>

I found this article by searching through the National Education Association it took a lot of digging to come across one I found credible. I knew this source was credible because it comes from the National Education Association. This article contained vital information for my research topic. It gives an example of a sixth grade teacher's situation and how to she handles it. The article also includes areas of classroom management for setting the tone of teacher-student interactions and typical behaviors of young adolescents. This targets my

focus of my research on improving my classroom management skills with upper elementary students.

Marzano, R.J. (2003). *Classroom management that works: research-based strategies for every teacher*. United States: ASCD.

I chose this text because I believe in the theories of Robert Marzano. The part of this text that I want to focus on is the theory of teacher-student relationships and the student's responsibility for management. I am extremely focused on what "I" can do to become a better classroom manager but I am realizing that students responsibility play a large role in this. I want to explore this area of my research in more depth. I think this book will provide me with new ideas on providing students with responsibility.

Marzano, R. J. (2003) *Classroom management that works*. ASCD Learn Teach Lead.

Retrieved from <http://www.ascd.org/publications/books/103027/chapters/The-Critical-Role-of-Classroom-Management.aspx>

This resource contains theories of Robert Marazno. He is known for his research in classroom management. I found this article useful because it targets my action research plan and gives great detail on the steps to become a good classroom manager. I have colleagues who study his work and theories and I would like to research more of his concepts. It will be a great link into figuring different classroom management techniques

that might work at different grade levels. As well, it will provide methods to become a stronger leader in the classroom.

Maranon, R.J., Gaddy, B.B., Foseid, M. C., Foseid, M.P., & Marzano, J.S. (2005). *A handbook for classroom management that works*. United States: ASCD.

This is a wonderful text that links to Marzano's theories. It provides me with research tools I can use. It breaks down different areas of classroom management and provides tools to find the most effective strategies that will work. It includes several assessment tools to use both for a teacher and ones to use on students. It even provides a section on tips for classroom setup, dealing with anger, different exercises to use with both younger and older students. I am happy I came across this resourceful tool for my research project.

Yang, A. (2001). Using the responsive classroom approach in special area classrooms. *Responsive Classroom*. Retrieved from <http://www.responsiveclassroom.org/article/using-responsive-classroom-approach-special-area-classrooms>

Although this article is from 2001 it has information on the importance of specialist teachers in schools. It gives ideas for how specialist teachers can use various techniques to

create consistency during their time with students. The article explains in-depth about using a responsive classroom strategy. This strategy focuses on academic achievement and decreasing problem behaviors. This article will provide methods to improve professional practice of classroom management as a specialist teacher

The purpose of this study is to investigate methods for classroom management in a technology class, with a primary focus on upper elementary students. My proposed intervention would be to create a goal-setting plan with one of my sixth grade classes. The goal setting plan would be teacher and student created. I would like to have students create goals for technology skills they would like to master before they go to junior high school. I will also include the goals I wish for them to reach by the end of the year. The purpose for this proposed intervention would be to help investigate if the projects I am giving students are the cause for poor behavior.

Research Process

Data Matrix Appendix A.

Research Questions	1	2	3
1. What teaching strategies must be in place to reach students with a variety of skill level?	*Active Observing	*Teacher survey	* Specialist Survey
2. What learning strategies/classroom procedures are necessary for students at each grade level?	*Semantic Differential	*Goal Checklist	*Email Interview
3. How will I monitor achievement of skills?	*Student Portfolios	*Student Journaling	*Student self-assessment

Completing my data collection matrix has helped me visualize how I will go about using my tools. I now realize the process that will go into collecting all of my research for my data analysis. In the Expert Commentary video, *How do I analyze and interpret my data?*, Dorothy Korzym states: Once you've collected all of your tools and you're ready to write your data analysis, it's probably the most cumbersome part or the most challenging part. To me, it's the most empowering part of your research, but it is going to take you a while". It will be challenging to analyze all my collected research, but worth it to find answers to my data research questions.

For the first section of my matrix I have come up with three tools that will guide my first action research question: What teaching strategies must be in place to reach students

with a variety of skill levels? (What do I, as teacher, need to know and put into practice? Is this where the off-task behaviors begin?). The first tool I would like to use is to be an active observer the class I wish to observe. Utilizing this tool first will help me get a clear sense of my students' regular classroom behaviors. After this tool, I will move onto giving my sixth grade teachers a management survey to get an idea of management techniques they use as upper elementary teachers. Lastly, I will use an online survey for media center specialist. I will compare management styles of both the general education teachers to the specialists. I will also look for patterns between students working in their regular classroom compared to working during their media center time.

