

The TEACHER CENTER of Broome County
Teacher Study Group Grant Award
2001-2002

FINAL REPORT
DOCUMENT PROCESSES AND OUTCOMES

Study Group on Parent/Teacher/Student Conferences

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Initial Goal of the Group

The study group was developed to analyze the effect that parent/teacher/student conferences have on how the lesson is delivered in the classroom (school processes), grades (student learning), attendance (demographics), and attitude towards the learning environment (perceptions).

Action Plan

The group identified six students who were in danger of failing one or more academic classes. We set up conferences with each of the students and their parents. We met as a team to determine what type of data we wanted to collect, how to collect it, and how to compile the data.

Action Plan Implementation

1. After participating in six conferences we analyzed the major areas that needed change to improve student achievement. We identified seven school process areas that could be changed in the classroom to improve student achievement.
2. We developed a student survey to evaluate their attitude towards the learning environment after the conferences.
3. We collected grades in all four major subject areas (test, quiz, homework, lab, overall) to compare their scores both before and after the conference.
4. We printed the student's attendance reporting sheets and tallied the number of tardies, legal, and illegal absences to compare the changes both before and after the conference.
5. We gave the student surveys to the students and tallied the number of positive, negative, and neutral responses.

School Processes (Teaching Practices)

The seven school process areas that we identified were:

1. the presentation of notes
2. seating arrangement
3. teacher prompting
4. a change from group to individual work or visa versa
5. the privilege to leave the classroom
6. providing study guides
7. daily attendance sheets to record homework and behavior

We found that classroom teachers were receptive to implementing these accommodations in the classroom. While participating in the conference the teachers were able to better understand the different student needs (learning styles). Seven of the ten participating regular education teachers implemented changes in their classroom according to need. Not only did they make changes for the student(s) they had conferences on, but in some cases implemented changes for the entire class.

Student Perceptions

To evaluate student attitudes towards the learning environment we developed a student survey. The students were to rate the statements by using a 1-yes, 2-sometimes, or 3-no. The student responses showed that the students rated 8 or more of the 16 statements with a yes, showing a positive attitude toward those areas. After developing and giving this survey, we realized that it would have been more effective if we had given a pre-conference survey and a post-conference survey to compare the changes.

Attendance (Demographics)

Regular attendance in classes generally correlates with student achievement. In our study of the second and third quarter, we found no trends to show improved attendance after the conferences. In four out of six students, absences decreased

slightly. In two out of six students, absences increased slightly. There were no measurable changes in the area of attendance. In short, we found no direct link between the conferences and improved attendance.

Student Achievement

Research studies consistently reveal that positive parental participation in education is closely related to student achievement. Crossing several different types of student learning data provided insight into the students learning, and helped identify root causes of problem areas. Based on our data, students do improve academically when parents and teachers communicate. All six students improved their academic achievement in at least one subject area following the conference. Five out of six improved in at least two out the four subject area grades. One student improved in all criteria areas, therefore, improving his academic average in each class. Five students improved their homework grade in at least one subject, and simultaneously improved their overall average. Therefore, from the data collected, we were able to determine that there is a trend: students who do homework, get better grades.

Conclusion

There are significant benefits to clustering different data together on students. It provided us with a better-rounded picture of the students' academic performance. It also provided new insight into student learning and how to improve academic achievement. Collecting student-learning data prompted us to ask more questions about the teaching learning process.