



THE EFFECT OF PREVENTIVE CLASSROOM MANAGEMENT TRAINING PROGRAM ON APPROVAL AND DISAPPROVAL BEHAVIORS OF TEACHERS

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In this study, the effect of Preventive Classroom Management Training Program (PCMTTP) on approval and disapproval behaviors of teachers working in inclusive classrooms was investigated. The study group consisted of 45 teachers who were working in public schools and had students with special needs in their classrooms. Data were gathered using Teacher Behaviors Observation Form, which was developed by the researcher, and during one lesson which was videotaped in the classrooms of teachers in the experimental group (n=21) who had a training using PCMTTP and the control group (n=24). The analysis of the research data revealed that PCMTTP did not make significant differences in the approval/disapproval behaviors of the teachers in terms of the post-test results but the maintenance results showed that disapproval behaviors of the teachers were significantly lower.

Key Words: inclusion, classroom management, approval behaviors, disapproval behaviors, training program, teachers working, inclusive classrooms

INTRODUCTION

Teacher behaviors are elements which influence student classroom behaviors and student achievements (Brophy, 1979). Even if it was not until 1970s that the researchers admitted that there was an important relationship between teacher behaviors and student behaviors, many research studies have been conducted to reveal the relationship between these two groups of behaviors since then. These research studies showed that teachers must approve student behaviors more to increase desirable academic and social behaviors of students (Brophy, 2006) and disapproval must be the least employed method (Landrum & Kauffman, 2006).

Approval and disapproval behaviors appear similar to “positive reinforcement and punishment” techniques which are used in behavior modification (Swinson & Harrop, 2001). Approval behaviors, which can be stated as teacher

reinforcing the appropriate behaviors that students show, can be described as teacher's praising or indicating the appreciation of the student immediately after the student/students has/have done appropriate behaviors (Gresham, 1998; Swinson & Harrop, 2001). However disapproval behaviors are stated as the teacher criticizing or rephending verbally or nonverbally a student or a group of students immediately after inappropriate behaviors (Partin, 2010; Swinson & Harrop, 2001).

Reinforcing appropriate behaviors of students by using rewards and trying to decrease inappropriate behaviors of students by organizing consequences are expressed as important teacher strategies for successfully managed classrooms (Brophy, 1979, 1983). In the literature there are many research studies that examine the strategies teachers use to manage the student behaviors. In one of the studies that investigated the approval and disapproval behaviors teachers used, it was revealed that teachers used disapproval behaviors more than approval behaviors (Meyer & Lindstrom, 1969). In another study in which teacher behaviors who had students with special needs in their classrooms, it was found that students who were less successful were confronted with less approval and support and with more criticizing (Skrtic, 1980). In addition to this students who were faced with less approval and more disapproval behaviors were unhappier than their peers to be in the classroom. In a study of Jambor (1984) which consisted of 286 teachers it was showed that the most frequently used rewards were praising students, giving amusing activities or extra free time and the most frequently used disapproval behaviors were rephending, giving time-out, making eye contact with the student, and touching the shoulder of the student. In another study it was revealed that female teachers used more positive methods and more rewards than their male colleagues (Pang, 1992).

There are research studies about teachers reward use that were conducted in Turkey. In the studies especially done in inclusive classrooms it was expressed that teachers mostly did not reward positive behaviors of students, they did not recognize problem behaviors of students and even they were not aware of students with special needs in their classrooms (Çifci, Yıkımsı, & Akbaba-Altun, 2001; Sucuoğlu, Akalın, Sazak-Pınar, & Güner, 2008; Sucuoğlu, Demirtaşlı, & Güner, 2009). It is an interesting result that teachers who often expressed problem behaviors of students with special needs as an issue that interrupts education (Kargin, Acarlar, & Sucuoğlu, 2005; Mitchem & Benyo, 2000; Scruggs & Mastropieri, 1996) did not recognize problem behaviors of students and did not utilize rewards. However, establishing an effective classroom management system which includes reward usage is one of the most powerful means that a teacher can use to increase desirable behaviors and decrease problem behaviors (Marzano & Marzano, 2003).