My next steps for my plan is to answer the question of what learning strategies/classroom procedures are necessary for students at each grade level. The first tool I will use is a student semantic differential questionnaire. From this survey I would create a goal setting checklist for students. The survey will help me propose goals for students I know will motivate them and skills they wish to improve on. Lastly, I will be interview emailing the media center chairperson in my district for advice and tips on classroom management.

My final research question is finding methods to monitor achievement of skills. The three tools to will help me find what the best practices are for student portfolios, students' journaling about goals and having students' write a self-analysis. These three data instruments will help me discover if there is a link between giving students responsibility and their behavior. Triangulating my data has helped me organize how I will collect my research "one way to processed with analysis is to follow three interactive, or repeating,

steps: reading/memorizing, describing what is going on in the setting, and classifying research data (Mills, 2011, p.126).

Nine Data Collection Instruments:

1. Active Observing:

Looking for:	Comments:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> What classroom procedures are set in place to monitor student behavior? 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> If and when do off task behaviors occur? 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Does the teacher use different methods of classroom control? (EX. Focus tool, proximity) 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Are there types of lessons/activities that keep students engaged and focused? 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Do certain students have special behavior plans/modifications of work? (Do any students have learning disabilities/leave room for added support?) 	

2. Teacher Survey:

1. Do you feel classroom management techniques differ by grade levels? (yes or no)
2. What types of classroom management techniques do you use as upper elementary teacher? (Comment/open ended)
3. Do you have special rules/behavior expectations for your students during their specials? (Comment/open ended)

Link to teacher survey: <http://www.surveymonkey.com/s/XK2S6Y3>

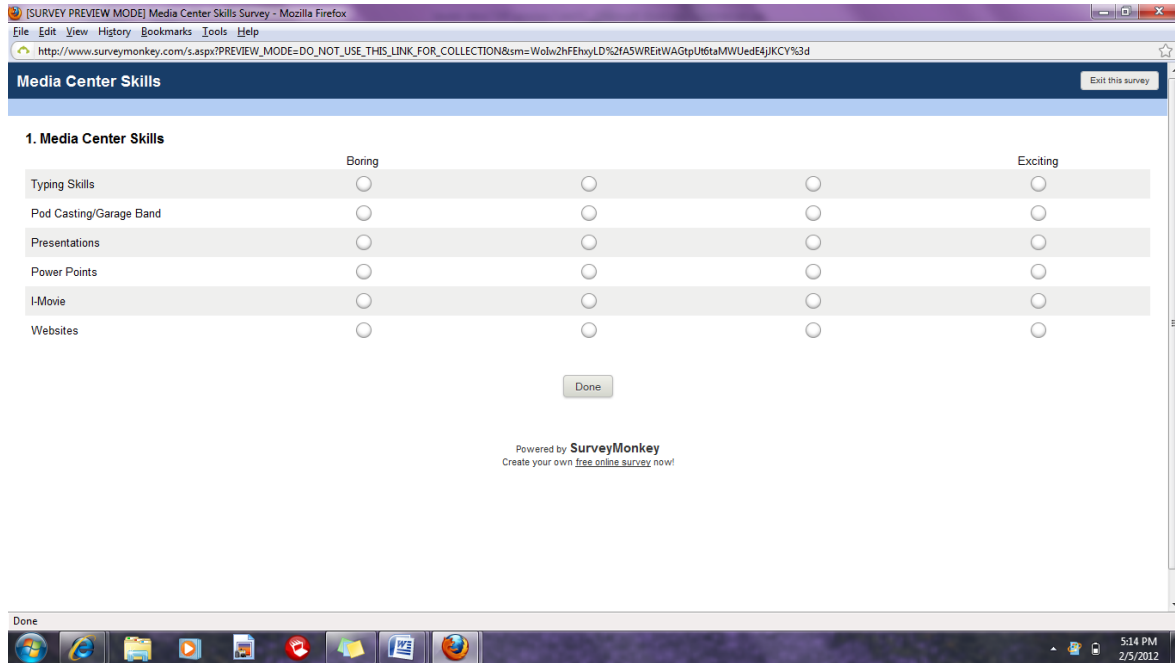
3. Specialist Survey:

- What type of behavior management system do you use?
- Do you use different classroom management methods with different grade levels?
- What teaching strategies do you use to reach students with a variety of skill levels?
- How do you monitor achievement of skills?

