

**The Impact Of Thoughtful Teacher Training On Teachers'
Instructional Strategies, Student Outcomes, and Disciplinary Practices**

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Introduction

The teacher in the classroom has the greatest influence on student learning and achievement (Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, “Learning about teaching”, 2010; Darling-Hammond, 2010). In today’s educational environment, teachers are under immense scrutiny regarding the academic success of their students. In the District Of Columbia Public Schools, students’ performance on standardized tests serve as a component of the teachers’ annual evaluation process. This system is based on the premise, if students are not performing well, then teachers must be responsible (Faulkner & Cook, 2006). With teachers being accountable for students’ academic achievement, they must be provided with instructional strategies to meet the extensive range of students’ needs. Thoughtful Teacher training provides teachers with instructional strategies to promote their success, especially with students who pose classroom management challenges.

Although national conversations tend to revolve around students’ academic outcomes as they contribute to the achievement gap, minority students are disproportionately subjected to higher rates of disciplinary actions ranging from office referrals to expulsions. (Krezmein, Leone, and Achilles, 2006). When students behave poorly, schools tend to rely heavily on excluding students from the classroom as the primary discipline strategy (Arcia, 2006). This practice has a disproportionate impact on minority students. The use of schools’ exclusionary tactics as a discipline practice may contribute to well-documented achievement gaps. Thoughtful Teacher trains teachers in the application of our classroom management framework which decreases the number of disciplinary incidents. Our trainings have resulted in fewer students being excluded from class.

Part 2: Thoughtful Teacher Training Model

Principal Quarterback LLC (dba Thoughtful Teacher) designed a classroom management model entitled Thoughtful Teacher™. The Thoughtful Teacher model specializes in providing professional development and personalized coaching with a specific focus on classroom management. To guide our work, we developed a comprehensive framework used to train teachers. The Thoughtful Teacher framework is comprised of 10 critical steps that transform the way teachers conceptualize the management of their classrooms. The Thoughtful Teacher Online Course and personalized coaching strategically trains teachers to understand the impact of their instructional behaviors on students' actions. Upon completing the training, teachers gain a complete understanding of the necessary systems needed to promote effective classroom management.

The Thoughtful Teacher training model is comprised of 10 defined strategies. The steps are as follows:

- Create A Winning Seating Plan
- Develop Healthy Relationships
- Systematize All Daily Tasks
- Provide Crystal Clear Directions
- Don't Ask, Direct
- Lesson Design
- Provide Frequent Positive Feedback
- Follow Up On Negative Behaviors
- Systematic Recognition For Positive Behavior And Academics
- Practice, Practice, Practice

The Thoughtful Teacher Coaching Program

The Thoughtful Teacher Framework serves as the foundation for our work. When we provide feedback to teachers, it is largely based on the Thoughtful Teacher Framework.

We utilize a 3 phase process to ensure teachers gain a firm understanding of the Thoughtful Teacher framework.

Training: Teachers participate in either a live Thoughtful Teacher professional development session or a 2.5 hour Thoughtful Teacher online course. Both methods can be used to train teachers in the Thoughtful Teacher model.

Application: Over a period of three months, our Thoughtful Teacher coaches conduct five coaching cycles with each teacher who has completed our training. One coaching cycle consists of a non-evaluative observation, post observation conference, and written feedback. Coaching cycles are conducted approximately every two weeks.

Online Assessment: For teachers who complete both the training and application phases, we administer the Thoughtful Teacher online assessment. To earn a successful mark, teachers must score at least 80% on the online assessment.

Thoughtful Teacher Training

Our Thoughtful Teacher training is designed to ensure teachers master the art of classroom management. If the training is delivered through a traditional professional development session, the length of presentation may vary based on the needs of the school. When the training is administered online, principals do not need to allocate additional time for teachers to complete this course. During the training, teachers will receive a comprehensive overview of proven strategies used by successful teachers. The online training is 2 hours 40 minutes in length and serves as the foundation for strategies provided by the Transformational Coach. Regardless of whether the school is located in an urban, suburban, or rural setting, the Thoughtful Teacher professional development sessions will provide a step-by-step training to transform teachers' classroom management skills. Our training is designed to drastically improve teachers' ability to manage the most difficult classes.

