Action Research: Implementing Restorative Practices to Improve Classroom Climate

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Abstract

This paper describes action research focusing on implementing restorative practices (RP) to improve the climate in an eighth grade science classroom. This study utilized a concurrent mixed-methods design to determine if the use of RP, specifically affective statements and affective questions, had an impact on classroom climate. Quantitative data consisted of administering the Classroom Life Inventory (CLI) to students prior to and following the implementation of RP in the classroom. In addition, a student focus group interview and a teacher interview were conducted following the implementation of RP. The quantitative data were analyzed via descriptive statistics and repeated measures t-tests. The qualitative data was coded and patterns were observed in order to obtain overarching themes in the focus group and teacher interview. While there were some discrepancies between the qualitative and quantitative data sources, the use of RP did have some effects on classroom climate. Of particular note were increased perceptions of student academic support for one another. Furthermore, qualitative instruments discovered that the use of affective statements and affective questions seemed to enhance the teacher’s use of feedback and caused students to feel that the teacher listened to them more than other teachers. The results of this action research and implications of the findings are described in detail, as well as an action plan for continuing this work.

Keywords: classroom climate, restorative practices, school climate, affective statements, affective questions.