Link to my online survey: <http://www.surveymonkey.com/s/LPLWMT3>

4. Student Semantic Differential Questionnaire:

The online semantic survey I will use: <http://www.surveymonkey.com/s/L6KCVTJ>



5. Example Student Goal Sheet:

Goal	Self-Evaluation (1-10)	Teacher-Evaluation (1-10)	Reach Goal (Student place STAR * for yes)
Typing Skills/ Microsoft Word Use			
Pod Casting/Garage Band			
Presentations			
Power Points			
I-Movie			
Websites			

6. Email Interview Questions:

- What type of behavior management system do you use?
- Do you use different behavior management techniques for different grade levels? If so what do you do?
- Do lessons during media center have an effect on student behavior?
- How do you reach students with a variety of skills?
- Any tips/advice you have as working as a media center specialist?

7. Student Portfolios:

Directions:

1. Login in using your student login
2. Click on your user name folder
3. Click on 20stucommon folder
4. Click this week folder
5. Click Technology Portfolios
6. Find your folder name

***Inside student portfolios is where students will store their goal setting sheets, journal and self assessment.

8. Student Journaling:

Example of Journal:

Name: _____ Date: _____

Technology Goal: _____

Details of goal (activity done): _____

Did you reach your goal? (Explain below):

9. Student Self-Assessment:

Student Self-Assessment Exit this survey

1. Technology Skills

	Typing Skills/ Microsoft Word	Pod Casting/Garage Band	Presentations	I-Movie	Websites
Don't Know	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Somewhat Know	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Know	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Know A Lot	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Mastered	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

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Link to survey: <http://www.surveymonkey.com/s/X9CFTVK>

Data Analysis:

During my research my first question was, What teaching strategies must be in place to reach students with a variety of skill level?. I wanted to answer this question because when it comes to lesson planning students are at various levels. Working as a media center specialist I worked with students in kindergarten through sixth grade. They came to me with various skill levels when it came to teaching them technology skills. I also wanted to research this question because meeting a variety of skill levels also has to do with how students behave in my classroom. One element from my research I learned to integrate was using the responsive approach to the classroom. A responsive approach gives students a chance to share their wants and needs as well observe how their behavior should be inside their own classroom and how it should carry over to a special class.

Yang (2001) found the following:

The specialists also teach children that rules for behavior in their regular classroom carry over to the special areas. Early in the year, students bring a copy of their classroom rules to their special classrooms. The specialists discuss with children what it would look like to follow these rules in the special area, and some specialists post the rules in their classrooms. The message to children is clear: The same high expectations are in place in specials as anywhere else in the school.

Teaching students they have the same expectations in a special as they do in their homeroom gives them the same level of respect to all teachers they work with. Looking at my media center classroom management survey; when asking the question what type of

management system do you use 100% of them responded that they use the same system approach for each grade level. The next source I used taught me the do's and don'ts of classroom management. According to Kratochwill (2011), teachers should do the following: "develop caring, supportive relationships with and among students; organize and implement instruction in ways that optimize students' access to learning; use group management methods that encourage student engagement with academic tasks; promote the development of student social skills and self-regulation; and use appropriate interventions to assist students who have behavior problems". This fact opened my eyes to seeing classroom management in a larger frame because it is not just the rules that need to be implemented, it is finding what will promote student engagement at different levels. Looking at the results and seeing that 8 out of 8 responses totaling 100% of teachers use one system made me aware that the system might not always be effective.

2. Do you use different classroom management methods with different grade levels? [Download](#)

	Response Count
	8

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Responses (8) Text Analysis My Categories (0)

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Showing 8 text responses No responses selected

Not really
3/16/2012 6:49 AM [View Responses](#)

I basically use the same methods across all grade levels, but I tend to give younger students a little more guidance into redirecting their behavior.
3/15/2012 10:12 PM [View Responses](#)

The next resource I used to help me answer this question was an article that broke down different strategies for working with older and younger students. As a new teacher to the upper elementary students I was curious of different methods to meet the needs of my older students. I never took into account these students have different needs and can be more independent when it comes to rules being placed by the teacher. The article *Teacher Tips: Classroom Management Strategies* (2012), states three classroom management rules when it comes to older students: clarity, consistency and follow through". This article helped me build the bridge of poor classroom management with my older students. I used these strategies because I wanted to build the bridge between student discipline and achievement. I learned that I was poor at the follow through part once I worked on that area I saw great achievement in my upper elementary classes.