Our Transformational Coaches

Our Transformational Coaches are the key to transforming the classroom management practices of teachers. We require all our coaches to develop a professional, supportive relationship with their teachers. Our Transformational Coaches are experienced educators. Each Transformational Coach engages in extensive training of the Thoughtful Teacher model. Prior to working with your teacher(s), each coach is certified in the Thoughtful Teacher model.

Our Transformational Coaches are trained in providing feedback to maximize teachers' implementation of strategies. In most cases, our coaches are working with new or struggling teachers. To maximize their growth, we found that frequent, "bite-sized" feedback optimizes teachers' growth without increasing their level of anxiety. In addition, our coaches focus on actions of teachers and their impact on the behaviors of students. When our Transformational Coaches identify these key levers and coach teachers to self-identify these actions, teachers demonstrate drastic improvement.

Methodology

During SY 2018-2019, Thoughtful Teacher was fully engaged in providing the following supports. The following supports were provided to each teacher who participated in our Thoughtful Teacher coaching program.

- Each teacher either participated in a professional development session or completed the online training (2 hours 40 minutes).
- Each teacher received a Thoughtful Teacher Planning Guide intended to facilitate the implementation of Thoughtful Teacher Strategies
- Each teacher received written materials detailing the Thoughtful Teacher Model
- Transformational Coach (es) conducted 5 non-evaluative observations and provided "real-time" feedback for each teacher
- Transformational Coach (es) conducted 5 post observation conferences for each teacher (in-person or virtually)
- Transformational Coach (es) provided written feedback and strategic plans for each classroom observation
- At the conclusion of the program, each teacher was administered a Thoughtful Teacher online assessment

Part 3: Data Collection

We conducted a non-experimental study to determine the impact of Thoughtful Teacher coaching on teachers’ instructional strategies, student outcomes, and disciplinary practices. We collected data using a quantitative approach. The survey was administered to each teacher at the conclusion of our coaching supports (after the fifth coaching cycle). The survey was sent to 42 teachers who finished the Thoughtful Teacher program during the 2018-19 school year. Of the 42 teachers, 32 teachers completed the survey (76% response rate).

The End of Program Survey

The End of Program Survey consisted of 12 items and was composed of Likert type, multiple choice, and open-ended questions. The purpose of the survey was to determine the instructional impact, from teachers’ perspectives, of the Thoughtful Teacher coaching program. In addition, the survey collected information on Thoughtful Teacher’s impact on students’ disciplinary referrals and the amount of time students were excluded from class during instructional time.

Thoughtful Teacher also used the survey to gain feedback on the overall quality of our model and coaches. The survey is separated into three parts including

- 1) The Impact of Thoughtful Teacher On Instructional Practices
- 2) The Impact of Thoughtful Teacher On Teachers’ Disciplinary Practices
- 3) The Teachers’ Perspectives On Thoughtful Teacher Model and Coaches.

Thoughtful Teacher used a survey to collect data related to the impact of our training on instructional strategies, disciplinary practices, and overall quality of our program. We captured teachers’ responses using Likert-type, multiple choice, and open ended questions. For the Likert-type questions, the response categories were strongly agree, agree, disagree, and strongly disagree. For the multiple choice questions, the response categories were increased by more than 15%, increased between 1 and 15%, unchanged, decreased between 1 and 15%, and decreases by more than 15%.

Characteristics of Participating Schools And Number of Teachers

During SY 2018-2019, the Thoughtful Teacher coaching program was used to support 42 teachers across 6 schools. All teachers at each school received the same coaching supports. The schools are as follows.

School	Grades Served	Number of Teachers	Location	Setting
Ballou Senior High School	9-12	9	Washington, DC	Urban
Friendship Public Charter School- Armstrong Campus	PK3-7	9	Washington, DC	Urban
Avon Grove Public Charter School	6-12	7	Avon Grove, PA	Rural
Willingboro High School	9-12	6	Willingboro, NJ	Suburban
Memorial Middle School	6-8	6	Willingboro, NJ	Suburban
Kramer Middle School	6-8	5	Washington, DC	Urban

The Impact of Thoughtful Teacher On Instructional Practices

The first two survey questions were intended to quantify the impact of our coaching model on teachers' overall effectiveness. In addition, Thoughtful Teacher believes that teachers who are more reflective demonstrate a greater likelihood of improving their practices. To quantify the impact of our coaching model on teachers' overall effectiveness, we utilized the four-point Likert scale and did not provide an opportunity to select a neutral response. The response categories were: strongly disagree, disagree, agree, and strongly agree.

