Improving Adult-Student Relationships: Ongoing Teacher and Parent Book Studies

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Abstract
Professional development (PD) programs are necessary to best meet the needs of students in the school and home environments. This study will examine the effect that ongoing PD with teachers and parents—in the form of book studies on Ross Greene’s Collaborative and Proactive Solutions (CPS) approach—has on perceived adult-student relationships. Results will help school psychologists understand the impact of this type of PD and allow them to develop similar trainings within their schools.

Addresses NASP Practice Model Domains 2 and 7: Consultation and Collaboration and Family – School Collaboration Services

Materials & Methods
• This study sought to determine the effect that including parents in professional development opportunities had on adult-student relationships, and whether the effect increased with a greater number of parent participants per classroom.

Participants
• Staff participants (n=14) consisted of 7 classroom teachers, 3 special education teachers, 2 paraprofessionals, 1 tutor, and 1 administrator from a PreK-5th grade Midwestern charter school.
• 14 parents (12 female, 2 male) of children from the same PreK-5 charter school participated in the parent book study.

Measures
• Staff members completed the Student Teacher Relationship Scale-Short Form (STRS; α=.89) (Pianta, 1992) to measure their perceived relationships with students.
• Parents completed the Behavior Assessment Scale for Children—3rd Edition Parenting Relationship Questionnaire (BASC-3 PRQ, α=.93) (Kamphaus & Reynolds, 2015).
• NOTE: All rating scales were scored using female rater norms to maintain confidentiality of male participants.
• Qualitative questions were administered before the book study began and after the last session to inquire about the facilitation of the sessions.

Procedures
• All staff and parent participants received a copy of Ross Greene’s Lost at School.
• Teachers and parents attended separate book studies facilitated by the authors once a month for four months.
• Participants filled out their respective measures each month during the book study.

Data Analysis
• A time series approach was used to visually compare the effectiveness of the book studies on perceived adult-student relationships.

Results

Parents reported less relational frustration with their child throughout the book study.

Overall, teachers reported less conflict with their students throughout the book study (effect size=0.20).

Contrary to our expectations, having 0-2 parents within a classroom participate in the book study had slightly better outcomes than having 3+ parents participate.

Qualitative Questions
• After the book study, participants reported that providing time to troubleshoot problems and modeling the approach during the book studies helped them feel successful with the material.

Discussion
• Teachers reported not feeling comfortable enough yet with the technique to collaborate with parents, which is the likely reason that the number of parent participants within a classroom did not have a significant effect.
• Limitations of this study include the small sample size and the book studies occurring once monthly. It’s likely that participants need more frequent reinforcement of the material to increase the chance of relationship gains.
• Future studies should examine whether adult-student relationship gains can be maintained following the completion of a book study. The current study was not able to due to unexpected changes in the book study schedule.

Implications for School Psychologists
• School psychologists can advocate for the implementation of CPS training opportunities within their schools to benefit students.
• School psychologists who implement this type of PD within their schools can increase participant confidence by coaching them through using the method with their students.

Selected References

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