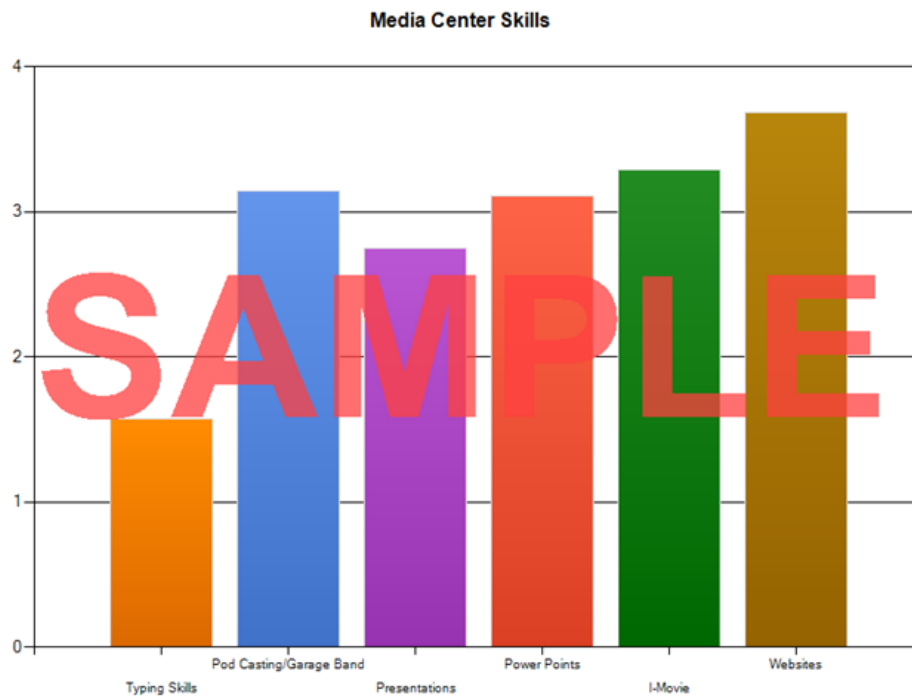
These three sources helped me link together the importance of not only having a set of classroom rules that must be followed through with, but also the importance of how management effects achievement. When conducting my research through the three projects to answer this question were active observing in an upper elementary classroom, giving students a survey and surveying both a sixth grade teacher and another media center specialist. From this research I found the teaching strategies that must be in place to reach students at a variety of skill level must first know what levels students are at in their learning and also seeing what skills they wish to learn. I also learned that the strategy of having a good classroom management system in place is crucial for student achievement. If students come to a special and look at it as a free time they will not process the drive to

want to learn the new material in the arts areas. After exploring the strategies that must be in place to target various student levels, I then was curious what learning strategies/classroom procedures are necessary for students at each grade level?

When looking at the learning strategies for upper elementary students from the first part of my research I began to question what learning strategies/classroom procedures are necessary for students at each grade level. I wanted to find the answers to this question because I was curious if there was a way to combine the different grade levels and promote the same management system or if it is more beneficial to use different techniques with different age groups. The first thing I discovered was through the text *Building Classroom Discipline* (2002), was the idea of synergetic teaching, “Synergetic teaching refers to working with student in a way that brings about classroom synergy” (Charles,p. 209). I loved this idea of building trust, communication and interest. I have found through my research that finding student interest is crucial to their behavior. If I am teaching something that does not interest students they will be keener to misbehave.