#	Question	Type of Question
1	Overall, the Thoughtful Teacher Coaching Model (online course and coaching program) supported me in becoming a more effective teacher.	Likert-type
2	The Thoughtful Teacher Model helped me become a more reflective teacher.	Likert-type
3	Can you provide a specific example or how Thoughtful Teacher coaching helped your instructional practices?	Open-ended

The Impact of Thoughtful Teacher On Teachers' Disciplinary Practices

Questions four and five were designed to quantify the impact of the Thoughtful Teacher coaching model on the number of disciplinary incidents within teachers' classrooms. In addition, we collected data to determine the impact on students' removal from class for disciplinary reasons. For these questions, we used a 5-point scale that provided bands of percentage ranges. The answers provided to teachers included: decreased by more than 15%, decreased between 1 and 15%, were unchanged, increased between 1 and 15%, and increased more than 15%.

#	Question	Type of Question
4.	Thoughtful Teacher coaching impacted the number of disciplinary incidents in my classroom in the following manner. The number of incidents _____	Multiple choice
5.	Thoughtful Teacher training has resulted in fewer students being excluded from my classroom due to disruptive behaviors. The number of exclusions _____.	Multiple choice
6.	As it relates to your disciplinary practices, how has Thoughtful Teacher helped you?	Open ended

Teacher's Perspectives on Thoughtful Teacher Coaches

Questions seven through ten were intended to collect information on the Thoughtful Teacher coach. With the coach serving as the primary point of contact with teachers, it is critical they provide high-quality coaching services that include impactful feedback. To qualify teachers' perceptions regarding Thoughtful Teacher coaches, we utilized the four-point Likert scale and did not provide an opportunity to select a neutral response. The response categories were: strongly disagree, disagree, agree, and strongly agree.

#	Question	Type of Question
7	The coach conducted all activities in a professional manner.	Likert-type
8	The coach always provided feedback in a timely manner.	Likert-type
9	The coach provided meaningful feedback.	Likert-type
10	When the coach provided feedback, I could implement recommendations within three days (business days).	Likert-type
11	What recommendations would you make to improve the coach's performance?	Open Ended
12	Is there information you would like to share about your coach?	Open Ended

Open-Ended Questions

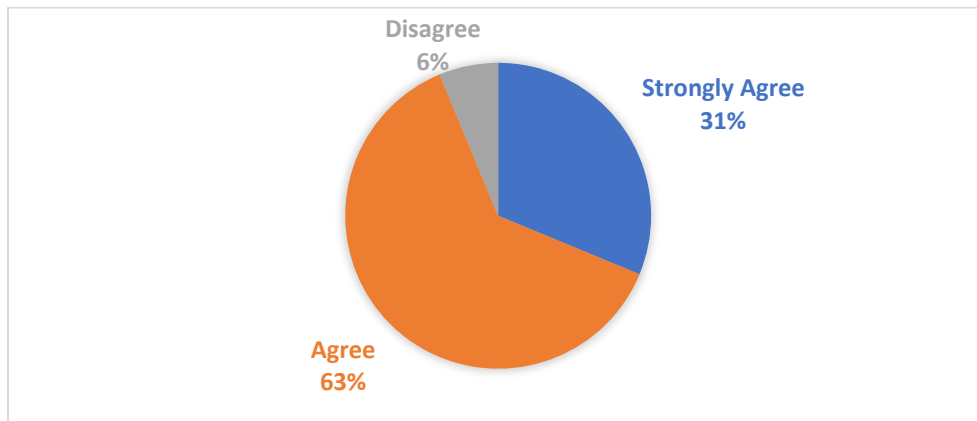
In each category, open-ended questions were used to provide opportunities for teachers to report specific feedback and examples regarding the impact of the Thoughtful Teacher on instructional strategies, student outcomes, and disciplinary practices.