In the literature there are various classroom management training programs which trained teachers about effective classroom management (Evertson, 1988; Evertson & Smithy, 2000; Freiberg, Connell, & Lorentz, 2001; Polirstok & Gottlieb, 2006; Reinke, Lewis-Palmer, & Merrell, 2008; Slider, Noell, & Williams, 2006) and it was proved by research results that teachers who participated in these programs managed their classrooms more effectively. The results of two research studies which focused on teachers' approval and disapproval behaviors are obtrusive. The first study that examined rewarding and rephending behaviors of teachers revealed that giving visual feedback to teachers about their classroom management practices increased effective classroom management strategies they used and their reinforcement behaviors increased and their rephending behaviors decreased (Reinke et. al., 2008). In the second study, a classroom management training program which targeted teachers to use classroom management strategies including decreasing rephending behaviors and increasing reinforcing behaviors was implemented; the results of this study showed that students of teachers who received this training program exhibited less problem behaviors and their reading performances and task behaviors ameliorated (Polirstok & Gottlieb, 2006).

Even though there are a lot of classroom management training programs which were prepared to empower the classroom management of teachers there are not any research studies in the literature that examined the effect of these programs on the classroom management behaviors of teachers working in inclusive classrooms. This study was done in order to train teachers working in the inclusive classrooms for them to establish an effective classroom management system and to show the effect of classroom management training on approval and disapproval behaviors of teachers.

METHOD

Study Group

Forty-five teachers who worked in three elementary schools (grades one to five) in Ankara participated in this study. The requirement that there was at least one student with mild mental retardation or learning disability diagnosis which was given by Counseling and Research Centers was fulfilled. But in the absence of a student with a diagnosed disability, according to opinions of teachers the requirement that there was at least one student who was consistently and continuously showed academic skills that were one or two grades below the classroom level was considered.

Whereas the control group of this study was consisted of 24 participants who worked in a school, of which the students were from high socioeconomic status

families according to teacher opinions, and that was in Çankaya providence (School one=24 teachers), the experimental group was consisted of 21 participants who worked in either a school, of which the students were from high socioeconomic status families according to teacher opinions, and that was in Çankaya providence (School two= nine teachers) or in a school, of which the students were from low socioeconomic status families according to teacher opinions, and that was in Mamak providence (School three= 12 teachers) (Table 1).

Table 1. Demographical information of 45 participants

<i>Demographical Variables</i>		<i>N</i>	<i>%</i>
Gender	Female	34	76%
	Male	11	24%
Age	Ages between 28-45	29	64%
	Ages between 46-60	16	36%
Marital Status	Married	41	91%
	Single	4	9%
Experience	6-20 years	27	60%
	21-42 years	18	40%

Measurement Tools

Demographical Information Form

This form which was prepared by the researcher consisted of questions regarding gender, age, marital status, and experience etc. of the teachers.

Teacher Behaviors Observation Form (TBOF)

It is known that teachers who successfully manage their classrooms use more approval (reinforcement) behaviors and less disapproval (reprehending) behaviors (Polirstok & Gottlieb, 2006; Reinke et. al., 2008). PCMTTP, Preventive Classroom Management Training Program, was developed by the researcher based on two related research studies (Polirstok & Gottlieb, 2006; Reinke et. al., 2008) and determining the effect of this program on approval and disapproval behaviors of teachers and measuring the frequencies of approval and disapproval behaviors of them were targeted.