In order to target student interest I needed to dig deeper and focus on what areas students want to learn more about and what areas do no interest these students. Through research I discovered a great website that allowed me to get ideas to create behavior management tools. The website Teacher Vision I adopted the idea of creating various forms to answer the question of what strategies need to be in place in various grade levels. The ideas I gained from this source was “Student goal setting sheet, student surveys and student contracts” (Teacher Vision, 2012). From this research I was able to adapt my own tools to answer this question. From my research I was able to differentiate instruction with my




different classrooms by finding out their interest and their goals. I found from this survey that students had a strong interest in creating their own websites and using the program I-Movie. 75% of students had interest in Websites and 53% had an interest in I-movie. Typing Skills was the lowest with a 58% student rate stating it was boring. Looking at the survey results you can see where student's interests are and these interests carried over into their goal setting. (Appendix B: Student Survey) Looking at the data I was able to pull students interests and integrate them into my lesson plans. Knowing that website making and I-movie were the top two areas students had an interest in I could better adapt my lessons to fit their wants. Doing this made classroom behavior increase because 100% of my students took their learning into their own hands.



The last area of concern when answering this question was now that I figured out what strategies to use with various grade levels, what do I do with disruptive students I still have. Looking at the website *Handling Disruptive Students* (2006), Lorain states how realizing older students are developmentally at a different behavior rate, “Well-prepared teachers know the developmental issues of their students. They respond to negative student behavior in ways that communicate that the teacher is in control, that there are parameters for acceptable behavior that the classroom is safe, and that individual relationships with students will always be positive and supportive”. Looking at my older students in a different light helps me because I know I need to take different approaches to these disruptive students. This then led me into asking once I monitor behavior management of all my students how will I monitor achievement of these students?

When finding the answers to how I will monitor student achievement I wanted to have students play a large role in their own success. “Self-monitoring and control techniques are those in which students are taught to observe their own behavior, record it in some way, compare it with some predetermined criterion, and then acknowledge and reward their own success” (Marzano, 2003, p.78). This research gave me the idea to have student goals, portfolios and self assessments to gain that responsibility of their own learning. Looking at my survey asking students if they reached their goal and if so what you are can see students have met their individual learning goal (Appendix C: Goal Survey). 15 students personal goal was I-Move and 51% of them met their goal. Webpage making was 6 students 20% met goal. Power Point was 8 students and 27% met their goal. Totaling 29/29 students reached their desired goal (100%). Having students create their own personal

learning goals aided in helping them have a main focus when they came to see me in Media Center. Analyzing the progress from this data tool I had 100% of my students reach their personal goal by the end of the school year. It was great achievement to see my students set a learning goal and reach it especially when I only get to see these students once a week for an hour.

		Response Percent	Response Count
Power Point		27.6%	8
Webpage		20.7%	6
I-Movie		51.7%	15
Other (please specify)		0.0%	0
		answered question	29
		skipped question	0

The text *A Handbook for Classroom Management that Works* (2005), talked about the difference between rules and procedures “A *rule* identifies general expectations or standards; a single rule can encompass a wide range of expected behaviors. A *procedure* communicates expectation for specific behaviors. Effective teachers use both rules and procedures” (Marzano, Gaddy, Foseid, Foseid, & Marzano, J.S., p.5). I discovered the importance of combining both rules and procedures to reach success with students. Creating the procedures for student self assessment resulted in students following rules.

Another area I took into account when finding out how to monitor students was learning their various backgrounds. Reading the text *Managing Diverse Classrooms: How to*

Build on Students' Cultural Strengths (2008), Fisch and Trumbell reflect on looking at student cultures "Every choice a teacher makes about organization or management reflects a cultural perspective, whether it is visible or not. Likewise, the teacher's choices will affect students in different ways, depending upon how the children have been socialized within their home cultures" (p.2). I never thought to look into student's different background and cultures. Exploring this area was new to me and I gained insight from student surveys and goals on this area. This part of my research surprised me because I didn't think it would play such a huge role in student assessment and goal setting.

The research helped me answer the three focus questions of this action research project. Through active observing and teacher surveys I was able to answer the question of what teaching strategies must be in place to reach student achievement. I learned through my research that linking both the homeroom and the specials is important. Answering the question of what needs to be in place for students at various grade levels was also interesting because my research provided me with the answer that different strategies must be implemented to reach the different interest and development areas of all students. Lastly, discovering how to monitor achievement of students was important because I found that allowing student responsibility and digging deeper into getting to know students is the solution for the link between management and student achievement.

Action Plan

Completing this action research project allowed me to discover new ways to meet the needs of all students in various grade levels. Going into this project I was in search of

one unique classroom management method that I could use on all my media center classes ranging from ages five to twelve. I quickly discovered that it takes different approaches to reach students at various grade levels. After discovering that I must take on different approaches when teaching students I wanted to primarily focus on my older students. I had a strong background when working with younger grade levels. My primary focus for this project then shifted to older students.