Part 4: Survey Results

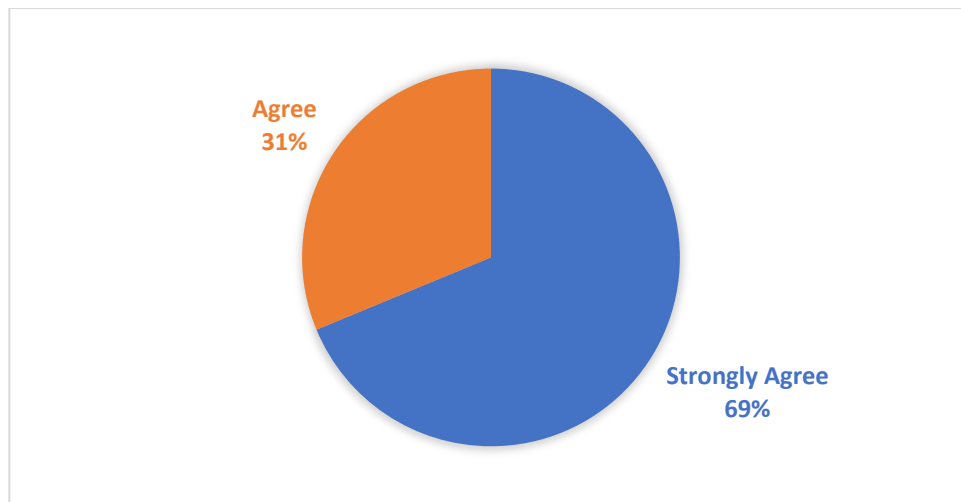
The purpose of the study was to determine the impact of Thoughtful Teacher coaching supports on instructional strategies, student outcomes, and disciplinary practices. Based on the results of the survey, teachers reported significant improvements in the three areas of consideration. The results are reported by section.

The Impact of Thoughtful Teacher On Instructional Practices

Question 1: Overall, the Thoughtful Teacher Coaching Model (online course and coaching program) supported me in becoming a more effective teacher.



Question 2: The Thoughtful Teacher Model helped me become a more reflective teacher.



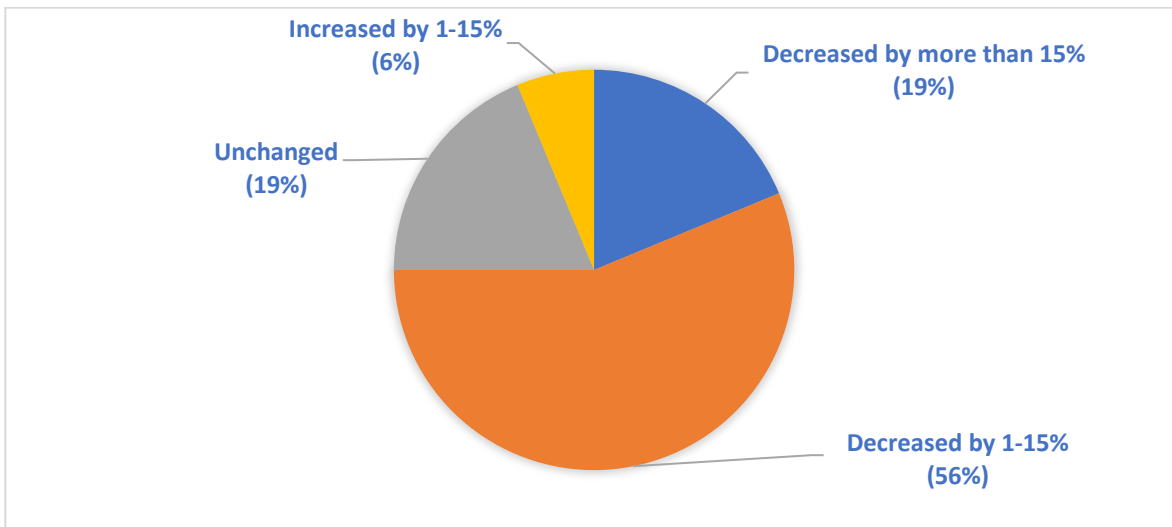
Question 3: Can you provide a specific example of how Thoughtful Teacher coaching helped your instructional practices?

- Thoughtful Teacher Program allowed me to meet more of my students' academic and behavior needs. By embedding positive feedback into my lessons, students seem to enjoy my lessons and are definitely more engaged.