PCMTTP has a column that includes verbal and nonverbal behavior examples that are accepted as approval and disapproval behaviors and it has another column that the frequency of every behavior is recorded. The approval behaviors included in the form are as follows: (verbal behaviors) Nice, very nice, bravo, great, well done, you are very creative, thank you, (nonverbal) ‘applause, caress hair, smack on the shoulder’, etc. Also disapproval behaviors included in the form are as follows: (verbal behaviors) Shut up, do not make a

noise, be quiet, shhh, put it away, why did not you bring your notebook, I forbid speaking, what is going on there, (nonverbal) ‘showing shh with finger, knitting eyebrows’ and etc.

Procedure

Preparation of the Preventive Classroom Management Training Program (PCMTP)

PCMTP was developed by the researcher for teachers to create a safer and efficient classroom environment using preventive classroom management strategies and thus to increase students’ behaviors of attending to lessons. While PCMTP was being developed, teacher training programs that were developed during the last 40 years with the purpose of determining the effective classroom management methods that were presented by classroom management research and the research and publications investigating the effects of these programs were examined. The main resources of PCMTP consisted of a series of Evertson and his colleagues’ research studies on classroom management that were done in homogenous classrooms (containing no students with special needs) (Evertson & Anderson, 1979; Evertson, 1989, 1995) and some of the classroom management books (Marzano, Gaddy, Foseid, Foseid, & Marzano, 2005; Emmer, Evertson, Sanford, Clements, & Worsham, 1984; Jones & Jones, 2001).

PCMTP targeted teachers to use effective classroom management strategies in their classrooms that were first described by Kounin (1970) and extended by process-outcome research that proved its effect and targeted to increase students’ participation behaviors and to prevent their problem behaviors. In order for the topics in the program content to be more effective and long lasting, parts containing questions for teachers to answer and pictures related to the topics were used; classroom videos exemplifying classroom management strategies teachers use such as reinforcement, individualization, reminding the classroom rules etc. were used to enrich the program.

Training of the Observers

Four university students were trained to use PCMTP as independent observers. The training of independent observers lasted three weeks and three sessions. In the process of the training, on four different video recordings reliability study between the observers and the researcher was done and the training was completed when at the end of the training the reliability coefficient between the researcher and the first, second, and third observer was found 85%, 88%, 84%, and 86% respectively.

Assessment before PCMTP

After receiving necessary permission from Ministry of National Education 45 teachers in the experimental and control groups were informed that they were to be videotaped in one of the lessons among Turkish, Math, Social Sciences, Science or Social Studies during instruction of a new topic. Pre program data were gathered by 20 minute videotapes of a lesson recorded in the classrooms.

Implementing PCMTP

PCMTP was implemented two hours a week in the schools of experimental group and lasted three weeks and the training of teachers were completed in six hours. PCMTP was implemented following different processes in two different experimental groups. During training, videotapes which were recorded in inclusive classrooms during a research study conducted by Ankara University Special Education Department and which showed lessons were used to illustrate teacher behaviors.

Assessment after PCMTP

One week after completing the training program post test data gathering process was carried by recording videotapes in the classes of teachers both in the experimental and the control groups.

Collecting Maintenance Data

Because of the fact that necessary permission was not obtained for video recordings for the third time in the classrooms of teachers of the control group, after one and a half months completing post test data in the classrooms of teachers of the experimental group videotapes were recorded again as maintenance data and by this way data collecting process was completed.

RESULTS

In this study there were three schools and the school in the control group was from high socioeconomic status (HSES), and one of the schools in the experimental group was from HSES whereas the other one was from the low socio economic status (LSES) according to teacher opinions. Due to the fact that there were less than 30 teachers who participated this study in each group it was not appropriate to use parametric techniques (Büyüköztürk, 2005) so that analyses were done separately for the scores of three schools using nonparametric techniques.

In terms of the data gathered using TBOF from the teachers in the experimental and the control groups frequency means of approval and disapproval behaviors in the pre-test, post-test, and maintenance stages are listed in Table 2.