I am glad I changed my focus to older students because it let me specifically focus on ways in which I could conduct a good classroom management system and at the same time figure out what these students wanted when they came to media center and help them learn and grow in this area. Having students take an interest survey was a crucial part of my evidence. This alone tackled two areas of my research building a strong classroom management technique and figuring out how to reach these students. Allowing these students to communicate to me what they wanted to learn opened the door for trust in the classroom and helped me guide them in lessons that they actually wanted to learn.

Other strong attribute that helped guide my research was having students create goals and keep a student portfolio. This again built a strong classroom management technique because I was allowing students to take their learning into their own hands. Once students set a goal of what they wanted to learn I could then guide them in the process of making that goal become a reality. When students were coming to class and working on things they chose to work on allowed for classroom behaviors to excel. I never had to focus on behavior because students had the drive to come to class and reach their own personal media center goal.

I will use this research as a stepping stone of how to manage older students. Giving students the ability to choose their learning path is a huge factor when it comes to behavior. If a student is constantly given what they are expected to learn and not a choice to choose what they want to learn it can cause for poor behavior issues. Allowing students to take their learning into their own hands not only allows students to be successful but allows a teacher to guide them in the path. I discovered that it is not a simple classroom management tool out there to reach students it is allowing them to take control in their learning. This data can also be shared with other teachers to show how allowing students to take part in the learning path can take over behavior problems.

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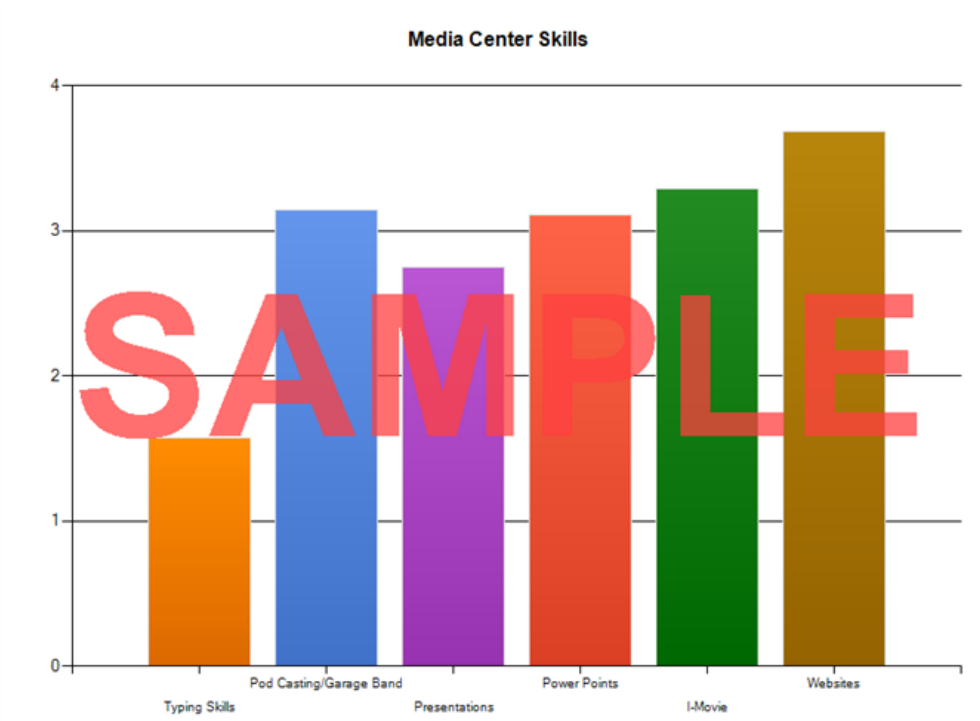
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Appendix

A: Data Matrix:

Research Questions	1	2	3
1. What teaching strategies must be in place to reach students with a variety of skill level?	*Active Observing	*Teacher survey	* Specialist Survey
2. What learning strategies/classroom procedures are necessary for students at each grade level?	*Semantic Differential	*Goal Checklist	*Email Interview
3. How will I monitor achievement of skills?	*Student Portfolios	*Student Journaling	*Student self-assessment

B: Student Interest Survey:



C. Goal Survey :