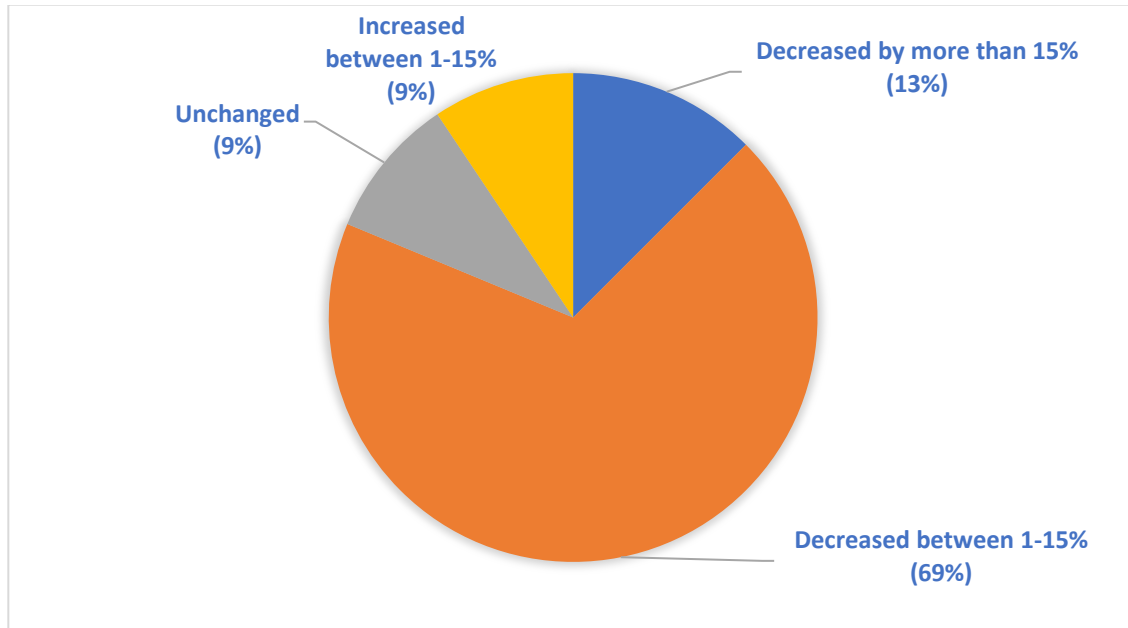
- My lessons are more engaging.
- By being more positive, students like my class better.
- We started systematically recognizing students after the second MAP Assessment. On the third MAP Assessment in math, my students grew an average of 4%.
- I am much more confident in delivering my lessons.
- I wish I had Thoughtful Teacher as a first year teacher. As a second year teacher, it helped me be a better teacher.
- A student who I always sent out of class due to constant distractions, finally began to connect with. Last week, he passed his first spelling test. The building relationship component of Thoughtful Teacher really helped me.
- My students pay more attention in class.

The Impact of Thoughtful Teacher On Teachers' Disciplinary Practices

Question 4: Thoughtful Teacher coaching impacted the number of disciplinary incidents in my classroom in the following manner. The number of incidents _____.



Question #5: Thoughtful Teacher training has resulted in fewer students being excluded from my classroom due to disruptive behaviors. The number of exclusions _____.