Table 2. Frequency means of pre-test, post-test, and maintenance scores related to approval and disapproval behaviors of teachers in the experimental and control groups

Schools	<i>Approval behavior</i>			<i>Disapproval behavior</i>		
	Pre-test	Post-test	Maintenance	Pre-test	Post-test	Maintenance
School 1 (Control Group)	10.83	10.70		28.54	26.58	
School 2 (Experimental Group)	5.88	6.77	10.44	29	16.55	15.11
School 3 (Experimental Group)	5.25	3.75	6.16	27	20.58	15.08

Approval behaviors:

Frequencies of approval behaviors were accepted as continuous variable, analysis of Kruskal Wallis Test of pre-test data related to these behaviors showed that there was no significant difference among means of frequency of teachers' approval behaviors in the three groups ($X^2(2) = 2.42, p > .05$).

However there was a significant difference in the Kruskal Wallis Test analysis of post-test data of approval behaviors in the schools ($X^2(2) = 10.31, p < .05$). Yet when the frequency mean ranks related to approval behaviors of teachers in three schools were examined, it was seen that the teachers in the control group had the highest mean rank.

There was no significant difference among three groups in terms of pre-test, post-test, and maintenance data of approval behaviors of teachers in the experimental group schools (School two and three) according to Friedman Test (School 2: $X^2(2) = 3.35, p > .05$, School 3: $X^2(2) = 5.44, p > .05$).

Disapproval behaviors

In terms of the Kruskal Wallis Test of pre-test data showed that disapproval behaviors of teachers in three groups of the experimental and control the groups did not differ significantly ($X^2(2) = .131, p > .05$).

Similarly when Kruskal Wallis Test was performed in order to see whether there were a significant differences among three groups in the post-test, it was found that there were no significant differences among frequency mean ranks of disapproval behaviors of teachers ($X^2(2) = .326, p > .05$).

When Friedman Test was performed in order to see whether there were differences among pre-test, post-test, and maintenance data of frequency of disapproval behaviors teachers used during instruction in the experimental group schools (School two and three), a significant difference was found. When the mean ranks were considered there was a significant decrease in the use of disapproval behaviors of teachers in the post-test (School 2: $X^2(2) = 6.68$, $p < .05$; School 3: $X^2(2) = 6.04$, $p < .05$).

DISCUSSION

In this study, the effect of Preventive Classroom Management Training Program on approval and disapproval behaviors of teachers who worked in inclusive classrooms was examined.

In the study, since there were three schools which were placed in different socioeconomic status regions (one school from low SES and two schools from high SES); analyses of scores of teachers from three schools were only compared due to this fact. However it was seen in the analyses that approval and disapproval behaviors of teachers working in three different schools were alike before training and there was no significant difference among them and thus this finding was interpreted as socioeconomic status of students did not change approval and disapproval behaviors of teachers.

When the frequency means of approval and disapproval behaviors of teachers are examined it can be seen that teachers in the experimental and control groups exhibited 28 disapproval and eight approval behaviors on average during a lesson before the training program. It is surprising that while especially three teachers' disapproval behaviors in a lesson were 78, 85, and 119 respectively their approval behaviors were quite low (10, 2, 11). Using rewards can be evaluated as one of the most effective tools in managing student behaviors in classrooms in which children with special needs attend. Undesirable behaviors in classrooms can be decreased or prevented by teachers by recognizing and rewarding desirable student behaviors. It is emphasized in the literature that in the classrooms in which approval behaviors are more and disapproval behaviors are less the classroom management is more effective (Polirstok & Gottlieb, 2006; Reinke et. al., 2008). However it was seen that the teachers in this study used limited rewards. Moreover even if the importance of using rewards was taught in the training program the number of rewards teachers used did not change significantly. The fact that teachers' reward usage was few and despite PCMTP training their reward usage did not increase significantly can be further investigated in future research. These findings can be interpreted as the quality of classroom management of teachers is not as desirable as it must be.