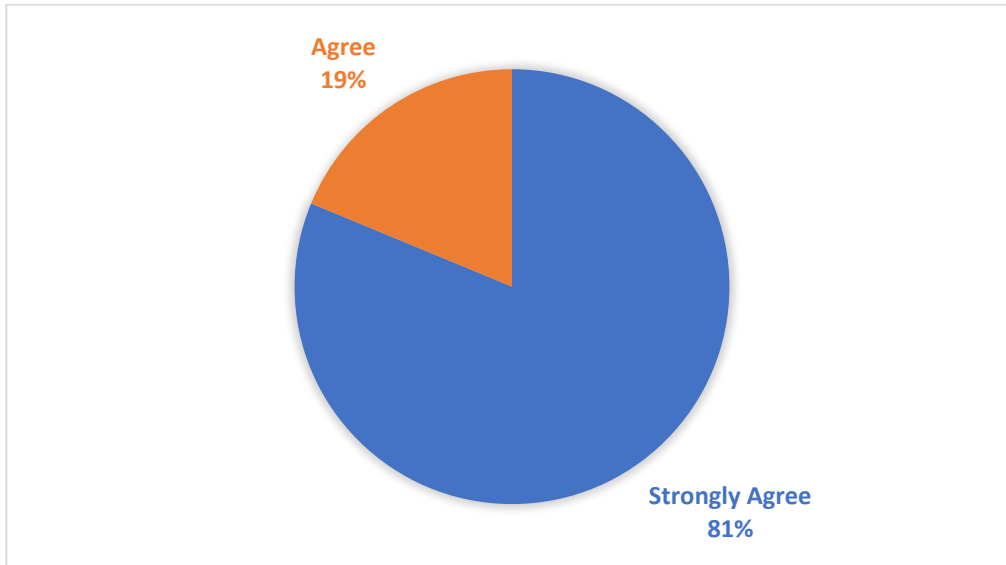


Question 6: As it relates to your disciplinary practices, how has Thoughtful Teacher helped you?

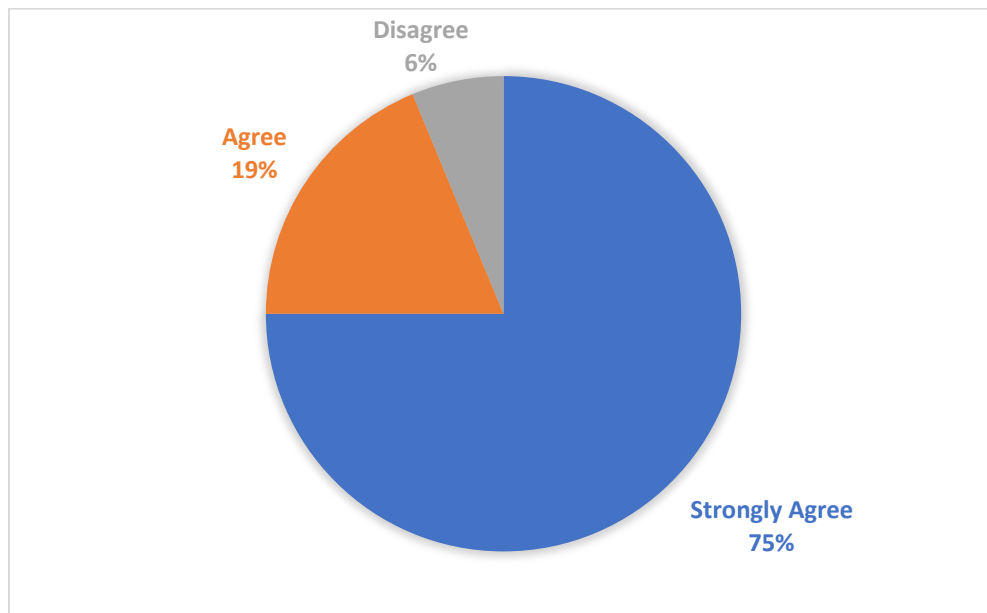
- Thoughtful Teacher helped me create stronger class systems. Students know exactly what to do at all times.
- My disciplinary referrals have dropped. I used to write between 5-10 referrals per week. Last week, I only wrote 2 referrals.
- My students who were my biggest problems have not been as bad.
- I have been working closer with parents and that has made a difference with my students.
- Routines and rituals, routines and rituals, routines and rituals
- Students are more engaged and discipline issues have decreased.
- Students who spend a lot of time in the office due to referrals now remain in my class.
- I am better at managing my students' behaviors.
- I no longer need my assistant principal for students' behaviors.
- Kids are behaving better.
- I am more comfortable reprimanding students. As a first year teacher, I did not know how to be strong with students.
- I realized that where students are seated makes a huge difference in their behaviors.

Teacher's Perspectives on Thoughtful Teacher Coaches

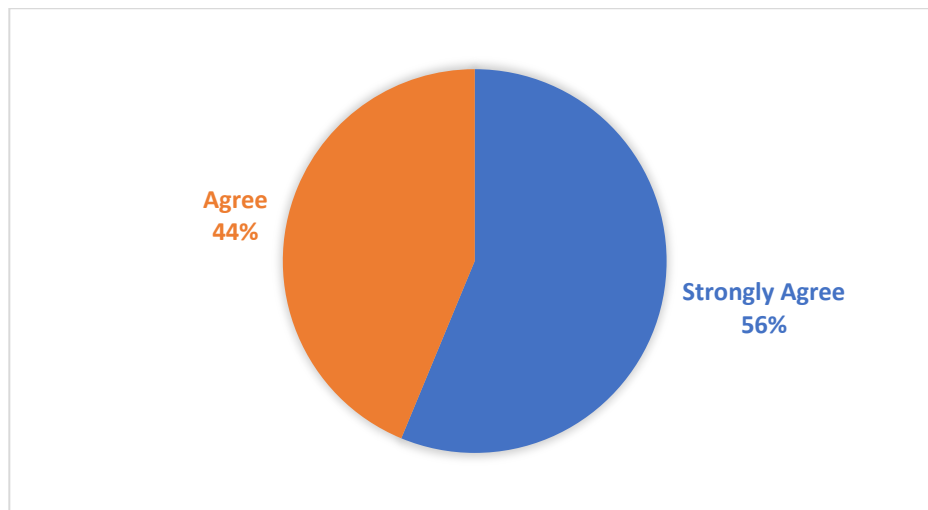
Question 7: The coach conducted all activities in a professional manner.



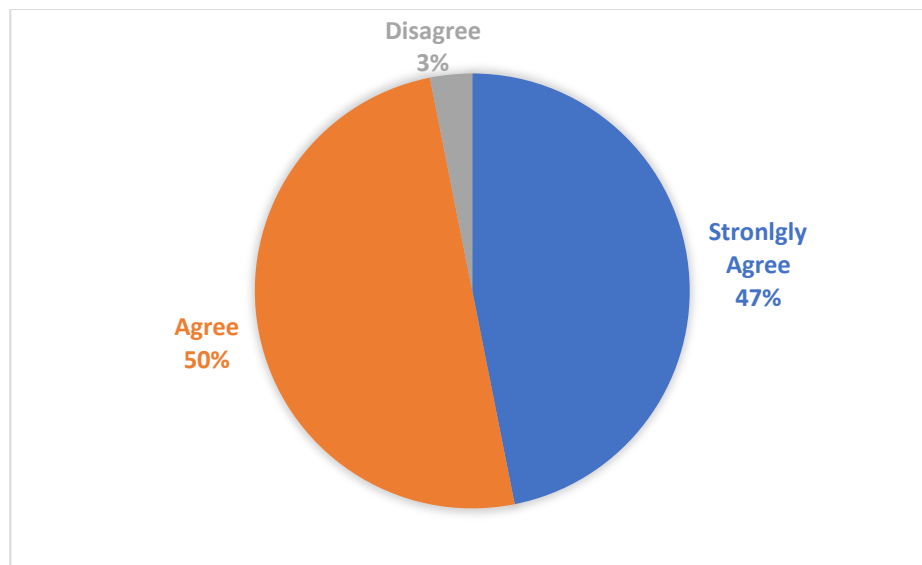
Question 8: The coach always provided feedback in a timely manner.



Question 9: The coach provided meaningful feedback.



Question 10: When the coach provided feedback, I could implement recommendations within three days (business days).



Question 11: What recommendations would you make to improve the coach's performance?

- More meaningful feedback to my grade level I teach.
- I would like to see more modeling of examples.

- Maybe she could model the recommendations in the moment instead of telling us after
- I think all of the teachers in the program should have a scheduled time to meet together with the coach for a group session so we have each other for support
- It may be beneficial to have differentiated strategies and examples for different grade levels (middle/high school vs. elementary).
- I wish the coach could come during the first period of the day (my toughest period).
- I would have liked if she would have stepped in during the lesson. I am reaching out to administration now to assist me with "nipping the behaviors" by being consistent with implementing my behavior plan in my room. I have good ideas in place, which Christine has seen, but it would have been nice for her to help me in noticing the disruptions in class while they are happening, not the day after in her feedback.

Question #12: Is there information you would like to share about your coach?

- Maybe we could get to know each other or at least could the coach know more about our background/teaching career at the beginning of the training.
- I liked our discussions/out loud thinking-reflecting after the observations
- Very courteous and professional!
- It has been a pleasure to meet her
- Mr. Hunter was very professional and supportive throughout the program!
- My coach was amazing. She was very informative and comfortable to talk to. Mrs. Williams was very helpful and insightful with helping me develop more classroom management strategies .