When the frequencies of teachers' approval and disapproval behaviors in the experimental and control groups before and after the training program were compared it was seen that there was not a significant difference in the disapproval behaviors but approval behaviors significantly increased in the control group. Even though PCMTP is a program which targets to increase approval behaviors it did not change approval behaviors of teachers who participated in this study. However the fact that teachers in the control group that did not receive PCMTP increased their approval behaviors might be due to observations and video recordings in the classrooms of these teachers during this study. Whereas teachers in the experimental group that had the training program might have seen the strategies of effective classroom management as a whole and might not have focused on approval behaviors, teachers in the control group that had no training related to effective classroom management might have tried to exhibit more positive behaviors due to having been observed. When the results were assessed the approval and disapproval behaviors of teachers did not change with the training program.

One of the possible reasons why PCMTP did not make any difference in the approval and disapproval behaviors of teachers in terms of post test results may be due to the training program having been given during the academic year. Effective classroom management is a result of a system and the teacher must begin to establish this system when s/he first enters the classroom at the beginning of the school year (Evertson & Anderson, 1979; Clements & Evertson, 1980). Therefore in the literature classroom management trainings are given before the academic year begins and teachers begin to use the strategies they have learnt whenever they enter the classrooms (Evertson, Emmer, Sanford, & Clements, 1983; Emmer, Sanford, Evertson, Clements, & Martin, 1981; Emmer, Sanford, Clements, & Martin, 1982; Evertson, 1985; Evertson, 1995; Evertson, 1989). However in this study the necessary permission could not be taken from Ministry of National Education in order to conduct the study therefore PCMTP could be implemented two and a half months later than the beginning of the school year. This fact is believed to have affected the results. In the literature it was emphasized that the effects of trainings given during the school year might be limited and however the training given during this time might have a moderate effect on teacher behaviors it has no effect on students (Evertson et. al., 1983).

When the maintenance data are examined even though there was no difference in approval behaviors it was seen that disapproval behaviors of teachers in the experimental group schools decreased significantly. In terms of maintenance data no change in approval behaviors might be interpreted as that the teachers did not use strategies related to rewarding during the time after the training. The

fact that teachers do not adequately use approval behaviors is also emphasized in the literature (Meyer & Lindstrom, 1969; Skrtic, 1980; Sucuoğlu, Demirtaşlı, & Güner, 2009). Even though the training did not have any significant effect on approval behaviors, significant change in the number of disapproval behaviors related to maintenance data might suggest that the teachers needed to use disapproval behaviors less and they reflected the classroom management strategies that they learnt during PCMTP to their in class applications even though they are not in the expected level and time. This situation can be explained in relation to the fact that effective classroom management must be a comprehensive whole of strategies. Even though ‘rewarding’ was discussed separately in the training program PCMTP is a classroom management program in which many strategies are targeted to be used and the results of which can be obtained in the course of time and it is not a program which teaches one or a few strategies. PCMTP might not have increased approval behaviors of teachers that were often emphasized to have inappropriate rates in the literature (Meyer & Lindstrom, 1969; Skrtic, 1980; Sucuoğlu, Demirtaşlı, & Güner, 2009), it might have affected the classroom management strategies teachers used and decreased the need to use disapproval behaviors. In terms of the maintenance data the significant decrease in the disapproval behaviors is parallel with the results in the literature that teachers criticize students less with effective classroom management (Reinke et. al., 2008; Polirstok & Gottlieb, 2006).

As a consequence the results of this study showed that approval behaviors were less than disapproval behaviors of teachers and having participated in the classroom management training had no effect on approval behaviors teachers used. It is a positive finding that PCMTP resulted in significant decrease in disapproval behaviors of teachers in terms of maintenance data and classroom management training decreased teachers’ need to use disapproval behaviors. Based on the results of this study it can be suggested that in Turkey the reasons why teachers use few rewards should be examined and classroom management trainings should be arranged in order to increase rewards-approvals of teachers who work in inclusive classrooms and in elementary schools.

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