Part 5: Summary of Findings

The Impact of Thoughtful Teacher On Instructional Practices

On questions one and two, Thoughtful Teacher collected teacher's perceptions to determine if the coaching program resulted in teachers being more effective and reflective in their instructional practices. Thirty of thirty-two teachers (94%) agreed that Thoughtful Teacher resulted in them being more effective teachers. For our survey, more effective was explained as teachers managing their classrooms more efficiently, meeting the behavioral needs of students more effectively, and meeting the wide range of students' academic needs better after receiving our coaching.

We found, when teachers perceive themselves as being more effective, they experience a greater level of job satisfaction, use fewer days of leave, and are perceived as better teachers from both students and parents. With 94% of teachers responding that Thoughtful Teacher improved their levels of effectiveness, their instructional practices have been significantly impacted by Thoughtful Teacher training.

On question three, 8 teachers responded to the open ended question. Teachers provided feedback capturing the impact Thoughtful Teacher coaching had on their instructional practices. For example, 2 teachers stated that Thoughtful Teacher coaching resulted in their lessons becoming more engaging. Another teacher stated that her students grew an average of 4 percent on the MAP assessment in math. Each response represents a significant impact that Thoughtful Teacher had on teachers' instructional practices.

The Impact of Thoughtful Teacher On Teachers' Disciplinary Practices

On question four, 75% of teachers noted that Thoughtful Teacher training resulted in fewer disciplinary incidents in their classrooms. Specifically, 6 of 32 teachers attribute Thoughtful Teacher coaching for the decrease in disciplinary incidents by more than 15%. With class sizes of approximately 24 students, this is a significant amount of instructional time that ordinarily would have been lost due to disciplinary issues.

On question five, we explicitly surveyed teachers related to students being excluded from class for disruptive behaviors. 26 of 32 teachers identified Thoughtful Teacher training as the reason for a decrease in exclusions for disruptive behaviors. Thoughtful Teacher training helps teachers establish systems to effectively manage student behaviors without excluding students from class.

On question six, we posed an open-ended question to teachers to determine how Thoughtful Teacher impacted their disciplinary practices. Twelve of 32 teachers responded. Their responses included general information including "kids are behaving better" to more specific answers like "My disciplinary referrals have dropped. I used to write between 5-10 referrals per week. Last week, I only wrote two referrals." Based on teachers' responses, it is clear that Thoughtful Teacher had a positive impact on the disciplinary practices of teachers.

Teacher's Perspectives on Thoughtful Teacher Coaches

On questions seven through ten, teachers completed survey questions to determine the effectiveness of Thoughtful Teacher coaches. With the rate of 98%, teachers reported that Thoughtful Teacher coaches conducted their activities in a professional and timely manner. In questions 9 and 10, the questions were used to quantify the quality and application of feedback. In questions 7 and 8, 97% of teachers agreed that coaches feedback was meaningful and could be implemented within 3 days.

On question eleven, an open-ended question, we requested recommendations from teachers to improve the overall quality of our coaching. Seven teachers responded to this question. While teachers provided a wide range of answers, most teachers requested coaches demonstrated instructional practices during lessons as

opposed to waiting until the post-observation conference. Thoughtful Teacher is exploring ways to incorporate teacher feedback into our practices.

On question twelve, we requested teachers provide additional feedback regarding their coach. Six teachers responded to this open-ended question. Five of six teachers provided glowing responses about their coaches.

Resources

Arcia, E. (2006). Achievement and enrollment status of suspended students: Outcomes in a large, multicultural school district

Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation. (2010). *Learning about teaching: Initial findings from the measures of effective teaching project*.

Darling-Hammond, L. (2010). *Evaluating teacher effectiveness: How teacher performance assessments can measure and improve teaching*. Washington, DC: Center for American Progress.

Krezmien, M. P., Leone, P. E., and Achilles, G. (2006). Suspension, race, and disability: Analysis of statewide practices and reporting.

Faulkner, S. A., & Cook, C. M. (2006). Testing vs. teaching: The perceived impact of assessment demands on middle grades instructional practices.